



Huron Perth Public Health Annual Report 2024

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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.





Land Acknowledgment

We acknowledge that the land where we are situated is the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, Neutral, and Wendat peoples. Today, this land is still home to Indigenous peoples, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to meet and work on this territory. We recognize the First Peoples' continued stewardship of the land and water, and that this territory was subject to the Dish with One Spoon wampum under which multiple nations agreed to care for the land and resources by the Great Lakes in peace.



We acknowledge and recognize the Upper Canada Treaties signed in regards to this land, which include Treaty #29 and Treaty #45 ½, and our roles and shared responsibilities as treaty people committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation, gratitude, and respect with all Indigenous, First Nation, Métis and Inuit people.



Bernie MacLellan and Todd Kasenberg

Remarks from Chair and Vice-Chair

It is our privilege to present the HPPH 2024 annual report— an opportunity to reflect on our progress, celebrate the work of our dedicated team, and reaffirm our commitment to the health and well-being of residents across Huron and Perth counties.

Over the past year, our work has continued to be anchored in the delivery of core public health services—from protecting the safety of our food and water to preventing disease and promoting health. This work, grounded in evidence and best practices, is essential not only for day-to-day well-being, but for the long-term resilience of our communities.

Recognizing the realities of fiscal restraint, we have worked diligently to make every dollar count. This has meant not only prioritizing programs with the greatest impact but also using strategies such as leveraging technology to improve efficiency.

Partnerships remain a cornerstone of our success. Whether it's collaborating with municipal governments, local healthcare providers, school boards, or community organizations, our shared efforts are strengthening public health in Huron Perth and across Ontario.

On behalf of the Board, we want to thank our dedicated staff, our community partners, and the public for their continued trust and engagement. Together, we are making a meaningful difference.

Thank you.

Bernie MacLellan, Board of Health Chair,
Todd Kasenberg, Board of Health Vice-Chair



Above Top-Bottom: Bernie MacLellan, Board of Health Chair, Todd Kasenberg, Board of Health Vice-Chair

Dr. Miriam Klassen

Remarks from MOH and CEO

This report summarizes work achieved during 2024 on longstanding, core public health programs and services likely familiar to our community, such as Infectious Disease Control, Immunizations, and Healthy Babies Healthy Children.

It also includes several new initiatives which leverage technology, partnerships and latest evidence to achieve public health goals.

These initiatives include:

- HPPH assuming oversight of the Infection Prevention and Control Hub in Huron Perth, including the launch of an IPAC Hub webpage, all aiming to support Congregate Living Settings
- developing and widely sharing a Social Connection Primer, as evidence shows that social connections increase resilience, reduce problematic substance use and improve mental health and well-being
- expanding our Mother and Young Child Clinic sites in partnership with local communities
- implementing a new Municipal Liaison Strategy ensuring structured, effective partnerships with our local municipalities who are key partners in health promotion
- launching a new Outbreak Summary page and a new Opioid tool on our website, enabling our community to easily access important information, and



- launching a new committee and tool to strengthen work on anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion.

The [HPPH 2024–2027 Strategic Plan](#) priorities - Focused Program Delivery, Partner and Community Engagement, Organizational Resilience and Thriving Workforce - provided guidance to make decisions in the context of continued change (including the anticipated release of updated Ontario Public Health Standards in 2025) and fiscal restraint.

I invite you to read this report and learn all the ways HPPH is working to strengthen quality of life and well-being for all residents and visitors in Huron Perth.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all HPPH staff who daily bring dedication, innovation and compassion to their work, and to the board of health for your leadership and support.

2024 Board of Health



BERNIE MACLELLAN
Board of Health Chair
Mayor, Huron East and
Councillor, Huron County



TODD KASENBERG
Board of Health Vice-Chair
Mayor, North Perth and
Councillor, Perth County



MARG ANDERSON
Deputy Mayor, Central
Huron and Councillor,
Huron County



LESLIE BIEHN
Councillor,
City of Stratford



RHONDA EHGOETZ
Mayor, Perth East



SHERYL FEAGAN
Provincial Representative



GEORGE FINCH
Mayor, South Huron and
Councillor, Huron County



MARG LUNA
Councillor,
Town of St. Marys



ROBERT PARKER
Provincial Representative



JARED PETTEPLACE
Provincial Representative



PAUL ROBINSON
Provincial Representative



CODY SEBBEN
Councillor,
City of Stratford

[Photo not available]

BILL VANSTONE
Deputy Mayor, Township of Ashfield-Colborne-Wawanosh and Councillor, Huron County

Management Team

Medical Officer of Health & CEO

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

Rita Marshall

Tanya Patry

Karen Sherwood

Jessica Thompson

Angela Willert

Locations

Clinton

77722B London Road

Listowel

161 Inkerman Street West

Stratford

Festival Square

10 Downie Street

West Gore

653 West Gore Street

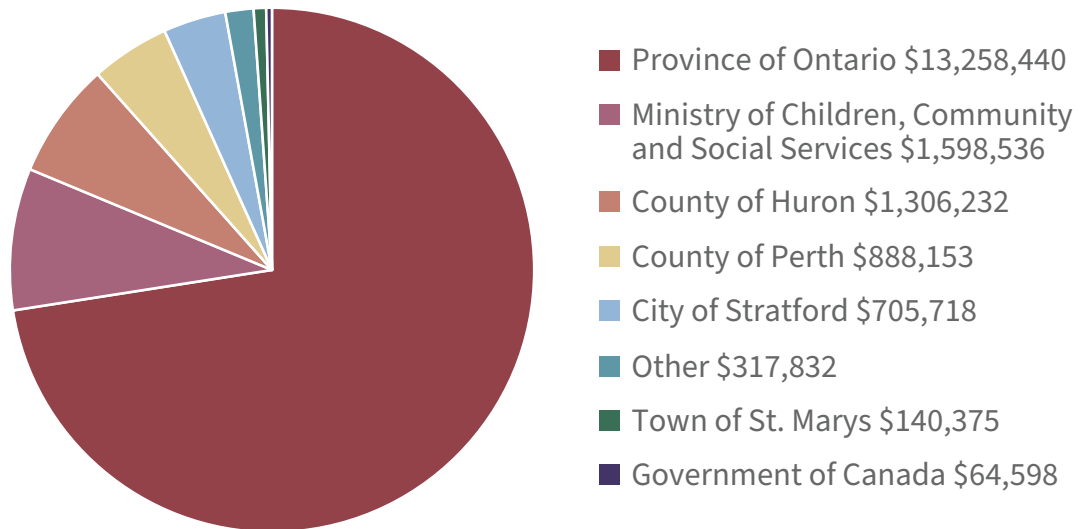


Above L-R: HPPH West Gore and Clinton offices

Financials

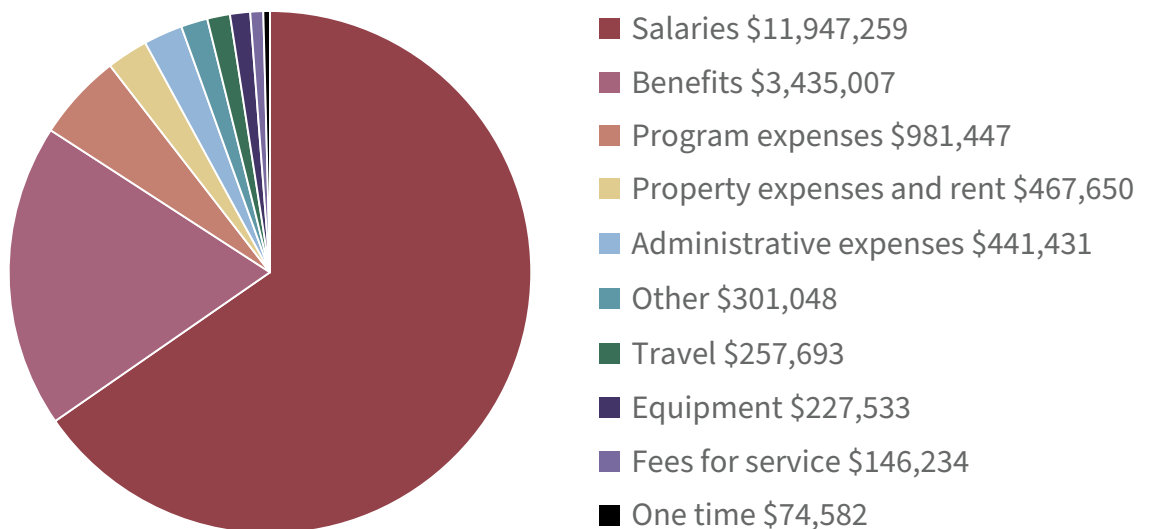
2024 Revenue

\$ 18,279,884



2024 Expenses

\$ 18,279,884



Health Protection

Infectious Diseases



Under the Ontario *Health Protection and Promotion Act* (HPPA), HPPH is required to follow up on reports of suspected and/or confirmed outbreaks of gastrointestinal and respiratory illnesses in retirement and long-term care homes. There were 73 outbreaks declared in these facilities in 2024.

Respiratory Disease	Outbreaks
Other*	29
COVID-19	20
Influenza	7
Gastrointestinal Disease	Outbreaks
Gastroenteritis	17

*Human metapneumovirus, Parainfluenza, Respiratory syncytial virus, Rhinovirus, Seasonal Coronavirus, unknown respiratory)

In October of 2024, the HPPH infectious disease team launched the online [Outbreak Summary 2024-25](#).

The outbreak summary on the HPPH website reflects all open and closed respiratory and gastrointestinal outbreaks in Huron Perth long-term care homes, retirement homes and hospitals starting from August 25, 2024. Updated regularly, the information is viewable to all facilities and the public. Previously, this information was sent as an email to individual facilities.

Health professionals and HPPH 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 (DoPHS) in Ontario. There were 339 DoPHS (excluding sexually transmitted infections and COVID-19) reported to HPPH in 2024. The top five were:

Disease	# Reported
Influenza	104
Campylobacter enteritis	70
Pertussis (whooping cough)	37
Cryptosporidiosis	29
Salmonellosis	27

There were 14 deaths from COVID-19 from January 1 - December 31, 2024 (outcome date).

Health Protection

Infectious Diseases

IPAC (Infection Prevention and Control) Hub

In the fall of 2020, the Ministry of Health established Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) hubs to strengthen IPAC practices in congregate living settings (CLSs) across Ontario, such as long-term care, retirement homes, community and social services, shelters and supportive housing.

From early in the pandemic through to December 2023, Huron and Perth IPAC hub programming was provided through the Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance. After pandemic and emergency response activities, HPPH was able to dedicate staff to support the transition of the IPAC hub from Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance to HPPH in January of 2024.

Regionally, the Huron Perth IPAC hub is a partner within the Southwest IPAC hub, which includes Southwestern Public Health and the Middlesex-London Health Unit. This partnership is an opportunity to create and share resources and learnings with one another. The partnership produces a quarterly newsletter that is a combined effort of the Southwest IPAC membership and focuses on facility needs and emerging infectious disease trends.

Huron Perth Public Health IPAC Hub Role

Since initiation, the hub's purpose has shifted from a reactive response role during the pandemic to proactive outreach and engagement with congregate settings. There will always be a risk of emergency or emerging threat: preparation and skills to manage the emergency are important. A key role of the hub is to build capacity in those who are responsible for infection prevention and control in congregate care settings, through education, training and mentoring.

Other services provided to congregate settings include:

- Development of education and training programs and materials
- Supportive IPAC visits and consultations
- Assistance with IPAC self-assessments
- Coaching/mentoring on IPAC practices
- Outbreak management planning
- Facilitation of a community of practice
- Best practice recommendations and implementation support

Health Protection

Infectious Diseases



Educational Supports and Knowledge Exchange

Throughout 2024, the IPAC hub facilitated virtual Community of Practice meetings with community partners including long-term care homes, retirement homes and other congregate settings. The meetings have been consistently well attended with strong engagement. Opportunity for member introduction, dialogue and information sharing have contributed to the success of the Community of Practice.

In late spring of 2024, a newly created HPPH IPAC hub webpage went live. This webpage is primarily a resource repository for community partners and public health staff.

Intra-Agency Collaboration

The IPAC hub has ongoing collaborative work with the infectious diseases, immunizations, and environmental health teams at HPPH. This intra-agency collaboration of public health teams in turn supports congregate settings in regards to outbreak management, vaccine access, education opportunities and prevention of disease transmission.

Health Protection

Immunizations

School-based Program

HPPH provides in-school immunization clinics for routine Grade 7 and Grade 10 immunizations. In 2024, we provided:

- 102 clinics
- 3,640 total immunizations

Disease/Vaccine	Doses
Hepatitis B (Hep B)	1,270
Human Papillomavirus (HPV)	1,250
Tetanus, Diphtheria and Pertussis (Tdap)	669
Meningitis (Men-C-ACYW-135)	451



Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) 2023-2024 school year

- 5,126 first notices sent home via schools (Dec 2023/Jan 2024)
- 2,481 second notices mailed (Mar/Apr 2024)
- 1,551 suspension notices mailed
- 97 students suspended as of May 23, 2024
- 9.9 per cent of students have an exemption on file for ISPA related vaccines (medical, philosophical and administrative combined)

COVID-19 and Influenza

In the fall of 2024, HPPH focus for COVID-19 and influenza vaccines was on children 11 years and younger. Staff administered 588 COVID-19 doses and 218 influenza doses.

HPPH identified St. Marys as an underserved area for COVID-19 vaccine and held two vaccine clinics at the Pyramid Recreation Centre in partnership with Happy Valley Family Health Team who provided flu shots.

Above: Public health nurses, Erin Heinbuch and Ruth Ann Ogilvie, prepare for an immunization clinic.

Health Protection

Immunizations

Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFIs)

An adverse event following immunization (AEFI) is an unwanted or unexpected health effect that happens after someone receives a vaccine, which may or may not be caused by the vaccine. The unwanted or unexpected health effect could be a laboratory finding, symptom or disease. Most AEFI reports are submitted by healthcare providers, who are mandated to report all AEFIs by the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. AEFI reports may also be submitted by vaccine recipients or their caregivers.

Each AEFI report pertains to one individual vaccine recipient who experiences one or more adverse events within a certain timeline after receiving one or more vaccines. In Ontario, all AEFI investigations are conducted by local public health agencies (LPHA), as part of post marketing safety surveillance, and in accordance with provincial surveillance guidance.

HPPH investigated 31 possible AEFIs in 2024. Of those 31 investigations, HPPH reported to the Ministry of Health 27 AEFIs with four additional reports classified as Does Not Meet. Of the 27 AEFIs reported to the Ministry of Health, two of those met the serious definition and were managed as anaphylaxis.

Infectious Disease Agents	# AEFIs
COVID-19 - Comirnaty - Pfizer-Biontech	10
Influenza	8
Herpes Zoster virus (RZV)	6
Diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis (whooping cough), polio, and Haemophilus influenzae type b (DTaP-IPV-Hib pediatric)	5
Mpox/Smallpox virus (SMV)	3
Measles, Mumps, Rubella (MMR)	2
Meningococcal disease Men-C-C	2
Pneumococcal disease Pneu-C-13	2
Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis (Tdap)	2
COVID-19 - Spikevax - Moderna	2
Pneumococcal disease Pneu-C-20	1
Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV)	1
Meningococcal disease Men-C-ACWY	1

Health Protection

Environmental Health

The environmental health team continued to focus on essential activities to protect health, prevent and reduce health hazards, and mitigate disease risks associated with both built and natural environments.

HPPH continued to add to our online disclosure website, “Check What We Inspect”. In 2024, institutional food service kitchens were added. This will allow members of the public to access food safety inspection results for hospitals, childcare centres, long-term care homes and retirement homes.

An enforcement section has also been added where the public can review any enforcement activities such as tickets or public health orders that have been brought against an inspected premises along with the outcomes of each.

HPPH is planning to add personal service setting inspections (hair salons, aesthetics, tattoo studios, etc.) as well as recreational water facility inspections (public pools, spas, splash pads and wading pools) to “Check What We Inspect” in 2025.

Other disclosures available at [Inspections and Disclosures](#) include status of beach water quality and convictions of tobacco and e-cigarette retailers.

Public Inquiries and Investigations

HPPH completed 2,071 public inquiries and investigations in 2024. The top five topic areas were: rabies (626), food safety (453), safe water (363), health hazards (226) and special events (200).

Inspections

Public health inspectors completed 2,965 inspections in 2024 (up 43 per cent from 2023), consisting of compliance (2,397), re-inspections (500), complaint (48) and pre-opening inspections (20).

Beach Water Sampling

- Sampled 17 locations across Huron Perth
- Collected 1,031 samples over 25 testing days from mid-June to end of August; received 39 adverse results (high bacteria levels)

Vector-borne and Zoonotic Disease Monitoring

West Nile virus

- 14 weeks of mosquito trapping occurred
- 219 traps were collected
- Three positive tests for West Nile virus were found in mosquito populations

Progressive Enforcement

- 67 Small Drinking Water Systems (SDWS) warnings provided for lack of sampling in 2024.
- 6 tickets issued
- 6 Section 13 orders issued

A public health inspector may issue an order under Section 13 of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, 1990. This happens when they are of the opinion, upon reasonable and probable grounds, that a health hazard exists and that the requirements specified in the order are necessary to decrease the effect of, or to eliminate, the health hazard.

Population Health

Health Promotion and Well-Being

Built Environment and Municipal Liaison Strategy

HPPH shifted to a more structured approach to partnering with our 17 municipalities in 2024 to help support coordination, reduce duplication, and improve understanding of local community context. This approach helps inform programming, establish or strengthen relationships with municipalities, and support municipalities in how they interact with public health.

In 2024, the Municipal Liaison Strategy included both the creation of essential program documents and supports, as well as the execution of the strategy itself. In 2024, nine HPPH and municipal alignment meetings occurred, which resulted in 74 action items. Outcomes from some municipal interactions:

- Submitted feedback to Perth County's and South Huron's Official Plans.
- Participated in community consultations and submitted feedback for recreation and leisure master plans in West Perth and St. Marys.
- Initiated support for City of Stratford's and County of Huron's Smoking and Vaping By-Law review.
- Provided best practice recommendations for North Huron's Municipal Alcohol Policy.
- Co-planned Sustainable Huron's "Healthy Aging in Huron" meeting.
- Amplified local voices in provincial circles for rural transportation issues.

Healthy Eating Behaviours

The public health dietitian completed the 2023 Monitoring Food Affordability (MFA) report and sent out a media release, which garnered eight media interviews and two additional media requests. MFA data were shared with community partners across Huron and Perth. HPPH staff attended a training for new menu planning resources for childcare centres, and developed a list of suggested recipes for community partners. Staff presented revised menu planning resources to Huron County Childcare centres. In addition, staff provided training on new menu planning resources to the Huron County Licensed Home Childcare Centres as well as reviewed North Perth Childcare Centre fall/winter menu and drafted a simplified allergy list for Clinton Childcare Centre. Staff worked with a Huron Perth registered dietitian to create a weight stigma infographic and supporting document.



Above: HPPH public health promoters and HPPH manager of health promotion and well-being team attend Perth County Municipal Day, November 20, 2024 at the Perth East Recreation Complex, Milverton.

Population Health

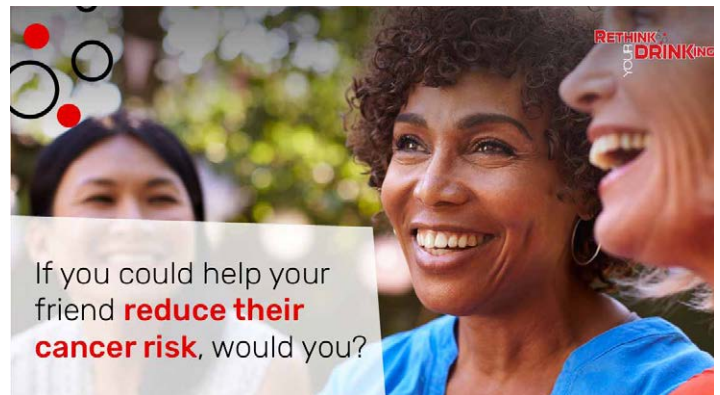
Health Promotion and Well-Being

Mental Well-Being

HPPH prioritized work related to social connection as a key protective factor for improving mental well-being, reducing problematic substance use, and strengthening individual and community resilience. Key highlights related to social connection work include:

- A 30-minute keynote on public health, protective factors and social connection to an audience of over 90 municipal staff and councillors at Perth County Municipal Day.
- Developed Social Connection Primer for Municipalities resource and launched it at Perth County Municipal Day.
- Made linkages to both Huron and Perth Community Safety and Well-being tables related to social connection.
- Included Social Connection language in the policy recommendations considerations for two official plans and two recreation master plans.

HPPH is the current chair of the Huron Perth Mental Health Promotion working group. This group includes partners from mental health and addictions agencies, school boards, primary care, and libraries. This group has three key priorities: improving mental health literacy; increasing knowledge exchange between partners; and improving social connection, specifically related to social prescribing. This group functions in an advisory role to help co-design mental health promotion work and is accountable to the Huron Perth & Area Ontario Health Team's Mental Health & Addiction Working Group.



Substance Use

HPPH participated in a campaign in the fall of 2024 to promote the updated “Rethink Your Drinking” website. The campaign, targeted at women aged 30 to 60, set out to raise awareness about alcohol-related harms and Canada's new guidance on alcohol and health. The campaign consisted of a series of social media ads and fell into three key themes – Alcohol and Cancer, Exploring Alcohol (including the new alcohol guidance and the “Rethink Your Drinking” website in general), and Understanding the Effects of Alcohol.

HPPH also purchased local media and participated in a provincial “Before the Floor” campaign. The “Before the Floor” campaign was an online harm reduction campaign that used peer crowd audience segmentation to target a young adult population that is at risk of binge drinking. High-level metrics for the 2024 provincial campaign include 6,881,594 impressions and 11,140 engagements, which includes likes, comments, shares, saves and clicks.

In 2024, HPPH distributed a total of 280 tobacco Quit Kits to local healthcare partners.

Population Health

Health Promotion and Well-Being



Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017

In 2024, tobacco enforcement officers received a total of 163 *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* complaints. Of the 163, approximately 81 per cent came from schools, predominantly from student vaping infractions.

In 2024, there were 114 vape vendors and 103 tobacco vendors across Huron and Perth counties. HPPH sent a memo to all tobacco and vape proprietors in Huron and Perth to outline information and restrictions specific to nicotine pouches.

Reproductive Health

306 expectant persons from Huron and Perth Counties registered for the online prenatal course available through HPPH.

Infant Feeding

In November, HPPH hosted two one-day breastfeeding refresher educational workshops with Kathy Venter, RN, CLC (Certified Lactation Consultant) and retired midwife. Over the two workshops, there was participation from 25 HPPH staff, local hospital, and community health professionals who work with breastfeeding families.

Injury Prevention

HPPH brokered collaboration between Public Health Ontario (PHO) and the former South West Injury Prevention Network to enable the first data sharing and analysis agreement between PHO and Ministry of Transportation. This is a necessary advancement in rural and northern Ontario's capacity to identify and act on issues of rural road safety.

HPPH actively facilitates opportunities for community partners to understand and mobilize on critical issues to prevent serious motor vehicle collisions.

Population Health

Health Equity

Ongoing Commitment to Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion

The Board of Health recognizes that an ongoing commitment is required to keep anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion strategies moving forward. Following staff training in 2023, in 2024 the HPPH Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (AREDI) Committee was established. The AREDI Committee provides leadership and helps operationalize approaches including:

- fostering inclusive environments
- defining supportive organizational processes
- increasing opportunities for learning
- participating in brave discussions
- championing anti-racism, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Above right: Public health nurse, Donna Parsons, with *Makwa at Sunset* at HPPH Clinton site; artwork commissioned from Sean Couchie.

Below right: *Water Guardians* at HPPH West Gore site; artwork commissioned from Sean Couchie.



Population Health

Health Equity

Commitment to Promote and Protect Indigenous Peoples Health and Well-being

HPPH's Indigenous Public Health Action Sub-Committee (IPHASC), which operates under the AREDI Committee, informs strategic direction and plans for actions supporting Indigenous reconciliation and Indigenous health equity. Key actions of this sub-committee in 2024 included:

- Completion of the HPPH commitment statement that focuses on Indigenous Peoples health and well-being.
- Development of a strategy to recognize dates of significance that celebrate and honour Indigenous Peoples culture, traditions and history. These will be formally recognized across the organization in 2025.
- Partnering with a local Indigenous Educator to support staff learning and the integration of Indigenous-focused, culturally appropriate public health.

Building Relationships and Engaging with Partners on Indigenous Health and Well-being

Health equity staff continued to support the Kaswentha Two Row Now Indigenous led-community group, who focus on education and awareness, as well as the Huron Perth Indigenous Community of Practice. These connections provided the opportunity to expand our engagement, planning and collaborative efforts with community partners on local Indigenous focused initiatives.

At the provincial level, HPPH is an active member of the Public Health Indigenous Engagement Network, where public health units across Ontario meet to share resources and learnings.

Population Health

Health Equity

New Tool to Support Health Equity in Local Public Health Work

The Health Equity Team developed the *HPPH Anti-Racism, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Lens* to further support the team's role in providing guidance to HPPH staff on how to best embed health equity into our programs and services. The Lens is a tool for HPPH staff to identify individual and team learning goals, and to support community engagement, removal of barriers to equity, and promotion of upstream thinking. Feedback from experts at the National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health was integrated into the Lens throughout development.

HPPH Lived Experience Expert Panel Helps Shape Local Solutions

HPPH's Lived Experience Expert Panel (LEEP) is a virtual panel of community members aged 18 and older with lived experience of one or more systems such as social assistance, courts, child welfare, education, and/or healthcare etc., and who have experienced discrimination based on the social determinants of health. *LEEP: The First Four Years Report* was released in March 2024 and summarizes the survey questions that were asked of panelists and describes how the information provided by the LEEP was used to help shape solutions in Huron and Perth. [LEEP: The First Four Years Report](#) [PDF] is available on our HPPH website.



Above: HPPH social media artwork.

Population Health

School Health and Vision Health

HPPH offers a variety of resources, supports and services to schools to promote the health and well-being of students and the school community. Using a comprehensive school health approach, we work with school boards, administrators, educators, and community agencies to create an environment that will make a positive impact on student health and learning.

During the 2023-24 school year, HPPH piloted a new way of delivering school health supports that is rooted in health equity and the social determinants of health. This new approach provided health promotion support to all schools ('universal supports') and offered more support to some schools where families need it most ('enhanced supports').

Through our Universal Supports, all schools could access a school health public health nurse (PHN) for questions and consultation via a dedicated phone number and email address for schools. They could also find a variety of teaching and health promotion resources on our Educator webpage.

Through our Enhanced Supports, six schools received support with health promotion initiatives from a school health PHN who was assigned to the school. PHNs had almost 200 interactions with these schools, delivering various health promotion programs/supports to about 900 students, covering food skills and nutrition, substance use prevention, playground leadership, healthy relationships, and other topics.



Vision Screening

HPPH works in partnership with the University of Waterloo's School of Vision Science and Optometry and local Lions Clubs to offer vision screening to all senior kindergarten students in Huron and Perth counties. Vision screening helps to identify visual health concerns and connect families with a local optometrist. In the 2023-24 school year, vision screening was offered at 53 schools. Through those visits, 1,278 students were screened and 545 students were referred to an optometrist.

Community and Family Health

Sexual Health and Harm Reduction



Clinic Appointments

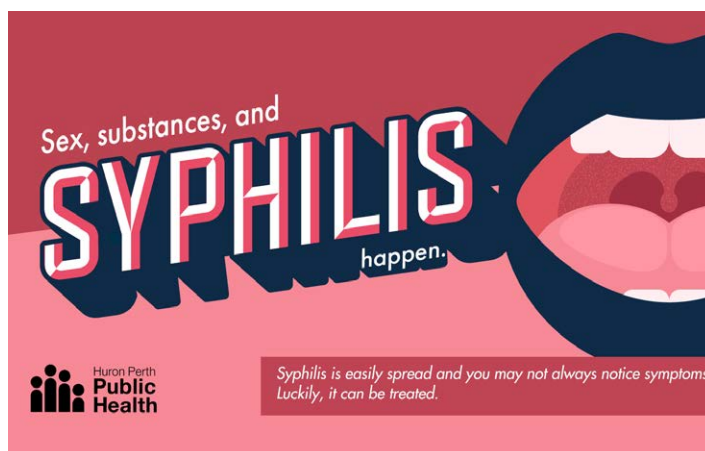
In 2024, there were 3,286 appointments at HPPH sexual health clinics. The top reason for attending a clinic was sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing.

There were 329 lab-confirmed sexually transmitted and blood borne infections reported to HPPH.

Naloxone kits

HPPH offers naloxone kits and training to help people who use drugs. Naloxone is a medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and allow time for medical help to arrive. In 2024, staff distributed 2,666 naloxone doses to clients and to community partners for further distribution.

Above: Public health nurse, Kate Underwood, demonstrates a typical clinic appointment.



Syphilis Awareness Campaign

The syphilis awareness campaign ran from October 15 to December 31, 2024. It aimed to increase awareness of the rising number of syphilis cases in the province, including Huron and Perth, and to promote testing and treatment at HPPH sexual health clinics. The paid advertising campaign featured five eye-catching social media graphics (one example above), which were displayed primarily on Instagram and geared to populations 25 years of age and older. Some content was also posted on HPPH social media pages, such as the importance of being tested for syphilis in the first trimester of pregnancy. The advertising campaign resulted in over 3,500 clicks to the HPPH sexual health clinics webpage.

Above: HPPH social media artwork.

Community and Family Health

Oral Health



Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO)

Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) is a free dental program for eligible children and youth 17 years old and under from low-income households. Through HSO, HPPH offers free preventive dental health services to eligible children and youth from families living with low income, and for children and youth who are identified through dental screening at school.

- In 2024, 617 children were enrolled into HSO.
- 514 children received preventive services at HPPH clinics.

Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)

- 96 unique clients were enrolled in the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Plan with 1,292 completed appointments.
- In 2024, we had agreements with 11 general dental providers, two specialist offices (endodontist and oral surgeon) and three denturists to facilitate enrollment in and provision of the OSDCP program.
- These dental offices service Exeter, Goderich, Milverton, Mitchell, Seaforth, St. Marys, Stratford and Wingham. In addition, clients are able to access local denture clinics in Clinton, Goderich and Stratford.

HPPH Dental Screening

- 992 children received dental screening (HPPH site clinics, non-school and remote clinics).
- 7,400 children were screened in schools (JK, SK, Grades 2, 4 and 7).
- 393 children identified at school were eligible for HSO-Emergency Essential Services Stream.
- Staff helped connect families to the Healthy Smiles Ontario program and to the Canadian Dental Care Plan as needed.

Community and Family Health

Healthy Babies Healthy Children and Anabaptist Community Work



Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC)

The Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) program provides home visits to parents who would like support during pregnancy, after the baby is born, and/or during the early years as the child grows and develops. This includes information and support on pregnancy, breastfeeding and infant feeding, growth and development, parent-child attachment, and referral to other programs and services. A total of 105 families received HBHC home visiting services in 2024.

Mother and Young Child Clinic (MYCC)

Mother and Young Child Clinic (MYCC) provides nurse practitioner services to perinatal clients and families with young children in Anabaptist communities who may experience barriers to accessing primary care.

In the fall of 2024, the clinic expanded to two sites in Huron County. Those clinic locations were established with the support, involvement, and endorsement of community members.

In 2024, there were a total of 1,244 visits (626 unique clients). Half of all appointments were for Well Visits such as well child, prenatal, and postpartum. Immunizations were administered at 33 per cent of visits. Also of note, 33 per cent (n=405) of all visits were for clients with no OHIP. Low German translation was provided during 24 per cent (n=297) of visits.

Foundational Standards

Communications

HPPH New Website

HPPH’s website provider switched to a new platform in 2024, which meant a rebuild of the HPPH website. To help design the rebuild, HPPH released a navigation survey to staff, partners and the general public.

The new website, launched in June 2024, includes consolidated information for the public and health professionals, a dedicated section for inspections and reports, as well as a home page with links to popular or timely public health topics.

The HPPH website welcomed 132,638 visits and 91,003 unique visitors in 2024. The five most popular pages from the launch in June to December 2024 were:

- [Beach Water Quality](#),
- [HPPH home page](#),
- [Careers](#),
- [COVID-19 Vaccine](#), and
- [Sexual Health Clinics](#)



Media Relations

In 2024, HPPH issued 24 media releases, provided 27 media interviews and were mentioned in 222 media articles.

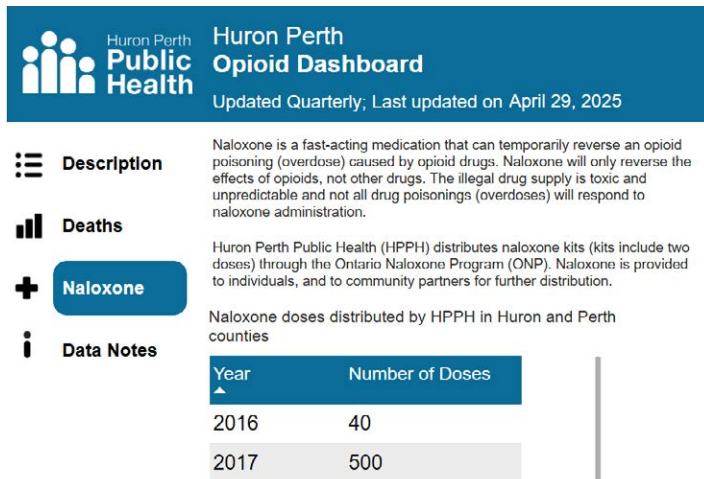
Social Media	Visits	Views*
Facebook	24,400	639,500
Instagram	3,200	256,100

*The number of times a video, post or ad was played or displayed.

Above: HPPH social media artwork.

Foundational Standards

Surveillance, Health Assessment, Research and Evaluation



In 2024, the SHARE team (surveillance, health assessment, research and evaluation) continued to complete work in the areas of population health assessment, program monitoring and evaluation, as well as building staff capacity in these areas.

In terms of population health assessment, two major projects were done in 2024. First, an opioid dashboard was developed for the HPPH website, to provide a public reference for tracking any increases in overdose deaths or near deaths so that we can alert our partners and the community. The dashboard was launched in January 2025.

Second, the SHARE team developed a process for efficient data collection and analysis for gastrointestinal outbreaks, where timely data collection and analysis is required to manage the outbreak and determine the source. This process involved a reliable process to gather gastrointestinal symptom timeline data from cases and develop a syntax to rapidly and reliably analyze the data.

The SHARE team also contributed to several evaluation projects over the course of 2024, including survey-based evaluations and long-term monitoring projects. Some examples include evaluation tool development for the school health “My Brain My Choice” program, completion of an internal staff evaluation to measure confidence in using the integrated Public Health Information System (iPHIS) database, an evaluation of the IPAC hub’s first year of service, and an evaluation of the breastfeeding refresher training course HPPH facilitated. The team was also involved in implementing a broader evaluation strategy for both the environmental health disclosure program and the municipal liaison approach. Additionally, the team helped to develop the *LEEP: The First Four Years Report*, and facilitated the ongoing development of the Program Planning Toolbox.

Above left: Huron Perth Opioid Dashboard on the HPPH website.



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