



PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION

REPORT TO:	WARDEN AND LAMBTON COUNTY COUNCIL
DEPARTMENT:	LAMBTON PUBLIC HEALTH
PREPARED BY:	Andrew Taylor, General Manager
REVIEWED BY:	Stéphane Thiffault, Chief Administrative Officer
MEETING DATE:	November 1, 2023
INFORMATION ITEM:	Lambton Public Health 2022 Annual Report

BACKGROUND

In accordance with the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards (OPHS), public health units are required to produce an annual report, which serves to provide transparency and accountability to the community and ratepayers served. This requirement aligns with the Ministry of Health's - Public Health Accountability Framework as follows:

"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."

This report is intended to satisfy the above legislative requirement.

DISCUSSION

Lambton Public Health (LPH) provides public health programs and services for 11 municipalities throughout 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. Throughout 2022, LPH played a significant role in safeguarding public health at the local level. Strong local connectedness is key, and 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.

At the end of November 2022, the Board of Health (County Council) appointed Dr. Karalyn Dueck to the position of Medical Officer of Health for the County of Lambton, and we are excited to welcome her to our community. Dr. Dueck joins us at a critical time. She is

highly skilled and trained, and she has good public health work experience. Given the current landscape facing public health, it is important to have a strong public health leadership in place, particularly in the face of uncertainty with respect to diseases of public health significance, including outbreaks of infectious disease such as COVID-19, mpox and Measles. Public health readiness is highly important for emergencies and communicable disease outbreaks in a new community context of lagging childhood immunizations, an aging population requiring greater use of the healthcare system, climate change increasing vector borne diseases such as Lyme Disease, higher rates of sexually transmitted infections and blood-borne infections such as syphilis and hepatitis C.

During the first six (6) to nine (9) months of 2022, LPH continued to provide response activities as required to control COVID-19, including outbreak management, vaccine delivery and necessary surveillance activities and ongoing work to support infection control and safety within the community. In an effort to maintain timely access for critical response, it is imperative to have a strong workforce that are qualified, trained and ready for active duty. The pandemic has taught us that we need to have good capacity to be responsive, and as we face increased staffing pressures it will be important to maintain a sustainable public health approach, which means that we need to maintain a safe and healthy workforce.

Beginning in late spring of 2022, LPH started to transition out of its COVID-19 emergency response efforts and began recovery planning and completed an internal After-Action Review (AAR) of our pandemic response to reflect and assess strengths and challenges experienced throughout the response. Key findings from our internal review will be used to improve ongoing response work and to strengthen our preparedness for future public health emergencies. Recommendations from this review support the need to:

- prioritize post-pandemic mental health supports for staff;
- continue to protect physical and mental safety of our workforce; and
- improve communication and transparency within LPH.

Again, the scope of this reported portion of the AAR was internal only and focused on challenges and best practices that occurred within LPH. Next, LPH is working to conduct a further review that will include key external partners and stakeholders to gather lessons learned from an external perspective. This assessment affirms that we have heard loud and clear from our staff about the acute and chronic mental health impacts of working in public health during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the importance of peer and organizational help and offering support.

LPH's 2022 Annual Report is attached (Appendix A). The highlights in this report demonstrate that LPH has strong connections in our communities with service agencies, partners, community groups, and municipalities. Similar to 2021, this 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. This report also highlights some of the work of our new Health System and Community

Engagement (HSCE) Team, which supports LPH's mental health and addictions strategy and health system navigation connectedness to improve collaboration with the broader healthcare system. The HSCE Team also created a new Age-Friendly Best Practice e-learning course for businesses and service providers that was launched in March 2022 to help combat ageism in the community. Below are some of the highlights of our 2022 annual report:

- 18,000 Calls answered by Vaccine Call Centre
- 57,000 COVID-19 vaccine doses administered
- 7,829 COVID-19 cases followed up
- 5,402 Routine Immunizations administered
- 4,308 Flu Immunizations administered
- 582,000 Needle sharps exchanged with our partners
- 4,639 Naloxone Kits distributed with our partners
- 351 Senior Dental services delivered
- 1,186 Sexual Health Clinic visits

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Ministry of Health is primarily responsible for funding public health units. Revenues supporting public health's operations derive from two main sources, which include cost-shared: 70/30 percent provincial/municipal funding. Also, LPH receives 100 percent funding allocations through provincial grant, to support eligible COVID-19 expenditures. Additionally, LPH receives 100 percent grant funding through the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, to support our Healthy Babies Healthy Children's programming.

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. The COVID-19 pandemic has elevated pressures on our workforce, and it is important have supports in place to maintain a safe and healthy workforce. The restrictive fiscal climate has increased strain on our public health resources, and LPH has introduced some new short-term priorities to assist our organization to prioritize its work moving forward, as reported to County Council through the [Update on Lambton Public Health's Current and Future Budget Pressures](#) report, dated July 5, 2023.

Setting priorities is more important than ever because we cannot continue to do everything in a restricted fiscal environment. Public health is responsive, and it is imperative to remain vigilant and connected at the local level. LPH remains committed to advocating for marginalized groups and ensuring that the department is here for those people who need it the most. Understanding the impacts on the vulnerable communities that we serve enables us to respond and contribute effectively to the needs of Lambton County.

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.

WELCOME TO DR. KARALYN DUECK

In November 2022, the Lambton Board of Health (County Council) appointed a new Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Karalyn Dueck. A licensed member in good standing with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO), Dr. Dueck is also a certified Family Physician with the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CCFP) and holds the specialty certification as a Fellow of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada in Public Health and Preventive Medicine (FRCPC), considered the gold standard of certification for medical officers of health.

“Dr. Dueck’s resume is extremely impressive, and she will be a tremendous asset to the County,” said County of Lambton Warden Kevin Marriott, who also sits as Chair for the County’s Board of Health. “The insight she will bring to this role thanks to her prior work experiences is invaluable and will be of great benefit, and I am pleased to welcome her to our community.”



COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

The COVID-19 pandemic response was a priority for service since 2020. In 2022, LPH continued to provide response activities required to control COVID-19 including outbreak management, vaccine delivery, and ongoing work to support infection control and safety within the community. Most staffing resources were redeployed to assist with pandemic emergency response in the first 6-9 months.

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 that continued in 2022.



57K COVID-19 VACCINE DOSES ADMINISTERED
by LPH in 259 community and mobile clinics.



18K CALLS ANSWERED BY THE VACCINE CALL CENTRE



7,829 COVID-19 CASES FOLLOWED UP as well as additional probable cases and high-risk contacts



77 COVID-19 OUTBREAKS DECLARED & MANAGED

HEALTH PROTECTION

Health Protection protects the public's health by ensuring safe water (drinking and recreational) and safe food handling practices as well as investigating health hazard complaints. Other programs include infectious diseases prevention and control including rabies and tuberculosis prevention and control; public health emergency management, which includes COVID-19 response; and vector-borne disease control activities including West Nile virus and Lyme Disease.

The Health Protection service areas also include the provision of clinical services for immunization including routine immunizations, school immunizations and the Universal Flu Shot program. Enforcement of numerous public health regulations and County By-Laws, including the Standing Water and DineSafe Lambton By-Laws.

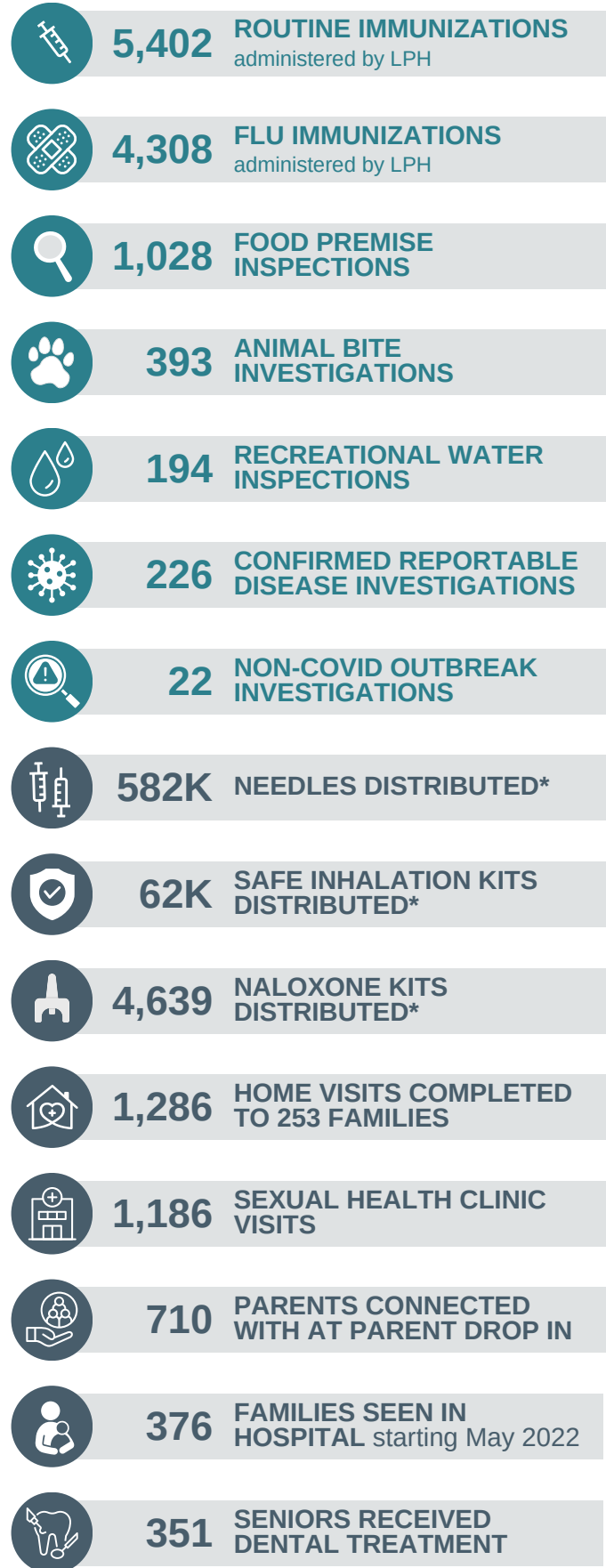


CLINICAL & FAMILY SERVICES

The Clinical and Family Services team focuses on healthy growth and development, home visiting, positive parenting, breastfeeding, sexual health clinics, harm reduction for the prevention of blood borne diseases and sexually transmitted infections, contraception, prenatal education and oral health programs for children and youth.

Child Health programs are designed to ensure that all families with children at risk of physical, cognitive, communicative and/or psychosocial problems have access to effective and early intervention services.

Reproductive Health programs are designed to prevent unwanted pregnancies, reduce the burden of sexually transmitted infections and prevention of blood borne illness and opioid overdose through harm reduction.



**in partnership with North Lambton Community Health Centre*

HEALTH PROMOTION

The Health Promotion team is responsible for programs in the areas including School Health, Health Equity, Chronic Disease Prevention, Injury Prevention, and Substance Misuse Prevention (CDIPS). This team is also responsible for implementation of the Ontario Tobacco Strategy and the Lambton Drug and Alcohol Strategy. Health Promotion staff also provide internal supports for all programs and services within LPH including program planning and evaluation, communications, and the social determinants of health.

The CDIPS Team completed COVID-19 Response activities as the Liaison Team through to May 2022. During this time, the Team responded to email and phone queries from the general public and various community sectors. In June, the team was reassigned to core programs and therefore developed an evidence-informed Operational Plan to address programmatic priorities that aligned with organizational strategic priorities; Mental Health and Addictions, and COVID-19 Recovery. Focus was given to food literacy, built environment, and tobacco/vape/cannabis programs.

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, as well as a transition to pandemic recovery with the return to pre-pandemic programming, and the re-positioning of the fall as respiratory illness season. Strategies leveraged digital communications, traditional media, and media relations to amplify the messages.



FOOD LITERACY

- 41 Mobile Markets attended by LPH staff to engage with community members, provide resources and educate them about LPH programs and services
- Engaged at-risk populations through presentations



BUILT ENVIRONMENT

- Encouraged schools to participate with physical activity theme weeks, engage with Active and Safe Routes to School, and use the HOP! App (123hop.ca)
- Advised on a variety of municipal development proposals



TOBACCO / VAPE / CANNABIS

- Hosted smoke-free movie nights
- Provided resources to support those ready to quit smoking/vaping
- Presented the impact of using tobacco/vape products to schools and community groups
- 631 inspections completed by the Smoke-free Ontario Act Enforcement Team



1K NEW FOLLOWERS
total of 13K Facebook followers

2.6M POST VIEWS
with 1.4K Facebook posts

4.92% ENGAGEMENT RATE
an increase from 3.55%



1.7M WEBSITE PAGE VIEWS



43 INTERVIEWS & MEDIA BRIEFINGS

54 NEWS RELEASES

207 MENTIONS IN MEDIA COVERAGE

HEALTH SYSTEM & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM

A new Health System and Community Engagement Team was created in 2022 to support mental health and addictions needs in Lambton County, health system navigation and healthcare provider engagement, harm reduction enhancement and community engagement.

Key areas of focus in 2022 included resuming work on the Lambton Drug and Alcohol Strategy, completing an evidence review to inform a new mental health resource for Lambton County, publishing the Older Adult Care Pathway Report to inform health system planning and relaunching www.agefriendlyarnialambton.ca to be more inclusive of all ages and stages of life. As well, LPH created a new Age-Friendly Best Practice e-learning Course for businesses and service providers that was launched in March 2022 to help combat ageism in the community.



RELAUNCHED AGE-FRIENDLY WEBSITE WITH SARNIA-LAMBTON ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

26,053 TOTAL USERS
24,376 NEW USERS
82,924 PAGE VIEWS
393,000 SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN VIEWS

**launched November 2022*



169 CLIENT ENGAGEMENTS BY NEW COMMUNITY OUTREACH NURSE

**starting November 2022*



127 AGE-FRIENDLY BEST PRACTICE COURSE COMPLETIONS



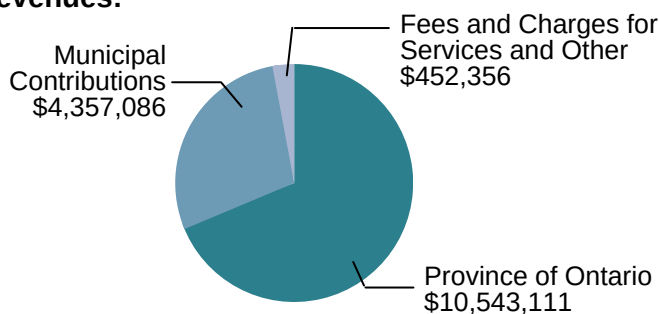
POSITIVE SPACE

In June 2022 LPH updated our Positive Space Policy and symbol to be more inclusive and ensure our commitment to treating everyone with dignity and respect, regardless of background, ethnicity, language, culture, religion, sexual orientation, gender identify, age, disability, or economic status.

GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY

LPH is governed by the Lambton Board of Health, 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 2022 was \$15,352,553.

Revenues:



Expenditures:

