
MEMORANDUM

PHD-C 3-2022

Subject: Ministry of Health Funding Adjustments

Date: June 14, 2022

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: M. Mustafa Hirji, Medical Officer of Health & Commissioner (Acting)

The purpose of this memorandum is to provide Committee with an update on recently announced Ministry of Health Funding and the associated impacts on the 2022 budget for Public Health.

In May 2022, the Ministry of Health communicated their approval of funding that was included as part of a budget request and outlined to Committee in Report PHD 6-2022 – Public Health 2022 Annual Service Plan (ASP) and Budget Submission. A summary of approvals are as follows:

1. Base funding increase of \$235,800 for Mandatory Programs which represents a 1% increase over 2021 based on all eligible expenditures approved by the Board of Health. As noted in PHD 6-2022, this approval is for expenditures already included in Public Health's base budget, therefore the funding increase will result in levy savings for 2022.
2. Base funding increase of \$378,900 for the 100% ministry funded Senior's dental program. An adjustment to reflect the Ministry approval of this funding in the 2022 Public Health operating budget will be completed in accordance with the Niagara Region's budget control by-law for in-year receipt of funding totalling less than \$1 million.
3. One-time funding requests totalling \$300,800 were approved as follows:
 - a. Needles to Support Community Based Safe Injection Activities (\$207,000)
 - b. Replacement of Vaccine Refrigerator (\$20,200)
 - c. Smoke-Free Ontario Inspector Computer Tablets (\$13,600)
 - d. Public Health Inspector Practicum Program (\$60,000).

An adjustment to reflect the Ministry approval of these one-time requests in the 2022 Public Health operating budget will be completed in accordance with the Niagara Region's budget control by-law for in-year receipt of funding totalling less than \$1 million.

4. One-time funding of \$9,913,600 for COVID-19 costs was approved out of a total request of \$19,434,898. The full amount of the request is already included in the Public Health 2022 approved operating budget funded through the Taxpayer Relief Reserve, therefore an adjustment to reflect the Ministry approval of this funding will be completed in order to return \$9,913,600 to the reserve. In previous years, through in-year reporting, actual expenditures have been 100% funded through reimbursements after expenditures were reported to the Ministry. In communication with the Ministry, such funding may be also available for 2022, which would allow most if not all of the remaining funding from the Taxpayer Relief Reserve to be returned to the Reserve.

The Ministry also announced incremental funding at 100% of costs for items not requested as part of the 2022 ASP and Budget submission as follows:

5. One-time funding of \$333,400 for the 100% Ministry funded School Focused Nurses Initiative, which is to reflect the extension of the program for five months from July 31, 2022 until December 31, 2022. An adjustment to reflect the Ministry approval of this funding in the 2022 Public Health operating budget will be completed in accordance with the Niagara Region's budget control by-law for in-year receipt of funding totalling less than \$1 million.
6. One-time funding of \$581,300 for Temporary Retention Incentive for Nurses was approved to provide Public Health Nurse's up to \$5,000 in incentive pay in 2022 based on certain eligibility criteria. An adjustment to reflect the Ministry approval of this funding in the 2022 Public Health operating budget will be completed in accordance with the Niagara Region's budget control by-law for in-year receipt of funding totalling less than \$1 million.

Finally, the Ministry funded one additional project previously requested through the previous year's (2021) Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission:

7. One-time capital funding of \$475,000 for a new Mobile Dental Clinic vehicle was approved. The full amount of the request is already included in the Public Health 2022 approved capital projects. Since the initial request in 2021, the cost to purchase a mobile dental clinic vehicle has increased to \$675,000, therefore an adjustment to reflect the Ministry approval of this funding will be completed in order to return \$275,000 to the capital reserve.

Unfortunately, one major funding request was not approved by the Ministry of Health at this time.

8. The Ministry had invited a submission for funding for “Recovery of Base Programming”, for which we submitted a request of \$2,035,762. This funding would begin catch-up of work that was not possible to execute during intense phases of the pandemic, as well as support residents with health issues that have been aggravated over the course of the pandemic. Specifically, our plan submitted to the Ministry included school immunization catch-up clinics, supporting mental health promotion for marginalized populations, reconnecting and reengaging residents in priority neighbourhoods, addressing opioid overdoses, and implementing strategies to reduce sexually transmitted infections. The Ministry did not approve this funding, nor did they approve the submission for any of the 34 local public health agencies despite asking for the submissions. In communication with the Ministry, we understand there may be opportunities to seek funds for recovery of base programming in future months. There was no transfer from the Taxpayer Relief Reserve in the Levy Operating Budget to fund this work, so this work is entirely contingent on Ministry approval of funding. Absent such approval, at this time, this work is on hold and will not commence.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

M. Mustafa Hirji, MD, MPH, FRCPH
Medical Office of Health & Commissioner (Acting)
Public Health & Emergency Services