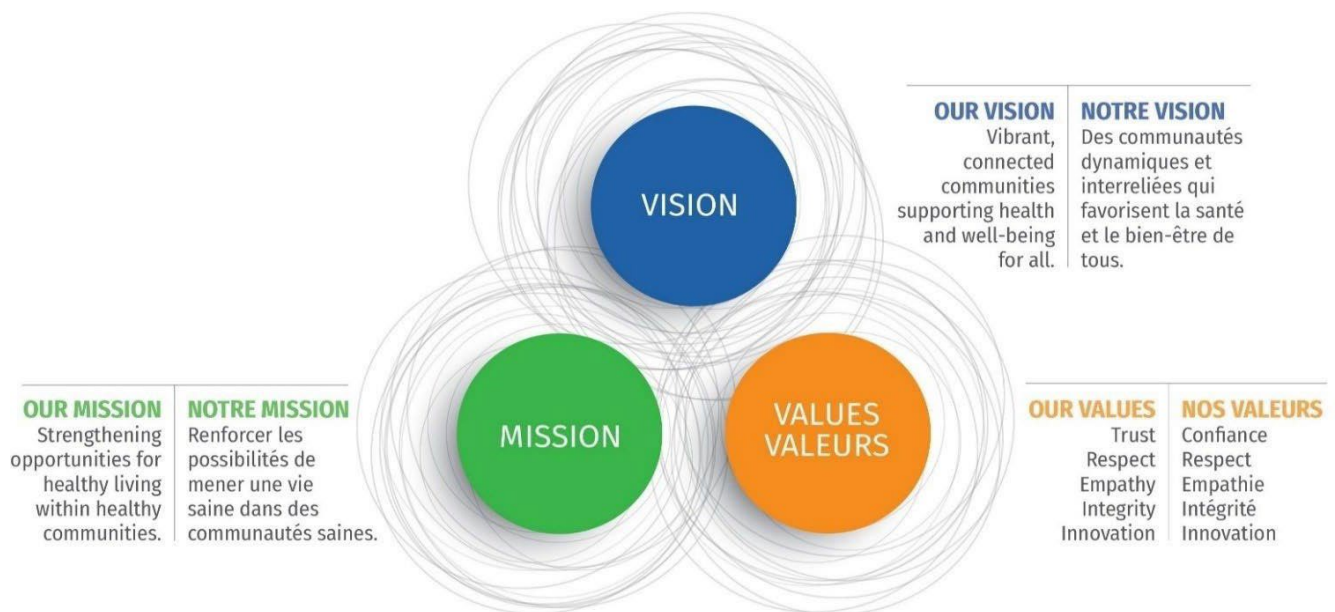


Medical Officer of Health/Chief Executive Officer Report to the Board of Health



We Are Public Health - Nous sommes la santé publique
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Prepared by Dr. Lianne Catton, MOH/CEO
June 13, 2024 BOH Meeting

General Report

1. Board of Health (BOH)

Strengthening Public Health

The Strengthening Public Health Strategy aims to optimize capacity, stability, and sustainability in the public health sector. The initiatives under the Strengthening Public Health strategy in the province continue.

Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) Review: Draft guidelines/protocols have been shared. Attended an information session for the public health sector consultation process and received a survey for each health unit to complete. Management is reviewing the standards with teams as appropriate to gather information and insight to inform the PHU response. It has been noted that there may not be a notable decrease in the expectations of the standards, which may create challenges and will require careful consideration in providing feedback.

Supporting Voluntary Mergers: There continues to be work and discussions regarding Ministry financial support for voluntary mergers.

Capital Application: This is possible with the merger application and the PHU has shared intent to move forward with a capital application for a new building in Timmins. The Ministry has shared the application form and process, which is extensive. The first step is an application form, which if approved, leads to funding to support the next steps in the process, with the business case being the next and much more significant step.

There will be further details and updates regarding the PHU-THU merger work; as well as the OPHS review as a separate item in the BOH agenda.

Ministry Reporting

Work continues on the 2023 Annual Report and Attestation, due at the end of June. This annual reporting tool requires Board of Health to provide a year end summary report of program achievements and finances and identify any major changes in program planning activities due to local events and demonstrate compliance with programmatic and financial requirements from January 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

Infrastructure

Preliminary work is underway to address the HVAC and boiler system at the Timmins main office. Need for space, as well as ensuring effective and efficient space for staff and clients, remains a priority and continues to highlight the need for a new building in Timmins.

In May 2024, a total of 1292 individuals visited the main PHU building in Timmins and 127 individuals presented to reception at the Timcor site. While noting there may have been extra visits due to ISPA enforcement, and the teams' ongoing additional availability to support parents requiring immunizations or in ensuring a valid exemption process has been completed as suspension letters were distributed this month.

Individuals come to the offices for various reasons such as:

- Access PHU programs and services (sexual health, immunizations, dental services, breastfeeding support, harm reduction, septic and water, etc.)
- Collect information (e.g. immunization records) or supplies (e.g. water bottles for sampling)
- Deliver mail and supplies
- Collect mail and packages

- Pick up or return vaccines from health care providers and facilities

2. Ministry of Health Engagement/Leadership Roles

Continued involvement at many tables includes continued role as vice-chair for the Council of Medical Officer of Health (COMOH) Section; most recent meeting was held on April 17, 2024; COMOH Executive meeting May 7th, the Public Health Leadership Table (PHLT) on May 14th, and Public Health Sector Coordination Table. The Association of Local Public Health Agencies (alPHa) Board meeting was held on April 19; and the Northern MOH group continues to meet monthly as a group, as well as monthly with the northern Associate Chief Medical Officers of Health from the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health (OCMOH).

Corporate Services

1. Human Resources

Professional Development & Health and Safety

We continue with N95 mask fit testing, reinforcing commitment to a safe and prepared work environment.

Recruitment

Since the last Board of Health meeting, there was three summer students that were hired, one in the Harm Reduction Program and two in Environmental Health. There was also one permanent Administrative Assistant in Timmins office hired. There was one resignation, a permanent part-time Administrative Assistant in Matheson, which the team will work to fill. The Health Promoter in Timmins from previous report requested to rescind their resignation, which was accepted, they will be staying in the permanent full-time position.

Staffing Summary - Vacancies

As of May 31, 2024, there were opportunities available for individuals looking to join the team, after careful assessment of program needs and risks as per the 2024 budget briefing note.

The PHU is currently seeking:

- Six Public Health Nurses
- Two Administrative Assistants
- One Human Resources Manager

Vaccine Preventable Diseases and COVID-19 Response Program

1. Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD)

Routine Immunization

Each PHU office offered routine immunization clinics, focusing on the delivery of vaccines to the general population.

There were 203 clients served across all PHU offices in routine VPD clinics with 372 vaccines were administered in these

clinics.

School Vaccine Program

Seventeen clinics were hosted at schools across the region as part of the Grade 7 school-based vaccine program, offering the second round of the Grade 7 vaccine series.

Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA)

In May, the PHU Immunization continued to support schools and families to meet their needs and the requirements of the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA). Upon final review, 167 students across the entire PHU region were suspended due to not meeting the needs of ISPA requirements. Therefore, on suspension day, over 98% of the estimated student body of approximately 11,500 in the PHU region had met the requirements of the legislation. Most of these suspensions have now been resolved, but the PHU continues to support families with outstanding requirements. During the suspension process and throughout the year, PHU staff work to ensure that parents and families receive supportive care, whether it be immunizations, education, and resources to make informed choices, or assistance with ensuring they complete valid exemptions. The PHU remains committed to supporting families and students, and continues to work closely with schools, principals, and school boards. With ongoing reports of measles across the province the importance of routine immunizations included in ISPA is increasingly evident.

1. COVID-19 Response

In May, the Immunization team continued to offer COVID-19 vaccines across the region as part of the spring campaign.

2. Local COVID-19 and Influenza Activity

There was no Influenza activity in week 22.

Interpretation of Local COVID-19 and Influenza activity:

COVID-19

- In week 22, there were 2 new cases, indicating a low level of activity, similar to the previous week.
- The 7-day % positivity was 2.4%, indicating a low level of activity, similar to the previous week.
- There were 2 new outbreaks, similar to the previous week. There were 2 declared over.

Health Promotion

1. Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention (CDIP)

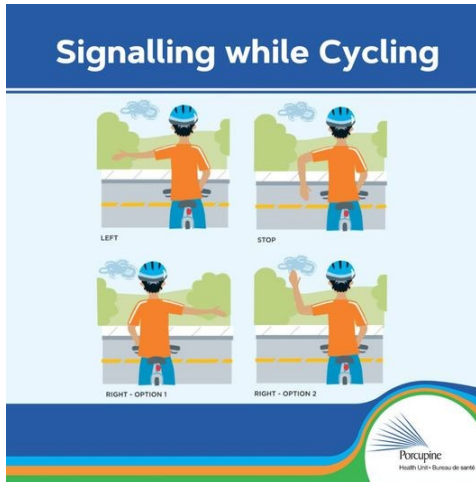
Concussions

The Brain Waves concussion awareness program was successfully offered at Smooth Rock Falls Public School and École Catholique *Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens - Iroquois Falls*, facilitated by the local public health nurse.

Off-Road Safety and Physical Activity

With the weather warming up and many residents taking part in more outdoor activities, the PHU has been promoting injury prevention campaigns, including safe water practices such as boating safety, and the safe use of ATVs and off-road equipment and/or vehicles. Additionally, the PHU has been encouraging physical activity due to its significant benefits for

overall well-being.



Making a surprise turn in front of a car is as smart as diving into a shark tank!
Signal all turns (but not until you know it's OK to turn by checking over your shoulder first).
Learn to ride in a straight line with one hand by dropping one arm to your side as you will need that arm to signal.
Practice beforehand on any pavement away from traffic that has a straight painted line.
TIP: Practice your signals, always starting with a shoulder check.
Image source: Young Cyclist Guide, Ontario



Buckle up your lifejacket or personal floatation device (PFD) before going for a cruise on the water! Consider the following when choosing between a lifejacket or PFD:

- Lifejackets have the ability to hold a person upright and can turn the person from face down to face up.
- PFDs are lighter and less bulky than a traditional lifejacket. PFDs will keep you afloat, but not always face up.

- You can choose either a life jacket or PFD for your child, as long as it is designed for children.
 - Check your lifejacket or PFD for a label showing that it has been approved by at least one of the following agencies: Transport Canada, Canadian Coast Guard, or Fisheries and Oceans Canada.
- For more information about lifejackets and PFDs, visit <https://parachute.ca/lifejackets>

Community Events

The PHU has been receiving many requests to participate in health promotion and awareness events in communities across the region. The health promotion teams are busy preparing for these events to ensure their success, aiming to have an upstream impact on community health. In May, PHU staff from the dental team and Stay on Your Feet attended the seniors fair in Timmins, while team members leading injury prevention work participated in a bike rodeo hosted by community partners, Girones Bourdon Kelly Lawyers. At the bike rodeo, the PHU was on site to provide bicycle safety messaging, properly fit helmets, and promote overall injury prevention in a fun and engaging way.

Healthy Eating

All PHU staff were invited to participate in a virtual foundational training on eating disorders prevention. An additional date will be offered in the coming weeks for staff who missed it. This initiative aligns with our objective of integrating food neutrality and inclusive language in all program work.

Coalitions

In May, the PHU participated in several important meetings, including two local senior committees, two Stay on Your Feet Operational Committee meetings, one Cycling Committee meeting, one Injury Prevention Evidence Network meeting, one Heads Together (local concussion coalition) meeting, one Ontario Concussion Prevention Network meeting, and one You're the Chef Working Group meeting.

Oral Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)

In May a total of 93 claims were processed and paid. One senior received preventative services in a PHU clinic.

Healthy Smiles Ontario

Throughout the month, the dental team provided service to 37 children for preventative services and/or dental screenings in the Dental Clinic. Out of the 37 children seen, 10 children had dental decay and were enrolled on the Emergency and Essential Services Stream of Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO).

Identifying Barriers to Care

Access to dental care remains a significant challenge for residents in northern communities. The lack of water fluoridation and higher costs of healthy foods contribute to the PHU's moderately high decay rate observed among school-age children. These regions often face prolonged wait times and a shortage of dental providers, resulting in unmet oral health needs. To address this issue, the Porcupine Health Unit recognizes a potential role for the Northern Health Travel Grant to help address this inequity if it included dental visits for clients enrolled on government funded dental programs.

2. Healthy Growth and Development (HGD)

Community Capacity

The Healthy Families program is leading a Baby Friendly Initiative 20hr Level 1 training in Kapuskasing on June 4th and 5th. Five internal staff members are registered to participate and as of current, ten people from varying community organizations have registered. Including community partners helps ensure the entire community is supporting Baby

Friendly Initiative messaging which promotes safe and adequate nutrition for all infants.

Partnerships

During the month of May, the Healthy Families program led four educational sessions in partnership with EarlyON sites in four different communities (Hearst – French, Iroquois Falls, Cochrane, and Smooth Rock Falls - French). Topics included: Developmental Milestones; Perinatal Mood Disorders; Introduction to Solids; and Separation Anxiety. In total there were 30 participants. EarlyON programs are mostly on hold during the summer; however, in Timmins a session is planned in August on Vaccine Preventable Diseases.

The Public Health Nurse in Smooth Rock Falls met with the new Brighter Futures worker to plan for future parent presentations. Collaboration focused on how to better engage families in the community.

The Healthy Families program led session five of the Perinatal Peer Support Group Series on Attachment. Using the “Make the Connection” resource, discussions centered on attachment and connection with baby. The final report for the series is still pending.

In Timmins, the Healthy Families program attended a “Children’s Health Fair” hosted by the Cochrane Temiskaming Children’s Treatment Centre at the Timmins Native Friendship Centre. Available Healthy Families programs and services were promoted. Approximately 20 families attended the booth.

Flora’s Walk (a perinatal mental health awareness raising event) occurred in Hearst and in Timmins. In Hearst the EarlyON hosted a walk and the Porcupine Health Unit Public Health Nurse provided information on the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children home visiting program and shared messaging and resources on perinatal mood disorders. In Timmins a meeting area was organized, the Porcupine Health Unit has a booth and was able to have discussions with 20 participants on perinatal mood disorders and on Healthy Families services.

In June, the Porcupine Health Unit will participate in a Family Fair in Hearst. The Public Health Nurse will promote Healthy Families programs and services.

Coalitions/Groups/Circle of Practice

To support leadership opportunities of Health Unit staff and to maintain close connections to provincial support for the promotion of evidence based, supportive breastfeeding practices in Ontario, a Healthy Families staff has obtained a seat on the Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario Executive. Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario (BFION) is the provincial representative for the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. In partnership with the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC), BFION is responsible for the implementation of the BCC’s Baby-Friendly Initiative Standards and partners with hospitals and community health services to assist and support them to achieve and maintain Baby-Friendly designation.

3. Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC)

Staff Training

HBHC staff (family home visitors and Public Health Nurses) participated in the Public Health Nursing Practice, Research, and Education Program virtual session on PIPE (Partners in Parenting Education). PHN-PREP develops, evaluates, and mobilizes evidence-informed resources to support public health nurses, supervisors, and home visiting program teams provide care and support individuals and families enrolled in home visitation programs. PIPE is curriculum used in the HBHC home visiting program and is designed to increase the emotional availability and relationship building skills of parents/caregivers with young children. It is an interactive and relationship-based curriculum.

Partnerships

The HBHC Program coordinator met with representatives from Timmins Native Friendship Centre (TNFC) and Metis Nation of Ontario (MNO) regarding the Indigenous HBHC programs that are re-starting. Discussion was centered around collaboration and promotion of each program to clients. It was mutually agreed upon to share training opportunities and public events to support programming and increase reach. Further discussions will be scheduled to coordinate seamless

referral pathways between agencies.

Current Program Capacity

Throughout the district, there are currently 46 families receiving HBHC home visiting service. Based on need, families are supported with either weekly or bi-weekly visits by the Public Health Nurse or the Family Home Visitor.

As of May 30, 2024, in Timmins, clients wishing to participate in the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children home visiting program are being placed on a temporary waitlist. All waitlisted clients receive monthly calls by a public health nurse to assess child and parent well-being and to identify needs/referrals for other community supports while they are on the waitlist.

The Porcupine Health Unit has been successful at filling some of the staff vacancies in the HBHC program. A permanent full-time Public Health Nurse in Timmins and a temporary part-time Family Home Visitor in Kapuskasing (replacing a leave) will start in June.

Home Visiting Services

	2022	2023	2024 – Q1
Number of Individuals Screened (Total - Prenatal): HBHC	11	25	5
Number of Individuals Screened (Total - Postpartum): HBHC	502	548	144
Number of Individuals Screened (Total - Early Childhood): HBHC	24	27	8
Number of Individuals Confirmed with Risk (Total): HBHC	387	436	128
Number of Families Served (Total - with Two or More Home Visits): HBHC	70	66	16
Number of Individuals who Received an In-Depth Assessment: HBHC	63	67	45

Source: ISCIS Reporting Sub-System. Monitoring Report 5.0 pulled 2024-04-10.

4. School Health

School Dental Screenings

Dental screenings in schools are complete for the 2023-2024 school year.

Vision Screening

The dental team visited 7 schools to conduct vision screenings, during which a total of 148 children were screened. Following these screenings, 61 children were referred to an optometrist for a comprehensive eye exam. This program will end in the fall aligning with updates to the Ontario Public Health Standards and information will be shared about access to optometry assessments for this age group.

Fluoride Varnish (FV) Program

The dental team visited childcare facilities and schools to implement the Fluoride Varnish Program. Fourteen childcare facilities were visited across the PHU region, and 250 preschool children (0-4 years of age) received a FV application. The team also visited 10 schools where 157 students (JK and SK) received a FV application.

Infectious Diseases

1. Control of Infectious Diseases (CID)

Sexual Health

Highlights:

- Walk-in clinics in Timmins continue to be offered monthly and are very well attended.
- Pap clinics were held in April and May in Timmins and Cochrane.
- Planning for the implementation of self-testing clinics in remaining branch offices continued. Hornepayne, Hearst, Smooth Rock Falls and Matheson will start offering self-testing clinics for Chlamydia and Gonorrhoea in mid-June.
- Training and authorization of harm reduction outreach nurses began in May. Sexual Health and Harm Reduction planning for outreach testing clinics in Timmins and branch communities beginning in June. Testing will be offered for Syphilis, HIV and other sexually transmitted and blood borne infections.
- Youth hub clinics started in May. There have been 2 successful clinics to date.

Youth Wellness Hub Clinic

The Porcupine Health Unit has partnered with the Timmins Youth Wellness Hub to offer bi-weekly sexual health walk-in clinics at the hub. The clinics have been promoted through posters, social media (see below), nurses during drop-in education sessions and staff at the hub. The goals of the clinics are to reach youth in a familiar environment that is accessible and provide sexual health information and services that are: comprehensive, confidential, inclusive, and sex positive. Sexual health and well-being are an important part of a youth's overall health during adolescence, a time where peer pressure and risk-taking behaviors can have serious consequences such as sexually transmitted infections and unintended pregnancies.

Health Promotion Activities

Three school presentations were requested and provided by sexual health nurses in April and May. Topics discussed were sexual health services, sexually transmitted infections, gender identity and sexual orientation (Ecole Catholique Nouveau Regard, Ecole Secondaire Georges-Vanier).

Sexual health nurses attended school wellness fairs at Ecole Publique Le Coeur du Nord, Roland Michener Secondary School, and Timmins High & Vocational School.

School health nurses continued to provide sexual health resources to schools as requested.

A sexual health informal presentation was offered at the Timmins Youth Wellness hub during a drop-in session with youth. Topics discussed were sexual health services, consent, relationships, sexually transmitted and blood borne infections and birth control. Condoms and handouts were also distributed.



**Sexual health clinics are now available for
youth 12-25 at the
Timmins Youth Wellness Hub!**

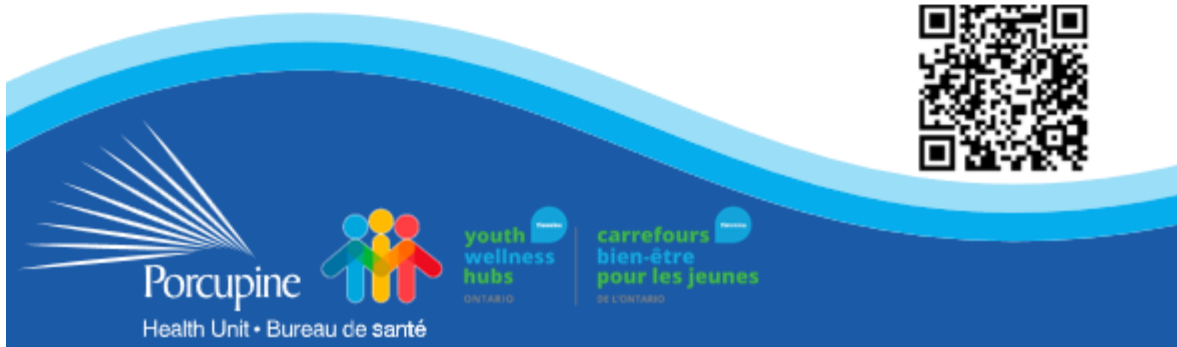
No appointments needed!


This clinic is for:

- Birth control counselling
- Low-cost birth control
- Free condoms
- Emergency contraceptive pill
- Pregnancy testing, counselling and referrals
- Testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections
- HIV testing, counselling, and referrals

Youth do not need to be accompanied by a parent/guardian.

For more information call the clinic or visit: phu.fyi/clinics








Sexual Health Clinic for Youth 12-25!

The Porcupine Health Unit is offering a Sexual Health Walk-in Clinic at the Timmins Youth Wellness Hub

Tuesday May 7, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

45 Spruce St. South, Timmins



Respectfully submitted,

Lianne Catton, MD, CCFP-EM, MPH
Medical Officer of Health/Chief Executive Officer