

# Medical Officer of Health: Report to The Board of Health

Prepared by Dr. Carol Zimbalatti  
Medical Officer of Health/Executive Officer

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# Medical Officer of Health Update

## Strengthening Public Health

There has been much to mull over since the last Board of Health meeting in September. Planning for 2024 has been in full swing, and this year brings the extra complexity introduced by the Ministry of Health's Strengthening Public Health plan. The Health Unit's planning aims to maintain flexibility in 2024 as we are not certain exactly what business we will be in come January 2025, nor how the organization will be changing; all the while dealing with a sub-inflationary one percent increase in base funding.

With the Board of Health's support and direction, Rick Champagne, Board of Health Chair, and myself have been engaging in preliminary conversations regarding mergers with northeastern and neighbouring health units. We will be seeking further guidance from the Board of Health on November 22, 2023, regarding conducting feasibility assessments regarding merger options.

In the meantime, the Health Unit is moving forward with Strategic Planning, with the understanding that this Plan will assist us in defining and remaining true to our core Vision, Mission, and Values as we shape our future state.

## Fall Respiratory Virus Update

### Viral Trends

In the province of Ontario, the most recent predictions by Public Health Ontario suggest that COVID-19 activity is high and likely to increase between November 5 and 18, influenza activity is low and likely to remain sporadic, and that RSV activity is low, but is expected to increase.

The number of COVID-related critical illnesses in Ontario continues to increase, with Northeastern Ontario adult ICU admissions for COVID showing the greatest increase, while similar admissions in the rest of the province are relatively flat or even decreasing in some areas. The strain of COVID that appears to have the largest growth advantage currently is the HV.1 subvariant. There are no indications at this time that it causes more severe illness than other Omicron subvariants.

Locally, with the limited testing and reduced reporting of respiratory infections, it is more difficult to get a sense of trends related to respiratory viruses. The number of respiratory outbreaks in highest risk settings has been decreasing since the end of October, and COVID-19 has been the causative agent in most of the outbreaks since the beginning of October. Rhinovirus and influenza have also been identified as causative agents in recent outbreaks.

### Vaccines

Indications from the Southern Hemisphere's recent influenza season are that the influenza vaccine is a good match to the influenza strains expected to dominate this respiratory season. Similarly, the COVID-19 vaccines currently being administered are active against the XBB subvariant. As the vast majority of currently circulating lineages (including HV.1) descend from XBB, the vaccines are expected to be effective at preventing severe illness for this season.

The Health Unit will continue to offer community influenza/COVID-19 vaccine clinics through to the middle of December. The Health Unit is encouraging the public to consider pharmacies as

their first option for receiving both of these vaccines. This will prepare the public for the limited influenza/COVID vaccines that the Health Unit will have the capacity to offer when we can no longer apply for funding for COVID-19 work starting in January 2024.

The RSV vaccine is publicly funded for the first time this fall, with a limited eligibility. In our area, residents of long-term care homes and Elder Care Lodges aged 60 years and over are eligible for the vaccine. The Health Unit's role is to receive and allocate vaccine as appropriate to local long-term care homes.

## **COVID-19 Recovery Priorities – Third Quarter Progress Report**

### **Priority 1: Nurturing Mental Health Recovery**

Key concepts important for the Health Unit in addressing this priority include improving mental health through the life span; recognizing an amplified need among equity-seeking populations, responding to increased stressors and indirect impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic; promoting resilience and coping; and addressing the social determinants of health.

Current activities that are directed toward this priority include:

- The Health Unit is engaging with the Muskoka, Nipissing and Parry Sound Child and Youth Planning Table (CYPT) on a collective impact approach to 3 community-based priorities: The prevention and mitigation of the effects of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs); youth substance use prevention and mental health promotion (Icelandic Prevention Model); and positive parenting. A working group is being formed to shape a cross-sectoral knowledge translation plan related to ACEs and resilience. (Healthy Living, Healthy Schools, Healthy Families)
- The Health Unit is engaging with Mental Health Leads from four school boards and Children's Aid Society (CAS) to support an increase and maintenance of attendance of students as data is indicating truancy is higher than other areas in the province. The group is engaging with School Mental Health Ontario and Attendance Works to provide support for schools, educators, and families. (Healthy Living, Healthy Schools)

### **Priority 2: Prioritizing Equity-seeking Populations**

Addressing this priority requires internal and external collaboration, and continued integration of this concept into program planning. Service gaps are being assessed and where needs align with public health program delivery, filling and bridging those service gaps. Holistic needs of equity-seeking populations when providing services are also being considered.

Current activities that are directed toward this priority include:

- Seventeen organizations and committees in our district that serve priority populations had their application for our Health Equity Fund accepted to use towards health equity specific professional development for staff and/or volunteers. The purpose of this fund is to recognize and support the work of community partners as they continue to respond to the unique needs of populations facing health and social disparities in the Health Unit region.

- Healthy Living is supporting the Nipissing District Homelessness and Housing Partnership to share the See the Person anti-stigma campaign at the National Conference on Ending Homelessness hosted by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. The presentation emphasizes the power of people with lived experiences in the co-creation and promotion of public education initiatives and advocacy related to housing and income.

### **Priority 3: Getting Children and Youth Back on Track**

Healthy social, mental, and emotional growth and development all need to be considered in supporting our children and youth. To make progress on this priority, the Health Unit, in collaboration with partners, is supporting schools and childcare centres, positioning children and youth for better health outcomes, and responding to indirect impacts of COVID-19. New partnerships to support this priority are also being sought.

Current activities that are directed toward this priority include:

- Grade 7/8 in-school Hepatitis B (HB) and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) clinics have resumed in 42 schools in the district in October and November.
- Ongoing catch-up opportunities for all eligible students who have not completed their Hepatitis B (HB) and Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) vaccines.
- In-house clinics are available for infants and children requiring routine/required immunizations and for children for attendance in school under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA).
- For students who are not up to date with required vaccines, the school suspension process has been modified to balance student achievement and risks related to vaccine preventable diseases.
- Ongoing assessment of new childcare registration forms with appointments for children eligible for immunizations prior to attendance in childcare.
- Ongoing assessment of international immunization records for school-aged records for attendance in schools.
- Provision of in-house and community clinics for infants, children, and youth to obtain both COVID-19 and influenza vaccines during peak season.

### **Priority 4: Strengthening Community Development**

Concepts that are key to furthering this priority are advocacy, equity, upstream approaches to social determinants of health, community collaboration, healthy built and natural community environments.

Current activities that are directed toward this priority include:

Ongoing work with school boards and schools to reduce the number of students who do not have the required vaccines to attend school.

# Programs and Services Updates

## Corporate Services

### *Communications*

Communications completed their promotion to make the public aware of the Parry Sound office move to 90 Bowes Street. The promotion included pre- and post-social media advertisements (258,575 impressions), ParrySound.com page takeovers, Google ads (371,334 impressions and 699 website clicks) and pre- and post-move radio ads on MooseFM Parry Sound.

- Communications is working diligently with Vaccine Preventable Disease to promote the public to receive their flu and COVID-19 shots. The campaign includes radio, social media, page takeovers in Parry Sound and print newspaper in Mattawa.
- Communications supported the launch of the new Respiratory Disease Status Report dashboard, which had 1,175 page visits in October.
- Communications also supported Healthy Families in coordinating their promotional material for National Breastfeeding Week, which resulted in 10,393 social media impressions and triple the website visits compared to the month prior.
- Starting in November, radio ads will be running across the district reminding people that they cannot smoke or vape within 20 metres of an arena.
- To date in 2023, Communications has disseminated 26 news releases, supported 33 media inquiries, and put out 760 total social media posts across all platforms, with over 31,000 engagements (e.g., likes, comments, shares).

### *Facilities Operations (formally Building and Maintenance)*

#### **Parry Sound**

- Prepared and returned the previous vacated location to the landlord.
- Relocated staff into the new 90 Bowes Street location. Activities included:
  - Oversaw the installation of new furniture and provided instructions to staff.
  - Moved staff boxes to their workstations and into designated areas (i.e., clinic rooms).
  - Installed dispensers (soap, paper towel, sanitizer).
  - Installed various items for the Oral Health operatories.
  - Installed washer and dryer and set up microfiber cleaning system.
  - Set up janitor room and new floor scrubbing machine.
  - Oversaw the installation of security system and trained staff.
- Received training on heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems from the owner.

#### **North Bay**

- Secured snow plowing contract for the 2023/2024 season.
- Packed up furniture from staff terrace for the winter.
- Gardens and sprinklers prepped for winter.
- Prepped salt bins for winter.
- Replaced stained carpet tiles in many areas of building.

### **Covid 19**

- Weekly monitoring of Personal Protective Equipment cleaning supplies for Covid 19 (sanitizer and disinfectant).

### *Information Technology*

Many activities related to the preparation and relocation to the new space in Parry Sound. These included:

- Testing of the emergency paging system.
- Setup relocated staff workstations including the installation of the new oral health workstations.
- Installed updated version of Oral Health server software (Dentrix).
- Network set up and configuration.
- Updated all video conference systems for meeting rooms.

### *Planning and Evaluation*

#### **Population Health Assessment and Surveillance**

- A new Respiratory Disease Status Report [dashboard](#) was publicly released on October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The new dashboard replaces the previous COVID-19 Status Report dashboard, and presents local COVID-19, influenza, and other respiratory disease outbreak data. The dashboard is updated weekly on Wednesdays.
- Alcohol harms and use statistics were updated on the Community Data and Reports section of the [website](#). The statistics focus on the new low-risk drinking guidelines, heavy drinking episodes, emergency department visits and hospitalizations entirely attributable to alcohol use.
- The Nipissing Parry Sound Data Collaborative and Muskoka, Nipissing and Parry Sound Child and Youth Planning Table members continue to meet to work on social determinants of health indicators at child, youth and population levels.

#### **Health Equity**

- Recommendations are being finalized by the Executive Team based on the findings from the internal needs assessment on health equity work and capacity. Recommendations and the full report will be shared with staff in November with work initiated immediately following to begin strengthening efficiency and coordinated action on shared intended health equity outcomes.

- The Health Unit participated in the March for Equity and Inclusion on September 16, 2023, in North Bay and hosted a booth at the post-march picnic that included dissemination of knowledge and resources, the chance to participate in fun and educational activities and the opportunity to book an appointment at our Sexual Health Clinic the following week. The event served as a valuable point of connection for many community members, and a chance to become more familiar with Health Unit services and our goal to be a safer health services space for 2SLGBTQ+ persons.
- Seventeen organizations and committees in our district that serve priority populations had their application for our Health Equity Fund accepted to use towards health equity specific professional development for staff and/or volunteers. Funds will be applied to training occurring between September and December 2023.

### **Effective Public Health Practice**

The Health Unit will be completing a 1-year planning cycle for 2024. Programs and services submitted their organizational operational planning documents and accompanying health equity assessment tools in October. In 2024, we will assess and re-develop our approach to organizational planning which will support long term planning timelines and integration of the strategic plan by next fall.

- The Health Unit is currently in the vision and commitment phase of strategic planning. Activities completed to date during this initial phase:
  - Inaugural Strategic Plan Advisory Committee (SPAC) meeting orienting the committee to each other, the strategic planning process, and our work with our consultants, [Platinum Leadership](#).
  - Platinum Leadership meeting with the SPAC to discuss guiding principles and critical success factors to inform the strategic planning experience.
  - SPAC sub-group meetings to brainstorm and draft a research map (e.g., who do we want to reach, what do we want to ask, how will we reach them) to inform the environmental scan.
- Upcoming strategic planning activities to conclude the vision and commitment phase:
  - All-staff virtual strategic planning kick-off with Platinum Leadership.
  - Platinum Leadership review of background/contextual documents.
  - Platinum Leadership meeting with SPAC to finalize the environmental scan approach and prepare for ethics submission.
  - Platinum Leadership meeting with SPAC and Executive Team to review the Health Unit's vision, mission, values.



## *Quality Assurance*

### **Policies and Procedures**

- A total of 89 policies, procedures, and associated documents were processed between August 25 and October 20, 2023: 48 documents issued, 33 new numbers assigned, and 8 documents archived.

### **Quality Issue Reports (QIR)**

- A total of ten QIRs were completed (closed) between August 25 and October 20, 2023. Four were level 0 (near miss, no harm, loss, or damage), and six were level 1 (incident did occur but no harm, loss, or damage). There were no level 2 issues (temporary or minor harm, loss, or damage – recovery in days/weeks) and no level 3 issues (permanent or semi-permanent harm, loss, or damage – recovery within 1 year) completed.
- Eight QIRs were classified as related to professional/organizational standards, and two were related to resources.

## **Clinical Services**

### *Communicable Disease Control*

#### **Dosanjh Care Residence Closure**

Dosanjh Care Residence is a Community Homes for Opportunity (CHO) located in Powassan ON and administered through the Canadian Mental Health Association North Bay & District. The care residence provides supportive housing for individuals experiencing complex mental health issues who require 24-hour support. Thirty-eight individuals live in the residence.

On October 23, 2023, two Communicable Disease Control (CDC) Public Health Nurses (PHN) and one Environmental Health (EH) Public Health Inspector (PHI) completed a site visit to the residence. The purpose of the site visit was to follow up on a complaint received regarding the condition of the residence. The PHI assessed the food preparation and food storage areas at the residence and the PHNs assessed items related to infection prevention and control throughout the residence. Based on the observations made at the time of the visit, an order under Section 13 of the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) to close the residence on or before 5 p.m. was issued on October 26, 2023. The Health Unit worked collaboratively with CMHA and the Ministry of Health, Mental Health and Addictions Division to close the residence and find alternative housing.

The residence remains closed until the requirements of the Order have been satisfied and the facility re-inspected by the Health Unit.

#### **Respiratory Illness Activity**

Locally we are seeing an increasing trend in respiratory outbreaks and COVID-19 hospitalizations.

In October, 16 respiratory outbreaks (13 COVID-19) in congregate living settings were declared and managed by the CDC team. The first case of Influenza A within the district was reported to the Health Unit on October 30, 2023.

### *Professional Practice*

Professional Practice has been consulting with Health Unit programs to determine professional practice needs in 2024. New activities have been added to the annual Organizational Operational Document for 2024 including:

- supporting clinical programs (OH, SH, VPD, and CDC) to work through updating and converting work instructions into procedures in an effort to improve quality of practice.
- seeking out research opportunities related to public health professional practice including collaborating with local academic institutions and community partners.
- enhanced use of the quality incident reporting system as an input to trigger improvements to professional practices.

For the Fall semester, the Health Unit is supporting twenty-one (21) students from various disciplines such as nursing, dietetics, and social work across several of our programs and services. Professional practice organizes and facilitates these placements and acts as a support throughout the process for the academic institution, students, and internal preceptors.

Professional Practice also manages work related to the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA). The annual privacy, confidentiality, and acceptable technology usage staff education has been updated and streamlined in preparation for the new year and will now have a formal procedure outlining the annual educational process. In addition, Professional Practice, in collaboration with the privacy committee is organizing an all-staff privacy educational session to increase staff understanding of the components of the privacy legislation and their role as health care providers in protecting client data and preventing data breaches and privacy violations.

### *Oral Health and Vision Screening*

- As our dental practice has grown and evolved, so too have our technological needs. The software program that we currently use is designed for small dental offices with 10-15 computers; however, we currently require access to approximately 30 computers to meet program demands. As a result, the program is slow and cumbersome, making it difficult to access patient records and book appointments efficiently.
- After consulting with other Health Units and researching different options, we have worked with our IT department to find a new dental practice management software that meets our needs.

- The new software program offers enhanced security and auditing features, is scalable to meet our program needs, and is easy to access from anywhere there is internet access. Furthermore, it offers helpful tools not currently available with our current software, such as text appointment reminders and a patient scheduling portal.
- The Oral Health team, in collaboration with our IT department, looks forward to launching this new practice management software in the first quarter of 2024.

## *Sexual Health/Clinical Information*

### **Sexual Health Update**

The program continues to respond to new cases of syphilis within the NBPS district and are seeing a shift in the impacted population. The program continues to evaluate the situation and implement interventions from a health promotion and case and contact management lens. Program process mapping is in progress with the Planning and Evaluation Team to evaluate workflow for greater efficiencies for clients and staff, and prioritize services for our most equity-seeking populations.

### **Enhanced Harm Reduction (EHR) & Needle Syringe Program (NSP)**

We have successfully filled the temporary Community Health Promoter (CHP) position that will pilot the integration of a focus on enhanced harm reduction (EHR) work. This position will start in mid-November and undertake the EHR work previously carried out in Healthy Living and will involve other activities to better align the EHR work with other harm reduction initiatives, including naloxone and the Needle Syringe Program.

### **Surveillance**

Information collected through the Overdose / Negative Drug Reaction Reporting System was sent to more than 160 community partners in weekly updates through the Health Unit's interactive surveillance dashboard. From September 1 to October 31, 2023, within the Health Unit district, there were 34 overdoses / negative drug reactions reported with two resulting in death. Compared to the same time period in 2022, the total number of overdoses / negative drug reactions and deaths is lower.

## *Vaccine Preventable Diseases*

### **School Vaccinations**

In September, the Vaccine Preventable Diseases (VPD) program worked with all 5 school boards in the district to update and upload all student information into the provincial vaccine database Panorama so that work could begin to identify students eligible and overdue for mandatory school vaccines for the 2023/24 school year. Following this, the VPD team hosted 42 in-school clinics to provide Hepatitis B (HB), Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and meningitis vaccines to students. To date, 628 HB, 618 HPV, and 662 meningitis vaccines have been administered at these school clinics.

## **Fall Vaccine Campaigns**

The fall COVID-19 and influenza vaccine campaigns are well underway. In October, 10 community clinics were held across the district targeting high risk individuals. Community clinics offered both COVID-19 and influenza vaccines to clients with appointments and those who chose to walk-in without appointments. In October, 5,372 COVID-19 vaccines and 6,056 influenza vaccines were administered at these clinics.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) has been a new focus of the fall respiratory season. Health Unit expectations for this vaccine program include distribution of publicly funded RSV vaccine to Long Term Care Homes, Elder Care Lodges, and some Retirement Homes for delivery to clients 60 years of age and older. Health Units are awaiting further guidance on the depth and breadth of our participation in this undertaking aside from allocating and distributing vaccine to these community partners.

## **In-House Vaccine Clinics and Intake Services**

In-house clinics continue to fill. These clinics meet the needs of clients across the life span from newborns to seniors who require publicly funded vaccines. Demand for these clinics increases during the fall months when college and university students return to programs and have placements that require specific vaccines, and when school-aged students begin receiving ISPA notices. This year, we have had a significant increase in the number of international records that require translation, interpretation, and assessment to ensure students of all ages are up to date with routine vaccines. Additionally, there has been an increase in travelers seeking information and recommendations about how to stay safe while travelling. These clients are assisted through our Intake services and placed into appointments in our regular in-house clinics.

In September and October, we offered 60 in-house clinics (1320 appointments) and 29 walk-in clinic days. There is currently approximately a 6-week wait time for an appointment at one of these clinics. When available, we attempt to prioritize high-risk individuals such as babies and immunocompromised clients through our Overflow/Walk-in services.

## **3<sup>rd</sup> Year Nursing Students**

The VPD program has partnered with 3<sup>rd</sup> year Nipissing University students to work on a health promotion project targeting parents and students on the topic of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and the health benefits and cancer prevention this vaccine provides to students. The students will be creating YouTube videos that can be used to educate, promote, and improve uptake of this vaccine within our district.

## **Community Services**

### *Environmental Health*

To date this fall, Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) have provided 24 Safe Food Handling Certification courses of which 349 participants received certification. In addition to the courses, 37 participants completed the exam and are now certified. Certification enables participants to secure employment.

In conducting food inspections during the month of October, six facilities were issued yellow signs, and three of these facilities were issued tickets, totalling \$600.00 in charges. Details of the charges are as follows: mechanical dishwashing equipment not maintained to provide sufficient chemical solution rinse, failure to protect against entry of pests, floor in food premises not maintained with tight floor surface, utensils were not adequately cleaned, ceilings in premise food-handling room not in good repair, and failure to post inspection results.

To date, in our Health Unit jurisdiction, four bats have tested positive for the Rabies virus, the most recent being in September 2023. The individuals who were exposed received post-exposure treatment. Healthcare professionals have been updated and made aware of this risk and are asked to consider this when conducting their risk assessment in relation to domestic animal biting incidents.

Throughout the year, Tobacco Enforcement Officers (TEOs) use underage youth test shoppers to test a retailers' ability to prevent youth from purchasing tobacco and vapour products, as per the age-based sales restrictions in the Smoke-Free Ontario Act (SFOA), 2017 (section 3). To date, 197 test shops have been completed with 23 total sales to the test shoppers. The TEOs have given 122 warnings and have served 17 charges to various workplaces, vendors, and high school students. Thirteen non-enforceable complaints have been addressed.

### *Healthy Families*

Breastfeeding is important for the short-term and long-term health of babies, young children, and parents. Health Canada and the Canadian Pediatric Society recommend that babies be fed only breastmilk for the first 6 months, and that they continue breastfeeding up to two years and beyond. According to the 2020 Canada's Breastfeeding Progress report 92.1 % of Ontario parents initiated breastfeeding and 62 % breastfed for at least 6 months.

Breastfeeding promotion is a component of the Healthy Families program as outlined in the 2018 Healthy Growth & Development Guideline and the 2018 Healthy Babies Healthy Children Protocol of the Ontario Public Health Standards.

### **National Breastfeeding Week: October 1<sup>st</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

This year's local focus "*Breastfeeding. Support it in the Workplace*" aligned with the National theme: *Enabling Breastfeeding; Making a Difference for Working Parents*. To maintain breastfeeding, working parents need time, resources, policies, and support such as paid parental leave, breastfeeding breaks, and access to childcare.

North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) National Breastfeeding Week activities:

- Life-sized cutouts of a breastfeeding parent and baby were placed in participating workplaces throughout the Nipissing and Parry Sound District to increase awareness and breastfeeding visibility and to show our support as a community for breastfeeding parents in the workplace.
- Press release; CTV news article and interview.
- The Health Unit's Breastfeeding website was updated with workplace information; October had a 109% increase in visits compared to September.

- Eleven social media posts with 30 clicks to website, 7000 video views, 62 positive reactions.
- Health Care Provider (HCP) outreach through site visits. HCPs were also invited to register for Level 1 and Level 2 Breastfeeding Courses through the Health Unit.
- Weekly breastfeeding clinics and home visits to support successful breastfeeding.



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Make us part of your village.

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Service de Santé



Our Public Health Nurses are available by phone or one-to-one breastfeeding clinics.

- Explore challenges together
- Gain practical skills
- Be supported for the special connection you and your baby share

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Call 1.800.563.2808 ext. 5351  
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[myhealthunit.ca/breastfeeding](http://myhealthunit.ca/breastfeeding)

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## Healthy Living

### White Paper on the Value of Local Health Promotion

In September, Health Promotion Ontario released a [White Paper on the Value of Local Health Promotion in Ontario](#) and an accompanying [Infographic](#). This project was a collaboration between six health units across Ontario as well as a Master of Public Health (MPH) student. The Health Unit was one of the six health units involved in this initiative and was represented by the Healthy Living program as a member of the Steering Committee. The White Paper demonstrates the value of a strong investment in local health promotion, delivered by public health units in Ontario, and how maintaining the breadth and scope of health promotion work outlined in the Ontario Public Health Standards can be an effective strategy in addressing Ontario's healthcare crisis.



## *Healthy Schools*

### **Adventures in Cooking**

Public Health Dietitians on Healthy Schools, Healthy Living, and Healthy Families have been working with staff at Public Health Sudbury & Districts and the Thunder Bay District Health Unit to revise and enhance the [Adventures in Cooking program](#), which is a food literacy program designed for children aged 8-12. This revamp was initiated based on feedback by community partners who run the program, and who had expressed they would benefit from a wider variety of child-friendly recipes. The Adventures in Cooking program supports the development of [food literacy](#) in children and youth, which is an important influence on healthy eating behaviours (as outlined in the OPHS Chronic Disease Prevention and Wellbeing 2, School Health 4b).

At the end of November and early December, the Health Unit will be hosting Adventures in Cooking gatherings in five communities across the district (Mattawa, Sturgeon Falls, Sundridge, Parry Sound, and North Bay). The goal of these gatherings is to bring community partners who support children and youth together, introduce them to the revamped Adventures in Cooking program materials, share collective knowledge of how to cook with children and youth, and build self-efficacy to facilitate food literacy programming.

### **Finance**

The following reports were filed with the province: 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter Standards Activity Report - Statistics and Yearend forecast; and Revised MOH/AMOH Initiative Documents. The annual budget was assembled, and meetings were held to find ways to balance the budget. It was then incorporated into the annual Operation Plan in preparation for presenting to the Board of Health on November 29. Preparations occurring for year-end include setting inventory count days and last payment day. Interviews took place to replace a long-term employee in Accounts Payable.

### **Human Resources**

#### *Employee & Labour Relations*

At the Joint OPSEU/ONA/Management committee meeting held on September 22, 2023, MS Teams Etiquette Guide was discussed as well as the All Staff Meeting and Service Awards and Retirement Celebration was well received by staff. There were also discussions about the recent news of possible mergers of public health units and how timely communication to staff will be helpful. The next Joint OPSEU/ONA/Management committee meeting is scheduled for December 14, 2023.

#### *Hybrid Work Procedure*

Human Resources continues to work on a Hybrid Work Operational Procedure that will fall under a Human Resources Operational Policy. This is being done in consultation with the management team and other relevant internal subject matter experts (e.g., Privacy Committee, Information Technology, Occupational Health & Safety). We anticipate that the procedure will be issued in early to mid-February 2024.



### *Occupational Health and Safety*

Influenza immunization clinics for staff are underway. Staff have until November 15, 2023, to be immunized or provide proof of annual immunization as a condition of employment. Staff can also request an update on their COVID-19 immunization, though this is no longer required.

Updates to our internal emergency response procedures (colour codes) continue, with updates to nine out of twelve procedures being fully updated by mid-December.

The Home Visiting Safety procedure has undergone extensive updates, led by Public Health Nurses in Healthy Families, in consultation with Human Resources. A new operational procedure has been developed regarding Preventing Occupational Exposure to Illicit Substances, as the discovery of illicit substances and paraphernalia on and near Health Unit property has become more frequent.

### *Professional Development*

Internal professional development sessions recently coordinated by Human Resources since the last report include:

| <b>Professional Development Session</b>          | <b>Date</b>        | <b>Number of Participants</b> |
|--|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| Basic Life Support Recertification               | September 21, 2023 | 8                             |
| Basic Life Support Recertification               | September 27, 2023 | 11                            |
| Basic Life Support Recertification               | October 5, 2023    | 10                            |
| Basic Life Support                               | October 12, 2023   | 9                             |
| Basic Life Support Recertification               | October 25, 2023   | 9                             |
| Basic Life Support Recertification               | November 1, 2023   | 7                             |
| Defensive Driver Training (Online Self-Directed) | Ongoing            | 27                            |

### *Staffing*

Human Resources continues to schedule casual nurses, COVax Assistants and COVID-19 Clinic Assistants to work at vaccination clinics across our district until December 31, 2023.

The following temporary positions were recently filled. These vacancies were created because of leaves of absences and to assist with workload:

- Program Administrative Assistant (0.60 FTE), Vaccine Preventable Diseases from October 2, 2023 to December 1, 2023
- Public Health Nurse (1.00 FTE), Communicable Disease Control from October 30, 2023 to April 11, 2025
- Community Health Promoter (1.00 FTE), Sexual Health and Clinical Information from November 13, 2023 to December 13, 2024

The following permanent positions were recently filled. These vacancies were created because of a resignation, a retirement, internal transfers, a change in position from a Public Health

Nurse to a Senior Public Health Nurse, and a new position as outlined in the Operational Plan and Financial Budget Proposal:

- Program Administrative Assistant (1.00 FTE), Finance effective October 2, 2023
- Senior Public Health Inspector (1.00 FTE), Environmental Health effective October 3, 2023
- Service Desk Technician (1.00 FTE), Information Technology effective October 23, 2023
- Communications Coordinator (1.00 FTE), Communications effective October 26, 2023
- Senior Public Health Nurse (1.00 FTE), Vaccine Preventable Diseases effective January 1, 2024
- Public Health Inspector (1.00 FTE), Environmental Health effective date to be determined

The recruitment of the following permanent and temporary positions is currently under way:

- Public Health Nurse, Communicable Disease Control (1.00 FTE)
- Accounts Payable Clerk, Finance (1.00 FTE)
- Public Health Inspector, Environmental Health (1.00 FTE)
- Bilingual Public Health Nurse, Vaccine Preventable Diseases (1.00 FTE)

We continue our efforts to recruit a permanent Clinic Dentist, Oral Health and Vision Screening, and a permanent Program Administrative Assistant, Healthy Families.

There has been no net increase in permanent positions, however there were some positions eliminated and new positions created as outlined in the Operational Plan and Financial Budget Proposal 2023.

*Approved by*

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Carol Zimbalatti, M.D., CCFP, MPH  
Medical Officer of Health/Executive Officer  
North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit