

# Overview Briefing to the Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission

September 28, 2020

Colleen Geiger, President and CEO (A)

Alwin Kong, Chief Legal Officer and Corporate Secretary

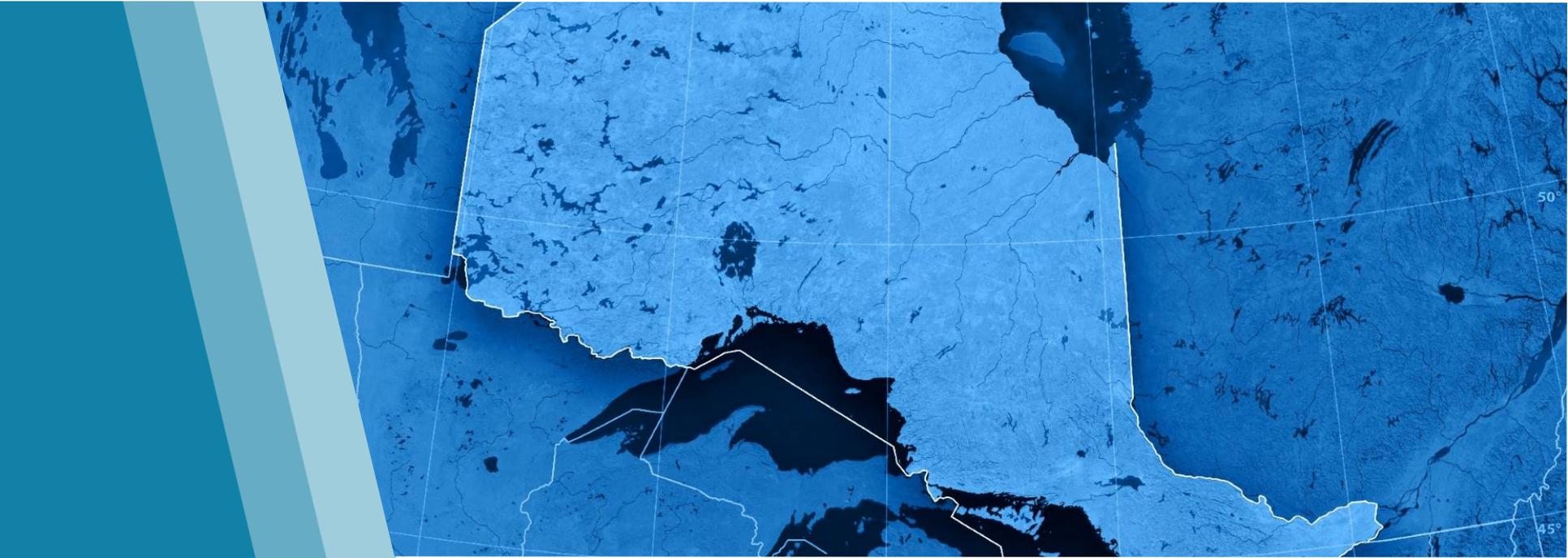
Dr. Shelley Deeks, Chief Health Protection Officer

Dr. Jessica Hopkins, Deputy Chief, Health Protection

# Overview

- Ontario's Public Health landscape
- About Public Health Ontario
- PHO's role in Ontario's response to COVID-19
- PHO's role in Ontario's response to COVID-19 specific to long-term care

# Ontario's Public Health Landscape



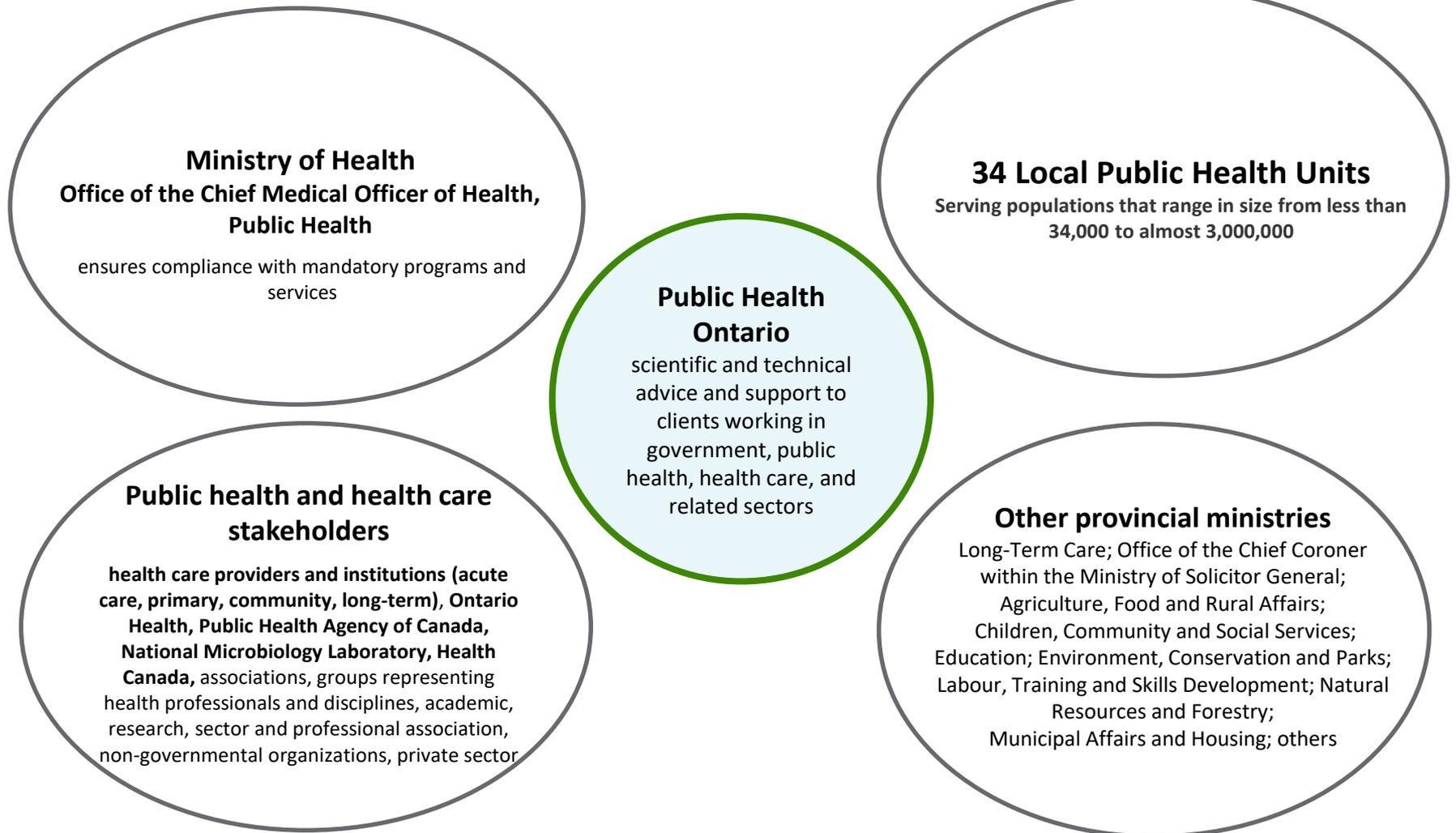
This section provides information about public health in Ontario, Public Health Ontario and our clients and stakeholders

# What is Public Health?

- The science of protecting and improving the health of people and their communities. This work is achieved by detecting, preventing and responding to infectious diseases, promoting healthy lifestyles, and researching disease and injury prevention.
- While clinicians treat diseases and injuries one patient at a time, public health *prevents* disease and injury for populations. Public health professionals work with *communities* and *populations*. These populations can be as small as a local neighborhood, or as big as an entire country or region of the world.
- Public health professionals identify the *causes* or *determinants* of disease and disability, and implement *solutions*. Public health recognizes the importance of health equity and social determinants of health.

# Ontario's Public Health Landscape

*Public health is everyone's business*



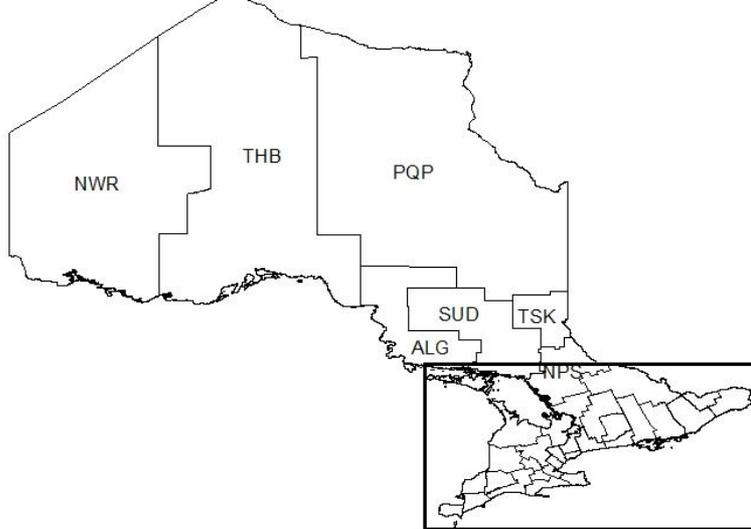
*Not illustrated: Various funding, reporting, service delivery, accountability, patient/public interfaces and other direct or indirect relationship lines.*

# Local Public Health Organization

34 Local Public Health  
Units

- Legislative authority for the organization of the public health system and for the duties and powers of its public health officials are established by the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA)
- **34 boards of health**, each responsible for a public health unit (PHU), each with an appointed local medical officer of health
  - 70% provincial funding for public health programs
  - 30% municipal funding for public health programs
- Vary in populations served, governance, structure and capacity

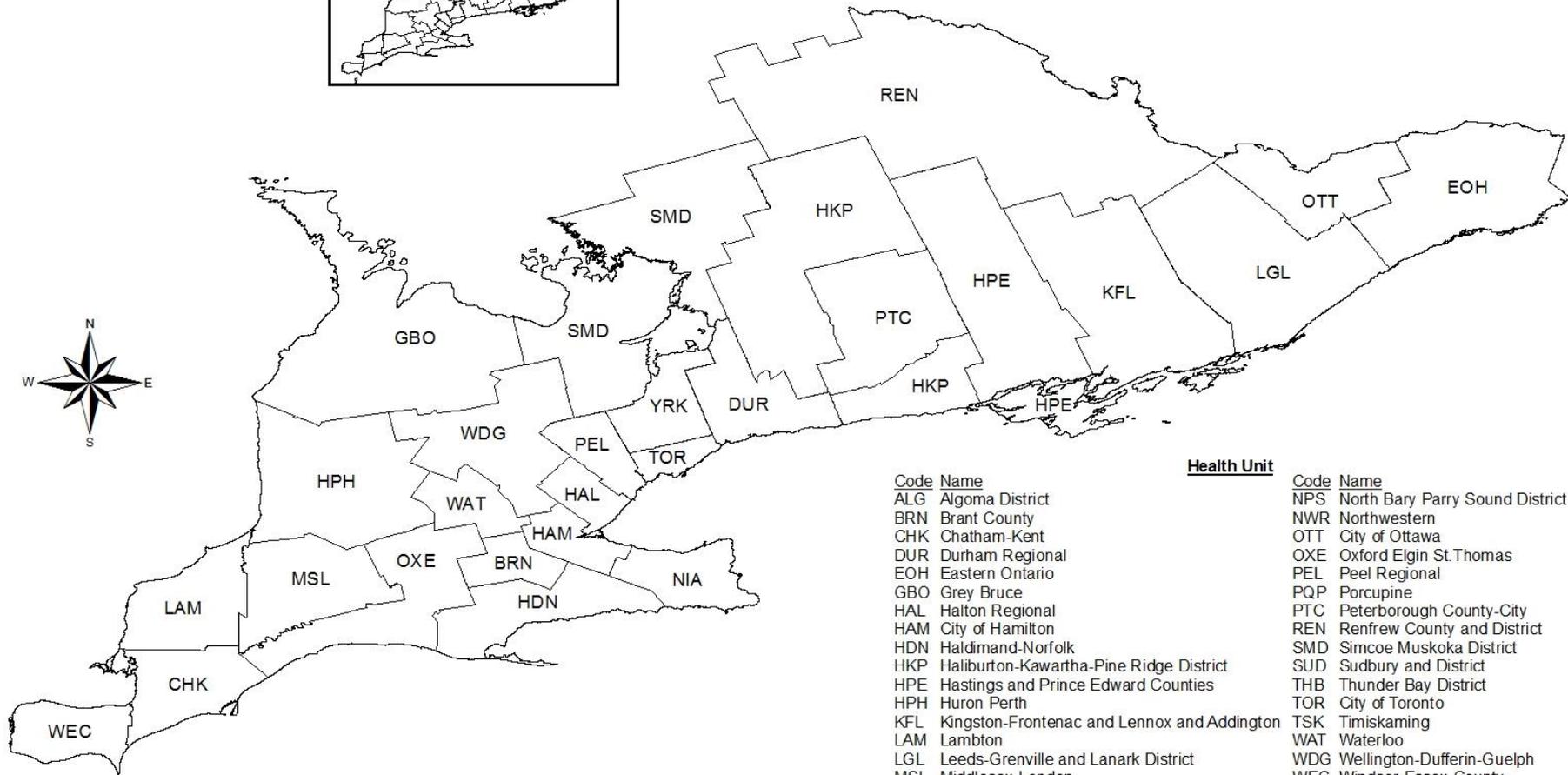
Public Health Ontario does not oversee local public health units



**Legend**

Health Unit Boundary \*

\* As of January 1, 2020



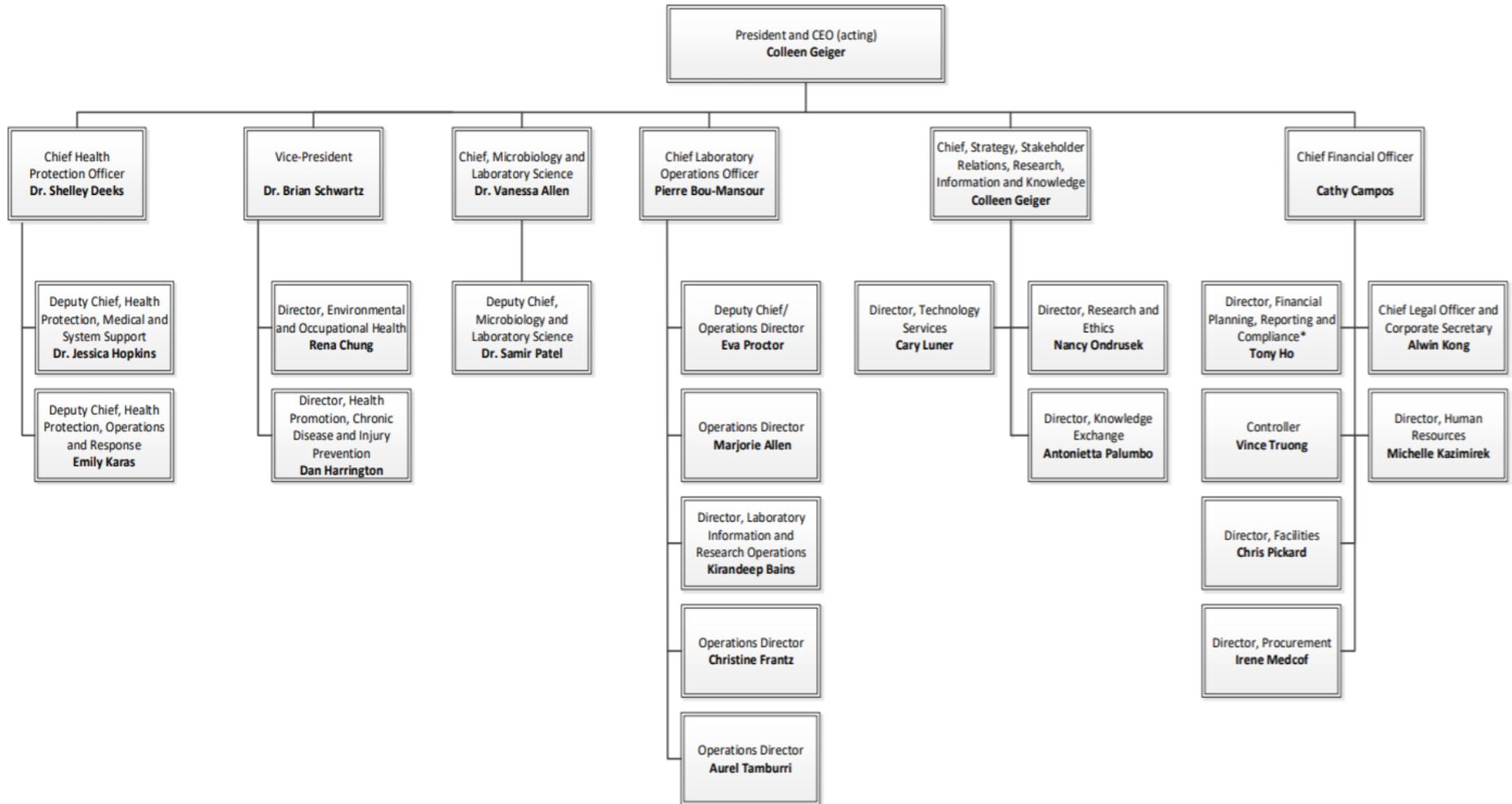
<u>Code</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Health Unit</u>	<u>Code</u>	<u>Name</u>
ALG	Algoma District		NPS	North Bary Parry Sound District
BRN	Brant County		NWR	Northwestern
CHK	Chatham-Kent		OTT	City of Ottawa
DUR	Durham Regional		OXE	Oxford Elgin St.Thomas
EOH	Eastern Ontario		PEL	Peel Regional
GBO	Grey Bruce		PQP	Porcupine
HAL	Halton Regional		PTC	Peterborough County-City
HAM	City of Hamilton		REN	Renfrew County and District
HDN	Haldimand-Norfolk		SMD	Simcoe Muskoka District
HKP	Haliburton-Kawartha-Pine Ridge District		SUD	Sudbury and District
HPE	Hastings and Prince Edward Counties		THB	Thunder Bay District
HPH	Huron Perth		TOR	City of Toronto
KFL	Kingston-Frontenac and Lennox and Addington		TSK	Timiskaming
LAM	Lambton		WAT	Waterloo
LGL	Leeds-Grenville and Lanark District		WDG	Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph
MSL	Middlesex-London		WEC	Windsor-Essex County

# About Public Health Ontario (PHO)



This section provides information about PHO: how and why it was created, and its governance model, mandate and roles and responsibilities

# Public Health Ontario's Leadership Team



# OAHPPA - Statutory Jurisdiction

- The *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007* (“**OAHPPA**”), established the corporation known as the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion
- Business name: Public Health Ontario
- PHO is an agent of the Crown
- Governed by an independent Board of Directors who are appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council
- Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board is designated by the Board

# OAHPPA - Governance

- Three Standing Committees
  - Governance
  - Strategic Planning
  - Audit and Finance
- The Chief Medical Officer of Health for Ontario (CMOH) is entitled to attend and participate in any meeting of the Board
- CMOH is a member of the Strategic Planning Standing Committee

# OAHPA - Corporate Objects

- Section 6 sets out PHO's mandate:
  - Scientific and technical advice and support
  - Knowledge, best practices, and research
  - Public health laboratory
  - Bridge infection control and occupational health and safety
  - Emergency response
  - Contribute to policy development processes
  - Population health, surveillance and epidemiological data
  - Education and professional development
  - At the direction of CMOH, provide scientific and technical advice and operational support to any person or entity in an emergency or outbreak situation

# Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

- Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health (formerly Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care)
- MOU sets out the accountability relationship between Ministry of Health (MOH) and PHO
- PHO's Board Chair is accountable to the Minister of Health for the performance of the agency
- PHO's CEO is appointed by and reports to the Board of Directors

# MOU – Emergency and Outbreak Situations

- In an outbreak situation, MOH establishes a chain of command and PHO operates within the structure
- PHO's role in emergency and outbreak support:
  - Provide scientific and technical advice
  - Provide surveillance and epidemiological data and analysis
  - Conduct relevant research
  - Provide field support
- MOH and PHO to work together to meet financial costs that cannot be offset by PHO
- MOH leads communications to the public
- The CMOH also has powers to issue directives to PHO

# PHO's Clients and Partners

- **Primary clients**
  - MOH
  - CMOH
  - Local public health units
  - Health system providers
- **System partners**
  - Other government ministries
  - Ontario Health
  - Public Health Agency of Canada (including the National Microbiology Laboratory)

# PHO's Areas of Expertise

- Infection prevention and control\*
- Communicable disease and outbreak control
- Microbiology and laboratory operations
- Environmental and occupational health
- Health equity
- Health promotion
- Chronic disease prevention
- Emergency preparedness
- Surveillance and epidemiology
- Data analysis and visualization
- Knowledge synthesis and exchange
- Training, education and professional development
- Information management
- Research, ethics and evaluation

\*Including the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee

# Public Health Laboratory

- Core functions of public health laboratories, include:
  - Disease prevention, control and surveillance
  - Integrated data management
  - Reference and specialized testing
  - Public health preparedness and response
  - Public health-related research

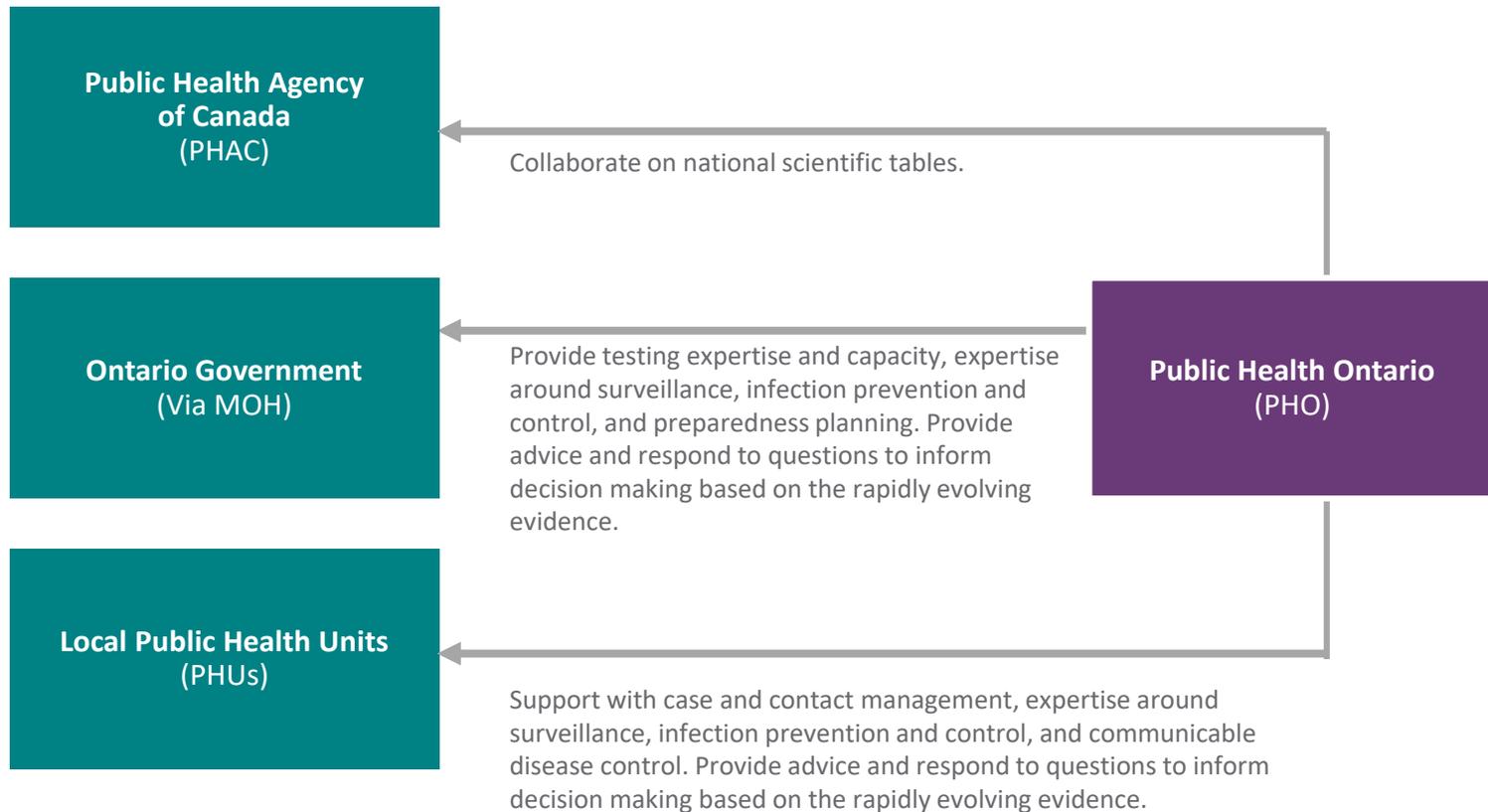
Core Functions of Public Health Laboratories, Association of Public Health Laboratories, 2014

# PHO's Role in Ontario's Response to COVID-19



This section provides an overview of PHO's role in supporting Ontario's response to COVID-19 and the two main streams of activity

# Canada's Public Health COVID-19 Response



# PHO's Role in Ontario's Response to COVID-19

- PHO's work in supporting Ontario's response to COVID-19 can be divided into two primary streams of activity.
  1. Laboratory testing
  2. Scientific and technical advice and support
- At the start of the pandemic, PHO established an incident management structure to coordinate our response activities.

# Laboratory Testing

PHO laboratories test more than 1/3 of all COVID-19 molecular tests\* in the province

As of September 15, 2020, the network had conducted more than 3.4 million COVID-19 tests, of which PHO's laboratory conducted more than 1.04 million

- Since early January, PHO has been conducting testing for COVID-19
- Testing criteria, established by the Ministry of Health, has evolved over the course of the outbreak
- As test volumes increased, PHO worked with Ontario Health to increase capacity through the development of the COVID-19 Diagnostic Testing Network - a coordinated system of hospital, private and public laboratories overseen by Ontario Health
- PHO is also leading Ontario's COVID-19 serosurveillance program to better understand what proportion of the Ontario population has COVID-19 antibodies and to identify hotspots and high risk groups

\*real time reverse-transcriptase polymerase chain reaction (rRT-PCR)

# Scientific and Technical Advice and Support

- **Laboratory Science**

- In Ontario's COVID-19 Provincial Diagnostic Network, PHO acts as the reference laboratory – validating new laboratory technologies and approaches to ensure they are effective
- PHO is also home to Ontario's COVID-19 Testing Strategy Expert Panel, which recommends changes to the testing strategy to the CMOH

- **Data and Surveillance**

- Support the development and implementation of a pandemic surveillance strategy
- Support data collection activities of partners
- Conduct provincial data analyses and report on those findings

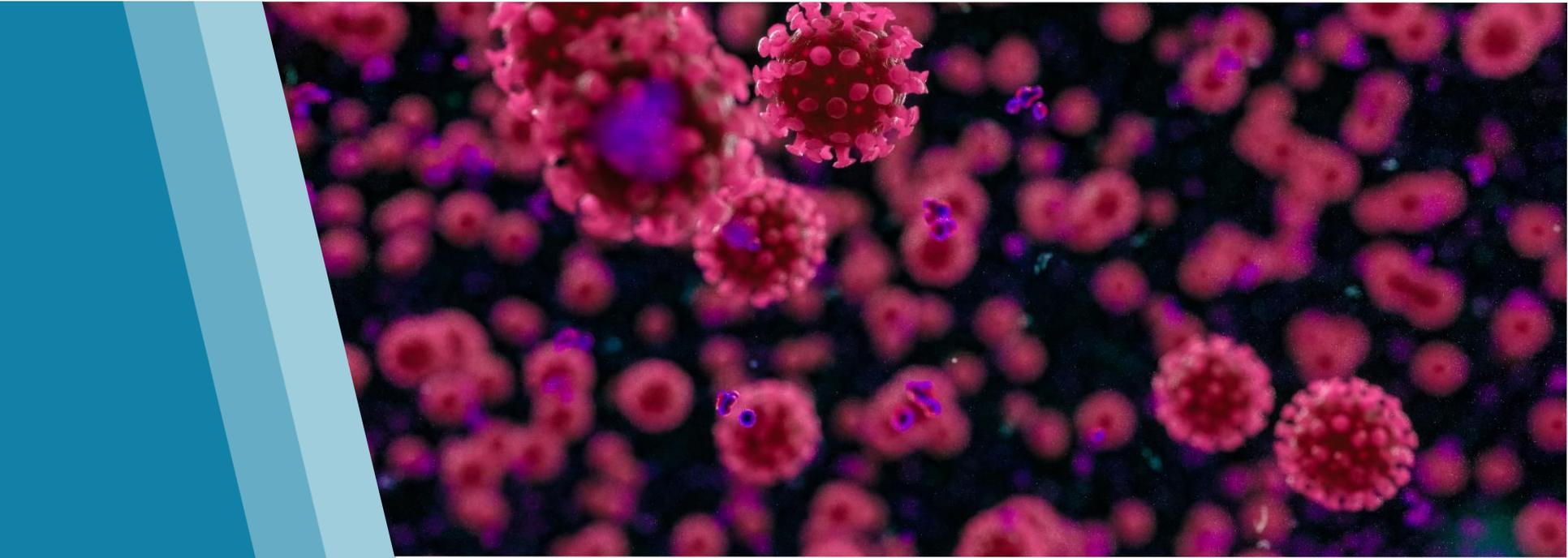
# Scientific and Technical Advice and Support

- **Advice and consultation**
  - Provide expertise to MOH and other government ministries to support provincial decision making and policy development
  - Provide support to PHUs to assist with local decision making, policy development, program and service delivery, and support of organizations and sectors in their community (e.g., long-term care homes, schools)
- **Knowledge synthesis**
  - Synopses of peer-reviewed literature
  - Summaries of the current state of knowledge related to specific COVID-19 topics
  - Quick turnaround of evidence summaries in response to requests from:
    - MOH (and other provincial ministries via requests from MOH)
    - Public Health Units

# Scientific and Technical Advice and Support

- **Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Best Practices**
  - Providing resources, training materials, and support to public health, health care organizations, and health practitioners for the implementation of best practices in infection prevention and control for the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC)
- **Public Health Guidance**
  - Providing input to MOH on the development of public health guidance based on the best available scientific evidence

# PHO's Role in Ontario's Response to COVID-19 in Long-Term Care



This section focuses on PHO's activities to support Ontario's response to COVID-19 in long-term care

# PHO's Pre-COVID-19 Support to Long-Term Care

As part of PHO's regular activities prior to COVID-19

- Providing **scientific and technical advice** to the CMOH and PHUs on long-term care relevant issues under the Ontario Public Health Standards (e.g., outbreak management and testing)
- Supporting PIDAC in the **development of infection prevention and control best practices** (e.g., Best Practices for IPAC Programs in Ontario)
- Developing **resources to support LTC homes' implementation of IPAC best practices** (e.g., videos on hand washing and putting on and taking off PPE)
- **Building capacity** for IPAC best practices through communities of practice and IPAC core competencies training
- **Laboratory testing** of communicable disease outbreak-associated samples from LTC homes

# PHO's Role in COVID-19 Response in Long-Term Care

- Initially, COVID-19-specific support based on pre-COVID-19 PHO roles:
  - Responded to requests from stakeholders (primarily MOH and PHUs)
- Built relationship with new stakeholders (e.g., the Ministry of Long-Term Care and Ontario Health)
- Participated in numerous LTC-specific tables (e.g., LTC Planning and Response, LTC-retirement home COVID-19 Action Table)
- Established long-term care setting work within PHO's incident management structure
  - Provincial-level supports
  - Local-level and community setting supports

# Provincial-level System Supports

- **Scientific and technical advice** to ministries to inform decision making and policy development (e.g., recommended prevention and control measures, such as restricting LTC staff from working in multiple homes)
- **Data collection, analysis and reporting** (e.g., long-term care cases and outbreaks; comparison of case fatality of seniors in long-term care vs. community-dwelling)
- **Knowledge synthesis** (e.g., evidence summary on universal masking in health care settings and retirement homes)
- **Capacity building:** training, professional development and education (e.g., Sep 2-23 more than 48,000 registrations for LTC IPAC training modules; network of laboratories)

# Local-level and Community Setting Supports

- **Scientific and technical consultation** to PHUs and long-term care homes on testing and outbreak prevention and management (e.g., IPAC assessments)
- **Data collection, analysis and reporting** (e.g., lab and analytical support to PHUs for testing pilot)
- **Knowledge synthesis** (e.g., IPAC best practices for LTC formatted as a publicly available checklist)
- **Capacity building** (e.g., increased community of practice meetings and provided updates to LTC participants on COVID-19 guidelines and best practices; IPAC-Extenders training developed)
- **Laboratory testing** for long-term care settings (e.g., PHO performs testing for the majority of outbreak-associated samples in LTC homes)



# COVID-19 Long-Term Care Resources

COVID-19 has had a large impact on the residents and staff in Ontario's long-term care and retirement homes. PHO has developed the following resources to help staff and administrators in these settings manage and prevent COVID-19 outbreaks.

These resources are complementary to the current public, public health, and health care guidance available on the **Ministry of Health's website**.

As of September 15, 2020, PHO's COVID-19 long-term care resources have been accessed more than 100,000 times

## Select a Type of Resource

Most Accessed	Checklist	Course
Fact Sheet or Infographic	Guidance and Best Practice	Presentation
Report	Sign or Pocket Card	Surveillance Report
Videos		

# Reference

- *Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007*
- *Health Protection and Promotion Act*
- Ontario Public Health Standards
- PHO's COVID-19 Resources
- PHO's COVID-19 Long-Term Care Resources

## For More Information About This Presentation, Contact:

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Public Health Ontario keeps Ontarians safe and healthy.  
Find out more at [PublicHealthOntario.ca](https://www.publichealthontario.ca)