



February 27, 2025
Board of Health Meeting
Open Session Minutes

A meeting of the Board of Health for Oxford Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit was held on Thursday, February 27, 2025 commencing at 1:04 p.m.

**Represents virtual participation*

PRESENT:

Ms. C. Agar	Board Member
Mr. J. Couckuyt	Board Member
Mr. G. Jones	Board Member (Vice Chair)
Mr. J. Herbert	Board Member
Ms. B. Martin	Board Member (Chair)
Mr. D. Mayberry	Board Member
Mr. M. Peterson	Board Member
Mr. L. Rowden	Board Member
Mr. M. Ryan	Board Member
Mr. D. McDonald	Acting CEO, Director, Corporate Services and Human Resources
Dr. N. Tran	Medical Officer of Health
Ms. W. Lee	Executive Assistant

GUESTS:

Ms. K. Bastian	Manager, Strategic Initiatives
Ms. J. Gordon	Administrative Assistant
Mr. P. Heywood	Program Director
Ms. S. MacIsaac	Program Director
Ms. M. Nusink	Director, Finance
Ms. C. Richards	Program Manager, Foundational Standards
Ms. N. Rowe*	Manager, Communications
Mr. I. Santos	Manager, Information Technology

MEDIA:

Mr. I. McCallum	Mybroadcastingcorp.ca
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REGRETS:

Mr. S. Molnar	Board Member
Mr. J. Preston	Board Member
Mr. D. Warden	Board Member
Mr. D. Shinedling	Board Member
Ms. C. St. John	Chief Executive Officer

**REMINDER OF DISCLOSURE OF PECUNIARY INTEREST AND THE GENERAL NATURE THEREOF
WHEN ITEM ARISES**

1.1 CALL TO ORDER, RECOGNITION OF QUORUM

The meeting was called to order at 1:03pm.

Dr. N. Tran expressed his sincere condolences for the family of Dr. Malcolm Lock.

1.2 AGENDA

Resolution # (2025-BOH-0227-1.2)

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by M. Ryan

That the agenda for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for,
February 27, 2025 be approved.

Carried.

**1.3 Reminder to disclose Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof when Item
Arises.**

2.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Resolution # (2025-BOH-0227-2.1)

Moved by J. Herbert

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the minutes for the Southwestern Public Health Board of Health meeting for
January 23, 2025 be approved.

Carried.

3.0 CONSENT AGENDA

No Items.

4.0 CORRESPONDENCE RECEIVED REQUIRING ACTION

No items.

5.0 AGENDA ITEMS FOR INFORMATION.DISCUSSION.DECISION

5.1 Medical Officer of Health's Report

Dr. N. Tran reviewed his report.

He noted that rising case counts are straining Southwestern Public Health's (SWPH) work in case
and contact management (CCM). As a result, SWPH has shifted from ideal CCM practices such as

contact tracing to public notifications and online assessment tools using decision trees to guide the public.

L. Rowden inquired about the Hart Hub's scope and the population it will serve, expressing concern about funding. Dr. Tran explained that the Hart Hub will address social determinants of health, substance use, mental health, and recovery services, combining addiction treatment with broader supportive services.

J. Couckuyt asked whether the Tillsonburg model of care developed in response to the lack of primary care physicians in the area could be replicated. Dr. Tran noted that the Tillsonburg model was implemented to mitigate the impact of healthcare provider (HCP) shortages. A call for proposals successfully expanded the Family Health Team (FHT) there, providing healthcare access for orphaned clients after HCP retirements. He emphasized this model as a local Oxford Ontario Health Team (Oxford OHT) initiative in response to funding gaps and HCP shortages.

J. Couckuyt noted that municipalities face pressure to address HCP shortages and followed up by asking if the clinic was staffed by existing municipal staff or if new staffing was involved. He also asked what role municipal funding played in supporting the clinic. Dr. Tran responded that while he did not have precise funding details, the clinic's development involved combining small funding streams, in-kind support, and reallocating staff. Some organizations contributed in-kind support for facilities, project management, administrative support, and supplies. Additional municipal funding was also sought to support the clinic. Dr. Tran emphasized that while this model was not ideal due to the absence of dedicated provincial funding, it was the best available response for addressing a critical local healthcare gap.

C. Agar inquired about measles cases, asking if they affected adults or children. Dr. Tran reported that 95% of cases involved insufficiently vaccinated individuals, highlighting that measles is preventable through vaccination. He confirmed seven hospitalizations.

B. Martin asked whether infections were spreading within families or communities. Dr. Tran explained that measles' high infectivity results in clusters of household cases due to significant viral load within homes.

M. Peterson asked if vaccinated individuals had been affected. Dr. Tran confirmed that two vaccinated individuals contracted measles but experienced milder illness. He stressed the vaccine's effectiveness in preventing severe outcomes. M. Peterson also asked whether the current measles strain shows signs of mutation. Dr. Tran confirmed that data continues to show the vaccine's effectiveness and emphasized the importance of achieving 95% vaccination coverage for herd immunity.

C. Agar referenced recent government changes regarding medical student placements and asked if SWPH could advocate for regional medical student recruitment. Dr. Tran noted that SWPH supports local work opportunities to enhance positive experiences in the region. While some organizations offer scholarships and bursaries, healthcare providers tend to gravitate toward urban areas, and incentives to attract providers to rural regions require further exploration.

B. Martin highlighted local efforts to encourage students to return home to practice medicine. Elgin County and St. Thomas have collectively invested over \$1 million in bursaries and incentives. However, a challenge remains as new doctors manage smaller patient rosters compared to retiring physicians (800 versus 1,500 patients, for example).

J. Herbert noted that new doctors expect local access to advanced medical technologies like CT and MRI machines, and outdated equipment in some hospitals deters recruitment. Dr. Tran acknowledged this as a barrier and stressed the importance of improving resources to support healthcare recruitment efforts.

Resolution # (2025-BOH-0227-5.1)

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by G. Jones

That Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Medical Officer of Health's report for January 25, 2025.

Carried.

5.3 Chief Executive Officer's Report

Derek McDonald reviewed the report on behalf of C. St. John.

G. Jones expressed gratitude from the Township of Southwold for SWPH's prompt support during a major water line break that affected 75% of the township. He commended SWPH staff for their swift communication efforts.

D. Mayberry asked for additional context in the status reports, noting they currently outline where things stand and where they have been. He requested more detail on how trends developed, why certain outcomes occurred, and how improvements or reversals could be achieved. C. Richards explained that the reports are intended to provide data to guide program and service planning, which will determine future actions to address these trends.

D. Mayberry also raised questions about addressing weight stigma in the Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention (CDIP) report. He stressed the importance of naming issues without shaming individuals, in order to promote prevention and solutions. D. McDonald explained that SWPH is aligning with Ontario dietitians to shift perceptions of healthy weight while promoting a weight-inclusive approach. P. Heywood added that this approach emphasizes environmental and socioeconomic factors rather than blaming individuals. Public health's role is to inform the public and support this shift.

J. Couckuyt asked about a previous program on alcohol and opioids. D. McDonald acknowledged he would confer with the team to source the report.

Resolution # (2025-BOH-0227-5.2)

Moved by J. Couckuyt

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Chief Executive Officer's report for February 27, 2025.

Carried.

6.0 NEW BUSINESS

7.0 TO CLOSED SESSION

Resolution # (2025-BOH-0227-C7)

Moved by D. Mayberry

Seconded by J. Herbert

That the Board of Health move to closed session in order to consider one or more the following as outlined in the Ontario Municipal Act:

- (a) the security of the property of the municipality or local board;
- (b) personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees;
- (c) a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board;
- (d) labour relations or employee negotiations;
- (e) litigation or potential litigation, including matters before administrative tribunals, affecting the municipality or local board;
- (f) advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose;
- (g) a matter in respect of which a council, board, committee or other body may hold a closed meeting under another Act;
- (h) information explicitly supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board by Canada, a province or territory or a Crown agency of any of them;
- (i) a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial, financial or labour relations information, supplied in confidence to the municipality or local board, which, if disclosed, could reasonably be expected to prejudice significantly the competitive position or interfere significantly with the contractual or other negotiations of a person, group of persons, or organization;
- (j) a trade secret or scientific, technical, commercial or financial information that belongs to the municipality or local board and has monetary value or potential monetary value; or
- (k) a position, plan, procedure, criteria or instruction to be applied to any negotiations carried on or to be carried on by or on behalf of the municipality or local board. 2001, c. 25, s. 239 (2); 2017, c. 10, Sched. 1, s. 26.

Other Criteria:

- (a) a request under the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, if the council, board, commission or other body is the head of an institution for the purposes of that Act; or
- (b) an ongoing investigation respecting the municipality, a local board or a municipally controlled corporation by the Ombudsman appointed under the Ombudsman Act, an Ombudsman referred to in subsection 223.13 (1) of this Act, or the investigator referred to in subsection 239.2 (1). 2014, c. 13, Sched. 9, s. 22.

Carried.

6.0 RISING AND REPORTING OF CLOSED SESSION

Resolution # (2024-BOH-1128-C8)

Moved by G. Jones

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health rise with a report.

Carried.

Resolution # (2025-BOH-0227-C3.1)

Moved by J. Herbert

Seconded by M. Peterson

That the Board of Health for Southwestern Public Health accept the Chief Executive Officer's Report for November 28, 2024.

8.0 FUTURE MEETING & EVENTS

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 2:22 p.m.

Resolution # (2025-BOH-0227-9.0)

Moved by M. Peterson

Seconded by L. Rowden

That the meeting adjourns at 2:22pm to meet again on Thursday, March 27, 2025 at 1:00 p.m.

Carried.

Confirmed: _____

