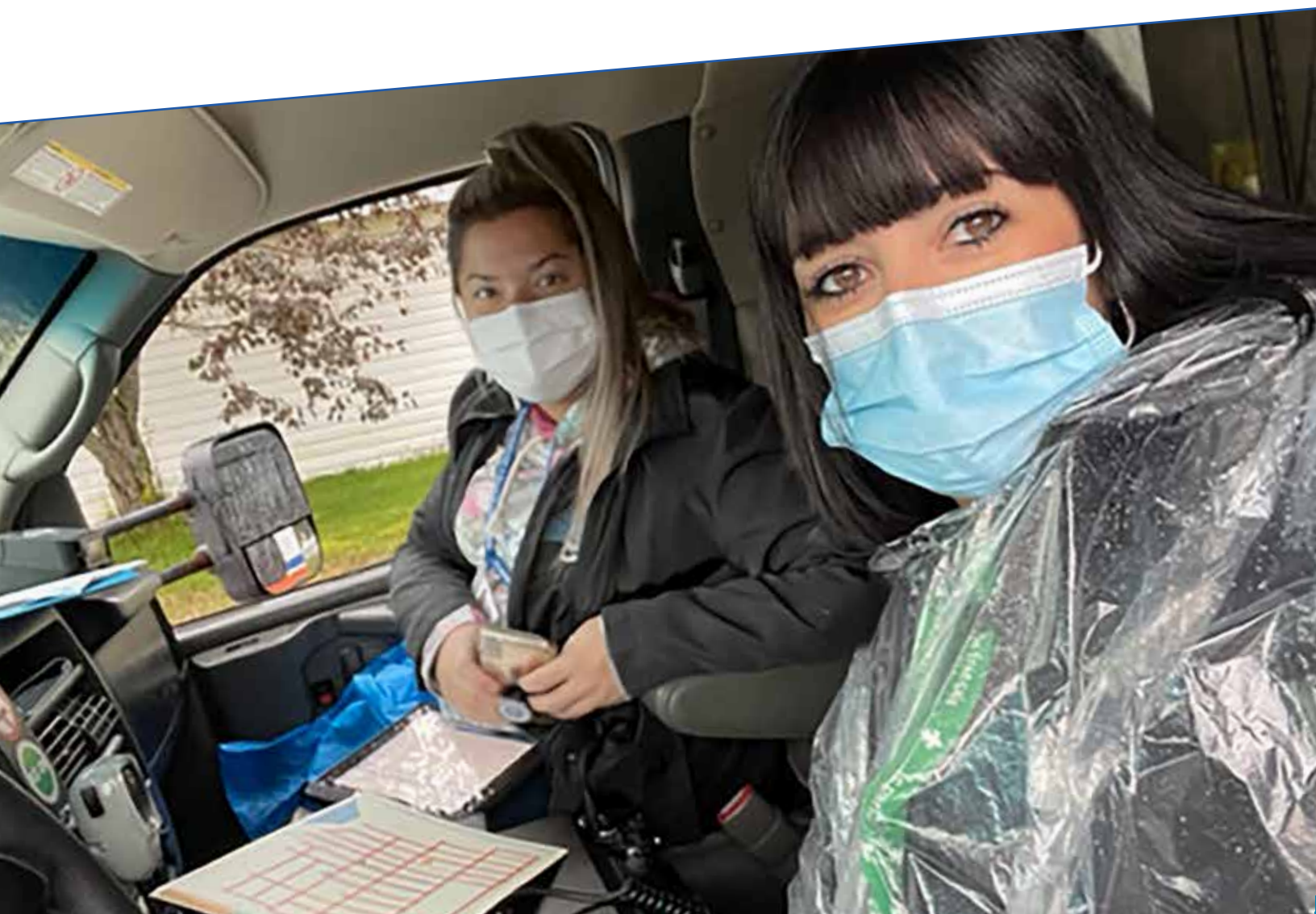


Annual Report 2020





ON JANUARY 1, 2020, few people had heard of novel coronavirus 2019. But on March 11 of that year, the World Health Organization declared it a global pandemic. Six days after that, the Porcupine Health Unit (PHU) had its first confirmed case.

Communities across our area — and around the world — faced huge economic and social challenges. We recognize the tremendous sacrifices made by our community members throughout the pandemic. But we must also highlight the strength of local public health with strong local connections and collaborations. Working with community partners, we were able to mount a rapid and flexible response to this public health emergency tailored to our area. This local public health response meant we were able to find unique and innovative ways to support our diverse population from daily updates to a partnership with the Cochrane District Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to coordinate testing for COVID-19 across the PHU region to ensuring support for people in isolation. Throughout the pandemic, but especially in the early days, the actions of our partners and community members helped to protect the health of our most vulnerable residents.

The pandemic required the mobilization of public health staff and expertise. Many PHU staff were reassigned to new and different roles, requiring us to pause some services. Meanwhile, we continued to respond to the opioid crisis and deliver other critical public health services including: infectious disease follow-up; sexual health services; providing support to families through the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program; emergency evacuations; inspection of food premises, recreational water, personal service settings and land use; complaints follow-up; and beach and West Nile surveillance.

As the year ended, restrictions put in place to minimize the risk of infection made for a “different holiday season”. But there was a positive note with the approval of the Pfizer and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines for adults. They would prove to be highly effective in decreasing the risk of serious illness and hospitalizations from COVID-19.

The pandemic showed the need for local public health in responding with the specific needs of our communities at top of mind. On behalf of the Board of Health and management team, I would like to thank our community members, our partners, and especially the incredible PHU staff for their sacrifices, compassion and dedication to the health and well-being of our communities during these unprecedented times.

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

Protect yourself & your family.
LATHER UP for 20 seconds with soap and water or use an alcohol-based sanitizer.

Protégez-vous et votre famille.
SAVONNEZ-VOUS les mains pendant 20 secondes à l'eau et au savon ou utilisez un désinfectant à base d'alcool.



We hear you, this year has been one for the books. There's only 4 days left in 2020 (but who's counting). COVID-19 entered our community in March and we've made it this far by working together and following public health measures. Remember, the point is not to live each day like your last, but to make your days last. Continue following public health measures throughout the holidays and together, we WILL get through this!

**OH DEER,
WHAT A YEAR!**



2020 Board of Health

Sue Perras – CHAIR
Town of Smooth Rock Falls

Drago Stefanic – VICE CHAIR
Township of Hornepayne

Cleo Charlebois
Township of Black River-Matheson

Denis Clement
Town of Cochrane, Town of Moosonee

Pat Britton
Town of Iroquois Falls

Marc Ringuette
Town of Hearst

Sebastien Lessard
Town of Kapuskasing, Townships of Moonbeam,
Fauquier and Strickland

John Curley
Kristin Murray
Mickey Auger
Rock Whissell
City of Timmins

Porcupine Health Unit

Head Office:

169 Pine Street South
Postal Bag 2012,
Timmins, Ontario
P4N 8B7

705-267-1181 1-800-461-1818

705-264-3980 (fax)

www.porcupinehu.on.ca

A COVID-19 Timeline

January

JANUARY 25 | First case of COVID-19 in Ontario.

February

March

MARCH 11 | First death in Ontario from COVID-19. That same day, the World Health Organization declares the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak a global pandemic.

MARCH 17 | Ontario enters state of emergency. Premier Doug Ford declares a state of emergency in Ontario while ordering some business to be closed.

MARCH 18 | Testing starts. A COVID-19 Community Assessment Centre opens in Timmins. Meanwhile, the PHU partners with Cochrane EMS to ensure COVID-19 testing is available throughout the region.

MARCH 18 | PHU brings community partners together for a media conference on COVID-19.

MARCH 19 | First case of COVID-19 in the PHU area.

MARCH 23 | All non-essential businesses closed in Ontario. Schools also closed that day.

MARCH 27 | Case count in PHU area reaches 10.



“Today, Dr. Lianne Catton, Medical Officer of Health, Porcupine Health Unit, confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in the PHU region.”

— March 19, 2020, PHU Media Release

April

APRIL 3 | City of Timmins declares State of Emergency.

APRIL 11 | First outbreak declared in the PHU area. Dr. Catton declares an outbreak at Spruce Hills Lodge after a resident there has tested positive for COVID-19.

APRIL 17 | PHU website crashes. The PHU website, which had recorded nearly 260,000 page views in the 29 days since the first case in the area, crashes for the first time. It's back up within a few hours.

APRIL 27 | PHU publishes first COVID-19 Epidemiology Update. At the time, of the 58 confirmed PHU region cases of COVID-19, 36 were from Timmins and area.

APRIL 27 | Ontario's Reopening Framework announced.

May

MAY 5 | Outbreak declared at Golden Manor in Timmins.

MAY 8 | Outbreak declared at the South Centennial Manor Long-Term Care Home.

MAY 11 | Outbreak declared at Extendicare in Timmins.

June

JUNE 11 | PHU area moves into Stage 2 of the Province of Ontario's Re-opening plan. Dr. Catton said today that the opening of more businesses and public spaces in the PHU area, announced earlier that week, is good news for residents and local businesses. However, she noted, “the work is not over. It is critical to recognize our shared responsibility to ensure safe and successful reopening.”

JUNE 25 | In a media conference, Dr. David Williams, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer announced there were 34,205 cases of COVID-19 in the province, 189 that day. The majority were in southern Ontario. At the time he noted that nearly 30,000 Ontarians had recovered from the virus.

July

JULY 15 | PHU region moves into Stage 3. In a media release, Dr. Catton announced, "This is good news, as many have found the last few months increasingly difficult. However, we are able to move forward due to the commitment to the public health measures in place. This is not a green light; it's amber — proceed with caution. That's why today, I am announcing the additional requirement of mandatory masks or face coverings in enclosed public spaces."

JULY 23 | Masks become mandatory. Businesses in the Porcupine Health Unit area were to require all members of the public and employees who entered or remained in an enclosed public space of the business or organization to wear a mask or face covering.

August

AUGUST 28 | The Ontario Government announces that long-term care residents can now "spend time away from their long-term care homes for day trips or overnight absences."

AUGUST 31 | A quiet week. After a week with no new cases, the PHU continued to urge that residents be cautious when visiting others. At the time, the number of confirmed positive cases was at 73, none of which were active. By the end of the week, there would be an additional positive case.

September

SEPTEMBER 2 | Schools reopen. Schools across Ontario start to open after being closed for 25 weeks.

SEPTEMBER 17 | Outbreak declared at Glencore. Dr. Catton, in line with Ministry guidance, declared an outbreak of COVID-19 at Glencore's Kidd Operations Mine Site, adding, "Let me assure the public that we are working with Glencore and we are all committed to ensure all necessary infection prevention and control measures are ongoing to contain the spread of COVID-19."



“We remain grateful for the ongoing sacrifices made by our community members.”

— from December 27, 2020, PHU Media Release

October

OCTOBER 8 | 85th case of COVID-19 declared.

OCTOBER 19 | The PHU urges everyone to have a safe and healthy Halloween.

“Many of us look forward to participating in Halloween-themed events including trick-or-treating,” Dr. Catton said. “The Porcupine Unit is encouraging the public to follow COVID-19 prevention measures this Halloween to limit the spread. To help celebrate safely, know your risk.”

OCTOBER 28 | Outbreak Declared at the Porcupine Health Unit in Hearst.

As a result of the outbreak, the Hearst office was closed for several days. The health unit followed that announcement a few days later with recommendations for enhanced precautions for all Hearst residents.

November

NOVEMBER 6 | Cases reach 100. 222 days after announcing the first case of COVID-19 in the region, the PHU declares number one hundred.

NOVEMBER 27 | Northern MOHs release video.

Medical Officers of Health from health units across Northern Ontario get together to create a video encouraging Northerners to work together to control the spread of COVID-19.

December

DECEMBER 11 | PHU moves to Yellow. As part of the new provincial framework, the “Yellow — Protect” designation, went into effect in the PHU area at midnight. The new level came with restrictions, including limited seating in bars and restaurants, limits for public events and social gatherings and discouraging non-essential travel.

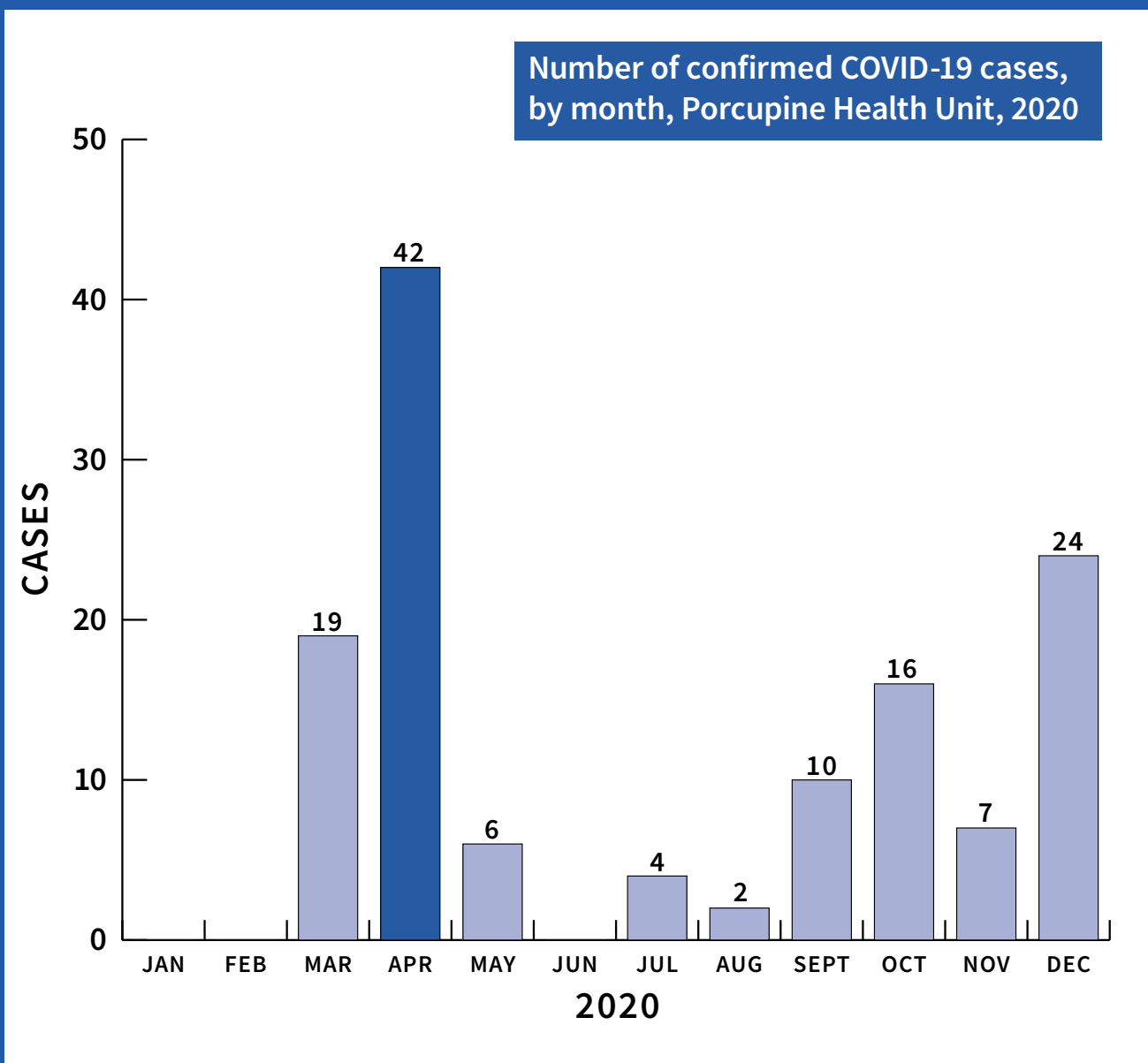
DECEMBER 23 | Joint message from “MOH, Mayors, First Nation Chiefs and Hospital CEOs from across the PHU” in Cree, French and English “The choices we make today, throughout the holiday season, and in the future, will help keep our communities safe.”

DECEMBER 26 | Provincial Shutdown takes effect.

The shutdown would be extended to January 25, 2021, early in the new year due to record-high case counts in the province.

DECEMBER 31 | On the final day of 2020, the Porcupine Health Unit reported two confirmed cases of COVID-19, bringing the year-end total to 130.

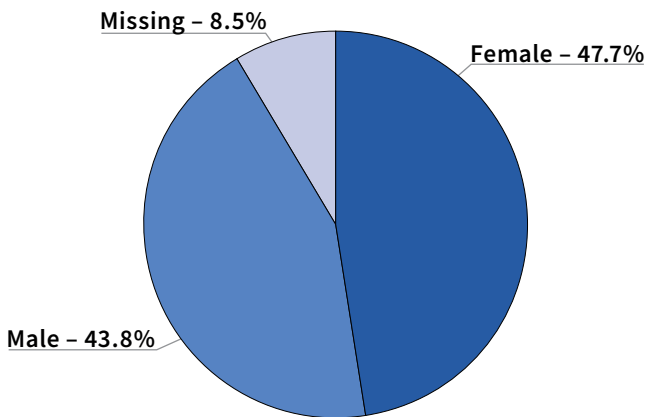
COVID-19: 2020 in numbers



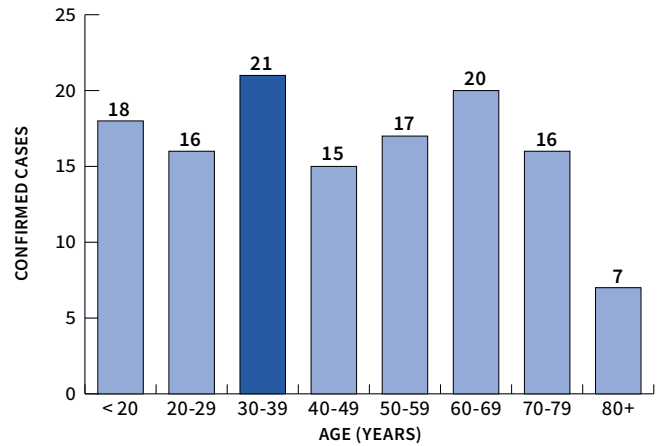
At the end of 2020, 85.9% of COVID-19 cases in the PHU area had been resolved, lower than the provincial number of 86.2%.

— from December 30, 2020, PHU Epidemiology Report

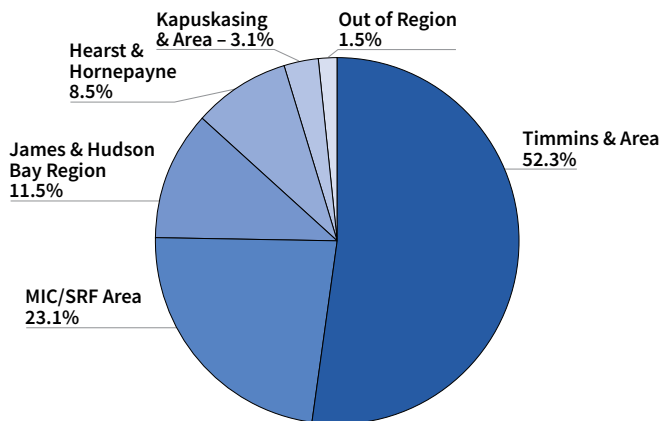
Percent of confirmed COVID-19 cases, by sex, Porcupine Health Unit, 2020



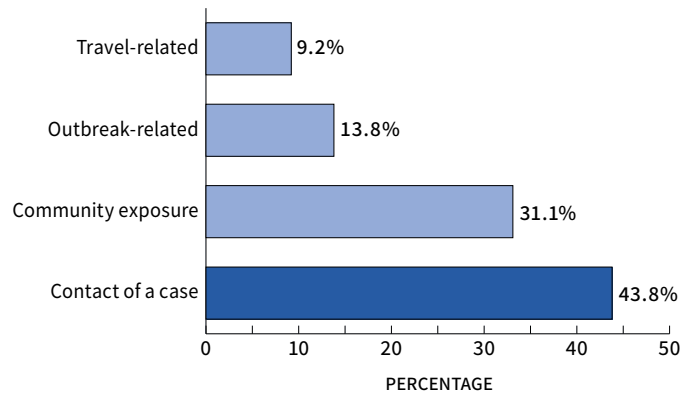
Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases, by age group, Porcupine Health Unit, 2020



Percent of confirmed COVID-19 cases, by region, Porcupine Health Unit, 2020



Percentage of confirmed COVID-19 cases, by exposure type, Porcupine Health Unit, 2020



Financial Report

PROGRAM EXPENDITURES	\$	%
General Public Health	11,884,058	73.23 %
Healthy Babies/Healthy Children	968,021	5.97 %
Unorganized Territories	849,254	5.23 %
Preschool Speech and Language Initiative	770,320	4.75 %
Genetics	332,931	2.05 %
Ontario Seniors Dental Care	319,531	1.97 %
COVID-19 School-focused Nurses Initiative	228,546	1.41 %
Fruit and Vegetable Pilot Program	184,292	1.14 %
AIDS Bureau Funding Program	171,637	1.06 %
Canada Prenatal Nutrition	109,294	0.67 %
Indigenous Communities Partnerships	94,500	0.58 %
Land Control	84,600	0.52 %
Stay on Your Feet	80,821	0.50 %
Children's Oral Health Initiative Program	76,988	0.47 %
Ontario Seniors Dental Care Capital	70,779	0.44 %
Temporary Pandemic Pay	2,236	0.01 %
	\$16,227,808	100.00 %

REVENUE SOURCES	\$	%
Province of Ontario	11,506,368	78.95 %
Member Municipalities	2,457,036	16.86 %
Government of Canada	191,910	1.19 %
Other	363,804	2.26 %
	16,114,494	100.00 %