

# Strengthening Public Health



**AMO Conference Concurrent Session**

Trudy Sachowski

alPHa Chair

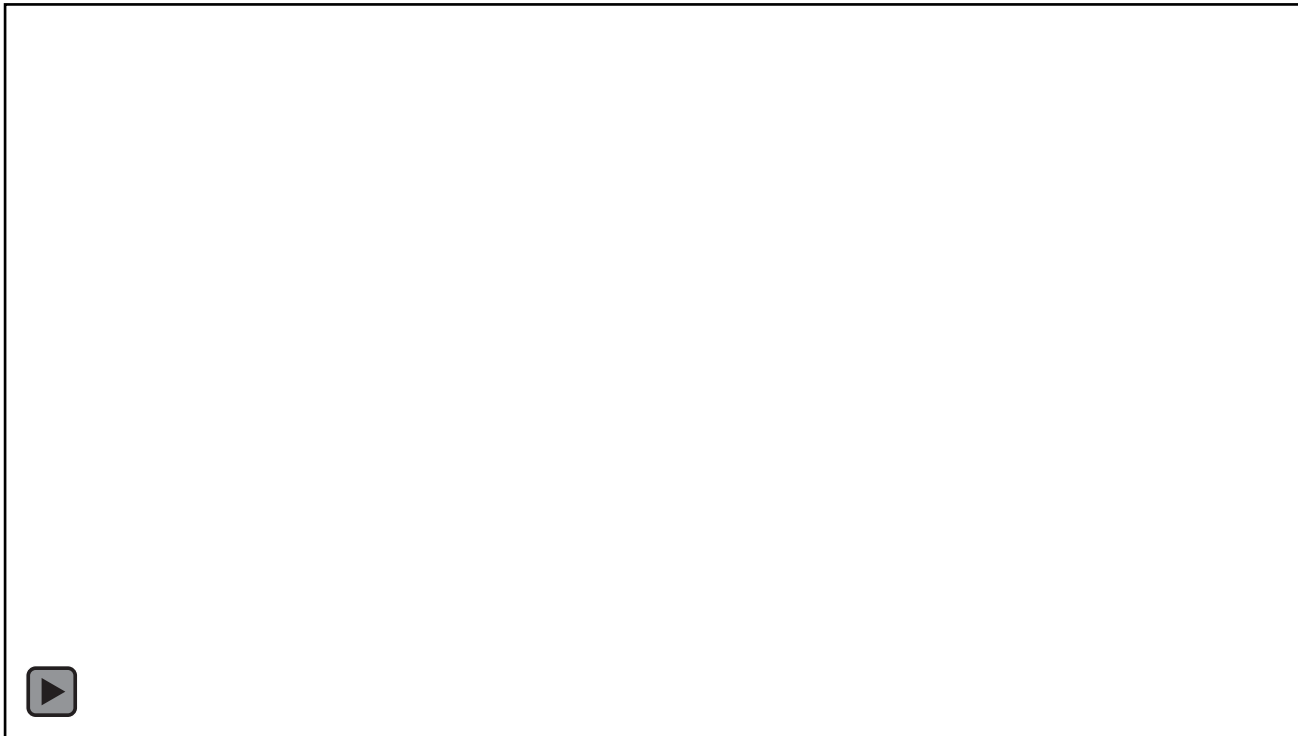
August 20, 2024



**alPHa**

Association of Local  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
Agencies

# Public Health Matters



[Public Health Matters - A Business Case for Public Health](#)

# alPHA Membership

alPHA represents Ontario's 34 public health units and its public health leadership including:

- Members of Boards of Health
- Medical and Associate Medical Officers of Health
- Members of Ontario's Public Health Affiliate disciplines including:
  - Association of Public Health Business Administrators
  - Association of Public Health Epidemiology in Ontario
  - Association for Public Health Dentistry
  - Health Promotion Ontario
  - Ontario Public Health Nursing Leaders
  - Ontario Dietitians in Public Health, and
  - Association of Supervisors of Public Health Inspectors of Ontario

Convening the leadership of local public health agencies to:



Be the unified voice  
and a trusted  
advisor on public  
health



Advance the work of  
local public health  
through strategic  
partnerships and  
collaborations



Support the  
sustainability of  
Ontario's local public  
health system



Deliver member  
services to local  
public health  
leaders



# alPHa

Association of Local  
**PUBLIC HEALTH**  
Agencies

## Key Stakeholders



# Key Partnerships

alPHa's success is based on our strong reciprocal relationships that we have built and nurtured over the years.

Key partners include:

- Ontario's Ministry of Health, including the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Public Health Division
- Public Health Ontario
- Ontario Health
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario
- Ontario Medical Association

# Strengthening Public Health

alPHa's statement of principles: (excerpt)

*That regardless of the sources of funding for public health and Ontario, mechanisms must be included to ensure that the total funding envelope is stable, predictable, protected and sufficient for the full delivery of all public health programs and services whether they are mandated by the province or adopted to serve unique local needs as authorized by the Health Protection and Promotion Act, 1990.*

# Draft 2024 OPHS Highlights

- Still in consultation phase - needs to fit with funding model review and any accountability framework revisions.
- Reflects needed level of local public health practice:
  - Increased emphasis on collaboration, engagement and partnerships including specific draft Relationship with Indigenous Communities protocol.
  - Stronger upstream focus of “primordial prevention”.
- Ongoing concern about current capacity and resources.
- Need stable, predictable and sufficient funding to meet requirements.

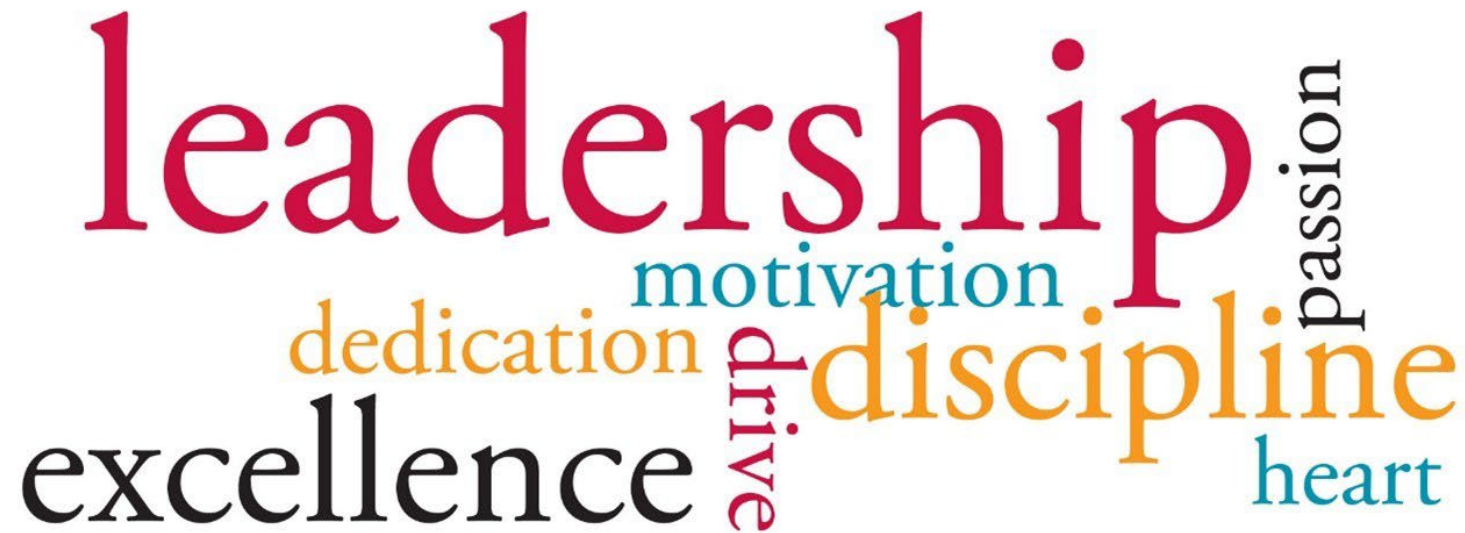




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# Local Public Health Leadership



A word cloud featuring the following terms: leadership (large, red), discipline (large, orange), excellence (large, black), dedication (medium, orange), motivation (medium, blue), drive (vertical, red), passion (vertical, black), and heart (medium, blue).

# Resources and Contact Information

- alPHa’s [submissions](#), including the [2024 OPHS Review](#) (includes the Statement of Principles) and [OPHS Review Follow-Up](#).
- [alPHa Resolutions](#), including the most recent Resolutions from the June 2024 AGM.
- [Public Health Matters Infographic – Business Case for Public Health](#)
- [2023 CMOH Annual Report](#) and [alPHa response](#)
- [alPHa’s submission on the 2024 Ontario budget](#)
- [“What is Public Health?”](#)

Loretta Ryan, CEO, alPHa: [loretta@alphaweb.org](mailto:loretta@alphaweb.org)  
[www.alphaweb.org](http://www.alphaweb.org)



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Agencies

*Thank  
you!*



# Whither Public Health?

## The Past, Present & Future

Dr. Robert Kyle  
Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health  
Regional Municipality of Durham

AMO Conference  
August 20, 2024



# Outline

- The Past (Pre-2020) & Present (2020-23)
  - Key Events
  - Key Plans/Reports/Reviews
  - Key Reforms
- The Future (2024+)
  - Key Public Health Challenges
  - Key Public Health Sector Issues
  - Key Social Trends
  - Key Enablers
  - Key Partners



## The Past (Pre-2020)

- Key Events
  - Provincial-Municipal Disentanglement (1997)
  - Walkerton Water Tragedy (2000)
  - SARS (2003)
  - Legionellosis Outbreak (2005)
  - Influenza pandemic (2009)



## The Past (Pre-2020)

- Key Plans/Reports/Reviews
  - [Bill 152, Services Improvement Act \(1997\)](#)
  - [Walkerton Inquiry \(2001\)](#)
  - [Naylor & Walker Reviews \(2004\)](#)
  - [Campbell Commission \(2005\)](#)
  - [Small Drinking Water Systems \(2005\)](#)



## The Past (Pre-2020)

- Key Plans/Reports/Reviews
  - [Legionellosis Outbreak Review \(2005\)](#)
  - [Capacity Review Committee \(2006\)](#)
  - [Make No Little Plans \(2013\)](#)
  - Funding Review Working Group (2013)
  - [Expert Panel on Public Health \(2017\)](#)





## The Past (Pre-2020)

- Key Reforms
  - [Public Health Agency of Canada Act \(2006\)](#)
  - [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#)
    - Part VI.1 – Provincial Public Health Powers (2008)
    - [Ontario Public Health Standards \(2008\)](#)
  - [Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion \(2007\)](#)
    - [PIDAC-IPC \(2012\)](#)



## The Present (2020-23)

- Key Event
  - COVID-19 Pandemic
    - [7 Waves \(June 2023\)](#)



## The Present (2020-23)

- Key Plans/Reports/Reviews
  - [Auditor General of Canada Reports \(2020-24\)](#)
  - [Auditor General of Ontario Reports \(2020-22\)](#)
  - [CPHO Reports \(2020-21\)](#)
  - [LTC COVID-19 Commission \(2021\)](#)
  - [Public Health Resilience in Ontario \(2022\)](#)



## The Present (2020-23)

- Key Reforms
  - [Roadmap to Wellness \(2020\)](#)
  - [Fixing Long-Term Care Act \(2021\)](#)
  - [Your Health \(2023\)](#)
  - [Strengthening Public Health \(2023\)](#)
    - Roles & Responsibilities
    - Voluntary Mergers
    - Funding



## The Future (2024+)

- Key Public Health Challenges
  - Changing Demographics
  - Chronic Diseases
  - Climate Change (e.g., [CPHO Report 2022](#))
  - Emerging/Re-emerging Infectious Diseases
  - Epidemics & Pandemics (e.g., [Being Ready](#) & [CPHO Report 2023](#))



## The Future (2024+)

- Key Public Health Challenges (Cont'd)
  - Healthy Public Policy
  - Housing & Homelessness
  - Mental Health & Addictions (e.g., [Balancing Act](#))
  - Social & Structural Determinants of Health



## The Future (2024+)

- Key Public Health System Issues
  - Health Equity & Community Engagement
  - Health Promotion Framework
  - Health Protection & Promotion Balance
  - Health Sector & Public Health Cooperation
  - Municipal & Public Health Collaboration



## The Future (2024+)

- Key Public Health System Issues (Cont'd)
  - Primary Care & Public Health Coordination
  - Primary Care Reform (OHTs, Pharmacies, etc.)
  - Provincial vs Local Public Health Responses
  - Provincial & Municipal Cost-sharing
  - Public Health System Resilience





## The Future (2024+)

- Key Social Trends
  - Affordability
  - Digital Toxicity
  - “Freedom” vs Public Good
  - Government Mistrust



## The Future (2024+)

- Key Social Trends (Cont'd)
  - Indigenous Reconciliation
  - Mis-/Disinformation & Scientific Denialism
  - Partisanship & Polarization



## The Future (2024+)

- Key Enablers
  - Digital Public Health (Including AI, Informatics, Public Health Digital Platform, etc.)
  - Local Public Health Capacity
  - Public Health Funding & Resources
  - Public Health Laws



## The Future (2024+)

- Key Enablers (Cont'd)
  - Public Health Workforce
  - Supportive Institutions
    - [Ontario Health](#)
    - [Ontario Hospitals](#)
    - [Primary Care](#)
    - Other



## The Future (2024+)

- Key Partners
  - [Association of Local Public Health Agencies](#)
  - [Association of Municipalities of Ontario](#)
  - [Office of the CMOH, Public Health](#)
  - [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
  - [Public Health Ontario](#)
  - Others



Comments/Discussion?



# The Importance of Local Public Health

Bonnie Clark

Board Member, Peterborough Public Health

Warden, Peterborough County

AMO Conference – August 20, 2024

# Major Issues in Public Health

- Funding
- Readiness for Public Health Crises
- Opioids
- Voluntary Mergers
- Long-Term Strategy

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Peterborough  
Public Health





- Pandemic preparedness
- Sustainable funding
- Boom & bust cycle

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2022 ANNUAL REPORT

Of the Chief Medical Officer of Health of Ontario to the Legislative Assembly of Ontario

# Being Ready





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The  
Opioid Crisis:

A Municipal Perspective



# Opioids

## Opioid Harms Data Portal

### We monitor data in four key areas:

- Naloxone distribution in our communities,
- Emergency medical service 911 calls for opioid poisonings,
- Emergency department visits for drug poisonings, and
- Deaths caused by opioid or other drug poisonings.

Last month (June 2024)



35

June  
2024

**5** people died from drug poisonings

Last 12 months (July 2023 to June 2024)



on average a person died from a drug poisoning

every **5** days

**74** people  
died from drug poisonings

### Monthly drug poisoning deaths

Month	Number of drug deaths
June 2024	5
May 2024	4
April 2024	8
March 2024	6
February 2024	6
January 2024	7
December 2023	8

# Opioids



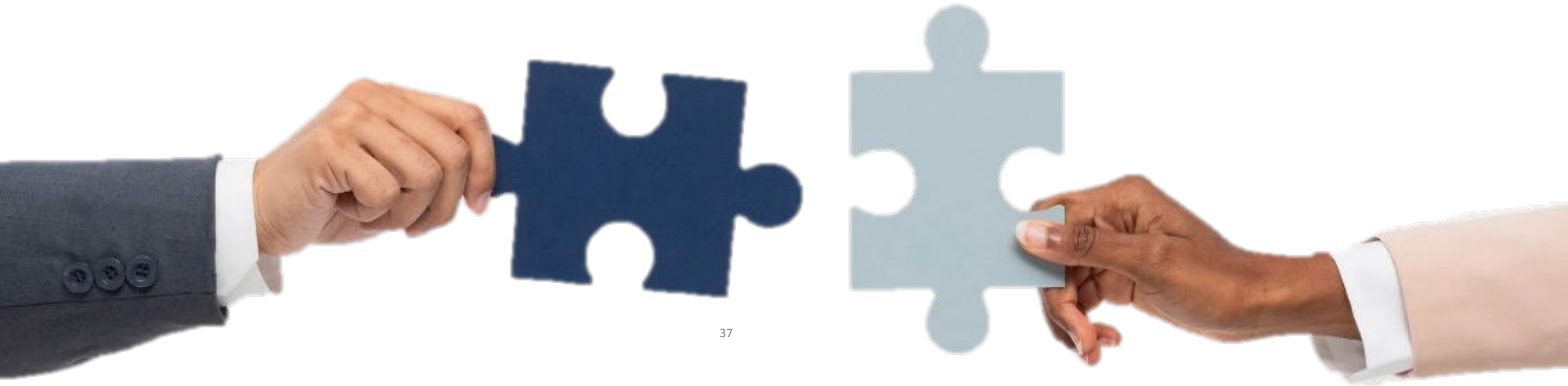
— **OBCM** —  
Ontario's Big City Mayors

We want to 'Solve the Crisis' together, today we are requesting that the provincial government:

- Appoint a responsible ministry and Minister with the appropriate funding and powers as a single point of contact to address the full spectrum of housing needs as well as mental health, addictions and wrap around supports.
- Have this Minister strike a task force with broad sector representatives including municipalities, healthcare, first responders, community services, the business community and the tourism industry to develop a Made in Ontario Action Plan.
- Provide municipalities with the tools and resources to transition those in encampments to more appropriate supports, when deemed necessary
- Commit to funding the appropriate services these individuals need, community by community where there are gaps in the system.
- Invest in 24/7 Community Hubs / Crisis Centres to relieve pressure on emergency centres and first responders

# Opioids





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# Voluntary Mergers

The Boards of Health for the [Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge \(HKPR\) District Health Unit](#) and [Peterborough Public Health \(PPH\)](#) announced that they will seek provincial approval and funding to voluntary merge.

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 decide to voluntarily merge by January 1, 2025.

#### Public Health Needs:

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- 1. Province to approve these mergers to allow for mergers by January 1, 2025.**
- 2. Need the full 3 year commitments as promised by the Ministry to support the mergers.**

# Voluntary Mergers

LONG-TERM

SHORT-TERM



Health Care is in **Crisis**

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LONG-TERM INVESTMENTS IN PUBLIC  
HEALTH *CAN* PREVENT THIS



Thank You!

Bonnie Clark  
warden@ptbocounty.ca

AMO Conference – August 20, 2024



# Strengthening Public Health Voluntary Mergers

**Presented by: Janet C. O'Neill,**  
Mayor, Municipality of Marmora and Lake, Hastings County  
Board Chair for Hastings Prince Edward Public Health  
Member of the South East Transition Team

# Introduction

- **Thank you to AMO, aPHa and Ontario Boards of Health for the opportunity to speak regarding the voluntary merger opportunities to improve efficiencies and enhance public health programs and services.**
- **Presentation**
  - ✓ **History**
  - ✓ **New initiative – Ministry of Health**
  - ✓ **Feasibility of a merger**
  - ✓ **Establishment of a board merger team**
  - ✓ **Three boards – Tri-Board Merger Team**
  - ✓ **Three boards endorsement – South East Transition Team (SETT)**

# History

- **Previous efforts referred to as Modernization to reduce the number of boards of health from 36 to 10**
- **Terminated due to the COVID-19 Pandemic**

# New Initiative

- **Ministry of Health initiated a voluntary merger opportunity in the fall of 2023**
- **Boards that wished to consider a merger were encouraged to prepare a Business Case and submit it by April 2, 2024**
- **Proposed implementation date is January 2025**
- **Criteria: Population base of 500,000+, no loss of frontline jobs, no reduction in local public health service delivery and funding considered based on a successful Business Case and Ministry of Health approval**

# Board Chairs Explore Feasibility of a Merger

- HPEPH and KFLAPH has a history of working collaboratively
- KFLAPH and LGLDHU has a history of working collaboratively
- Medical Officers of Health of the three health units have a relationship and work interactively
- Board Chairs and Medical Officers of Health met informally to discuss a 3-way merger and determined to go forward
- Motions were presented to each Board seeking approval to go forward and explore the option of merging

# Board Chairs Explore Feasibility of a Merger

- **Significant research and development of case scenarios was carried out by staff within the framework of the various boards**
- **Presented options to each Board with recommendation to “examine the prospect and feasibility of a 3-way merger”**

# Tri-Board Merger Team

- **Meetings were scheduled and held on a rotating basis at the three health unit locations**
- **Meetings were conducted in accordance with the Municipal Act**
- **Terms of Reference were created**
- **Host Board creates the agenda, records minutes and chairs the meeting**
- **Special meeting with Dr. Moore and staff; update meetings have occurred with Ministry staff when required**

# Tri-Board Merger Team *(continued)*

- **Each Board chose to appoint four (4) representatives to sit at initial meetings including each Board chair**
- **Consultants were engaged to assist with developing appropriate documents, by-laws and identify differences and commonalities between the Boards with recommendations to consider**
- **Decisions would be made based on majority votes and where possible by consensus**
- **Legal counsel was engaged to assist with development of a Memorandum of Understanding**



# Tri-Board Merger Team *(continued)*

- **Memorandum of Understanding was presented to each Board at their regular meetings and was approved**
- **Communications with local municipalities was identified as crucial to the success of the merger**

# Meet our South East Transition Team (formerly Tri-Board Merger Team)



Left to right Sitting: Mayors Jan O'Neill and Robin Jones; Councillor Peter McKenna, Wess Garrod, Provincial Rep  
Left to right Back: Councillors Jeff McLaren and Judy Greenwood-Speers; Toni Surko and Stephen Bird, Provincial Reps; Drs. Ethan Toumishey, Linna Li and Piotr Oglaza;  
Councillors Bill Roberts, Nathan Townend and Sean Kelly. Missing: Councillor Michael Kotsovos and Dr. Jeffrey Allin, Provincial Rep

# Boards' Endorsement to Proceed

- **Tri-Board Merger Team became the South East Transition Team (SETT)**
- **Funding strategies were developed and approved by SETT**
- **Delegation of Medical Officers of Health to their future roles has been determined with documents being prepared by legal advisors**
- **Consultants prepared documents regarding harmonization of collective agreements and staff remuneration**
- **Redbrick Communications assisting with communication materials to ensure consistent messaging with staff, municipalities and the public**

# Boards' Endorsement to Proceed *(continued)*

- **Governance Package** – certain mandatory operating by-laws are being created in preparation of a January 1, 2025 start

**Success of the merger is entirely dependent on  
funding from the Ministry of Health**

**Thank you!**