

November 12, 2018

Mayor Jeff Lehman
City of Barrie
70 Collier Street
Barrie, ON L4M 4T5

Dear Mayor Lehman and Members of Council:

I would like congratulate council members on their successful election, and to take this opportunity to provide preliminary background information related to the role of public health in your community.

The Vision of Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is Healthy People. Healthy Places. This is reflected in our Mission Statement: With our communities, we prevent disease and injury, and promote and protect health for all in Simcoe Muskoka.

Municipal councils share common goals with us, supporting improved quality of life for residents, and building and maintaining healthy and vibrant communities. As you move forward in your term as elected officials, we welcome the opportunity to support and assist you in achieving these goals. As a reminder, we provided municipal candidates with the “Let’s Make Health Matter” resource to outline important public health issues, such as climate change, opioids, food insecurity and affordable housing that can be influenced by municipal planning, programs and policies. This resource has been updated since the election and is available on our website [here](#).

Along with the role of our Board of Health to advocate for healthy public policy, we provide a wide range of programs and services to keep our population and communities healthy. Some of these are entwined with local municipal planning and decision-making, such as safe food inspection and water monitoring, emergency management and response, tobacco-free by-laws, infection prevention and control, and addressing health hazards and environmental issues. Others include substance misuse (including alcohol, cannabis and opioids) prevention, healthy eating and active living, population health assessment, parenting and child development programs, school immunization clinics, dental screening, sexual health counselling and clinics, and infectious diseases surveillance and monitoring.

In addition to our requirements under the new Ontario Public Health Standards 2018, we have also recently adopted a four-year strategic plan. Our [2019-2022 Strategic Plan](#), developed with stakeholder input, clearly outlines our Mission, Vision and Values and identifies three priority areas of focus for the health unit: Relationships, Public Health Standards, and Accountability and

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Governance. Building strong partnerships with our local municipalities is an important factor in achieving our Mission, our strategic priorities, and our common goals.

As a tangible next step, I would be very pleased to present to your council, an overview of the work of the health unit and to discuss issues of common concern. In addition, over the next several months, you may hear from staff of our programs who will be reaching out to local municipalities in relation to specific public health issues and activities, such as cannabis retailing and enforcement, climate change and food insecurity.

Thank you for your time. My staff and I look forward to working with your council and staff to promote and protect the health of all people, our communities, and the environment in Simcoe Muskoka.

Sincerely,

ORIGINAL Signed By:

Charles Gardner, MD, CCFP, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health

CG:MW:cm

Cc: Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit Board of Health