

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Merger of HKPR District Health Unit and Peterborough Public Health Moves Forward

The legal merger of both health units into a single entity will take effect January 1, 2025.

PETERBOROUGH AND PORT HOPE, ON (December 4, 2024) – The Boards of Health for [Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit](#) (HKPR District Health Unit) and [Peterborough Public Health](#) (PPH) are pleased to announce that they will be moving forward with a voluntary merger, effective January 1, 2025. The goal of the merger is to sustain and improve the delivery of public health programs and services across the City of Kawartha Lakes, the County of Haliburton, Northumberland County, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Peterborough County and the City of Peterborough.

The merger will be supported through an investment of \$10.1 million from the Province of Ontario ([announced](#) on Monday, December 2) to support both the merger directly, catch-up activities, and service improvements to strengthen public health for this region.

“This is an important milestone bringing both public health units together to form one new organization,” said David Marshall, Board Chair for the HKPR District Health Unit. “Our dedicated and now combined employees of more than 300 public health professionals will continue to work with our communities, partners and stakeholders to protect and promote health and prevent disease within our combined areas to keep our residents healthy.”

In August 2023, the Ministry of Health announced plans to strengthen the public health sector by offering one-time funding, resources and supports to local public health agencies that voluntarily merged by January 1, 2025. In response to the announcement, the HKPR District Health Unit and PPH Boards of Health engaged the consulting firm Sense and Nous to conduct a feasibility study on a potential merger. Both Boards then voted to move forward with the merger process in February 2024 and a voluntary merger proposal and budget was submitted to the Ministry of Health on April 2, 2024. The new Board of Health will meet for the first time in the new year. The Ministry of Health has assured the public health unit that the government commits to 100 per cent provincial funding support for this merger with no fiscal impacts to municipalities and First Nations as a result of this merger, and in principle also commit to funding eligible merger expenses in subsequent years.

Membership of the new Board of Health will include 9 municipal representatives (two from the County of Northumberland, two from the City of Kawartha Lakes, one from the County of Haliburton, two from the County of Peterborough, and two from the City of Peterborough). In addition, the new Board of Health intends to have section 50 representation as currently exists (one member from Curve Lake First Nation and one from Hiawatha First Nation). The new Board of Health will also include provincial appointees, as outlined in the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, and these members are yet to be confirmed.

“Peterborough residents became more familiar with public health's role and leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, the health unit in our community has served us for over 135 years with a wide-reaching scope beyond infectious diseases,” said Councillor Joy Lachica, Board Chair for Peterborough Public Health. “With our friends at HKPR and the generous funding investment by the province, we will sustain and grow public health services for our residents.”

A new organizational structure and leadership team for the merged public health unit will be announced at a later time. Both current public health units will remain operational, with no immediate impact on programs and services provided to the public. A new identity and brand will be launched in early 2025.

During this time, both the HKPR District Health Unit and Peterborough Public Health remain committed to engaging with the communities they serve, partners and teams to determine future opportunities to continue the important work of public health across the City of Kawartha Lakes, Haliburton County, Northumberland County, Hiawatha First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Alderville First Nation, Peterborough County and the City of Peterborough.

Further communication will be released once the new health unit launches its official business name and new logo.

Additional Quotes

- “The province has made a commitment to the people of Ontario to strengthen the public health sector. The merger of Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit and Peterborough Public Health will combine over 300 dedicated staff to increase public health capacity and improve program delivery to our communities. The significant investment from the province will provide assistance for our local health units to merge smoothly and continue their quality service for all residents in Haliburton, Kawartha, Northumberland and Peterborough.” **David Piccini, Member of Provincial Parliament, Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development**
- “The merging of HKPR District Health Unit and Peterborough Public Health will streamline operations and enhance their ability to deliver comprehensive and efficient services. This integration will allow for the expansion of programs and ensure health initiatives will reach more people, fostering healthier communities across our region.” **Laurie Scott, Member of Provincial Parliament, Haliburton – Kawartha Lakes – Brock**
- “This merger is fantastic news for the entire region. It will create a health unit that is large enough to allow for succession planning for every staff position, create opportunities for mentorship, professional growth and provide exceptional healthcare results for the area. I want to thank everyone involved in this voluntary merger and look forward to working closely with both Dr. Piggott and Dr. Bocking.” **Dave Smith, Member of Provincial Parliament, Peterborough – Kawartha**
- “This is excellent news that the provincial government has approved the investment and the PPH Board of Health has resolved to merge. The efficiencies and improvements to public health delivery will be important for residents of the County of Peterborough and full Geography.” **PPH Board of Health Vice Chair and Deputy Mayor Ron Black (County of Peterborough, Selwyn Township)**
- “Public health affects us all and is important to the health of our communities. I am looking forward to seeing the new organization grow to more capably and equitably serve Indigenous peoples and all residents in the new region.” **Councilor Kathryn Wilson (Hiawatha First Nation)**
- “The merger of these two health units makes sense. Because of their proximity and the similar rural environment, they face common issues and experiences. No doubt, these experiences are resolved differently than how they might be in larger urban health units with the high population density yet relatively small geographical size. The merger will allow currently suggested but not mandated services to remain active and regular services to remain less interrupted, even when an emergency such as COVID hits unexpectedly.” **Mayor John Logel (Alnwick Haldimand Township)**

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About the Haliburton, Kawartha Pine Ridge District Health Unit

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit provides important public health programs and services to residents in Northumberland County, Haliburton County, and the City of Kawartha Lakes. Our dedicated team of public health professionals, led by our Medical Officer of Health, promote healthy living, protect against disease, and prevent illness and injury. We work with health care providers and community partners to address emerging health issues, service gaps and social inequities to support residents in being well and reaching their full potential. Our values of trust, engagement, accountability, and leadership guide what we do every day. Learn more at www.hkpr.on.ca.

About Peterborough Public Health

Peterborough Public Health serves residents throughout the City and County of Peterborough, as well as Curve Lake and Hiawatha First Nations, and offer a wide range of programs and services ranging from healthy eating workshops, poverty reduction initiatives to controlling infectious disease outbreaks, water safety and oral health and sexual health clinic services. Public Health is shaped by our social, economic and physical environments, as well as by our personal choices. Through community programs and by developing better health policies, Peterborough Public Health works to improve the living conditions of those in need for the benefit of all. Learn more at www.peterboroughpublichealth.ca