



Board of Health Meeting August 29, 2024

Summary

Sunsetting of the Land Control Program

Staff gave a presentation on the Land Control Program outlining the history of the program and the successful transition to municipalities. Achievements were celebrated along with the many partnerships developed and staff look forward to continue to work collaboratively with community partners now and in the future. Board members thanked the Land Control Team for their hard work and dedication.

Strengthening Public Health

Chair Peter McKenna gave an update on the ongoing South East Transition Team Meetings advising that a SETT Bylaw Review Sub-Committee has been established to develop draft primary by-laws for the new Board of Health in order to prepare for the proposed merger on January 1, 2025. Representatives on this sub-committee from the LGL Board of Health are Mayor Robin Jones and Stephen Bird.

The Medical Officers of Health and Executive Teams for LGL, HPE and KFL&A continue to meet to prepare for the transition and integration of operational elements for the new organization.

Pertussis

Pertussis (Whooping Cough) is a highly contagious respiratory disease that usually begins with a runny nose and mild fever, but symptoms progressively worsen to severe coughing fits, which can cause vomiting, rib fractures, and serious respiratory distress in some cases. The disease spreads through droplets from an infected person's cough or sneeze and is particularly dangerous for infants under the age of one. It is preventable with vaccination, though protection from vaccination wanes over time.

There is currently a global increase in pertussis transmission, possibly due to reduced vaccination as a result of health system disruptions during COVID-19. Locally there have been 40 cases of pertussis in the LGL region so far this year; a typical range is from 0-10 cases a year. Our cases have primarily been among ages 10-19, with ages 0-9 also frequently seen. More cases of pertussis are expected in our region, especially once school begins in September.

Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) Suspensions

The Health Unit is in the midst of assessing the vaccination status of schoolchildren, and suspension orders have been issued for a subset of children for whom the health unit has no vaccine records. This is being done in accordance with the [Immunization of School Pupils Act](#) ("ISPA"), which is provincial legislation that requires all

schoolchildren to be compliant with specified vaccination requirements. The ISPA lays out the expectations for parents, schools, and all health units across the province. To be compliant with ISPA, kids need to have been vaccinated or they can have a medical exemption or exemption due to conscience or religious belief. The health unit does not generally get information about people's vaccination status automatically; this means that parents must send vaccine records to the health unit directly in order for us to know that a child has received a vaccine. As well, if a child has an exemption the paperwork also needs to be submitted to the health unit.

The health unit is keen to work with parents to receive the information required. If there is an exposure to a vaccine-preventable disease in a school setting, vaccination records for children need to be evaluated quickly to respond to the risk presented.

Eastern Equine Encephalitis

Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE; "Triple E") is a rare but potentially serious mosquito-borne virus. Symptoms include fever, headache, diarrhea, seizures, long-term neurological problems, and infection is fatal for 30% of cases. There are no vaccines for humans, and the best way to prevent EEE is to prevent mosquito bites.

The Ottawa and LGL region is known to be a risk region for EEE. EEE is most often seen in horses and so far this year there have been 10 cases of EEE among horses in Ontario; two have been in the Ottawa region, and eight have been in the LGL region. There have been no human cases at this time. The health unit has put out a media release about EEE being found in our region, and is doing public communication about preventing mosquito bites.