

Peel Public Health Risks

Description	Key Risk Mitigation
<p>Human Resourcing Challenges:</p> <p>As one of the hardest hit regions during the COVID-19 pandemic, Peel Public Health redeployed over 80 per cent of its employees to the pandemic response. The extensive demands and unpredictability of the pandemic had many negative effects on our workforce’s well-being, due in part to the prolonged response, high workload, and recruitment and retention challenges.</p> <p>Public Health was also highly impacted by the passing of the <i>Hazel McCallion Act, 2023</i>, (Peel Dissolution). The uncertainty and change brought on by the Peel Dissolution created additional recruitment and retention challenges.</p> <p>These challenges in the context of a strained health system labour market have resulted in the inability to achieve full staffing capacity in Public Health to maintain levels of service for the community.</p>	<p>Public Health is using the following strategies to address employee wellbeing, recruitment and retention issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying employee wellbeing as a key principle of Public Health work, with various strategies (e.g., Peel human resource wellbeing supports, developing people leader capacity, managing workload, and increasing recognition opportunities). • Offering enhanced incentives to support and retain staff (e.g., increased Sun Life coverage for mental health supports). • Working with Peel Human Resources to streamline recruiting practices. • Offering long-term contracts with benefits to non-bargaining employees, where possible. <p>Despite these mitigation strategies, the risk of being unable to fill vacancies remains high.</p>
<p>Provincial Underfunding:</p> <p>Public Health has been historically underfunded by the Province to deliver on its mandate and meet community needs.</p> <p>Peel Public Health has one of the lowest provincial per capita funding rates among public health units in Ontario. For cost-shared programs, in Peel, Public Health was funded by the Province at approximately \$34 per capita in 2022, while Toronto, Hamilton and Ottawa received \$49, \$49, and \$39 per capita respectively. Provincial funding has also</p>	<p>Program capacity reviews and evaluations are continuously conducted to maximize efficiencies and effectiveness.</p> <p>Provincial challenges are being mitigated through the use of various strategies, including one-time funding requests, cost-containment, and ongoing advocacy to the Province to help secure adequate financial support to meet provincial mandates and growing community needs.</p>

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<p>not kept pace with Peel’s population growth or inflationary costs.</p> <p>Predictable and sustainable funding is also necessary to support the successful rebuilding and remobilization of Public Health.</p>	
<p>COVID-19 Pandemic Disruptions to Health and Health Systems:</p> <p>Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in significant disruption to already overburdened health systems. Compounded with the health impacts of climate change and humanitarian crises, this has resulted in the re-emergence of several infectious diseases such as measles and other health challenges such as increasing prevalence of sedentary behaviour.</p> <p>In Peel region, multi-year strategies are needed to address disruptions to routine childhood and school immunizations which are contributing to an increase in infectious diseases (e.g., measles).</p> <p>During the pandemic, Public Health was able to leverage additional COVID-19 specific resources and community partnerships to increase its ability to address community needs and address health inequities. However, our current resources and capacity are not optimal to equitably address the health needs and priorities of vulnerable populations. Sufficient resources and time are needed to sustain community engagement efforts and to integrate health equity practices into services.</p>	<p>A staged approach to remobilization and rebuilding Public Health programs has been in place to mitigate challenges and balance employee well-being, service needs, and partner readiness.</p> <p>Public Health is on track to remobilize the remainder of program and services by year-end 2024. Remobilization involved resuming work to advance the 2020-2029 Public Health Strategic Plan.</p> <p>Public Health is addressing health equity through the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together with Peel Region Health Services partners in developing a health equity strategy, consistent with the Peel Public Health Strategic Plan priority; • Further developing the capacity to identify population health disparities; • Implementing lessons learned from the pandemic to understand how health disparities were identified, assessed, and addressed (e.g., COVID-19 specific resources and community partnerships); and • Leveraging community partnerships within the health care and other sectors to help protect the health of historically marginalized populations (e.g., Public Health’s involvement in the Community Response Table, provides an opportunity to connect with community agencies across diverse service areas).