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**Subject:** Public Health 2026 Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission

**Report to:** Public health and Social Services Committee

**Report date:** Tuesday, April 14, 2026

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## Recommendations

1. That the Board of Health (BOH) **APPROVE** the Public Health 2026 Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission (ASP) to the Ministry of Health (the Ministry) for a total gross budget of \$42,133,884, inclusive of two (2) one-time funding requests totalling \$131,000.

## Key Facts

- The purpose of this report is to seek the BOH's approval for the 2026 ASP.
- The 2026 ASP is a mandatory, Ministry-required document outlining detailed program plans and budgeted expenditures for Ontario public health units. It aligns local public health initiatives with provincial standards (the Ontario Public Health Standards or OPHS), covering mandatory cost-shared programs, 100% provincial-funded initiatives, and one-time requests to improve community health.
- The submission was due on March 31, 2026; however, the Ministry has granted an extended deadline of May 8, 2026 as the report template was provided to staff later than anticipated.

## Financial Considerations

The Ministry provides cost-shared funding to Niagara Region's BOH and uses the ASP as a primary accountability mechanism for the delivery and funding of mandatory and related public health programs and services. The budget figures included in the ASP constitute the BOH's formal request to the Ministry for provincial funding reflected in the Regional Municipality of Niagara's 2026 Levy Operating Budget, approved February 12, 2026.

The Public Health budget is largely cost-shared between the Ministry and the Regional Municipality of Niagara. Within base funding, the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP) is the only program that is 100% provincially funded. For 2026, the Ministry's planned allocation for mandatory programs is \$25,248,400, representing 1% growth over 2025 (\$24,998,308). The provincial cost-share ratio for mandatory programs is

capped at 75% of the BOH’s gross operating budget; based on Niagara’s 2026 budget submission, the projected cost-share ratio is 65%. The BOH has approved a 2026 levy contribution of \$13,965,184 for Public Health mandatory programs.

The 2026 Public Health request to the Ministry is based on gross budget expenditures of \$42,133,884 broken into three streams, as shown in Table 1. The Ministry of Health funding agreement for Mandatory Programs includes indirect support costs but excludes indirect capital costs from the funding formula; as such, these figures differ from Niagara Region’s consolidated budget, which includes capital costs.

**Table 1: Summary of 2026 ASP and Budget Submission**

	Description	Ministry Funding %	Gross Budgeted Expenditure (Note 1)	ASP Funding Requests	Levy Funding
1	Mandatory Programs	65%	\$39,213,584	\$25,248,400	\$13,965,184
2	OSDCP	100%	\$2,789,300	\$2,789,300	N/A
3	One-Time Requests	100%	\$131,000	\$131,000	N/A
	Total 2026 ASP		\$42,133,884	\$28,168,700	\$13,965,184

Table 1 includes two one-time funding requests, including: 1) two (2) public health inspector practicums, and 2) capital for four (4) purpose-built vaccine fridges. As Ministry approval is uncertain, they were not included in the 2026 operating budget. If one or both requests are approved, the 2026 budget will be adjusted accordingly.

## Analysis

The Ministry of Health’s [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability \(June 2021\)](https://files.ontario.ca/moh-ontario-public-health-standards-en-2021.pdf) (https://files.ontario.ca/moh-ontario-public-health-standards-en-2021.pdf) identify the minimum expectations for public health programs and services to be delivered by Ontario’s 29 boards of health/public health units. The OPHS, which are published by the Minister of Health as outlined in Section 7 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, are informed by the core public health

functions: 1) Assessment and Surveillance; 2) Health Promotion and Policy Development; 3) Health Protection; 4) Disease Prevention; and 5) Emergency Management.

Boards of health/public health units are accountable for implementing the OPHS including the protocols and guidelines that are referenced within. The OPHS consist of the three overarching sections that: 1) define what public health does, 2) strengthen accountability, and 3) ensure transparency and demonstration of impact.

The *Strengthened Accountability* section includes the Public Health Accountability Framework, centering on four main domains (delivery of programs and services, fiduciary requirements, good governance and management practices, and public health practice) and is supported by three types of documentation (accountability, planning, and reporting). The ASP, which is a key mechanism for boards of health to outline how they will operationalize their strategic priorities, is part of the accountability framework's planning documentation. It contains:

- Community assessment: description of the health needs, priority populations, and challenges and risks faced by Niagara residents;
- Program plans: description of programs and services to be delivered under the foundational standard and nine program standards, including interventions and key partners for delivery;
- Budgets for each program;
- One-time funding requests; and
- BOH membership, apportionment of costs, and certification of the ASP.

Public Health staff complete an annual planning process to realign programs with priority health outcomes and to articulate clear program goals, objectives, activities, and key performance indicators. The work is grounded in surveillance data, literature reviews, a community health status assessment, among other sources of data and evidence.

Given its length, the ASP is not included as an appendix to this report. Board of Health members wishing to review the full document may do so by contacting the office of Niagara Region's Medical Officer of Health.

## Alternatives Reviewed

Submission of the ASP is a requirement of the Ministry to receive funding. Loss of provincial funding because of non-submission would impose untenable burden on the Region's levy.

## Relationship to Council Strategic Priorities

By ensuring that services are delivered in a way that is collaborative, efficient, and fiscally responsible, the way in which the ASP is crafted is aligned with Council's Effective Region priority. The ASP also reflects the Equitable Region priority by ensuring that services meet the needs of communities in an inclusive, welcoming, and equity-focused way.

## Other Pertinent Reports

- [PHD 3-2025 Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission](https://niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/PHSSC_Apr08_2025/eSCRIBE%20Documents/eSCRIBE%20Attachments/PHD%203-2025%20Public%20Health%20Annual%20Service%20Plan%20and%20Budget%20Submission.pdf)  
([https://niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/PHSSC\\_Apr08\\_2025/eSCRIBE%20Documents/eSCRIBE%20Attachments/PHD%203-2025%20Public%20Health%20Annual%20Service%20Plan%20and%20Budget%20Submission.pdf](https://niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/PHSSC_Apr08_2025/eSCRIBE%20Documents/eSCRIBE%20Attachments/PHD%203-2025%20Public%20Health%20Annual%20Service%20Plan%20and%20Budget%20Submission.pdf))
- [PHD 2-2024 Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission](https://niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/PHSSC_Mar05_2024/eSCRIBE%20Documents/eSCRIBE%20Attachments/PHD%2002-2024%20Public%20Health%20Annual%20Service%20Plan%20and%20Budget%20Submission.pdf)  
([https://niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/PHSSC\\_Mar05\\_2024/eSCRIBE%20Documents/eSCRIBE%20Attachments/PHD%2002-2024%20Public%20Health%20Annual%20Service%20Plan%20and%20Budget%20Submission.pdf](https://niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/PHSSC_Mar05_2024/eSCRIBE%20Documents/eSCRIBE%20Attachments/PHD%2002-2024%20Public%20Health%20Annual%20Service%20Plan%20and%20Budget%20Submission.pdf))
- [PHD 4-2023 Annual Service Plan and Budget Submission](https://niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/PHSSC_Apr04_2023/eSCRIBE%20Documents/eSCRIBE%20Attachments/PHD%204-2023%20Public%20Health%202023%20Annual%20Service%20Plan%20and%20Budget%20Submission.pdf)  
([https://niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/PHSSC\\_Apr04\\_2023/eSCRIBE%20Documents/eSCRIBE%20Attachments/PHD%204-2023%20Public%20Health%202023%20Annual%20Service%20Plan%20and%20Budget%20Submission.pdf](https://niagararegion.escribemeetings.com/PHSSC_Apr04_2023/eSCRIBE%20Documents/eSCRIBE%20Attachments/PHD%204-2023%20Public%20Health%202023%20Annual%20Service%20Plan%20and%20Budget%20Submission.pdf))

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