

Huron Perth Public Health Annual Report 2021

www.hpph.ca



Vision, Mission & 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 Kathy Vassilakos

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the daily routine of our lives and challenged our sense of time and place, which makes it difficult to know what day it is let alone what year.

However, as I reflect on the events of 2021 it becomes clear that 2021 was the year that changed the trajectory of the pandemic. It did not always feel that way, and many events challenged this trajectory, but there is no denying that the scientific miracle of vaccination turned the tide on both our local and global response to COVID-19. We are in a significantly better place now than in the summer of 2020, and this is in no small part due to the work of public health.

Like many citizens, I received all my vaccinations at a clinic run by Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH). The professionalism, compassion, efficiency, and expertise of HPPH staff was on full display. I am grateful for the work of HPPH employees and would like to acknowledge both their public-facing and behind-the-scenes efforts. I would also like to thank all the volunteers

and community and municipal partners who made the mass vaccination clinics possible.

While it is easy to focus on the pandemic, I would like to take a moment to highlight a few non-COVID-19 activities. Mother & Young Child Clinics, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, Healthy Smiles Ontario, and the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program are just a few of the HPPH programs that continued in some capacity throughout 2021. The resources and planning required to resume full public health programming is significant, however the Board of Health has confidence in Dr. Klassen and HPPH staff. We know that given sufficient resources they are ready and capable of resuming a full slate of public health programming.

Early in the pandemic there was a public perception that we were all in the same boat, but



the pandemic highlighted what public health has understood for a long time: we are not all in the same boat and our social and economic conditions have a profound impact on our ability to weather the storm. As the Board of Health continues to support the work of HPPH, we remain united in our commitment to equity and evidence-informed decision making and to the vision, mission and values of HPPH. It is through these values that we meet our obligation to protecting the health of all the residents of Huron and Perth counties.

Kathy Vassilakos, Chair
Huron Perth Public Health
Board of Health

Board Vice-Chair Dave Jewitt

As Vice-Chair of the Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH) Board of Health, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the staff at HPPH for their hard work and dedication on behalf of the residents in Huron and Perth Counties.

Without question the COVID-19 pandemic had, and continues to have, an impact on the lives of our residents. The educational background and work experience of our staff has benefited our communities greatly. I would be remiss if I did not thank the countless volunteers and community partners that freely gave of their time to assist HPPH during this time.

As a Board, protecting the health of our community is imperative and we recognize that much work will still be required to support community recovery. Public health encompasses a wide variety of areas and it is incumbent upon us to continue to provide community support and programs in all of these areas.

It is incredibly important that we continue to focus on equity within public health and the Board remains committed to ensuring that all of our work is viewed through this lens.

It has been an incredible experience to be a board member and see how public health impacts virtually every aspect of our lives. I firmly believe that with the commitment to providing exceptional public health from our staff, oversight by our Board and the continued support of our community members, that HPPH will continue to play an integral role in our community well-being.



Dave Jewitt, Vice-Chair
Huron Perth Public Health
Board of Health

Board of Health in 2021

Jim Fergusson
Deputy Mayor,
Municipality of Bluewater

Bonnie Henderson
Councillor, City of Stratford

Daryl Herlick*
Councillor,
Municipality of Perth East

Board of Health Vice-Chair

Dave Jewitt
Deputy Mayor,
Municipality of Central Huron

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

Paul Robinson
Provincial Representative

Board of Health Chair

Kathy Vassilakos
Councillor, City of Stratford

Bob Wilhelm
Mayor, Township of Perth South



Above: Board of Health Chair, Kathy Vassilakos receiving a COVID-19 vaccination.

*stepped down February 2021

**joined March 2021

Medical Officer of Health Dr. Miriam Klassen

I am pleased to share the first comprehensive annual report for Huron Perth Public Health (HPPH). HPPH was established on January 1, 2020 as a result of the merger of former Huron County and Perth District Health Units.

The Senior Leadership Team began 2020 intending to complete the operational details of the merger. However, by March 11, the World Health Organization had assessed that COVID-19 could be characterized as a pandemic. On March 14, HPPH confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in a Huron Perth resident and on March 17, Ontario declared a State of Emergency. HPPH staff met the challenge of leading the public health response to COVID-19 with skill, dedication and compassion, despite the stress and uncertainty. The increased workload necessitated that most other programs and services were reduced or paused (including a condensed 2020 annual report). Even though most internal staff were redeployed to the pandemic response, significant human resource capacity was added to HPPH in order to meet the demands.

This report provides a high level summary of the extraordinary work that was completed in 2021 to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, while also maintaining other critical public health programs and services. HPPH staff investigated 3186 lab-confirmed cases of COVID-19, supported the management of 85 outbreaks, and led the roll out of the largest mass vaccination program in the history of Huron Perth, providing over 250 000 vaccine doses in collaboration with numerous community partners.

While this annual report provides a snapshot of our COVID-19 work in 2021, we'll be releasing additional reports over time that provide more detailed information on our COVID response over the entire pandemic, starting in March of 2020.

In 2021, HPPH also developed our new Vision, Mission, and Values Statements, which will guide this organization moving forward in continued efforts to optimize health for all in Huron Perth.

During the last 2 years, the pandemic has impacted every individual, family, and business/organization either directly through illness, or indirectly through the unavoidable effects of public health measures. Some of us have been merely inconvenienced; some of us experienced greater losses such as loss of jobs, lack of social connections, lost opportunities to mark special milestones, interruptions in education and delayed/missed treatment for other health conditions. Tragically, at the time of this report, 112 lives have been lost due to COVID-19 over the course of the pandemic. It is important to acknowledge that COVID-19 disproportionately impacted some populations such as workers in low-income occupations and racialized communities.

The pandemic started with great uncertainty; now, we have far greater understanding of COVID-19 and more tools to mitigate this serious infection including effective vaccines and treatments. We can move forward in 2022 knowing we have the knowledge and strategies to respond to new waves and new variants of COVID-19. We also look forward to renewing our efforts to tackle other public health challenges such as mitigating climate change, enhancing mental wellness, addressing the opioid crisis and striving for equity in all our programs and services; strong local public health is essential in tackling these complex issues.

I want to thank the Board for their ongoing leadership and support. To HPPH staff – you may recall my comments from early in the pandemic, when I advised we needed to prepare for a marathon, not a sprint. Thank-you! You have run the race well! It has been an honour to work with you and I am proud of what we have achieved together. Finally, I want to thank everyone in Huron Perth for your efforts to mitigate COVID-19, and for your continued kindness with one another as we navigate these challenges together.

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



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

Jennifer Duffin

Megan Goss

Lori Holmes

Annette Hoyles

Janet Jackson

Amy MacDonald*

Rita Marshall

Tanya Patry

Melissa Purdy*

Karen Sherwood

Nancy Summers

Jacqui Tam**

Dori Taylor*

Jessica Thompson*

Angela Willert

*temporary managers for COVID response

**served part of 2021

Locations

Stratford

West Gore | 653 West Gore Street

Festival Square | 10 Downie Street

Clinton

77722B London Road

Listowel

161 Inkerman Street West

Wingham

131 John Street East

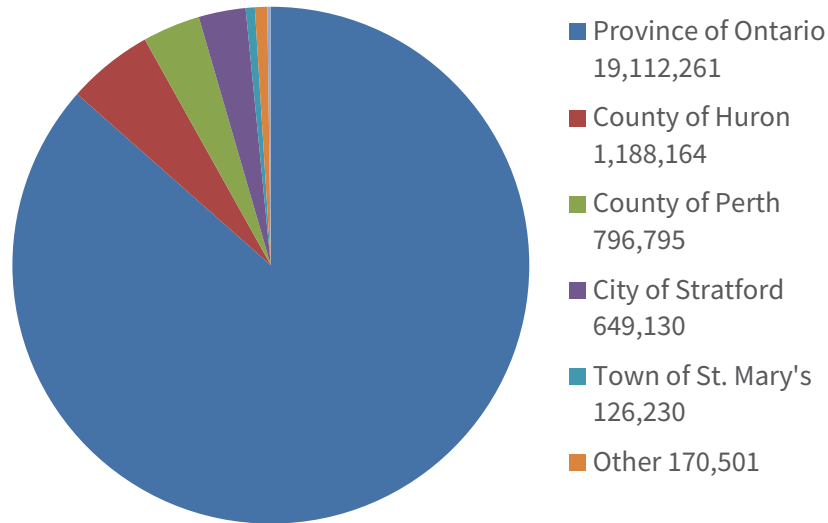
Above L-R: HPPH offices at West Gore and Clinton

Financials

Huron Perth Public Health financial picture, year ending December 31, 2021.

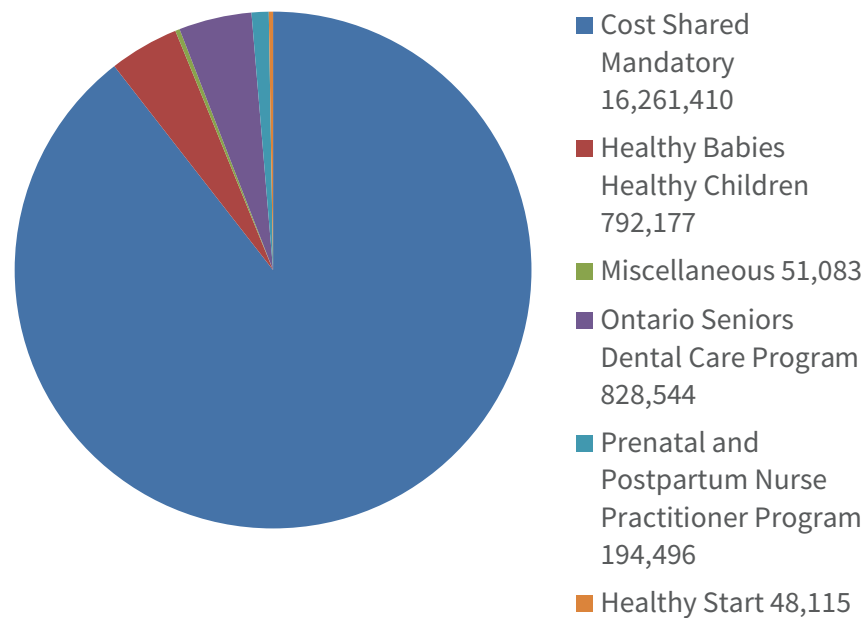
2021 Revenue Huron Perth Public Health

\$ 23,077,870



2021 Expenditures* Huron Perth Public Health

\$ 24,424,804



*New for 2021

The 2021 statements include an actuarial review of the post retirement benefits and have been fully expensed in the 2021 statements. These expenses have been absorbed into accumulated surplus.

COVID-19 Response

2021 saw several waves of infection driven by new, more transmissible variants of COVID-19, including Delta and Omicron. You will see more details in our Huron Perth Public Health COVID-19 Disease Report, but here are some highlights of our management of cases and outbreaks.

3186
Lab-Confirmed
COVID-19 Cases



196
Cases in Healthcare
Workers (6% Cases)



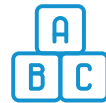
554
Cases in School-
Aged (4-18 Years)



112
Hospitalized Due
to COVID-19



88
Cases in Children
(<4 Years) in
Childcare



52
Huron Perth
Residents Died
Due to COVID-19

COVID-19 Outbreaks by Setting

The definition of an outbreak varies by setting. In long-term care, retirement and congregate living settings: **one or more** residents or staff members with COVID-19. In hospital, workplace, school, childcare, and community settings: **two or more cases within 14 days**.

| | | | |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|
| 18 Long-term Care Home | 6 Retirement Home | 2 Hospital | 28 Workplace |
| 8 Congregate Living Setting | 5 Community | 16 School | 2 Childcare |



HPPH convened the Huron Perth Mass Vaccination Advisory Committee (HPMVAC) in December 2020. The committee played a critical role in guiding the COVID-19 vaccination rollout, including strategic decisions, coordination, and communication of vaccination activities locally.

HPMVAC was a collaborative of numerous stakeholders including Huron Perth Public Health, the Huron Perth and Area Ontario Health Team (representing **more than 60 organizations** including, but not limited to, Hospital, Paramedics, Primary Care, Community and Home Care, Mental Health and Addictions Services, Long-Term Care), pharmacy sector representation, municipalities and community representatives.

With the majority of Huron Perth residents vaccinated against COVID-19 by early 2022, the committee voluntarily disbanded in February, 2022.

Please visit our [Huron Perth Mass Vaccination Advisory Committee](#) webpage for more information.

Above: Vehicles lined up at a drive-through COVID-19 vaccination clinic, HPPH Clinton site, August 10, 2021.

COVID Intake

The COVID Intake team responds to questions and requests for information from residents, businesses and organizations, schools, workplaces, places of worship and healthcare providers. On average, there were over 1000 phone and email inquiries per month in 2021. March, April and June each saw over 2000 inquiries.

20 014 Total inquiries

Top 3 topics:



Vaccine



COVID Illness Case/Isolation



Government Regulations



Left: Volunteers at COVID-19 vaccination clinic at Listowel’s Steve Kerr Memorial Complex, June 2, 2021.

COVID-19 Vaccine

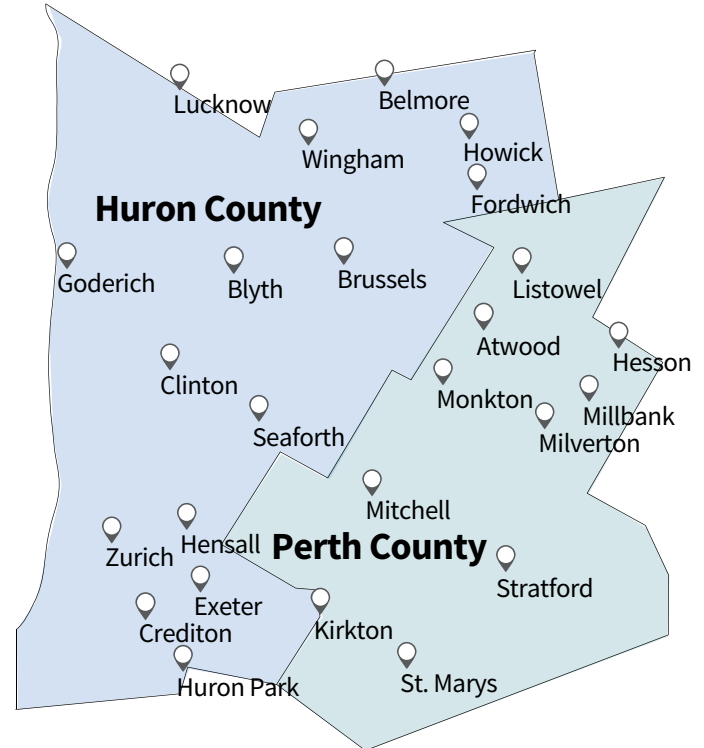
2021 saw the largest vaccine roll out in history. Vaccine supply was very limited initially and the focus was on our most vulnerable residents – those living in long-term care and retirement homes. As supply increased and became stable, eligibility expanded.

254 723

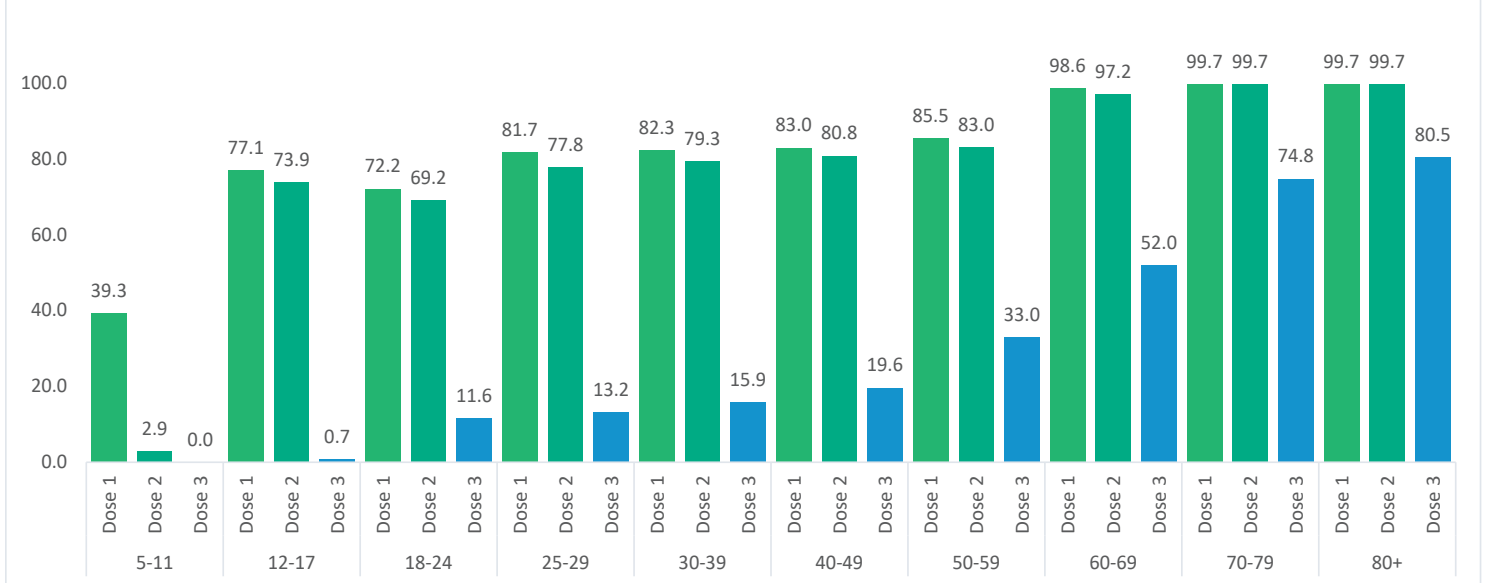
Vaccine Doses Administered by HPPH and Our Partners

COVID-19 Mass Vaccination Clinics

HPPH held 282 mass vaccination clinics – **133 in Huron** and **149 in Perth**. The map shows the communities where clinics were held.



Coverage of Huron Perth Residents for COVID-19 Vaccine Doses by Age, 2021



Data for this graph span from January 1 to December 31, 2021 and are based on vaccine dose records assigned to HPPH. Age is calculated as the age at the date of vaccination.

Provincial Regulations & Public Health Measures

For HPPH public health inspectors, the priority in 2021 was to provide education and enforcement related to the *Reopening Ontario Act*, provincial orders, public health measures and workplace inspections. The team supported two successful Multi-Ministry Team COVID-19 Inspection and Education blitzes, developed many resources and hosted workplace webinars to educate operators on the importance of COVID-19 prevention measures.

Public Health Orders, Instructions & Recommendations

HPPH issued Section 22 Class Orders, Letters of Instruction (LOI), and Letters of Recommendation (LOR) in order to decrease the health risks to Huron Perth residents posed by COVID-19. The Medical Officer of Health issued the Sec. 22 Class Orders under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, and the LOIs under the *Reopening Ontario Act*. The documents were aligned with provincial direction where possible, and rescinded when possible. Learn more at [Sec. 22 Orders and Instructions](#).

Orders and Letters issued or active in 2021

Class Order Section 22:

Cases and Contacts

Employers of Temporary Foreign Workers (TFW)

Letter of Instruction:

Places of Worship

Private and Parochial Schools

Sports and Recreation Facilities

Letter of Recommendation:

Employers, Businesses and Organizations

Businesses and Individuals (issued in partnership with Southwestern Public Health and Middlesex-London Health Unit)

Supporting Vulnerable Community Members

Self-isolation

Being required to isolate due to COVID-19 was a hardship for many families and individuals. Their life circumstances were barriers to being able to successfully or safely isolate. This was especially true for those living in poverty, experiencing homelessness, living in crowded conditions or social housing; those who are temporary international workers; those with mental health challenges and/or addiction; single parents; and those with English as a second language.



HPPH ensured the provision of supports such as groceries, cleaning supplies, pharmacy deliveries, other essential goods, and transportation or accommodations. **One hundred and seven (107) parties received grocery supports and three parties were provided accommodations.** Where possible, individuals and families were linked to other community services including social services, financial support, food banks and churches.

Mobile Testing

HPPH worked with Huron and Perth County paramedics and local testing/assessment centres to arrange in-home COVID-19 PCR testing for individuals who faced barriers to getting tested.

Mobile COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics

HPPH provided mobile COVID-19 vaccination clinics to long-term care homes, retirement homes and congregate living settings. Paramedic partners and facility staff assisted at some of these clinics.





Non-COVID Public Health Programs

HPPH’s response to COVID has required significant resources and we have redeployed staff from our regular programs and services to COVID for over two years. On average, public health units in Ontario **diverted 78% of all available resources to the COVID response.**

HPPH had to suspend, reduce or modify many of our regular public health programs and services. However, we continued to provide some services.

Source: Association of Local Public Health Agencies – [Public Health Resilience in Ontario Executive Summary](#)



Water sample bottles at St. Joseph’s beach, July 21, 2021.

Vaccine-Preventable Disease

Grade 7 Immunization Community Clinics

HPPH held community clinics to help students get up-to-date on routine immunizations. Typically, students receive these immunizations at school-based clinics.

Seven clinics took place in Perth and six in Huron. Hepatitis B (Hep B), Human Papillomavirus (HPV) and Meningococcal (Men-C-ACYW-135) vaccines were offered.

Vaccine Doses Administered

| Vaccine | Perth | Huron |
|----------------|-------|-------|
| HPV | 734 | 549 |
| Men-C-ACYW-135 | 585 | 384 |
| Hep B | 712 | 558 |

Influenza Clinics

HPPH held influenza immunizations clinics for children under age five without a family physician or who were not eligible to be vaccinated at a pharmacy.

 **44** Doses in Perth
12 Doses in Huron



Infectious Disease

The Infectious Disease team is responsible for:

- Responding to and investigating diseases of public health significance (DoPHS).
- Responding to and investigating communicable disease outbreaks in highest risk settings such as long-term care homes, retirement homes and congregate living settings.
- Conducting infection, prevention and control audits to ensure facilities are equipped to respond to potential disease outbreaks.

In 2021, the team supported local investigations into recalled frozen mangoes suspected of Hepatitis A contamination.

This investigation mobilized a multi-health unit team response to support disease investigation, access to vaccination, and removal of product from store shelves.

Despite being heavily involved with COVID-19 disease outbreak management, the team conducted over 150 DoPHS investigations.

Environmental Health

HPPH provided essential programming to protect health, prevent and reduce health hazards, and mitigate disease risks associated with both built and natural environments. Due to the demands of the pandemic response, Public Health Inspectors modified mandated inspections to ensure compliance with the *Reopening Ontario Act* and access to businesses under the restrictions of provincial orders and mandates.



| Inspections in 2021 | |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Compliance | 1121 |
| Demand | 15 |
| Re-inspections | 148 |
| Complaint | 17 |
| Pre-opening | 15 |
| Total | 1316 |

1799 Total inquiries & investigations completed

Top 5 topics:



471

COVID-19



444

Rabies



275

Food Safety



151

Drinking Water



110

Health Hazard



Beach Water Sampling

18

Locations Across Huron Perth



1189

Samples taken June 14–August 27



Beach Sampling Locations

- Amberley Beach
- Ashfield Township Park Beach
- Black's Point Beach
- Goderich | Main Beach
- Goderich | Rotary Cove
- Goderich | St. Christopher's Beach
- Hay Township Park Beach
- Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp
- Houston Heights Beach
- Howard Street Beach (formerly Bayfield | South Beach)
- Pier Beach (formerly Bayfield | Main Beach)
- Port Albert Beach
- Port Blake Beach
- St. Joseph's Beach
- St. Marys Quarry
- Sunset Beach
- Wildwood Conservation Area | Beach
- Woodland Lake RV Resort

Health Line

Health Line is a phone help line staffed by public health nurses who answer questions on a variety of health topics, offer resources, and provide information on HPPH and community programs. In 2021, Health Line responded to non-COVID inquiries and also received some COVID inquiries.

Portion by Program

| | |
|--|-----|
| Vaccine preventable disease | 39% |
| Infectious disease | 16% |
| Healthy Babies Healthy Children/ Healthy growth and development | 7% |
| Other | 9% |
| Chronic disease, substance use and injury prevention | 5% |
| Oral health | 5% |
| Sexual health | 3% |
| Foundations (e.g. mental health, violence prevention) | 3% |



2805

Total inquiries

Top 5 topics:



194

COVID-19
Vaccine



810

Vaccine
Preventable
Disease



143

Tuberculosis



232

COVID-19



130

Safe Water



Method of Contact

| | |
|----------------------|------|
| Phone | 2187 |
| Email | 559 |
| Other / Not recorded | 59 |

Healthy Growth and Development



Healthy Babies Healthy Children

(HBHC) program 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. Due to COVID-19 response HPPH had to modify the format of HBHC visits by using virtual communication and also had to reduce services, which impacted the number of families that were able to participate in the program. In 2021, **61 families received HBHC home visiting services** (two or more home/virtual visits), about one-third of pre-pandemic levels.

Pregnancy and Newborn Health

362 Enjoy ePrenatal Learning registrants

109 Prenatal Education evaluations

3162 Resource books distributed



Mother and Young Child Clinic

Mother and Young Child Clinic provides nurse practitioner support to perinatal clients and families with young children in Anabaptist communities that may experience barriers to accessing primary care. There were **748 clinic visits** in 2021. Due to staff redeployment to support COVID response, the number of clinic visits decreased to about three-quarters of pre-pandemic levels.

Sexual Health, Harm Reduction

Throughout the pandemic, we continued to provide harm reduction supplies, including naloxone, to clients and community partners.



Sexual Health

2054 Visits to Sexual Health clinic

369 Sexually transmitted infection cases investigated (Chlamydia, Gonorrhea, Syphilis)

+ 1098 Naloxone kits distributed to clients and community partners

Oral Health



193 Ontario Senior Dental Care Program clients referred to dentist

289 Healthy Smiles Ontario clients referred to dentist

Communications

Online: www.hpph.ca

3 085 069

Total Visits

6 681 189

Total Page Views



75

News Releases sent
(60 COVID-related)

Virtual Meetings/Zoom Calls (hosted by HPPH)

Stakeholder group

| | |
|---|----|
| Health care and Long-Term Care | 33 |
| Municipalities | 36 |
| Media Briefings | 55 |
| Faith Groups (Churches) | 1 |
| Anabaptist | 5 |
| Schools | 18 |
| Huron Perth Mass Vaccination Advisory Committee | 42 |

Most popular webpages:

COVID-19 in Huron and Perth | **1 434 911 views** | 38.9% visits

COVID-19 Vaccine: Booking Appointments | **1 214 990 views** | 27.0% visits

Huron Perth Public Health landing page | **797 971 views** | 19.7% visits



Facebook:
@HuronPerthPublicHealth

264 621
Estimated Reach

109 689
Visits

9 139
Likes



Twitter:
@HPPublicHealth

948
Posts

3 662 900
Impressions

4 063
Followers



Instagram:
@huronperthpublichealth

5 833
Estimated Reach

6 581
Visits

1 662
Followers



Twitter:
@huronbeachinfo

109
Posts

140 600
Impressions

1 781
Followers



www.hpph.ca



1-888-221-2133



hpph@hpph.ca

