

Huron Perth Public Health Annual Report 2022



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Vision, mission and values

Vision

Optimized health and well-being for all.

Mission

HPPH takes action to protect and promote population health and prevent disease, strengthening quality of life and well-being for all.

Values

Equity, diversity and inclusion

We value all community members. We are responsive to the communities we serve and commit to finding ways for people to feel safe and welcome.

Evidence-informed practices

We will use the best available information and public health best practices in our work.

Partnership and collaboration

We value our relationships and commit to authentic engagement in our work in order to meet the public health needs of our communities.



People

We acknowledge that HPPH staff are the greatest asset to achieving our vision and mission, and commit to creating a healthy workplace together.

Innovation

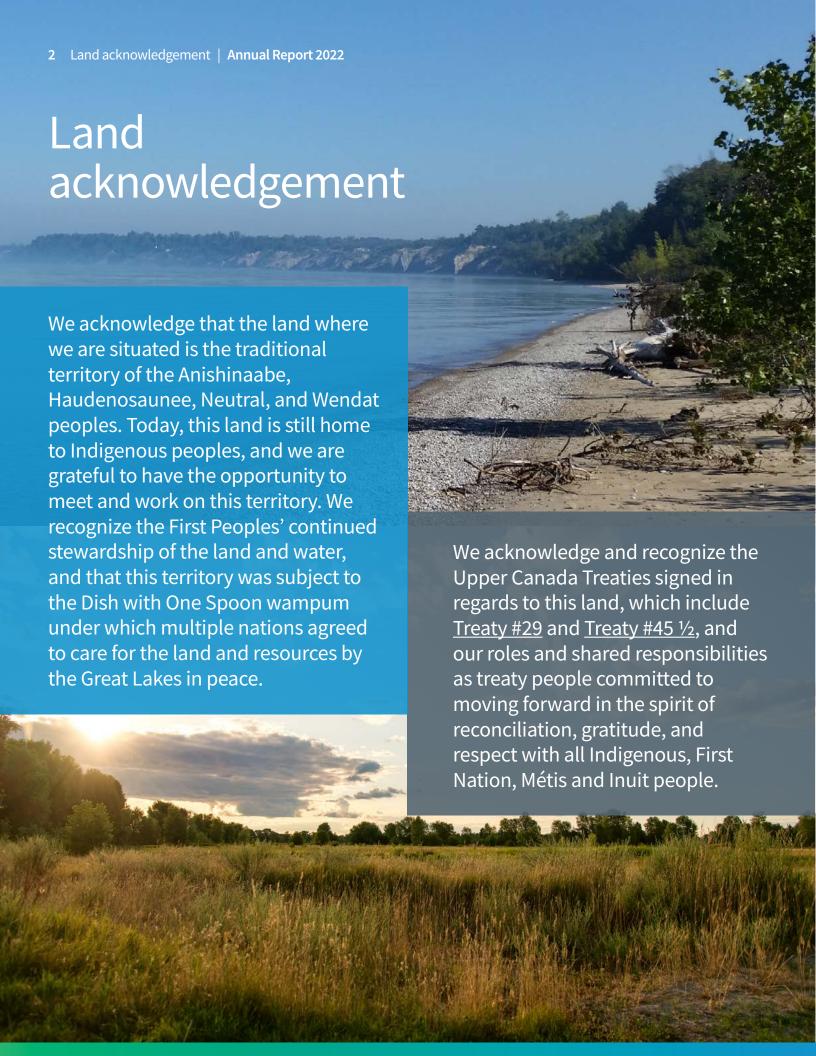
We embrace new ways to respond to the public health needs of our populations and will use bold and creative approaches as needed.

Accountability

We focus on our public health mandate and are committed to transparent accountability for the use of our resources.

Leadership

All staff are valued as HPPH ambassadors who continually show leadership by using public health knowledge, skills and expertise to improve population health.



Board Chair Bernie MacLellan

In 2022, provincial and local public health underwent a significant transition as communities cautiously navigated their way out of the pandemic response.

It was a pivotal year where the focus shifted from emergency measures to a more nuanced approach that aimed to strike a balance between minimizing disease spread and using the least restrictive public health measures possible.

For Huron Perth Public Health, the previous years of intense COVID response meant that most other public health programs and services had to be suspended, reduced, or modified. In 2022, although COVID response continued, there was at last the opportunity to begin the recovery of public health programs and move forward on amalgamation.

To deliver public health programs and services, HPPH relies on its in-depth knowledge of local resources and priorities, and strong relationships with key local partners/stakeholders such as school boards and municipalities. The Huron Perth Board of Health is made up largely of elected representatives appointed by the upper-tier municipalities of Huron and Perth counties.



Municipal elections were held in October 2022, resulting in some changes to the Huron Perth Board of Health in December of 2022. I am proud to continue to serve on the Huron Perth Board of Health, and further to serve as Chair.

Both the pre-December 2022 Board of Health and current Board of Health continued to support staff as HPPH resumed regular operations and integrated COVID-19 response into those regular HPPH operations. We are grateful for our hardworking staff and the continued support of our community members.

Bernie MacLellan, Chair Huron Perth Public Health Board of Health

Board Vice-Chair Todd Kasenberg

Local public health serves as a crucial foundation for the health and resilience of communities. By providing a multi-layered approach, including disease control, health education, and equity promotion, local public health bolsters the overall vitality of society.

Public health uses an "upstream approach" that aims to prevent health problems before they even arise, leading to more sustainable and equitable improvements in population health. The upstream approach works proactively, addressing systemic issues and collaborating across sectors. Public health's goal is to make people healthier where they live, work and play, and avoid drawing on costly and scarce health care resources.

Many people think of disease prevention and control when they think of public health, and that has certainly been the focus of the last few years as HPPH carried out an unprecedented pandemic response.

However, in addition to vaccination, case and contact management, outbreak response and community infection control measures, public health also:

 Works with municipalities to provide safe water, safe food, and emergency preparedness and response.



 Works with municipalities, schools, community partners and families to promote healthy growth and development, routine vaccinations, dental screening, and school health.

In this report, you will learn about the COVID-19 response provided in 2022 as well as the many other public health programs that HPPH was able to begin resuming to keep our communities safe.

When we recognize the importance of local public health and provide the necessary resources and support, communities can create a healthier and more secure future for everyone.

Todd Kasenberg, Vice-Chair Huron Perth Public Health Board of Health

Board of Health in 2022





Board of Health Chair

Kathy Vassilakos | Councillor, City of Stratford

Board of Health Vice-Chair

Dave Jewitt | Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Central Huron

Jim Fergusson | Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Bluewater

Bonnie Henderson | Councillor, City of Stratford

Todd Kasenberg | Mayor, Municipality of North Perth

Marg Luna | Councillor, Town of St. Marys

Bernie MacLellan | Mayor, Municipality of Huron East

Myles Murdock | Deputy Mayor, Town of Goderich

Robert Parker | Provincial Representative

Paul Robinson | Provincial Representative

Bob Wilhelm | Mayor, Township of Perth South



As of December (following 2022 municipal elections)

Board of Health Chair

Bernie MacLellan | Mayor, Municipality of Huron East

Board of Health Vice-Chair

Todd Kasenberg | Mayor, Municipality of North Perth

Marg Anderson | Deputy Mayor, Municipality of Central Huron

Leslie Biehn | Councillor, City of Stratford

Rhonda Ehgoetz | Mayor, Township of Perth East

George Finch | Mayor, Municipality of South Huron

Marg Luna | Councillor, Town of St. Marys

Robert Parker | Provincial Representative

Paul Robinson | Provincial Representative

Cody Sebben | Councillor, City of Stratford

Bill Vanstone | Deputy Mayor, Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh

Medical Officer of Health Dr. Miriam Klassen

COVID-19 continued to circulate in 2022, requiring a significant public health response. However, I was pleased that HPPH staff were also able to start the work of tackling the public health back log, and considering public health programs and services that have been held or reduced.

The context is not the same as it was when HPPH was formed in January 2020. The pandemic has had many direct and indirect impacts (in addition to ongoing COVID-19 cases and outbreaks), such as an increase in reported poor mental health and opioid overdoses, as well as a transformation of the workplace as technology has been implemented to facilitate more work from home and virtual meetings.

In addition, new public health challenges have emerged or increased including mpox (monkeypox), avian influenza, and adverse impacts of climate change.

HPPH staff have adapted to the constant changes, while maintaining a focus on the core work of public health; surveillance,



health protection, health promotion and disease prevention. This report outlines the work accomplished across a range of programs, supporting everyone in Huron Perth to be as healthy as possible.

Thank-you to each HPPH staff member for your flexibility, kindness and hard work. Thank-you also to our board of health for your steadfast support.

Miriam Klassen Medical Officer of Health and CEO Huron Perth Public Health



Medical Officer of Health & CEO Dr. Miriam Klassen

Dr. Miriam Klassen

Physician Consultant

Dr. Lauren Hayward

Directors

Barb Leavitt Julie Pauli Tanya Sangster Christina Taylor

Managers

Karen Bergin-Payette
Megan Goss
Lori Holmes
Annette Hoyles
Janet Jackson
Amy MacDonald*
Rita Marshall
Tanya Patry
Melissa Purdy*
Karen Sherwood
Nancy Summers
Dori Taylor*
Jessica Thompson*
Angela Willert

*temporary managers for COVID response

Above L-R: HPPH offices at West Gore and Clinton

Locations Clinton 77722B London Road

Listowel

161 Inkerman Street West

Stratford

Festival Square | 10 Downie Street West Gore | 653 West Gore Street

Wingham

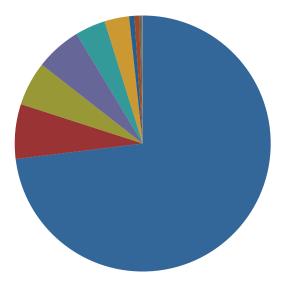
131 John Street East

Financials

Huron Perth Public Health financial picture, year ending December 31, 2022.

2022 Revenue

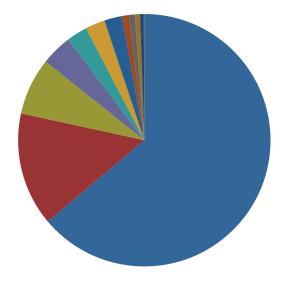
\$ 22,273,577



- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (operating) \$16,243,085
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services \$1,537,684
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (one-time) \$1,242,059
- County of Huron \$1,288,531
- County of Perth \$853,284
- City of Stratford \$690,104
- Other \$147,757
- Town of St. Marys \$134,995
- Health Canada \$60,290
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (immunization) \$24,072
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (influenza) \$7,185



\$ 22,273,577



- Salaries \$14,225,096
- Benefits \$3,239,633
- Program expenses \$1,627,405
- One time \$886,449
- Amortization of capital assets \$592,872
- Property expense and rent \$562,109
- Administrative expenses \$503,439
- Travel \$201,553
- Equipment \$164,411
- Fees for service \$149,342
- Past service benefit \$107,400
- Other \$13,868

COVID response

2022 began with a surge in COVID-19 cases due to the Omicron variant. The focus of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) testing and case, contact and outbreak management turned to highest-risk individuals and settings.

HPPH continued to hold vaccine clinics in the community and at HPPH sites. Vaccine eligibility expanded and new bivalent vaccines became available for use as booster doses.

2022 Hospital Admissions



243 Admissions to hospital

(Includes all cases admitted to hospital, or that had their hospital stay extended, because of COVID-19. Includes intensive care unit cases, but not emergency room visits).

2022 COVID Outbreaks



Outbreaks in highest risk settings:

Congregate living 51

Hospital 15

Long-term care home 37

Retirement home 32

resident deaths

(Includes from a clinically compatible illness in a confirmed COVID-19 case, unless there is a clear alternative cause of death that cannot be related (e.g., trauma)).

In 2022, there was a higher number of deaths due to COVID in Huron Perth compared to 2020 and 2021. Twenty-three deaths were reported to HPPH in 2020 and 52 deaths in 2021. While the number of deaths was higher, the case fatality rate (the proportion of people who died after contracting COVID-19) declined.

COVID-19 vaccination

At the start of 2022, COVID-19 vaccination coverage was strong enough that much valued volunteers and community partners were able to transition out of mass vaccination clinics, with HPPH able to provide full support for clinics. HPPH continued to hold mass vaccination clinics across Huron Perth for the first few months of 2022 before moving to in-house clinics based at our Clinton and West Gore sites for several months. In the fall of 2022, given the challenging respiratory season, HPPH offered vaccination clinics across Huron-Perth again.



By the end of 2022, 119,117 Huron Perth residents (79.4% of the total population) had at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Huron Perth residents & COVID-19 Vaccination



115,661 (77.1%) had completed their primary series



78,089 (52.0%) had their primary series and one booster



40,991 had their primary series and two or more boosters

HPPH provided



293 vaccine clinics



94,784 vaccine doses administered in Huron Perth by HPPH and partners

Reference: Public Health Ontario's Ontario COVID-19 Data Tool

COVID-19 vaccination

Adverse events following immunization

An adverse event following immunization (AEFI) is an unwanted or unexpected health effect that happens after someone receives a vaccine; this health effect may or may not be caused by the vaccine. However, public health agencies investigate and review all AEFI information to see if there are any safety concerns that did not appear in the original clinical trials.

An AEFI may range from local redness lasting more than four days to more severe outcomes.

38

In 2022, there were 38 confirmed AFFIs due to the COVID-19 vaccine, 0.04% of the doses administered. This equates to a reporting rate of 40.1 AEFIs per 100,000 doses administered.

COVID Intake

7,171 Total Inquiries

Method of contact:

√ 6,114 phone 1,033 email 24 other





Top 3 topics:



Vaccine appointments or cancellations



COVID illness/case/ isolation



Vaccine – other and general questions

Environmental health

The Environmental Health team managed the continued demands of COVID-19 pandemic response while also maintaining focus on essential programming to protect health, prevent and reduce health hazards, and mitigate disease risks associated with both built and natural environments.

2022 Investigations

1,655 public inquiries and investigations completed

Top 5 inquiries:



rabies

491 animal exposure investigations 42 animal inquiries outside of investigations 49 human exposures with animals resulting in rabies prophylaxis



410 safe water



190 food safety



95 health hazards



66 COVID-19

Inspections

1,500 total inspections:

1,326 compliance

114 re-inspections

14 pre-opening

25 complaint

21 demand

Enforcement

5 temporary restaurant closures due to infractions

Vector-borne and zoonotic disease monitoring

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)

3 HPAI investigations: 2 commerical poultry operations, 1 wild swan flock

In an HPAI investigation, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) leads the animal health response. Public health leads the human health response by providing guidance to workers, employers and local health care providers.



West Nile Virus

15 weeks of trapping in Huron Perth:

- 240 traps collected
- 0 positive tests for West Nile Virus in mosquito populations

Lyme disease



10 tick identifications



6 identified as Blacklegged ticks (primary vector associated with Lyme disease transmission)

Beach water sampling



17 locations across Huron Perth



926 samples collected over 21 days; 23 adverse results

Foundations

SHARE Team

(Surveillance, Health Assessment, Research and **Evaluation Team**)

In March 2022, the SHARE team began to shift work from the pandemic response; resuming more population health assessment, program monitoring and evaluation, as well as building staff capacity in these areas.

The team continued to monitor lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases. hospitalizations, deaths, and surveillance data such as test percent positivity and waste water. In addition, they monitored and reported COVID-19 vaccine data. In the fall, as other respiratory activity (example, influenza) increased in the community, the SHARE and Infectious Disease teams developed an integrated Respiratory Activity Assessment report.

Health Equity Team

During the transition from COVID-19 response, the staff of the Health Equity team initiated the creation of strategies, tools and resources to support the reduction of health inequities within health unit programs and services.

Other work within the team included:

- Completion of the report, *The Real Cost of Eating in Huron and Perth* Food affordability was calculated by collecting data on the cost of specific food items across six grocery stores in Huron Perth. In addition, HPPH worked alongside United Way Perth Huron's Social Research and Planning Council (SRPC) to conduct a food insecurity survey of local residents in November.
- Development of a Land Acknowledgement User Guide to support staff to offer land acknowledgments at meetings and events A land acknowledgement is an expression of gratitude for Indigenous Peoples and cultures, a time to recognize Indigenous Peoples' traditional and current relationships to the land, and a time to affirm our local treaty agreements. It is one small step towards reconciliation and prompts non-Indigenous people to reflect on our collective past, present and future as treaty people. We are all treaty people.
- Ongoing support to Poverty to Prosperity (P2P) Huron Perth Originally a Huron County coalition, in 2022 P2P formally expanded to include Perth County/City of Stratford. With more than 70 members, P2P developed a new framework and action plan that strategically aligns P2P's poverty reduction work with the income security work of the SRPC. Working with many community partners, P2P will focus on poverty reduction through increased tax-filing and support SRPC's advocacy and action on income policy solutions.

Foundations



- Resuming the HPPH Lived Experience Expert Panel (LEEP) The virtual panel is made up of community members aged 18 and older with lived experience with one or more systems such as social assistance, courts, child welfare, education, and/or health care. LEEP participants contributed their insights to the work of HPPH and our community partners in Huron Perth by responding to surveys on the following topics:
 - O post-pandemic HPPH program and service restart priorities
 - O continuing impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on communities in Huron Perth
 - O household food insecurity and optimal survey distribution strategies
 - O municipal service priorities in communities in advance of the municipal election
 - O community-based Indigenous reconciliation awareness and education needs
 - O access, design and delivery aspects of current parenting programs
- LEEP insights, ideas and recommendations inform the current and ongoing work of Huron Perth Public Health, SRPC, the Huron Perth Area Ontario Health Team's Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism Committee, and Poverty to Prosperity (P2P) Huron Perth, our region's anti-poverty coalition.

Anti-Racism and Inclusion Strategy

The Board of Health committed to reducing racism and discrimination within its workforce and public health practices. HPPH engaged a consultant to collect data and review internal documents to understand our organization's practices and polices with respect to racism. The work continues into 2023, with the creation of an anti-racism and antidiscrimination policy and action plan, including mandatory training of staff to support implementation of our anti-racism strategy.

Health promotion and well-being

Community **Partnership**



The Health Promotion & Well-Being (HPWB) team reconnected with several local, regional, and provincial partners to regroup and determine next steps within chronic disease, substance use, and injury prevention. With a focus on connecting with partners, the team was able to assess and take action on the current landscape of initiatives along with building and leveraging opportunities to collaborate.

Healthy Public Policy

- The HPWB team responded to local callouts for feedback, including the Municipality of Bluewater's Recreation Master Plan, the City of Stratford's Transportation Master Plan, and the Town of Goderich's Official Plan review.
- At a federal level:
 - O HPPH's board of health endorsed the Southwest Tobacco Control Area Network (SW TCAN) submission to Health Canada about the Tobacco and Vaping Products Act. On March 16, 2022, Health Canada opened a public consultation to fulfill the mandated three-year legislative review of the *Tobacco* and Vaping Products Act, with particular emphasis on the Act's ability to address youth vaping. Among other things, the SW TCAN submission recommended banning all vapour product and e-substance flavours, further restricting advertising and promotional activities, and expanding automatic prohibition criteria to include charges related to vapour products.
 - O In response to the Government of Canada's consultation, Engaging on cannabis legalization and regulation in Canada: Taking stock of progress, HPPH's Medical Officer of Health endorsed Ottawa Public Health's submission to the Government of Canada. Ottawa Public Health's submission outlined current regulations that support a public health approach where continued implementation of restrictions is critical, and included recommendations on areas for enhancement.

Tobacco, vapes and cannabis

Reporting Smoke Free Ontario Act violations

HPPH implemented an online form for collecting complaints about Smoke Free Ontario Act violations occurring on school properties; 88 school complaints







6 tobacco 2 cannabis

Innovation

HPPH became one of the first health units in Ontario to use debit cards for test shopping

Cessation support

Provided tobacco quit kits to community partners to distribute to clients in their cessation journey



Smoke Free Ontario Act Inspections

Completed 100% of inspections in Huron Perth:

- Tobacco and vape display and promotion
- Tobacco and vape test shops
- Secondary schools

Complaints investigated



118 Total complaints (including school complaints):

- 89 vape
- 29 tobacco
- 3 cannabis
- 3 workplace
- 7 multi-unit dwellings
- 22 charges
- 91 warnings

Infectious disease

Diseases of Public Health Significance (DoPHS)

In 2022, there were 270 lab-confirmed diseases of public health significance (DoPHS) reported to the infectious disease team (excluding COVID-19 and sexually transmitted infections)

What are DoPHS?

Health professionals and public health work together to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases in our communities. O. Reg. 135/18: Designation of Diseases under the *Health Protection and Promotion* Act. outlines which communicable diseases are designated as diseases of public health significance in Ontario. A healthcare provider is legally required to report any suspected or confirmed cases to the Medical Officer of Health Top 5 reported diseases*



Influenza 132 Campylobacter Enteritis 52 Hepatitis C 22 Cryptosporidiosis 22 Salmonellosis 20

*excluding COVID-19 and sexually transmitted infections

Outbreaks



26 confirmed outbreaks (non-COVID)

Sexual health

Appointments

2,625 in-person appointments at sexual health clinics New clients



726 new clients

Sexual health clinics resumed



In the fall, sexual health clinics resumed at all Avon Maitland District School Board secondary schools

Reported infections



310 lab-confirmed sexually transmitted and bloodborne infections (chlamydia, gonorrhea, syphilis, HIV) reported to HPPH

Harm reduction

Naloxone kit distribution



667 Naloxone kits given to clients

1,051 Naloxone kits provided to community partners for further dissemination

1,718 total Naloxone kits



Health Line/ reception



New format for helping the public

In 2022, the former Perth District Health Unit Healthline service transitioned into a new format. The new format connected inquiries to team and program experts at HPPH as needed.

2022 Inquiries



2,668 total inquiries

Top 5 inquiry topics



484 vaccine preventable disease



224 COVID-19 vaccine



162 Tuberculosis



162 food safety



139 safe water

How you reached us

Method of contact:



1,806 phone 817 email 45 other





Oral health

Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)



New OSDCP clients 2022



253 new clients

1,854 OSDCP appointments with community dental providers for all clients

Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO)



332 clients placed on HSO-Emergency **Essential Service** Stream



68 clients received preventive services at HPPH clinics



502 clients received dental screenings (HPPH site clinics and remote clinics)



The school dental screening program resumed for students in kindergarten, grade 2, grade 4, and grade 7

Healthy growth and development

Breastfeeding support

In September, HPPH hosted a one-day breastfeeding refresher educational workshop with Kathy Venter, RN, Retired Midwife, and Certified Lactation Consultant. HPPH staff, local hospital and community health professionals, who work with breastfeeding families, were invited to participate; 32 registrants

Breastfeeding support



969 Breastfeeding Matters resources distributed

Prenatal education



250 people accessed on-line prenatal education

Breastfeeding support

On-going support and training provided to community volunteers offering Breastfeeding Peer Support via MILKS (Mothers **Initiating Lactation** Knowledge and Support)

Guidance with pregnancy



460 Your Guide to a Healthy Pregnancy distributed

Guidance with newborns



1.001 Your Guide to a Healthy Newborn distributed

Guidance with toddlers



131 Your Guide to a Healthy Toddler distributed

School health

Although HPPH and schools worked closely together during COVID response, all non-COVID school health programs were disrupted during the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2022, the School Health Team was pleased to resume planning school health programs; with continued provincial funding for the School-Focused Nurse Initiative, HPPH was able to re-engage with schools on priority programs and support.

HPPH held 47 consultations with public and Catholic schools (approximately 75% of schools) to help plan and prioritize programs and supports. HPPH staff also helped with school-based immunization clinics.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC)

Helping Huron Perth families



HBHC provides home visits to parents who would like support during pregnancy, after the baby is born, and during the early years as the child grows and develops: 64 families participated

MYCC Visits

Mother and Young Child Clinic (MYCC) provides nurse practitioner support to perinatal clients and families with young children that may require primary care services:

1,161 clients

Vaccine-preventable disease

Grade 7 Immunization Community Clinics

HPPH held Grade 7 immunization clinics in the community to help students catch up on routine immunizations. Typically, students receive these immunizations at school-based clinics but COVID response did not allow for school clinics to take place.

Thirteen clinics took place across Huron and Perth. Hepatitis B (Hep B), Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Meningococcal (Men-C-ACYW-135) vaccines were offered. Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap) boosters were also available for secondary school students at these community clinics.



1,299 vaccine doses administered:

Tdap 350

Men-C-ACYW-135 104

Hep B 403

HPV 442



1,435 flu shots

Adverse events following immunization (AEFIs); 8 confirmed

Influenza Clinics

HPPH held influenza immunization (flu shot) clinics for children under age five without a family physician or who were not eligible to be vaccinated at a pharmacy. Influenza doses were also offered during the fall at in-house clinics and at more than 50 COVID-19 vaccine clinics.

Communications

Website: www.hpph.ca

Total visits to webpage

479,824 (↓ 2,605,245 or decrease of 81.58% compared to 2021)

Total unique visitors

240,837 (↓ 707,597 compared to 2021)



January (COVID-19 Omicron surge) had the highest number of website visits Total page views

1,004,256 (↓ 5,676,933 compared to 2021)

Total returning visitors

29,384 (↓ 7,732 compared to 2021)

Top 3 most popular web pages for the year were:



Get a vaccination 211,795 page views (21.1% of total website traffic)



HPPH landing page 163,503 page views (16.3% of total website traffic)



COVID-19 in Huron and Perth 141,555 page views (14.1% of total website traffic)

Communications

Social media: Facebook

@HuronPerthPublicHealth

Total reach



402,434 users

Facebook posts



681 account posts

Social media: Instagram

@huronperthpublichealth

Total reach



20,971 users

Instagram posts



539 account posts

HPPH Facebook page

Total likes and reactions 25,701

Total comments 2,353

Total shares 5,462

Total link clicks 19,998

New followers 518

Unfollowers 237

Total stories 188

Total likes, comments and shares 112

Social media: Twitter (now X) @HPPublicHealth



378,100 impressions*



131 new followers*

*incomplete data due to changes to the platform

Communications

Social media: Twitter (now X)

@huronbeachinfo

This account operates for three months of the year, June to August.



68,700 impressions



94 new followers



Social media numbers continue to grow. The number of new followers, interactions and comments increased. In 2022 more than ever, we saw vulnerabilities in social media, including more emphasis on use of the platforms to spread misinformation.

Media

7 media briefings held (COVID and respiratory illness)



23 COVID-19 media releases issued

14 media releases issued on other topics (e.g. heat warning, dog bite)



www.hpph.ca



1-888-221-2133



hpph@hpph.ca

