

November 12, 2024

To: Partners of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU)

Re: Realignment of Programs

Building on its history of providing reliable public health services to residents, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit (WECHU) is announcing changes to its organizational structure coming into effect January of 2025. Provincial public health direction has shifted toward prioritized core activities like immunization and communicable disease prevention and an enhanced life-span approach to health promotion which highlights the current impact of substance use on Ontario communities.

To better align with these emerging priorities, the WECHU will be refocusing health promotion resources toward a life-span approach by topic, and prioritizing evidence informed approaches to reach those most at-risk. The new *Comprehensive Health Promotion* and *Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction* departments will allow for the implementation of upstream and protective strategies through the delivery of services that are responsive and relevant to the local needs of our population. Additionally, through the introduction of an independent *Immunization* department, the WECHU will enhance its support of the increasing demand for vaccination amongst high-risk populations. Finally, enhancing our resource footprint in emergency management and planning, the WECHU has bolstered its commitment to preventative and responsive public health initiatives, driven through stakeholder engagement and partnerships.

These new opportunities and initiatives will coincide with the WECHU's cornerstone strategic and operational goals around healthy public policy development, harm reduction, population health assessment, surveillance, and health protection. Additionally, through the reallocation of existing staff these changes will better position the WECHU for alignment with anticipated changes to the Ontario Public Health Standards without reducing its overall staffing complement.

To support this realignment, the following shifts will be made to Senior Leadership roles and responsibilities effective January 1, 2025;

- **Kristy McBeth, Senior Director** (kmcbeth@wechu.org)
 - Departments: Immunization, Comprehensive Health Promotion, Environmental Health, Planning & Strategic Initiatives, and Epidemiology & Data.
- **Linda Watson, Chief Nursing Officer & Director of Public Health Programs** (lwatson@wechu.org)
 - Departments: Infectious Disease Prevention and Healthy Families.
- **Eric Nadalin, Director of Public Health Programs** (enadalin@wechu.org)
 - Departments: Substance Use and Harm Reduction, Oral Health, and Communications.

The WECHU appreciates the support of its provincial and local partners in the implementation of these changes. As the new year approaches, department managers will be contacting partners to identify the most appropriate leads for collaborative work.

Should there be any general questions about these changes, please contact **Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Ken Blanchette** at kblanchette@wechu.org or for department specific questions, contact the program Director indicated above.

Thank you,

Handwritten signatures of Dr. Ken Blanchette and Dr. Mehdi Aloosh.

Dr. Ken Blanchette & Dr. Mehdi Aloosh,
on behalf of the staff and board of the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit.