



Annual Report

Renfrew County and
District Health Unit

2012

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What public health does...

The focus of public health is to promote health, prevent illnesses and respond to threats to the health of the public. Ontario's public health units work closely with other parts of the health system and community partners outside of the health system.

We have 13 "Program Standards" in five areas: Family Health, Infectious Diseases, Chronic Diseases and Injuries, Environmental Health and Emergency Preparedness.

Our work is based on the principles of *need* (responding to the health needs of the local population), *impact* (using evidence about the effectiveness of our work), *capacity* (making sure we have the skills and resources to do the work we need to do), and *partnership and collaboration* (working with other towards mutual goals).

The [Ontario Public Health Standards and Protocols](#) describe the minimum requirements for fundamental public health programs and services delivered by Ontario's 36 health units.

Who we are...

Renfrew County and District Health Unit delivers public health programs and services within our borders, in collaboration with other organizations in the health system and in partnership with local, provincial and national organizations.

We are a non-profit agency governed by the Renfrew County and District Board of Health. We are funded by the Government of Ontario, the County of Renfrew, the City of Pembroke and the Township of South Algonquin. Our approximately 70 staff members serve over 102,000 people living in an area of 15,000 square kilometers.

Dr. Michael Corriveau
Medical Officer of Health

New performance monitoring system for public health in Ontario

In 2012, Ontario's 36 local public health units entered into Accountability Agreements with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. These Agreements are part of a new performance management framework for public health.

The Agreements set performance expectations, including annual targets that relate to baseline measures of performance at each public health unit. The table below summarizes performance indicators that were assessed in 2012, and monitoring results for Renfrew County and District Health Unit.

Performance Indicator	Baseline (2010)	2012 Target	2012 Performance
Percent of high risk food premises inspected once every four months while in operation	52%	≥85%	99%
Percent of pools and public spas by class inspected while in operation	25%	≥75%	100%
Percent of high-risk Small Drinking Water Systems inspections completed for those that are due for re-inspection	Could not be established	100%	100%
Percent of confirmed gonorrhoea cases where initiation of follow-up occurred within two business days	100%	100%	100%
Percent of confirmed Invasive Group A Streptococcal disease cases where initiation of follow-up occurred on the same day as receipt of lab confirmation	100%	100%	No cases Not applicable
Percent of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine wasted that is stored/administered by the public health unit	0.0%	Maintain current rate	0.1%
Percent of influenza vaccine wasted that is stored/administered by the public health unit	7.6%	≤5%	4.1%
Percent of school-aged children who have completed immunizations for Hepatitis B	82.3%	Maintain or improve rate	94%
Percent of school-aged children who have completed immunizations for HPV	50.5%	Maintain or improve rate	60%
Percent of school-aged children who have completed immunizations for meningococcus	81%	Maintain or improve rate	67%
Percent of tobacco vendors in compliance with youth access legislation at the time of last inspection	99%	≥90%	99%
Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) status (implementation of activities that promote, support and protect breastfeeding)	Preliminary work towards BFI designation	Intermediate work towards BFI designation	Intermediate work towards BFI designation

For more information about these performance indicators and how they are calculated, see the [Technical Document: Public Health Accountability Agreement Indicators 2011 - 2013](#).

Creating Supportive Environments

Facing the elephant in the room

Our health is clearly related to our social and economic position in society. In general, we have better health than people below us and poorer health than people above us on the social and economic ladder.

Public Health Units in Ontario are mandated to work on reducing health inequities. This term refers to the common experience of more frequent illness, premature disability and early death by people with lower social and economic positions in society. This is the elephant in the room that has been ignored for too long.

Factors that influence health through social and economic position are called [social determinants of health](#). Some examples are income, education and literacy, employment and working conditions, and social and physical environments.

In 2012 two full-time Public Health Nurse positions were created to enable a focus on addressing determinants of health and reducing health inequities. We identified three priority areas for this work: healthy child development, child and youth mental health, and access to sexual health services.

A Social Determinants of Health Advisory Group was established to develop knowledge, skills and practices that improve our capacity to address determinants of health and reduce health inequities. This group organized a staff in-service and piloted a tool that assesses how our work in a variety of program areas influences health equity, and identifies what further work could be done.

Becoming baby friendly

The Baby Friendly Initiative is a framework for implementing international best practices that support the best care possible for mothers and infants.

Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) is progressing towards achieving [Baby Friendly Initiative](#) (BFI) designation. BFI designation is a performance measure for all Ontario public health units.

BFI is a campaign launched by the World Health Organization and UNICEF in 1991 to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. Breastfeeding is a fundamental tenet of a healthy mother-infant bond and a key determinant of health.

RCDHU continues to have a leadership role in promoting breastfeeding and creating environments that support optimal infant feeding practices.

To achieve BFI designation, RCDHU must follow a process established by the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. The process requires that we assess internal practices, develop a written [breastfeeding policy](#), and provide training for all staff on how to protect, promote and support breastfeeding. BFI provides a framework for implementing best practices, and will enable us to support the best health possible for local children and families.

Helping Families

Healthy Smiles Ontario

Regular dental care is important to children's overall health. Yet for some, regular dental care may not be affordable.

[Healthy Smiles Ontario](#) is a provincial program that covers regular dental care such as checkups, fillings, and preventive services for eligible children age 17 and under. To be eligible, children/youth must live in a household with an adjusted family net income of under \$20,000 per year, and not have any dental coverage.

In 2012 the Healthy Smiles Ontario program was promoted through the following means:

- radio advertisements
- health care provider and teacher newsletters
- public health presentations
- outreach to food banks, day care centres and nursery schools
- displays at community events
- brochures sent to schools and throughout the community

Community committee works to prevent falls

Renfrew County and District has high emergency department visit rates for injuries caused by falls in older adults. Local organizations are working together to address this issue.

Renfrew County and District Health Unit provides leadership for a community coalition called the ***Aging Safe, Healthy and Strong Committee***. Through this group, local agencies work together on ways to decrease falls among older adults. Activities of this committee in 2012 included:

- Carried out the *Medicine Clean Out* communication campaign
- Organized a health fair at the Senior Games
- Developed two new educational resources: [Am I at Risk for Fall?](#) and [Medications and Falls](#)
- Updated the [Home Safety Checklist](#)
- Distributed resources to community partners for use with their clients and the public at large

Renfrew County and District Health Unit also participated in four community outreach events for seniors and promoted falls prevention messages through presentations and a display.

Helping the Community

Engaging youth in issues that are important to them

[Youth Engagement](#) is recognized as an important strategy for promoting the health, development and well-being of young people. In 2012 we carried out several youth engagement activities:

Youth that are engaged build life and leadership skills. They build connections in their community and learn to address social issues that affect their lives.

- Recruited student ambassadors at three area high schools to work on tobacco use prevention activities.
- Facilitated the sharing of experiences by local youth involved in successful [OSAID](#) (Ontario Students Against Impaired Driving) groups with youth at other local high schools.
- Supported the implementation of [Challenge Day](#) workshops in four high schools. More than an anti-bullying program, Challenge Day builds connection and empathy, and inspires compassion and positive change.
- Mobilized a discussion about youth engagement with representatives from community agencies (at the Building Our Strengths and Successes workshop organized by the Renfrew County Healthy Communities Partnership).
- Facilitated a community based focus group in collaboration with Renfrew County United Way's [United with Youth](#) to assess service gaps and the need for a youth service hub
- Promoted and supported a youth engagement community of practice for adults working with youth.

More ways to get the annual flu shot

10 pharmacies in Renfrew County and District became part of Ontario's universal influenza immunization program.

In 2012 the Ontario government expanded the role of pharmacists to include providing the publicly funded flu shot. In Renfrew County and District, 10 pharmacies were approved to provide the flu vaccine.

RCDHU distributed 4,070 doses of influenza vaccine to pharmacies. We also distributed 25,310 doses of flu vaccine to physician's offices, hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes, health care agencies, workplaces, and community health centres. We provided 3,780 doses of the flu vaccine at our own community clinics.

Protecting Renfrew County and District

Safe Food Program

- 1,462 routine inspections of food premises
- 268 re-inspections to ensure corrective actions were taken
- 12 complaints investigated
- 153 food-related inspections at special events
- 25 food safety courses resulted in 491 people certified as Safe Food Handlers
- 5 food recall inspections
- 47 recreational camp inspections

Safe Water Program

- 53 adverse water results from regulated systems investigated
- 6 boil water orders/drinking water advisories issued
- 5,716 private water samples submitted to the provincial laboratory through the Health Unit
- 316 inquiries due to private water sample results
- 1,600 recreational beach samples collected from 24 beaches and 1 beach posted as unsafe for swimming
- 12 indoor Class A pools inspected
- 23 indoor Class B pools inspected
- 26 outdoor Class B pools inspected
- 22 indoor hot tubs/whirlpools inspected

Small Drinking Water Systems

- 121 compliance inspections
- 60 directives issued

Rabies Control

- 196 animal bites investigated
- 16 people received post-exposure rabies prophylaxis

Immunization Program

- 3,428 vaccines given to 2,325 people at 240 community immunization clinics
- 602 students given tetanus/diphtheria/polio boosters at 11 high school immunization clinics
- 92 inspections conducted on vaccine storage and handling practices in health care provider premises

Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections

- 250 confirmed cases of chlamydia, 25 confirmed cases of hepatitis C and 6 confirmed cases of gonorrhea investigated

Sexual Health

- 1,180 client visits at 12 clinic locations; 54 pregnancy tests carried out; 27,648 condoms distributed

Harm Reduction Program

- 44,073 clean needles distributed, and an estimated 20,950 used needles collected

Protecting Renfrew County and District

Health Hazard Investigations

- 73 health hazard complaints investigated
- 39 food-related complaints investigated
- 5 water safety complaints investigated
- 5 infection control complaints investigated
- 11 Smoke Free Ontario complaints investigated

Enforcement of the Smoke Free Ontario Act

- 10 charges laid by the Health Unit under the Smoke Free Ontario Act
- 719 worksites inspected for compliance with the Act
- 252 tobacco vendor inspections completed
- 126 enforcement checks using test shoppers completed

Lyme disease is a growing concern

Lyme disease is an infection caused by the bacterium *Borrelia burgdorferi*. The bacterium can be transmitted to humans by a bite from an infected blacklegged tick (deer tick). The tick must be attached to the skin for at least 24 hours to transmit the bacterium.

An established blacklegged tick population has not been confirmed in Renfrew County and District. However, migratory birds can carry them into this area so there is a risk of becoming infected here. Over the past three years (2010 - 2012), four cases of Lyme disease were reported in Renfrew County and District. All were related to travel in areas where there are established populations of blacklegged ticks.

The first sign of infection in about 75 percent of cases is a circular rash that looks like a bull's eye. Other common early symptoms are fatigue, chills, fever, headache, muscle and joint pain and swollen lymph nodes. Suspected Lyme disease is treated with antibiotics. The earlier treatment is received, the better. If left untreated it can last for months or years.

Populations of blacklegged ticks are spreading northward, possibly because of climate change. Ticks can be avoided by when spending time in wooded and grassy areas by wearing long pants tucked inside socks, long sleeves, and using an insect repellent containing DEET.

If you find a tick on your skin, remove it with tweezers by grasping it as close to the skin as possible and pulling straight out gently but firmly without squeezing. Put the tick in a screw-top bottle and take it to the nearest Health Unit office.

Physicians and public health officials can send ticks to the Ontario Public Health Laboratory for identification. Knowing where infected blacklegged ticks are living helps public health authorities to understand Lyme disease and how to prevent it.

For more information and to see what blacklegged ticks look like, see the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's [Lyme Disease](#) page.

2012 Board of Health

The Renfrew County and District Board of Health oversees the administration of the Health Unit's programs and services. Members of the Board of Health in 2012 were:

Mayor Jack Wilson, Chair

Reeve Tammy-Lea Stewart, Vice-Chair

Mayor Mary Campbell

Mr. J Michael du Manoir

Mayor Jane Dumas

Councillor Les Scott

Warden Bob Sweet

Ms. Marcia Timm

Ms. Carolyn Watt

2012 Financial Statements

[Financial Statements of Renfrew County and District Health Unit, Year ended December 31, 2012](#) (PDF, 19 pages, 380 KB)

Contact us...

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