



Annual Report

Renfrew County and
District Health Unit

2013

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What public health does

The focus of public health is to promote health, prevent illness and respond to threats to the health of the public. Renfrew County and District Health Unit delivers public health programs and services within our borders, in collaboration with organizations both within and outside of the health care system.

Partnership and collaboration are integral to the work of Ontario's public health units. By working closely with many other organizations, we can create the conditions necessary for changes that support health.

For example, the Renfrew County and District Health Unit worked with several other organizations as part of the [Physical Activity Network](#) and the [Healthy Communities Partnership](#) assisting the County of Renfrew in developing an [Active Transportation Strategy](#).

The Health Unit also participates in the Renfrew County chapter of [Infection Prevention and Control Canada](#) to exchange information, ideas and resources with community partners.

The Health Unit provides leadership to a network called Aging Safe, Healthy and Strong in Renfrew County. This group has worked extensively on communication activities related to the prevention of falls in older adults.

Who we are

Renfrew County and District Health Unit is a corporation under the Health Protection and Promotion Act governed by the Renfrew County and District Board of Health. It is funded by the Government of Ontario, the County of Renfrew, the City of Pembroke and the Township of South Algonquin. There are approximately 70 staff members serving over 103,000 people living in an area of 15,000 square kilometers.

The former Medical Officer of Health Dr. Michael Corriveau retired at the end of 2013, after having served our community ably for 26 years. Dr. Maureen Carew assumed the role of Medical Officer of Health on January 1, 2014.

Report on 2013 performance indicators

The 2011 - 2013 Public Health Accountability Agreement (PHAA) between Ontario's 36 local public health units and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care provides a funding and performance management framework for public health.

This legal agreement sets performance expectations between boards of health and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, including annual targets that relate to baseline measures of performance. The current PHAA remains in effect until a new agreement has been established. The table below shows performance indicators and monitoring results for Renfrew County and District Health Unit that were assessed in 2013.

Performance Indicator	Baseline (2010)	2013 Target	2013 Performance
Percent of high risk food premises inspected once every four months while in operation	52%	100%	100%
Percent of Class A pools inspected while in operation	25%	100%	100%
Percent of high-risk Small Drinking Water Systems inspected of those 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 of a positive case	100%	100%	100%
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%	2.7%
Percent of school-aged children who have completed immunizations for meningococcus	81%	≥86%	83.5%
Percent of tobacco vendors in compliance with youth access legislation at the time of last inspection	99%	≥90%	94.4%
Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) status (implementation of activities that promote, support and protect breastfeeding)	Preliminary work towards BFI designation	Advanced work towards BFI designation	Advanced 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

Ensuring that students are immunized

272 notices were sent to parents of children overdue for one or more required vaccine. 60 suspension notices were sent and 12 students were suspended from school because immunization information had not been received by the Health Unit.

Ontario's public health units are mandated to enforce the [Immunization of School Pupils Act](#), which aims to protect the health of children against designated communicable diseases. In 2013, this Act required students to be immunized against tetanus, diphtheria, polio, measles, mumps, and rubella.

Renfrew County and District Health Unit reviews each student's immunization record annually to ensure that immunizations are up to date. Notices are sent to parents of children overdue for one or more required vaccines. A time period is given to have the child vaccinated, unless parents or guardians provide a medical exemption or a statement of conscience or religious belief. If an exemption is not provided and the child has not been immunized within the specified time period, the student will be suspended from school.

Healthy food IN and OUT of schools

Creating environments that encourage healthy behaviours requires good collaboration among local organizations. The [Community Resource Centre \(Killaloe\)](#) provided an opportunity to do just that through the **Healthy Food IN and OUT of Schools** project.

The project which was funded by a Heart and Stroke Foundation of Ontario Spark Advocacy Grant, aimed to make food choices in the community more congruent with healthy eating efforts in schools. The project focused on improving healthy food choices at the arena canteen located in Eganville (Township of Bonnechere Valley).

Health Unit staff guided a survey of arena users and wrote a report on community readiness and preferences for healthier choices. The Community Dietitian assessed foods and drinks for sale at the canteen, identified changes necessary to improve nutritional quality, supported consultations with Township staff and assisted with presentations to Township Council.

In November 2013, a new menu was launched which offered healthier food choices such as soup, chili, fresh fruit and vegetables, fruit smoothies and yogurt and whole grain breads. The launch recognized the tremendous efforts on the part of the Community Resource Centre and arena staff to research new products, revise the ordering system and develop marketing materials to promote the new and improved "Blades" canteen. Healthy foods now represent 50 per cent of the canteen's food choices compared to one percent when the project started in the fall of 2012.

Recreation facilities play a key role in promoting health and wellness. However, typical canteen food choices are low in important nutrients and contain high amounts of fat, sugar and salt.

Helping Families

Enhancements to the HBHC Program

[Healthy Babies Healthy Children](#) (HBHC) is a home visiting program provided by Ontario Health Units to support families during pregnancy, after birth and up until children attend school. Public Health Nurses and Home Visitors assist families in need with parenting and child development. The purpose is to help all children get the best possible start in life.

Based on a provincial evaluation, the following enhancements were made to improve the effectiveness of HBHC:

- a) Implementation of a new screening tool that is better at identifying vulnerable families, enabling them to access targeted services more quickly.
- b) Strengthening of home visiting through training of Public Health Nurses and Home Visitors to use the following evidence-based interventions and programs:
 - [Promoting Maternal Mental Health](#), which addresses a woman's psychosocial health during pregnancy
 - [Keys to Caregiving](#), which builds skills in responding to infant behaviours and cues
 - [Parent Child Interaction Scales](#), which assess strengths and identify areas for improvement
 - [Partners in Parenting Education](#), which focuses on the emotional connection between parent and child

872 women and their families were assessed using the new HBHC screening tool. Sixty-three percent were considered to be "with risk" and 37 percent "without risk". One fifth of families "with risk" received voluntary home visiting services.

Stand Up! Falls prevention program

Most falls are predictable and preventable, yet fall-related injuries are common in older adults.

In 2013, the Renfrew County and District Health Unit implemented a program called **Stand Up!** as one way to reduce injuries caused by falls. This program is for seniors who live at home and are concerned about falling or about their balance. It consists of group exercises, exercises that can be performed at home, and discussions that promote home safety and safe behavior. **Stand Up!** [has been successful](#) at increasing balance and mobility of older adults when offered by community organizations in natural settings.

The Health Unit hosted two **Stand Up!** facilitator training sessions for 44 staff from local agencies that offer seniors' programs. Health Unit staff also received instruction in providing future training sessions in conjunction with a physiotherapist. **Stand Up!** programs were held in the fall of 2013 in Barry's Bay, Beachburg, Eganville, Pembroke and Renfrew by trained facilitators from different community agencies. The Health Unit was available to assist community partners with the educational component of this initiative.

For Ontarians age 65 and older, falls are the leading cause of injury-related emergency department visits. In Renfrew County and District, there are over 80 emergency department visits per 1,000 people age 65 and over each year. This is higher than in Ontario as a whole.

Helping the Community

Supporting residents with quitting smoking

The Renfrew County and District Health Unit continues to support residents with quitting smoking. Here are some highlights of smoking cessation activities completed in 2013.

- Hosted two [STOP on the Road](#) workshops. Sixty-one participants received five weeks of free nicotine patches.
- Provided support to Algonquin College (Pembroke Campus) to plan and implement [Leave the Pack Behind](#), a smoking cessation program for young adult smokers.
- Promoted the [Would U Rather](#) smoking cessation contest for young adults through posters, radio ads, the [Health for All Workplaces](#) newsletter and the Health Unit's website.
- Distributed [You Can Make it Happen](#) program materials to 124 doctors, dental offices and other health care providers across Renfrew County and District to use in giving brief advice to clients to help them quit smoking.
- Hosted the Program Training and Consultation Center's workshop [Brief Counselling Techniques for Tobacco Use Cessation Using A Woman Centered Approach with Pre/Postnatal Clients](#). Seventeen health care providers attended.

In Renfrew County and District, 22 percent of people age 12 and over were daily or occasional smokers in 2011/12.

This is a decrease from previous years (25% in 2007/08 and 2009/10, and 28% in 2003 and 2005).

Influenza immunization rates improve among local health care workers

Health care workers are well aware that a virus-laden sneeze or cough is all it takes to spread influenza and that contracting this disease can have harsh consequences.

The Renfrew County and District Health Unit works closely with health partners to promote the uptake of influenza vaccine among health care workers.

Recent analyses indicate that influenza immunization rates for health care workers in local hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement residences and community health centers have increased.

In 2013, the immunization rate of hospital staff against influenza climbed to 55 percent, from 46 percent in 2012. For long-term care homes, the immunization rate was 78 percent, up from 71 percent in 2012. While there is still room for improvement, local health care workers should be congratulated on the progress made thus far.

In Ontario, it is estimated that about 1/2 of hospital staff and 3/4 of staff in long-term care homes are getting the flu shot, despite continued efforts to improve these rates.

Protecting Renfrew County and District

Safe Food Program

- 1,395 routine inspections of food premises
- 325 re-inspections to ensure corrective actions were taken
- 44 inspections of school nutrition program facilities
- 33 complaints investigated
- 208 food-related inspections at special events
- 40 food safety courses resulted in 668 people certified as Safe Food Handlers
- 61 long-term care facility inspections
- 40 recreational camp inspections
- 11 farmers' markets inspected

Safe Water Program

- 9 boil water orders/drinking water advisories issued
- 5,571 private water samples submitted to the provincial laboratory through the Health Unit
- 560 consultations due to private water supply concerns and/or adverse water sample results
- 1,655 recreational beach samples collected from 24 beaches and 2 beaches posted as unsafe for swimming
- 14 indoor Class A pools inspected
- 44 Class B pools inspected
- 25 indoor hot tubs/whirlpools inspected

Small Drinking Water Systems

- 104 compliance inspections
- 88 risk assessments conducted
- 18 directives issued

Rabies Control

- 204 animal bites investigated
- 21 people received post-exposure rabies prophylaxis

Infection Control

- 76 day nursery facilities inspected
- 40 group homes inspected
- 195 personal services settings inspected
- 15 institutional enteric outbreaks investigated
- 70 individual enteric illnesses reported and investigated

Immunization Program

- 102 inspections conducted on vaccine storage and handling practices in health care provider premises

Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Infections

- 241 confirmed cases of chlamydia, 17 confirmed cases of hepatitis C and 7 confirmed cases of gonorrhea investigated

Sexual Health

- 1,004 client visits at 11 clinic locations; 25 pregnancy tests

Harm Reduction

- 59,700 clean needles distributed and an estimated 19,500 used needles collected

Protecting Renfrew County and District

Health Hazard Investigations

- 66 health hazard complaints investigated
- 33 food-related complaints investigated
- 4 water safety complaints investigated
- 4 infection control complaints investigated
- 10 Smoke Free Ontario complaints investigated

Other

- 12 arenas tested for carbon monoxide
- 23 ticks submitted to Public Health Laboratories for testing
- 50 mosquito traps set up for West Nile Virus monitoring

Enforcement of the Smoke Free Ontario Act

- 16 charges laid by the Health Unit under the Smoke Free Ontario Act
- 16 warnings issued under the Act
- 734 worksites and public places inspected for compliance with the Act
- 132 tobacco vendor display/promotion inspections completed
- 254 enforcement and compliance checks using test shoppers completed

Over 600 people trained in safe food handling

As part of our ongoing commitment to public health education, the Renfrew County and District Health Unit offers a no-charge, provincially recognized safe food handler training course for anyone who wants to learn about the proper techniques and practices to use in order to reduce or eliminate food poisoning in private homes and commercial kitchens.

Course topics include safe food handling techniques, understanding foodborne illness, food premise sanitation, proper cleaning and disinfection of surfaces and utensils, and pest management. Upon successful completion of the exam, students are granted a certificate in safe food handling that is recognized by all health units in Ontario. The certificates are valid for a period of 5 years. In 2013 we offered 40 courses and trained 668 food handlers.

The Health Unit strongly recommends that every person working in the food industry or preparing food for community groups obtain their certificate in safe food handling from the health unit. For more information and to view our course schedule, please visit our [Food Safety Training and Certification](#) web page.

2013 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 2013 were:

Mayor Jack Wilson, Chair

Reeve Tammy-Lea Stewart, Vice-Chair

Mayor Mary Campbell

Mr. J Michael du Manoir

Mayor Jane Dumas

Warden Peter Emon

Councillor Les Scott

Ms. Marcia Timm

Ms. Carolyn Watt

2013 Financial Statements

[Financial Statements of Renfrew County and District Health Unit, Year ended December 31, 2013](#) (PDF, 20 pages, 6 MB)

Contact us...

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