



PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION

REPORT TO:	CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS
DEPARTMENT:	LAMBTON PUBLIC HEALTH
PREPARED BY:	Andrew P. Taylor, General Manager
REVIEWED BY:	Stéphane Thiffault, Chief Administrative Officer
MEETING DATE:	April 5, 2023
INFORMATION ITEM:	Lambton Public Health 2021 Annual Report

BACKGROUND

Lambton Public Health (LPH) provides public health programs and services for all of the 11 municipalities in the County of Lambton, including collaboration with First Nations communities of Aamjiwnaang, Kettle and Stoney Point and Walpole Island. Under the legislative authority of the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, public health units are accountable to provide public health programs within their geographic defined service areas.

In accordance with the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards (OPHS), boards of health are responsible for the assessment, planning, delivery management and evaluation of a range of public health programs and services designed to promote and protect the health of the population. The OPHS requires public health units to produce an Annual Report, which serves to provide transparency and accountability to the community and ratepayers served. As part of the province's funding agreement with local public health units, Lambton's Board of Health (County Council) is required to demonstrate it is delivering quality public health programs and services in compliance with legislation.

"Boards of Health provide to the ministry a report after a year-end on the affairs and operations, including how they are performing on requirements (programmatic and financial), delivering quality public health programs and services, practicing good governance, and complying with various legislative requirements."

The purpose of this report is to satisfy the above legislative requirement.

DISCUSSION

Ontario's 34 local public health agencies served on the front line of the COVID-19 response and the past few years have been very challenging for public health. Many local public health programs were suspended in an effort to redirect LPH's staffing and

resources to respond to the pandemic crisis. LPH works in collaboration with its community partners, stakeholders, and clients to assess, promote and protect health, prevent disease and injury and advocate for healthy public policy. Local connectedness is critical to our operations and LPH continues to seek innovative and meaningful ways to engage with its community partners and stakeholders, which include, but are not limited to school boards, local health care providers, long-term care, retirement homes and social agencies.

Some examples of public health work at the local level includes assessing the state of mental health readiness through the development of a community mental health profile, building supportive collaborative networks to assist seniors to age-in-place, and development of a local drug and alcohol strategy to combat the local opioid-overdose crisis. To successfully meet our objectives, staff ground themselves in evidence and effective public health practice. Working to assist our vulnerable sectors helps to better understand perspectives of people with lived experience and this serves to inform and improve our service delivery by applying a health equity lens to our work.

The current landscape has impacted those living in our poorest neighborhoods and there is evidence of poorer health outcomes for people who experience homelessness and addictions. Issues related to injuries, frostbite, mental health, infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and hepatitis, and chronic diseases such as cancer and diabetes are some examples of these experiences. LPH remains committed to advocating for marginalized groups and ensuring that the department is here for those people who need it the most.

Public Health is responsive, and it is imperative to remain vigilant and connected at the local level. According to a recent report from Dr. Kieran Moore, Chief Medical Officer of Health, *“Sector readiness means having in place the relationships (networks), people (workforce), competencies and expertise, technologies, data systems, resources, structures, processes, and surge capacity that enable the public health sector and the broader health system to manage and contain an outbreak or pandemic - while continuing to provide other essential public health and health care services and, if necessary, respond to other emergencies that may occur during an outbreak.”*

Lambton Public Health's 2021 Annual Report (Appendix A) provides a summary of the department's activities and includes information about key initiatives and services undertaken by staff over the course of the year. The current restrictive fiscal environment brings many challenges, and it is necessary to seek out opportunities for staff to identify innovative approaches to service delivery. The Ministry of Health expects that public health unit budgets will continue to recognize and incorporate the identified needs of their communities and will balance local priorities with the government's clear direction for fiscal constraint.

Lambton Public Health's 2021 Annual Report reflects on our experiences with COVID-19 pandemic response and includes summaries of the numbers of COVID-19: vaccines administered in various settings, cases and outbreaks followed up, phone calls and inquiries answered through our vaccine call centre and liaison teams. The report also

includes the COVID-19 Community Health Survey findings, which support that 81% of respondents agree on continuing with mandatory masks in public settings, and 72% agree on provincial lockdown measures if cases overwhelm hospitals. Some other highlights of the report include:

- 38,000 Calls answered by Vaccine Call Centre
- 176,105 COVID-19 vaccine doses administered
- 4,985 COVID-19 cases followed up
- 2,900 Email responses by Liaison Team
- 2,868 Flu Immunizations administered
- 686,000 Needle sharps exchanged
- 1,753 Outreach visits to vulnerable sectors
- 306 Senior Dental services delivered
- 1000 Sexual Health Clinic visits

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Ministry of Health is primarily responsible for funding public health unit operations. Revenues derive from two main sources, which include cost-shared: 70/30 percent provincial/municipal funding, and 100 percent funding through Provincial grants, which includes revenues from the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

LPH also receives other revenues such as donations, and fees and service charges, which help to offset costs associated with services, such as sexual health teaching in schools, clinical supplies, and food-handler education and training.

CONSULTATIONS

In the preparation of this report, the Medical Officer of Health, Managers, Supervisors, and the Epidemiologist were consulted, as necessary.

STRATEGIC PLAN

The County of Lambton's mission statement supports the provision of responsive and efficient services, which is accomplished by working closely with municipal and community partners. As a department of the County of Lambton, LPH strives to achieve accountability through providing accurate, transparent, and timely information.

CONCLUSION

As part of the Ministry of Health's Public Health Accountability Framework and Organizational Requirements, Lambton's Board of Health is required to demonstrate it is

delivering quality public health programs and services in compliance with legislation. Like many other jurisdictions, the COVID-19 pandemic has put strain on LPH's workforce, and it is important to maintain a sustainable public health approach as we move from pandemic response into recovery. LPH has a strong resilient workforce, and we need to provide the necessary supports to maintain a safe and healthy workplace.

The restrictive fiscal environment brings opportunities and staff must strive to increase efficiency and effectiveness. System readiness and strong relationships are important. Maintaining our local connectedness and understanding the impacts on the vulnerable communities we serve enables us to respond and contribute effectively to the needs of Lambton County.

Lambton Public Health

2021 ANNUAL REPORT

LAMBTON PUBLIC HEALTH

We work to keep you, your family and our community safe and healthy.

VISION

Lambton Public Health's (LPH) vision is that Lambton County is a community that supports all people to strive for safety, health and well-being. LPH is part of the Public Health Services Division within the County of Lambton. LPH works with the community to: assess, promote and protect health, prevent disease and injury, and advocate for healthy public policy.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic was declared in March 2020. This forced the rapid suspension of many regular LPH programs and a re-prioritization and re-deployment of a significant amount of the public health workforce to deal with COVID-19 communication, surveillance, emergency management, case and contact management, and vaccinations.

Presented in this report are highlights from LPH's COVID-19 pandemic response and the accountability numbers from some of the core Public Health Standards programs which continued in 2021.

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

January 2021 marked a local turning point in the pandemic as the first doses of the COVID-19 vaccine were administered. The Lambton COVID-19 Immunization Task Force was established to oversee and advise the implementation of the COVID-19 Immunization Plan for Lambton County, in alignment with provincial direction and as articulated in the Ontario Vaccination Program.

On January 26, 2021, Valerie Verberg, an 88-year-old long-term care resident was the first recipient of the COVID-19 vaccine in Lambton County, who is pictured here with a Public Health Nurse. The first COVID-19 vaccines were in high demand and short supply, and were prioritized to protect the most vulnerable, including long-term care residents.

Supply continued to increase and community partners rallied to increase capacity for vaccine delivery, using community halls and adopting the innovative "Hockey Hub" model, which were able to deliver up to 1,200 vaccine doses in one day while maintaining social distancing. In 2021 alone, 176,105 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine were administered in partnership with community partners, pharmacies, and primary care.



176,105

COVID-19 VACCINES DOSES ADMINISTERED

by LPH staff and in partnership with community partners and volunteers

Among Lambton County residents age 5+:



HAVE AT LEAST ONE DOSE



HAVE TWO DOSES



HAVE THREE DOSES

HEALTH PROMOTION

The Health Promotion Team continued to perform the role of Liaison in 2021 responding to queries from individuals and all community sectors including municipalities, schools, daycares, businesses, sports associations, and interest groups. Most queries centered on the application of the province's COVID-19 legislation, provincial guidance documents, and the COVID-19 vaccine. With a goal to support the community, information was regularly updated and distributed in response to the frequent regulatory changes made by the province.



OPENED VACCINE CALL CENTRE

in May 2021 to assist residents with accessing COVID-19 appointments and vaccine records.

38K CALLS ANSWERED BY THE VACCINE CALL CENTRE



4,985

COVID-19 CASES FOLLOWED UP as well as additional probable cases and high-risk contacts



105

COVID-19 OUTBREAKS DECLARED & MANAGED



96

HOCKEY HUB MASS CLINICS AT POINT EDWARD AND CLEARWATER ARENAS

175

ADDITIONAL FIXED & POP UP CLINICS ACROSS LAMBTON COUNTY

36

FIRST NATION CLINICS

150

TIMES THE MOBILE TEAM DEPLOYED TO SERVICE THE MOST VULNERABLE



842

LPH STAFF, COMMUNITY PARTNERS & VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED



2,114

COVID-19 VACCINE DOSES DELIVERED BY THE HOMEBOUND TEAM

11,299

COVID-19 VACCINE DOSES ADMINISTERED IN ONE WEEK (WEEK OF JUNE 21, 2021)



18K

CALLS ANSWERED BY THE LIAISON TEAM



2.9K+

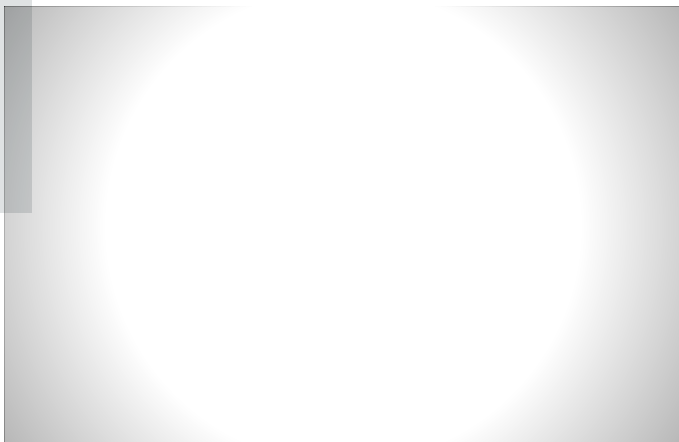
EMAIL RESPONSES BY THE LIAISON TEAM

from May to December 2021

COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

The Communications Team continued support for the COVID-19 pandemic including a focus on the promotion of COVID-19 vaccine updates, eligibility, requirements, and access points. Local situational updates continued under the Provincial COVID-19 Response Framework, reports on the community impact (health status, outbreaks), and encouraging the practice of basic actions and control measures to reduce the severity of illness.

Strategies leveraged digital communications, traditional media, and media relations to amplify the messages.



INCREASED SOCIAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE

4K NEW FOLLOWERS
for a total of 12K Facebook followers

3.4M PEOPLE REACHED
with 2K Facebook posts

3.55% ENGAGEMENT RATE
an increase from 2.79% on Facebook



6.2M WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS
*doubling the amount of web traffic



50 SCHEDULED MEDIA BRIEFINGS
127 NEWS RELEASES

2021 LAMBTON PUBLIC HEALTH COVID-19 COMMUNITY HEALTH SURVEY

Surveyed Lambton Country residents, finding that:



STRONG PREFERENCE TO RECEIVE INFORMATION FROM LOCAL PUBLIC HEALTH UNIT

Residents reported a strong preference to receive information and services related to COVID-19 from the local public health unit, rather than a central regional authority.



68% OF RESIDENTS VISITED THE LPH WEBSITE OR SOCIAL MEDIA FOR COVID-19 INFORMATION



MENTAL HEALTH HAS CONTINUED TO DECLINE since the onset of the pandemic, especially among those aged 18 to 44

Though perceived threat of COVID-19 has declined with the vaccine rollout, most residents were still supportive of public health measures. For example:



81% AGREE ON CONTINUED MANDATORY MASKS IN PUBLIC



71% AGREE ON VACCINE PASSPORTS



72% AGREE ON LOCKDOWN MEASURES if cases overwhelm hospitals



1 IN 10 Lambton residents reported that they were suffering from financial hardship



HEALTH PROTECTION

The Health Protection Team enforces regulations aimed at protecting health and conducts investigations and inspections regarding infectious disease, and environmental hazards. LPH offers immunizations, manages outbreaks and ensures the safety of food and water.



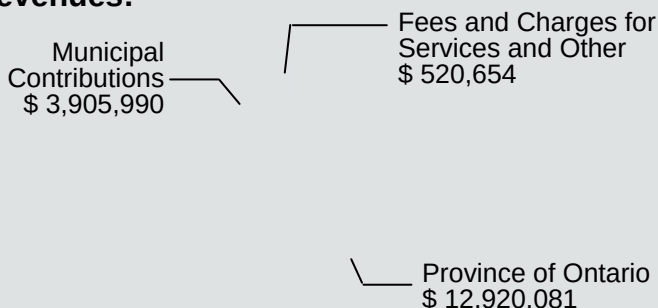
FAMILY HEALTH

The Family Health Team provides individuals at all stages of their life with access to services that promote healthy family living and support healthy child development. Child Health programs help give babies their best possible start, Sexual Health services focus on healthy sexuality and harm reduction, and Oral Health programs improve dental health through screening and preventative services.

GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

LPH is governed by a Board of Health (Lambton County Council) which is responsible for ensuring the provision of effective population health programs and services to meet the needs of the community. Public health funding is cost-shared between the Province of Ontario and the County of Lambton. In addition, LPH receives 100% provincial funding to support specific programs. LPH's operating budget in 2021 was \$17,346,725.

Revenues:



Expenditures:

