

2018
ANNUAL
REPORT



GREETINGS FROM THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH



I am pleased to present the Porcupine Health Unit's (PHU's) 2018 Annual Report. With much gratitude for the contribution of community partners, staff and the Board of Health, the PHU's Strategic Plan 2018-2023 was developed. With a theme of "Your Voice Matters", we listened to perspectives about local issues to help identify public health priorities. The new vision statement—vibrant, connected communities supporting health and well-being for all, along with values of trust, empathy, respect, integrity and innovation—will guide our work going forward.

This year also included the release of updated Ontario Public Health Standards. The PHU welcomed the enhanced focus on school initiatives, health equity and relationships with Indigenous Communities. We remain committed to continued work to fulfill our public health mandate while addressing unique local needs for healthy communities.

As the PHU area continues to see higher injury rates, prevention was highlighted in the Strategic Plan. Concussion prevention is key as promotion of physical activity increases. This year, the PHU was honoured to have renowned and widely respected neurosurgeon and concussion researcher, Dr. Charles Tator come to Timmins. Dr. Tator provided a session for over 50 local physicians on concussion diagnosis and management. In the evening, he was joined by Gordon and Kathleen Stringer, who shared the tragic story of their daughter Rowan, a rugby player who died after repeated head injuries. It was an emotional reminder of the need for increased conversation and awareness of concussion prevention and management amongst coaches, teachers, parents, players, and children.

*Lianne Catton, MD, CFPC-EM, MPH
Medical Officer of Health*

"Vibrant, connected communities supporting health and well-being for all."

GREETINGS FROM THE BOARD OF HEALTH

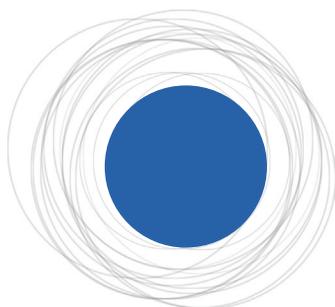


It is my pleasure to share the 2018 Annual Report from the Porcupine Health Unit (PHU). Although new to the role of Board Chair, as an active Board of Health member for thirteen years, I continue to be impressed by the dedication of the PHU team. The local partnerships with public health is important to the health of all of our communities. It was encouraging to see the enthusiasm and dedication to developing a Strategic Plan that was meaningful by including input from staff as well as Board of Health members.

This year the PHU worked with local schools to conduct dental screenings, promote physical activity in the school yard, and provide cannabis education sessions and resources for parents. From children and youth to seniors and the elderly, the team addressed health across the age continuum. PHU leadership in organizing Healthy Aging Expos in branch communities was well attended. An event for information on preventing falls, medication disposal as well as influenza vaccines, as well as access to other local key partners is so greatly appreciated by the population of older adults in all communities.

I would like to acknowledge our previous Board of Health Chair, Mr. Gilles Chartrand, and other Board members for their dedication to the Porcupine Health Unit. We look forward to continued advocacy as a Board of Health to ensure the local voice is represented in a strong public health system reflecting the needs of our diverse and vibrant communities.

*Sue Perras, Board of Health
Smooth Rock Falls*



2018 Board of Health

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Andrew Marks
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OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

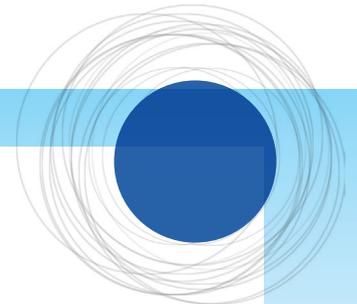
The Porcupine Health Unit's (PHU) strategic plan, developed in 2013, ended in 2018. Creating the next one, for the years 2018-2023, was a year-long project that included consultation with key stakeholders including health unit staff, community partners and members of the communities within the PHU catchment area.

During the consultations, many were surprised to learn about the number of programs and services that the PHU offers to the public, often with other organizations. Not all public health units are the same: although there are concerns and responsibilities that are common to all Ontario health units, each one – including the PHU – has several distinct local needs.

The strategic plan sets priorities based on these local needs and establishes goals, objectives and measurable outcomes to address them. It provides direction for the delivery

of public health interventions. It also allows for the flexibility and ability to respond to emerging local health issues, from boil water advisories to the current opioid crisis. In addition, the plan assists with the allocation of resources to support the work of the over 120 multidisciplinary staff. An effective PHU strategic plan aims to improve the quality of life and health and well-being of all.

The planning process started with two big questions: what is the health unit required to do and what should be done? To identify requirements, the PHU completed a review of current legislation; the Ontario Public Health Standards, 2018; the 2013-2018 PHU Strategic Plan; local health data; and various high-profile reports published since 2013 that are relevant to public health. Public Health Ontario (PHO) and other health units were also contacted to identify best practices for strategic plan de-



KIOSK PARTNERSHIP HELPS KEEP TIMMINS SAFER

Prompted by a request from City of Timmins Public Works staff during the Spring “Clean-Up Season”, the Porcupine Health Unit moved forward with a very visual symbol of the Harm Reduction approach. On July 31, 2018, a yellow sharps kiosk was set up in front of the Porcupine Health Unit Pine Street office in Timmins. Looking like a bright yellow mailbox, the kiosk was the first of several that were installed in the city, providing a safe and secure way to dispose of used needles 24 hours a day.

The City of Timmins has been an invaluable partner in this project, not only installing the kiosks, but also tracking and sharing data about discarded needles, critical in determining the best locations for new kiosks.

The kiosks are only a small part of the health unit’s harm reduction work with partners across the area. Clinics, community outreach, community events, local and social media all help share the message about safe needle handling and disposal, which will eventually lead to a reduction in the transmission of infectious diseases.



PLAYGROUND ACTIVITY LEADERS IN SCHOOLS (PALS)

Physical activity is important to the prevention of substance use and mental health concerns which is on the rise in the PHU population. It is also critical to the overall health and wellbeing of children and youth. The PHU collaborates with schools to promote programs that increase opportunities for children to be physically active. An example is the PALS program. It tackles two schoolyard concerns at the same time: bullying and a large reduction in the amount of physical activity.

First created in 1998, PALS is a proven program that has been successfully launched in a number of health units in Ontario, including the Waterloo and Peel Regions. PALS is a playground leadership program that encourages all children to participate in activities, regardless of their gender, size, or ability. The program is led by senior students who are trained to plan and lead fun and safe activities on the playground

at recess. A health promoter or public health nurse from the health unit trains the students and staff and provides ongoing support. The program is an excellent leadership opportunity for students while increasing physical activity and reducing conflict and bullying in the schoolyard.

In 2018, six area schools came on board: two each in Cochrane and Timmins, plus one in Hearst and one in Iroquois Falls, bringing the total to eight school participating. Sixty students have been trained to be PALS peer leaders.

PALS is an innovative project that the PHU hopes to expand to other schools across our area. As the motto of the program says, "There is always room for one more."



Playground Activity Leaders in Schools

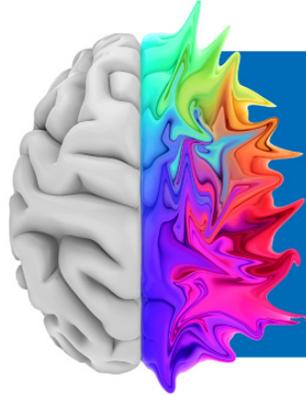
CONCUSSION AWARENESS EVENT

As the PHU promotes increased physical activity in children and youth, it focuses on concussion prevention and management. Injuries continue to be a significant concern across the PHU area, especially with physical activity (e.g. hockey, skiing, skating, etc.). Preventing injuries is important in keeping people active throughout their lives. A concussion is a serious injury. While the effects are typically short-term, a concussion can lead to long-lasting symptoms and even long-term effects like memory problems or depression.

Preventing concussions is a team effort. Parents, teachers, coaches and the players themselves all have a part to play. In the fall of 2018, coaches and managers at a Timmins Minor Hockey Association meeting discussed with PHU staff the importance of concussion prevention, recognition and reporting. From that meeting, the health unit started planning a public education event for coaches, parents and other members of the public.

International authority on concussions, Dr. Charles Tator, participated in the event, held on the evening of Thursday, November 29, 2018, in the McIntyre Ballroom. Dr. Tator was joined at the head table by Gordon and Kathleen Stringer, parents of Rowan Stringer. The Stringers talked about their daughter's death due to concussion and their efforts to promote Rowan's Law and Rowan's Day. Members of the Timmins Rock, a local health unit partner in concussion prevention, also attended and presented Dr. Tator and the Stringers with team jerseys.



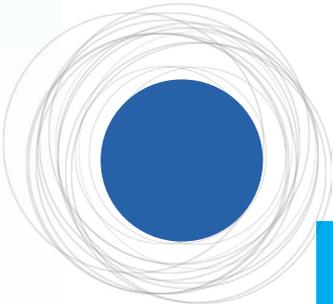


Stay Ahead of the Game A Concussion Awareness Event

Thursday, November 29, 2018
6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.
McIntyre Ballroom, Schumacher

Earlier that day, Dr. Tator provided an education session to over 50 local physicians on concussion prevention, identification and treatment. The medical community was honoured to have the opportunity to hear from such a widely respected and revered colleague about this timely and important topic for our community.

Whether you are a coach, school professional, healthcare provider, teacher, or parent, we all have a role to play in preventing concussions and traumatic brain injury on and off the field. You can learn more about concussions on the PHU website at <https://phu.fyi/concussions>.



CANNABIS LEGALIZATION: PUBLIC HEALTH'S ROLE

On October 17, 2018, the first stage of the Government of Canada's Cannabis Act came into effect, changing the laws around the possession, sale and growing of cannabis. Public health's role in this process was to ensure residents and municipal councils had the information they needed to deal with the changes.

Starting in the fall of 2018, the Porcupine Health Unit provided municipal councils with resources that included recommendations based on the current evidence and best practices on cannabis-related policies; changes to the Smoke-Free Ontario Act; and details about the one-time window to opt out of accepting retail stores.

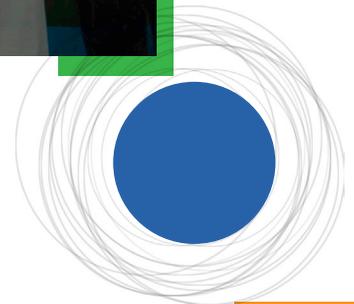
At the same time, PHU staff put into place a multi-pronged approach to public education. They developed messaging for social media and the PHU website to provide information from credible sources on the health risks, including: the risks associated with cannabis as frequency and length of use increase; how cannabis can affect individuals differently; and the specific risks for young people and woman who are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Evidence suggested that parents would have particular concerns, so members of the PHU's Health and Well-Being team researched and prepared new resources to help parents talk with their children about cannabis, and about the low-risk cannabis use guidelines. Requests for information sessions from 9 school parent associations in Timmins, Cochrane, Iroquois Falls, Ramore, Smooth Rock Falls, Moonbeam, Kapuskasing, Mattice and Hearst were received and provided during the fall semester. Several workplaces requested resources and presentations, which were delivered in late 2018.

Harm reduction is a key strategy in how public health tackles such a significant societal change. Collaboration is essential: within the Porcupine Health Unit, in our communities and with our partners across the province and country. The health unit's Health and Well-Being team worked with harm reduction staff to help with messaging about the health risks and how to minimize them. School administration and staff were also key partners in rolling out the information, making sure everybody was using the most current science-based information.

Cannabis Recommendations

1. Establish minimum distance requirements between cannabis retail outlets and place limits on the overall number of outlets.
2. Legislate minimum distance requirements from youth-serving facilities such as schools, childcare centres and community centers. The PHU recommends 500 metres as a minimum distance.
3. Limit cannabis retail outlets in low socioeconomic neighbourhoods and enact minimum distance requirements from other sensitive areas.
4. Prohibit co-location and enact minimum distance requirements between cannabis, alcohol and tobacco retail outlets.
5. Limit late night and early morning retail hours.



STATS & UPDATES

Environmental Health

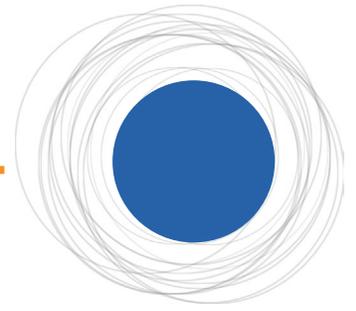
The Environmental Health program at the Porcupine Health Unit is committed to promoting and protecting public health and continually meeting the new challenges from our environment that can affect human health. These include environmental health programs like food safety, safe water, rabies control, sewage systems and West Nile virus surveillance. Inspectors also oversee outbreaks and infection control and enforcement of the Smoke-Free Ontario Act.

In 2018, the Environmental Health program conducted:

- * 1,589 food-related inspections
- * 322 Child Care or Personal Service Setting inspections
- * 99 recreational water inspections
- * 189 animal contact investigations
- * 357 tobacco and e-cigarette inspections: 1 charge and 1 warning

Tobacco Prevention and Cessation

- * 140 clients received assistance from Quit Clinics
- * 98 clients received assistance from the STOP (Smoking Treatment for Ontario Patients) study
- * 7 clients participated in school-based youth cessation programs
- * A number of students participated in smoking awareness activities:
 - + *Keep the Promise* campaign developed (which outlines the differences between sacred and commercial tobacco)
 - + Smoke-Free movies (urban park, school events) completed
 - + Tobacco Industry Denormalization training and information



Injury Prevention

Falls Prevention in Seniors

The following resources were distributed:

- * 817 Independent Living Guides
- * 692 Home Safety Checklists distributed
- * 307 “What to Do if You Fall” fact sheets were distributed
- * 484 “Preventing Falls” fact sheets were distributed
- * 472 “Tips and Warning” risk cards and 205 pamphlets were distributed
- * 18 pharmacies in the district accepted and distributed 1,653 medication cleanout bags



Events

- * Over 500 people attended Rising Stars performances in the district
- * Healthy Aging Expos provided in 8 communities
- * Over 550 participants attended the Healthy Aging Expos with 377 people receiving their flu vaccine at the expo
- * Hosted a regional Registered Nurses’ Association of Ontario Fall Prevention Best Practice workshop with 17 participants from 7 different organizations attending

Other Injury Prevention Stats

- * Total of 15 schools within the district and 328 Grade 5 students participated in the Brain Waves program
- * These schools were located in Timmins (5), Hornepayne (2), Iroquois Falls (3), Kapuskasing (3), Hearst (1) and Smooth Rock Falls (1)

Mental Health

- * SafeTALK suicide awareness training sessions, delivered in 5 PHU communities
- * Reach in 2018: 186 individuals in 5 communities, offered in 15 sessions

Vision Health

- * 728 Senior Kindergarten students screened
- * 331 referred to optometrist
- * Referral rate: 45%

Healthy Babies Healthy Children

- * 749 Healthy Babies Healthy Children screens were completed
- * 80 families received two or more home visits by a public health nurse and/or family home visitor

Clinical Services

Immunization Program

Travel Program

- * Total Number of Clients: 807
- * Total Number of Vaccines Given: 1,153

General Immunization Clinics

- * Total Number of Clients: 5,494
- * Total Number of Vaccines Given: 8,215
- * TB Skin Tests: 546

Vaccine Cold Chain

- * Number of Inspections: 96
- * Number of cold chain failures investigated: 46

Influenza Vaccine

- * 2016/17 Vaccine distributed: 18,635
- * 2016/17 Vaccine given by PHU: 4,076

Sexual Health Clinic

- * Total Number of Visits: 2,169 visits
- * Screening Tests for Blood-Borne Infections (BBIs): 379
- * Screening Tests for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs): 1,060

- * Number of Pregnancy Tests: 177
- * Number of Pap tests: 201

Infectious Disease Program

- * Cases of Chlamydia: 418
- * Cases of Gonorrhoea: 90
- * Newly diagnosed cases of Hepatitis C: 53

- * Cases of invasive Group A Streptococcal Disease (iGAS): 12

Genetic Program

- * Total number of client referrals: 254
- * Total number of cancer referrals including Ontario Breast Screening

Program (OBSP) referrals: 111

- * Total number of clients seen in clinic: 89

Speech

- * 1,448 children registered in the Preschool Speech and Language system for the Cochrane District, including 327 new children
- * 183 children were seen for an initial assessment
- * 154 children received first intervention
- * 547 children were seen for an assessment and treatment
- * 2,028 speech and language assessment and therapy sessions provided
- * Average age at the time of referral was 30 months
- * 39% of referrals were from parents; 32% from health care providers
- * 9% of referrals were from the health unit's HBHC program
- * 10% of referrals came from education (6%) and childcare (4%) organizations



Oral Health

- * 4,426 children were screened in Grades JK, SK, 2,4,6, & 8
- * Visible dental decay in students screened: 12%
- * Fluoride varnish provided in 42 preschools, 28 day cares, 2 home daycares & 12 Early On Centres, totalling 1,188 applications provided to 865 children
- * 67 children from 8 First Nations communities received fluoride varnish treatments and sealants (when needed) through COHI services in the 2017-18 COHI fiscal year
- * 200 clients were enrolled in the HSO-EESS stream of Healthy Smiles Ontario through the PHU
- * Over 200 oral health kits distributed to local vulnerable populations

Services Provided

- | | |
|------------------|-----------------------------|
| * Screening: 261 | * Fluoride treatments: 712 |
| * Scaling: 497 | * Pit & fissure sealants: 3 |
| * Prophy: 533 | * HSO enrollment: 200 |

2018 FINANCIAL REPORT

PROGRAM EXPENDITURES	\$	%
General Public Health	8,710,526	60.95
Healthy Babies/Healthy Children	992,731	6.95
Unorganized Territories	855,159	5.98
Preschool Speech Initiative	757,349	5.30
Healthy Smiles	528,455	3.70
Smoke Free Ontario	371,341	2.60
Genetics	329,248	2.30
Infection Control	222,279	1.56
Diabetes	191,006	1.34
Northern Fruit & Vegetable	190,169	1.33
Priority Population Nurses	178,702	1.25
Harm Reduction	149,779	1.05
Vector Borne Disease	122,649	0.86
Chief Nursing Officer	121,244	0.85
Canada Prenatal Nutrition	97,961	0.69
Stay on Your Feet	91,335	0.64
Infection Control Nurse	89,200	0.62
Land Control	73,905	0.52
Indigenous Communities Diabetes	70,875	0.50
Children's Oral Health Initiative	60,305	0.42
Indigenous Communities Liaison	34,437	0.24
Aids Hep C	25,973	0.18
Small Drinking Water Systems	24,620	0.17
	\$14,289,248	100.00
REVENUE SOURCES	\$	%
Province of Ontario	11,552,998	80.85
Member Municipalities	2,214,449	15.50
Government of Canada	158,266	1.11
Other	363,535	2.54
	\$14,289,248	100.00

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