



**LAMBTON PUBLIC HEALTH  
STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019**



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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### Funding Acknowledgement

Lambton Public Health programs are funded primarily by the County of Lambton, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth Services. In addition, some of our projects are funded through grants from community agencies.

### Partners In Public Health

Lambton Public Health works in partnership with many local agencies to fulfil its mandate. These partners include municipalities, school boards, health care providers, police, fire departments, Emergency Medical Services, workplaces and business partners, children's agencies and service providers, non-profits and service clubs.

Several of our partners were consulted during the development of this strategic plan, including:

Bluewater Health,  
Canadian Mental Health Association,  
Chatham-Kent Public Health Unit,  
City of Sarnia,  
County of Lambton Planning and Development Services Department,  
County of Lambton Social Services Division,

County of Lambton Warden,  
County of Lambton CAO,  
Erie St. Clair LHIN,  
Inn of the Good Shepherd,  
Lambton Area Water Supply System,  
Lambton Elderly Outreach,  
Lambton-Kent District School Board,  
Middlesex-London Health Unit,  
North Lambton Community Health Centre,  
Rapids Family Health Team,  
Sarnia Lambton Workforce Development Board,  
Sarnia Lambton Children's Aid Society,  
Sarnia Police Services/Emergency Response,  
St. Clair Child & Youth Services,  
St. Clair County Health Department,  
and St. Clair Catholic District School Board.



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Vision

Lambton County is a community that supports all people to strive for safety, health, and well-being.

## Mission

Public Health works with the community to: assess, promote and protect health, prevent disease and injury, and advocate for healthy public policy.

## Strategic Priorities

Our six strategic priorities represent a collective recognition that we have work to do both inside and outside our organization.

Internally, we have three areas of focus: **Governance, Communication, and Organizational Capacity.**

First, we want to strengthen our governance model and help our management and Board to be leaders in public health. Second, we want to identify and communicate how public health brings value to the community and to our partners. Third, we want to develop the current generation and support the next generation of public health professionals.

Externally, we have priorities in three domains: **Healthy Child and Youth Development, Healthy Aging, and Healthy Environments.**

First, we want to help children and youth to be healthy, resilient, and prepared for their future. We will take a systems approach to detecting and treating physical, mental, and social concerns. As children grow into adults, their health needs change but the need to stay healthy

is the same. Our focus on adulthood is on healthy aging throughout the lifespan, and we will promote the development of age-friendly communities in Lambton County. Finally, people need healthy environments in which to live. We will work to ensure that public health issues are considered in municipal policies and plans, and we will communicate information about environmental health risks to the public in a timely manner.

Our work in these six priority areas will help us to protect and promote the health of everyone in Lambton County.

## Values

With a goal of health for all, our values are **C.L.E.A.R.**

**Collaboration** - We work with many partners to deliver programs and services that meet the needs of our community.

**Leadership** - We advocate, inspire, and empower our community, partners, and staff to influence positive change.

**Equity** - We commit to reducing barriers so all people can achieve their full health potential.

**Accountability** - We provide accurate, transparent, and timely information with a commitment to protecting privacy and confidentiality.

**Respect** - We act and serve with integrity and treat all people with dignity.





# INTRODUCTIONS

## Todd Case, Warden



On behalf of Lambton County Council, I am pleased to present to you the Strategic Plan for public health in the County of Lambton. This plan will help guide Lambton County Council, acting as the Board of Health, and its public health staff to support all residents in the pursuit of healthy, happy, and safe lifestyles. Public Health provides meaningful resources, clinics, programs and services to all corners of the community. Developing a plan such as this will help position Council to effectively advocate for the progression of public health policy, equip our staff to respond to the unique and growing demands of our community, and prepare community leaders for the potential of significant health events.

In its corporate Strategic Plan, the County of Lambton outlines a belief in a healthy community. Our staff and community stakeholders are enthusiastic about advancing that goal. So, I invite you to review the contents and share your thoughts with our dedicated team. It will take collaboration from us all to continue to be a healthy and robust community.

## Andrew Taylor, General Manager, Public Health Services Division



It is my distinct pleasure to present the shared vision for public health over the next five years. As leaders in local public health, our vision aligns with the new strategic direction of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, as well as the County of Lambton Strategic Plan. I am confident the organization is strategically positioned to successfully meet future needs and service demands of residents, visitors and community stakeholders going forward.

Our dedicated, knowledgeable and skilled staff are committed to the organization's new goals, mission and values. The strength of our organization is demonstrated through our multi-disciplinary approach to identifying local needs and working with our community partners. I encourage you to review the vision, mission and priorities that our staff and public health stakeholders have identified for the organization and as always, please feel free to share your comments with us.

## Dr. Sudit Ranade, Medical Officer of Health



On behalf of all of us, I am pleased to present our 2014-2019 Strategic Plan! This plan is the result of several months of work by the Strategic Planning Working Group and the Writing Team. We looked at our mandate and at the work of other health units, the County of Lambton, and the Ontario Public Health Sector. We asked our partners and our staff to think about what we should do, and how we should do it, in order to ensure the continued health of children and adults in Lambton County. Our vision: *Lambton County is a community that supports all people to strive for safety, health, and well-being.*

We look forward to working with you to make it happen - in fact, we can't get there without you!

# PROFILE OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND LAMBTON COUNTY

Lambton County is home to 126,000 residents, a population base that has remained stable for over 20 years. Sarnia is the County's largest population and urban centre, surrounded by picturesque rural towns and farmland, with a rich agricultural heritage. Our region has beautiful beaches, parks, and trails making it a very attractive place to live, work and play. Looking to the future, our civic leaders are working to position the area for sustainable growth and development.

## Social Determinants of Health

Health is determined by many factors outside the health care system. These include income, education, early childhood development and social connections.

### Education

**42%** of adults age 25-64 have no post-secondary education.

### Readiness to Learn

**23%** of children in Sr. Kindergarten are not ready to learn at school.

### Housing

**43%** of adults spend more than 30% of their income on shelter.

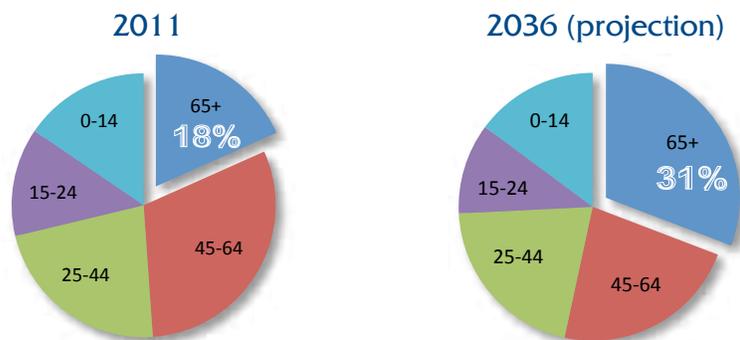
Sources: Intellihealth Ontario, Canadian Community Health Survey 2011/12, National Household Survey 2011, Ontario Early Years Centre Lambton Kent-Middlesex.

## Population Trends

Our population is getting older, as the "baby boomer" generation enter their retirement years. The pie charts below illustrate the increase in the number of older adults that is projected between now and the year 2036.

This demographic trend has important implications for public health, as well as for health care and social service providers.

## Proportion of Lambton County Residents by Age Group, 2011 - 2036



## Aiming for 10 out of 10

### Immunization

3 of 10 Lambton adults got their flu shot in 2012.

### Physical Activity

6 of 10 Lambton adults met the guidelines for daily physical activity.

### Nutrition

4 of 10 Lambton adults are eating enough fruits and vegetables.

### Tobacco

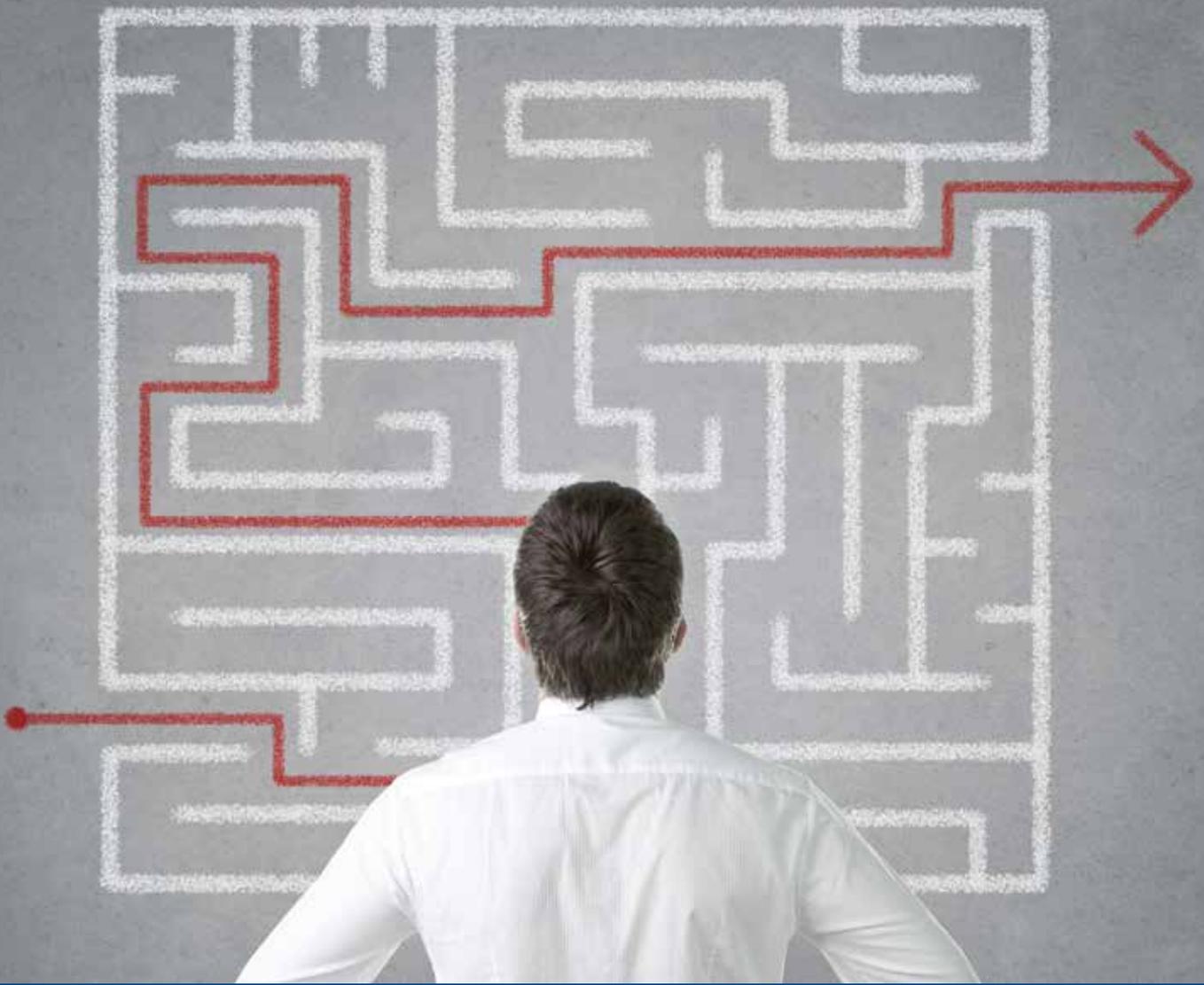
7.5 of 10 Lambton adults are non-smokers.

### Mental Health

7.5 of 10 Lambton adults perceive their mental health as good or very good.

### Alcohol

7 of 10 Lambton adults meet the Canadian Low Risk Drinking Guidelines.



## OUR STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

Lambton Public Health began a strategic planning process in November 2012. Our goal was to create a strategy that would direct the planning and delivery of our programs and services over the next 5 years. The plan includes a statement of the Vision, Mission and Values that guide the work that we do.

An internal workgroup used Appreciative Inquiry principles to develop the plan. This meant learning about what we do well, what we should be doing, and determining what our ideal strategic directions and priorities should look like.

The strategic planning process involved engaging internal staff and external partners to understand their experiences, opinions, and resources. Three methods were used: staff surveys, staff focus groups, and external key informant interviews. This input provided support for the proposed strategic directions and priorities, as well as material to inform next steps. Our next step will be to create implementation teams which will have the responsibility of moving the strategic plan to an operational level.





# DOMAINS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

## COMMUNICATION

The ability to communicate who we are, what we do and what value we provide to the community is integral to our success.

### Priority Statement

Build a strong brand for public health in Lambton County by:

- a) Identifying a value proposition and identity for public health programs and services;
- b) Improving the efficiency and co-ordination of internal communications; and
- c) Developing and implementing a comprehensive external communications plan.

Much of the work public health conducts relies on the ability to successfully communicate information in a timely, accurate and clear manner. Whether it is routine communication to the public of upcoming parenting clinics, or a public health emergency such as the outbreak of SARS in 2003; we must ensure that we remain a trusted voice for public health information.

The development of a brand takes time and internal co-ordination. We intend to create a unique identity that reflects who we are, what we do, and the value we provide for the community.

*“It would be great to expand the public’s idea of what we do to make this community a better, safer and healthier place to live and work.”*

**Staff Survey Participant**



## GOVERNANCE

Behind every successful organization is a functional governance model. A complete governance model addresses how we make decisions, how we conduct our work, how we measure success and how we report to our stakeholders.

### Priority Statement

Strengthen our governance model by:

- a) Improving accountability and reporting processes;
- b) Communicating our structure and decision-making process to staff and relevant stakeholders; and
- c) Building leadership capacity among management and the Board of Health.

*In the past 5 years the Board of Health has protected and promoted health by:*

- *responding to H1N1 influenza, a Cyclospora outbreak and a major winter storm emergency;*
- *supporting tobacco-free public spaces;*
- *continuing community drinking water fluoridation;*
- *raising awareness of the social determinants of health;*
- *endorsing the Sarnia-Lambton Food Charter; and*
- *implementing the DineSafe food safety program.*

# ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY

Our team of multi-disciplinary public health professionals is the strongest asset that we have. To utilize this strength we need to ensure that our staff has the most current information, expertise and tools to provide the best service to the community.

## Priority Statement

Support workforce development and organizational capacity in public health by:

- a) Promoting continuous education, core competencies and professional development;
- b) Implementing evidence-informed decision-making and relevant best practices;
- c) Enhancing recruitment, retention and succession planning;
- d) Providing mentors for staff and preceptors for students; and
- e) Facilitating internal knowledge sharing and collaboration.

Lambton Public Health is dedicated to being an organization of continuous improvement and efficient, effective program delivery. In order to achieve these goals, it is essential that we strengthen the capacity of our public health workforce.

Enhancing capacity requires a supportive environment and a culture of excellence that is embraced by all public health staff. By leveraging existing professional development resources and identifying new resources to fill the gaps we can build a supportive environment for our workforce.

*“We have a great reciprocal relationship. They shape our thinking as well as providing services; we offer support to one another. When we find ourselves in a tough situation the support of the Medical Officer of Health is key. They have an enormous profile in the community and are seen as experts and leaders with an objective, scientific view and with research and data to support their position.”*

**Key Informant Interview Participant**





## HEALTHY CHILD AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

A person's lifetime health is shaped in large part by the time they reach young adulthood. The early identification of physical, mental and social developmental issues is critical for every child's future safety, health, and well-being.

By reaching future parents and children before birth, and even before conception, public health professionals and partners have a unique and important opportunity to influence a child's health in ways that will last a lifetime.

### Priority Statement

To co-ordinate the creation and maintenance of early identification systems to promote optimal physical, mental and social growth and development by:

- a) Building on existing initiatives in the community;
- b) Training public health staff and stakeholders;
- c) Evaluating existing systems of early identification; and
- d) Supporting policies and interventions that optimize healthy development.

*We need will and skill to move Ontario towards an integrated and comprehensive system of child and family services. We need the backing of all political parties and successive governments to succeed over the long term. We will all be learning along the way about how to make programs better each day for children and their families.*

**Charles Pascal - With Our Best Future in Mind, 2009**



## HEALTHY AGING

Aging is a continuous process that occurs throughout a person's life. Healthy aging can help to reduce the burden of chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer, obesity and diabetes. A healthy adult population is an important part of a sustainable community. As people age, their health needs change. Focusing on chronic disease prevention, workplace wellness, and increasing opportunities for healthy living can produce health benefits that impact the whole population.

### Priority Statement

Develop a Healthy Aging Strategy that includes:

- a) The use of a healthy aging 'lens' to guide the delivery of our public health programs and services;
- b) Co-ordination with community stakeholders who serve older adults; and
- c) Leadership in promoting age-friendly communities in Lambton County.

*Seniors now make up the fastest growing age group in the country. In 2011, there were 24,081 adults aged 65 and over in Lambton County. This number will jump to over 42,533 in 2036, representing a 77% increase.*  
**Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Population Projections.**

# HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

The built environment includes land use planning, transportation systems, infrastructure, and energy systems. It influences air and water quality, access to healthy foods, physical activity, mental health and our sense of community belonging. By working with municipal planners, local stakeholders and other partners, we can influence how we design and build communities to reduce health risks and promote positive health behaviours.

## Priority Statement

Collaborate with relevant sectors to ensure a healthy built environment by:

- a) Establishing public health perspectives and representation in the planning processes of municipalities, provincial governments, community groups, developers, school boards, and other stakeholders; and
- b) Responding to concerns about the health impacts of our built environment.

*“Having input into built environment planning may provide the opportunity to ensure decision-makers keep population health a priority.”*

**Staff Survey Participant**





## OUR NEXT STEPS

The strategic plan provides a road map and over-arching directions that will guide us as we work to implement action plans based on our strategic priorities. To achieve results we will establish detailed goals, measurable objectives and timelines.

An oversight team will be created to support our strategic plan over the next five years. In addition, implementation teams will be formed to achieve progress in each priority area over the five-year period of the plan.

*“Like anything you should start with the inside. When staff are confident and knowledgeable in their positions, they can further reach out and help people in the community. Up-to-date information, innovative ideas and a passion for public health will foster the outside environment and support healthy growth and development and aging.”*  
**Staff Focus Group Participant**



COUNTY OF  
LAMBTON

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