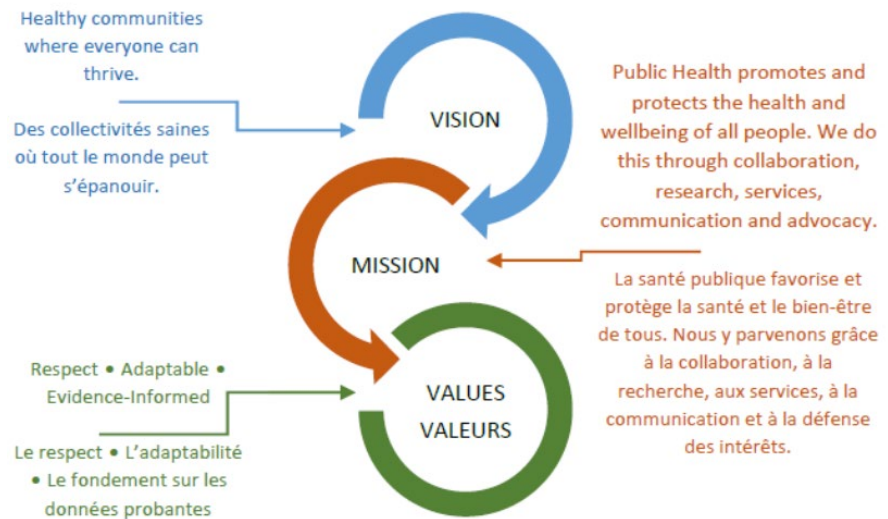


Report Content

- [Currently On Our Radar](#)
- [THU in Action - Our Stories](#)
- [Upcoming Events](#)
- [HR Update](#)



Introduction

During the first half of 2023, Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) staff continued to move forward on routinizing COVID-19 response work and recovery. THU began the first steps of initiating an after-action review with core IMS members. After-action reviews are an essential component of the recovery phase of the emergency management cycle. They are a qualitative review conducted after the end of an emergency response to identify best practices, gaps, and lessons learned. We hope to integrate these findings into our emergency planning work.

The COVID-19 pandemic caused severe backlogs in public health programming and planning that all THU teams continue to navigate. This has, however, provided an opportunity for renewed reflection and prioritization of our programs. In 2023, we began the work of integrating a public health program pyramid in our planning cycle. The pyramid has guided staff involved in program planning to identify critical, essential, aspirational, and legacy work and to think critically about gaps and opportunities.

A new organizational structure was launched in June with the reduction of a manager and realignment of programs. School Health, Oral Health, and Healthy Growth and Development were brought under one portfolio. Infectious Diseases and Immunizations were merged with COVID-19 response. Additionally, the Community Health portfolio will be providing Foundational Standards support and the Environmental Health manager will continue to support Communications.

In Q1 and Q2 we celebrated RPPAs, RDs, the dental team, nurses, admin staff, National Physician's Day, and Canadian Public Health Week. Staff were celebrated on social media, with educational opportunities and with their recognition voucher as per THU's new Professional Day and Years of Service Recognition Procedure (January 2023).

Additional highlights of Timiskaming Health Unit work from January to June of 2023 are further described below. A change to the report format is the inclusion of variance. This change is intended to improve transparency and to ensure the board is aware of work completed and planned work that has been delayed.

In the Spotlight and On Our Radar

An early and severe Canadian wildfire season brought high levels of smoke to our region, putting our community's health and wellbeing at risk. Fires in Quebec impacted air quality in northern Ontario which at times was at the top of the Air Quality Health Index (AQHI) scale, putting our community in the highest public health risk category. This unique situation highlighted how the Timiskaming Health Unit catchment area currently lacks air quality monitors and providing public health messaging on smoke levels was a challenge. To remedy this challenge, THU is working on an air quality pilot program with municipalities, in partnership with Environment and Climate Change Canada to improve air quality monitoring data collection. As the impacts from climate change continue to rise, the frequency, extent, timing, and duration of the forest fire season is expected to substantially increase, further highlighting the urgency for effective air quality monitoring in northern Ontario.

Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy (TDAS)

After launching the [Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy document](#) in December 2023, THU continues to provide a backbone role while also co-chairing the Steering Committee and Chairing the Prevention and Harm Reduction Pillars. [A website](#), social media and branding strategy have been completed and are now being launched in the community. August 31 is International Overdose Awareness Day and THU is coordinating, for TDAS, promotion and engagement in events being held across the district. Prevention, Harm Reduction and Treatment pillars have developed and are implementing their individual collaborative workplans. The Community Safety pillar is being re-formed and will have its initial meeting in September.

The Role of Public Health in Creating Healthy Communities: Working together toward healthy communities where everyone can thrive

Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) staff are offering presentations, in partnership with Board of Health members, to municipalities to discuss the role of public health in creating healthy communities, explore how THU and municipalities can collaborate to make strong and healthy communities, and share examples and resources.

Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan (CSWB)

Like with TDAS, THU is playing a backbone function for the 23-municipality collaborative implementation of the [CSWB plan](#) developed in 2022. A project coordinator has been hired and is now actively planning a launch event, to be held in late September. Municipalities, members of the initial plan Steering and Advisory committees have all been invited to the launch for this historical collaborative effort.

Reduce weight bias and stigma to prevent disordered eating and eating disorders

THU's Registered Dietitians are working on resources to build internal and external capacity in this area. More to come in early 2024.

Timiskaming Health Unit in Action

Our people – our stories.

Foundational Standards

Population Health Assessment and Surveillance

Population health assessment and surveillance is an essential public health function to support local public health practice to respond effectively to current and evolving issues and contribute to the health and well-being of our population. The list below highlights some of this work:

- **Work completed:** Opioid Early Warning Surveillance System was drafted and piloted, soft launch of the Opioid Dashboard, continuing COVID surveillance, infectious disease report for 2022, creation of new outbreak and case reporting spreadsheets, briefing note on youth physical activity and screen time, enhanced surveillance on wildfires and smoke trends, contributed food security indicators and data for food insecurity reporting.
- **Variance:** It is challenging for our two epidemiologists to balance the demands of their work with professional development needs. Some training needs that were identified but not yet met include: Advanced Excel training, Power BI training, and Knowledge Translation competencies.

Health Equity

The following section highlights local public health work in 2023 toward reducing health inequities that includes assessing and reporting on the local impact of health inequities and identifying local strategies, modifying and orienting public health interventions, and health equity analysis, policy development, and advancing healthy public policies.

- **Work completed:** Supported the updating of the SDoH profile in Timiskaming. Timiskaming Collaborative was ended in the spring in response to the community moving into recovery from the pandemic. Updated THU orientation package to include a Health Equity module series. Partnered with Public Health Ontario to deliver all-staff health equity training.
- **Variance:** Due to competing priorities, planned work on health equity indicators has not been initiated.

Effective Public Health Practice

Effective public health practice requires THU staff to apply skills in evidence-informed decision-making, research, knowledge exchange, program planning and evaluation, and communication, with a continued focus on quality and transparency. The section below captures 2023 activity highlights for program planning, evaluation, and evidence-informed decision making as well as for knowledge exchange and continuous improvement.

- **Work completed:** Completed a new procedure and restarted grand rounds at THU. Grand Rounds are a series of presentations that are developed by THU employees on a voluntary basis that rotate among teams to deliver within the health unit. The goal of Grand Rounds is to educate fellow employees about an area of public health significance or importance or share information about a public health topic area of interest. Some grand rounds topics in 2023 include Indigenous Peoples' History in Canada and Employee Wellbeing. There has also been significant work put into finalizing THU's ethics protocol and drafting THU's evaluation protocol. Although we are behind in some CQI work, we have successfully initiated a Professional Practice council that will support and engage multiple disciplines and aim to improve clinical practice at THU.

- **Variance:** Some foundational standards work, such as needs assessments, performance indicator development, tool maintenance, continuous quality improvement deliverables, and protocol creation have been put on hold due to pandemic backlog, staff turnover, and capacity.

Emergency Management

Effective emergency management ensures that boards of health are ready to cope with and recover from threats to public health or disruptions to public health programs and services.

- **Work completed:** As THU moved out of pandemic recovery, all surveys, assessments, and debriefs from COVID-19 response were documented. It was assessed that a missing piece of the evaluations was management perspective. In Q2, staff worked on drafting an After-Action Review, a mixed-methods survey that will assess factors such as strategies, support systems, partnerships, and health equity during the COVID-19 response from 2020 to 2023. The lessons learned from the After-Action Review will be applied to our pandemic planning and emergency preparedness work.

Examples of Knowledge Products created with the Foundational Standards Team Q1-Q2:

Team	Product name
CD/IP	Connexions Timiskaming Connections Volunteer Line Evaluation Final Report.
CD/IP	IPM-Planet Youth Community Forum Presentation.
FS-HE	Situational Assessment on Low Income in Timiskaming.
HGD	Applicability and Transferability tool for updated parenting website.
FS-PHA	Diseases of Public Health Significance counts and rates.
FS-PHA	Presentation to school board which included THU's data sources for children and youth.
FS-PHA	Various maps of THU by different geographical classifications and shapefiles for mapping health unit data.
FS-PHA	Updated case and outbreak forms used for partner reporting and monitoring: outbreak tracking spreadsheet, and preliminary and final notification forms for general respiratory outbreaks, COVID-19 and influenza.
FS-PHA	Pre-pilot project for senior falls. Collaborated with PHO and other Health Units in standardizing some falls indicators.

Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being

Active Living

Work completed:

- Refreshed the Share the Road communications campaign and offered signage to municipalities at no cost to them. Distributed new signs in the southern part of the district and replaced damaged signs.
- Participated in the City of Temiskaming Shores Road Safety Education Day along with community partners (200+ attendees). Set up booth with active travel information including cycling safety, pedestrian safety, and share the road resources. We also provided helmet fit demonstrations and helmets to anyone who needed them.
- Community involvement at Englehart's Day in the Park. THU staff set up tent where the Walk 'N Roll program provided a scavenger hunt and the HGD staff provided car seat resources. Over 400 people attended the Saturday event.
- Coordinated Temiskaming Shores Community Bike Festival. This year's event gave 115 bicycles and helmets to new owners.
- Supported Town of Kirkland Lake with Bike Month activities.



115 bikes distributed!
Bike Festival



SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL

Volunteers

Russell Walker
Mike Nemcsok
Rob Kalovsky
Angela Hunter
Linda St. Cyr
Luc Brisson
Mark Taylor
Laurie Wilson
Tammy Beaudry
Shane Matheson
Rim Mouhaffel
Valerie Haboucha
Jocelyn Moreno



Brittany Herd
Lorna Desmarais
Logan Tullett
Amanda Mongeon
Lindalee Rogers
Lynn Gibson
Joann Moar
Andrew Little
Melanie Bourgeois
Abby Furlotte
Nadia Pelletier-Lavigne
Lori Aquino

Isabelle Goulet
Cameron Lamothe
Angela Fiset
Laurie Laverdure
Matt Bahm
Jeff Thompson
Susan Hall
Shujian Liu
Tricia Anderson
Gavin Posch
Brenda Furlotte
Brendon Jacksic
Justin Maille
Paul Potter



SPECIAL THANKS TO ALL

Community Partners

City of Temiskaming Shores
Timiskaming Health Unit
RE/MAX Pursuit Realty
Centre de santé communautaire du
Témiskaming
New Liskeard Property Corp.
Demora Construction
Open Studio Libre
New Liskeard OPP
Canadian Tire



Funders

The Temiskaming Foundation

100 Women Who Care
Temiskaming Shores and
More

**And... everyone
who donated a
bicycle!**

Thank you! 

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Thank you! 

Variance:

- Did not collaborate as planned with City of Temiskaming Shores on active transportation initiatives; City did not hire a student in this role for 2023.
- Active travel resources for teachers delayed, to be distributed in Q3.
- Replaced update of active transportation campaign with pedestrian safety campaign, to be implemented in Q3.
- Delayed collaboration with Town of Kirkland Lake (promotion of active travel facilities and map, active travel encouragement events and challenges) to Q3.
- Delay in completion of submission to Town of Cobalt Official Plan update pending response from consultant.
- Did not initiate bicycle festival in Kirkland Lake due to staffing capacity. Will revisit in 2024.
- Did not complete the Cobalt Operational Plan review due to competing demands with planning process. Expected completion in Q3.

Healthy Eating

Work completed:

- Provided a virtual presentation to the Age Friendly Committee about eating well, food labels, and the community fridge (25 participants).
- Precepted one student from Northern Ontario Dietetic Internship Program for 6 weeks.
- Presented to a group of youth 15 to 29 from Youth Job Connection (YJC) on "how to eat well on a budget": 20 participants.
- Completed 2022 Nutritious Food Basket data analysis and dissemination as part of Nutrition Month (social media, [THU website](#), [infographic](#), [report](#), [BOH briefing note](#) and [presentation](#), [media release](#), email blast, THU webinar).
- Participated in [launch of Temiskaming Shores Community Fridge Project](#) in collaboration with the Community Food Action Network in Temiskaming Shores. A number of community partners attended the event. THU managed the social media accounts, supported the project implementation, created social media posts, resources and materials.

- Offered training to 4 community partners on how to use the blender bike during community events (Extendicare, EarlyON, TPR, KL FHT).
- Provided content for THU's Youth Instagram account: Nutrition Month; youth engagement raising awareness around diet culture and healthy eating habits such as encouraging the consumption of fruits and vegetables, making water the drink of choice, etc.
- Provided support to concession operator and shared healthy eating resources for a hockey tournament.
- Maintained the Timiskaming Talks Nutrition page to provide evidence-based and accurate nutrition information to promote the health and well-being of the Timiskaming population.
- Drafted content and compiled resources to promote the 2023 National Eating Disorders Awareness Week.
- Contributed to THU targeted newsletters: content to raise awareness about the community fridge and food insecurity in municipal newsletter, content to educate about weight stigma and bias, food insecurity, and the international code of marketing of breastmilk substitutes and formula marketing in health care provider newsletter.

Variance:

- Winter monitoring tours for Healthy Eating in Recreation Settings project did not take place—concessions mostly closed. Project support on hold due to limited staff capacity.
- Local food map update and maintenance paused due to staff capacity limitations.

Mental Health Promotion

Work Completed:

- Created comprehensive inventory of community assets.
- Promoted 2023 Mental Health Week Promote Mental Health Awareness Week. [Public online event](#) with Adele Lafrance with 125 participants. Developed a library toolkit used by 9 libraries used across Timiskaming and Porcupine districts.
- [Board of Health briefing note](#) on mental health promoting policies and [letter of support](#) for Act for Mental Health Campaign.
- [Board of Health briefing note](#) on psychological health and safety in the workplace and endorsement of adoption of the National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace to promote and protect the psychological health and safety of Timiskaming Health Unit staff.

Variance:

- Internal Psychological Health and Safety policy review delayed to align with updated Employee Wellness and Engagement Committee who will be facilitating implementation of this initiative.

Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)

The Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP) continues to see an increase in the need for routine dental care for seniors as things return to normal after the pandemic. Capacity in this program is reduced while we have an FTE on maternity leave. As of August 9, 2023, we have a waitlist for the OSDCP with 17 new clients waiting to be seen and 47 clients waiting for a recall appointment. New clients are prioritized as recall clients are waiting for a follow-up appointment.

We also continue to wait on a special one-time funding request for the program, this request was completed as part of our Annual Service Plan in early 2023. The extra funds would support hiring another dental hygienist position to support the OSDCP which includes completing the significant paperwork associated with the program and decreasing the waitlist. We continue to maintain partnerships with local oral health providers in the community to make sure qualifying seniors from all areas of the district can receive care. The fee issue could become an issue for 2024 when it is time to update our service agreements.

Variance: We have received two letters from local dentist offices expressing concern and frustration with the fees associated to the program. Noting this issue is well known across the province. If local dentists stop participating in the OSDCP, seniors within our district will see longer wait times for services. This could also mean seniors could end up needing to be referred to services out of our district.

OSDCP 2023	2022 Total	Q1 Total	Q2 Total	Q3 Total	Q4 Total	2023 (Jan-Jun 2023)
Applied at THU	232	77	52	0	0	129
Applied Online	19	11	0	0	0	11
Unique Seniors Served at THU	182	64	68	0	0	132
Total OSDCP Preventive Appointments at THU	197	74	68	0	0	142
Unique Seniors Served by Providers	554	158	183	0	0	341
Total OSDCP Appointments by Providers	686	238	38	0	0	276

Substance Use and Injury Prevention

Alcohol and Drug Use, Enhanced Harm Reduction Program and Ontario Naloxone Program

Work completed:

- [BOH briefing note](#) and endorsement of the implementation of the Icelandic Prevention Model as a local strategy to reduce youth substance use.
- [Board of Health briefing note](#): Mandatory labels on alcohol containers and endorsement, in principle, of Bill S254 – An Act to Amend the Food and Drug Act (Warning Labels on Alcoholic Beverages) and Motion M-61 A National Warning Label Strategy for Alcoholic Products.
- Launched [@YouthTimiskaming](#) on Instagram. The goal of the account is to empower and engage youth 12-25 in the THU region to live healthier lives through sharing credible, non-judgemental health messaging and resources. (183 followers as of August 2023).
- Hosted *An Introduction to the Icelandic Prevention Model and Planet Youth* community learning session with special guests from Planet Youth. The event recording is available on [YouTube](#). Approx. 50 community partners in attendance.
- Attended the [Roundtable on Youth Health and Wellbeing](#) event in Ottawa on May 29.
- Provided a short presentation as part of the [Youth Substance Use Prevention Webinar](#) in partnership with Drug Free Kids Canada, Northeastern Catholic District School Board, and Porcupine Health Unit. The webinar provided information about cannabis, alcohol, and vaping, as well as tools to empower caregivers to have conversations about substance use with their children.
- Brought two CSCT locations on board for Harm Reduction supply distribution and two sharps collection bins.
- Established and hosted first Community of Practice (Knowledge Network HR/TX) meeting. The Knowledge Network provides a virtual venue for presentations and knowledge exchange for service providers and partners working in harm reduction and treatment related to substance use. Guest speakers share their knowledge and experience, followed by an opportunity for all participants to provide local updates, discuss challenges and receive support from their peers.
- Co-chaired Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy Steering Committee and chaired Prevention and Harm Reduction Pillars. Ongoing backbone support of this collaborative initiative.

- Provided Harm Reduction and Naloxone training to client-facing staff in all offices to enhance knowledge and build capacity.
- Submitted Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy Phase 1 Evaluation Report/final funding deliverable to Public Health Agency of Canada.

Variance:

- Public communications campaign topics delayed due to staff capacity issues: Guidance on alcohol and health, substance use stigma, lower risk cannabis use, and steroid use.

Needle Exchange and Harm Reduction Program

Internal Program					
Client Services	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Total # Encounters NEP and Other HR Supplies	498	355	159	249	273
Total # of needles provided	-	24,380	31,638	37,260	17,352
Total # of bowl pipes provided	-	4,620	12,962	15,366	7,078
Total # of Naloxone kits provided	-	236	234	256	118
Total # of Naloxone refills provided	--	43	45	39	18

Comprehensive Tobacco Control

Work completed:

- Cessation support to 48 clients without access to other resources.
- Distributed 69 NRT vouchers.
- Archived Medical Directive for this program since no longer dispensing NRT.
- Provided tobacco-free resources to local sports and recreation clubs and facilities.
- Continued advocacy for smoke-free campus (Northern College).

Variance:

- Vaping cessation campaign delayed and merged with a larger youth vaping campaign to be launched in Q3.
- Timiskaming tobacco cessation network spring meeting cancelled, will hold only one in October instead.
- Refresh and retraining to integrate tobacco cessation support into clinical practice initiated but not complete.

Tobacco Enforcement

Tobacco Enforcement							
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Inspections	355	336	357	220	163	267	156
Charges	6	9	7	1	8	5	2
Warnings	103	82	166	73	136	144	53

- **Variance:** During the pandemic the test shopper program was halted. At the beginning of 2023 we have revisited plans for this to resume. Although it was not complete in the first half of the year our goal is to have it restored and completed by the end of 2023.

On- and Off-Road Safety

Work completed:

- Continued with advocacy efforts to reduce highway speed. Highway 11 speed was recently reduced to 70km/h near Ecole St-Michel.
- Facilitated Action2Zero project, with 20 community partners representing 14 organizations participate in preliminary survey to help shape Action2Zero report.
- Collaborated with Healthy Growth and Development team to support car seat safety during Safe Kids Week.

Variance:

- Did not deliver boating or ATV safety campaigns as planned due to staffing constraints.

Falls Prevention

Work completed:

- Coordinated implementation of three older adult Spring Fling wellness fair and luncheon: June 7th – Kirkland Lake – approx. 70 older adults and 8 community partner booths; June 14th – Englehart – approx. 55 older adults and 10 community partner booths; June 21st – New Liskeard – approx. 150 older adults and 12 community partner booths.

Violence

Work completed:

- Initiated data collection from partners about the prevalence of violence in Timiskaming.

Variance:

- Research to identify public health approach to addressing violence not completed due to staff capacity. Adding resources to the team to complete this by end of 2023.
- Revisions and re-launch of violence screening tool: initiated but not complete. Tools in development and pilot phase of tool planned for Q3/Q4.

Healthy Growth and Development

Since January 2023, Healthy Growth and Development initiatives have returned to regular programming. We continue to prioritize and promote preconception, pregnancy, newborn, child, youth, parental and family health.

Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding

Work completed:

- THU continues to support clients with the breast pump program. So far this year, a total of 14 breast pump rentals have been borrowed. We also continue to offer manual breast pumps to families as needed for a minimal fee.
- Work is ongoing to maintain and support the Timiskaming Breastfeeding Buddies Facebook group while the Breastfeeding Peer Program remains on pause since 2022. We are currently in the process of evaluating the possibility of restarting the Breastfeeding Peer Support Program.
- In early 2023, it was decided after a briefing note that THU would not recertify the Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI). We continue to ensure that all staff have level 1 breastfeeding training. Staff working

in the Healthy Growth and Development program have level 2 breastfeeding training to support local families.

- Lactation consulting support continued throughout 2023, as of July 31, 2023, 26 families received at least one consultation (16.88% of total deliveries).

Prenatal Education

Work completed:

- We continue to offer the online bilingual courses for THU residents via Public Health Sudbury and Districts. THU also continues to partner with Timiskaming Brighter Futures to offer virtual sessions. From January to June 2023, a total of 37 mothers and 7 support persons have attended either the Brighter Futures classes or one-on-one prenatal/breastfeeding classes.
 - We are currently working on summarizing pre-COVID survey feedback and attendance rates on prenatal classes to determine the need to resume in-person classes.

Well-baby Visits (WBV)

THU continues to offer WBV throughout the district. These visits reach children aged 0 to 6 years and offer services such as immunizations, weights, and developmental screening.

Work completed:

- As of March 2022, the Well-baby clinic increased to two days per week in the New Liskeard office. Well-baby clinics continued to be offered weekly in the Kirkland Lake and Englehart office. From January to June 2022, there were 150 WBV in the New Liskeard office, 105 in the Kirkland Lake office and 3 in the Englehart office.

Mental Health

Work completed:

- THU is performing an evidence review to inform local perinatal depression screening practices.
- We continue to screen families using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale prenatally, 48 hours after hospital discharge, at 2-months, and at 6-months post-partum. From January to June 2023, six referrals for support services were made.

Parenting

Work completed:

- THU continues to work on launching a Parenting in Timiskaming campaign later this fall. This campaign will include a website and social media that will support the following topics: breastfeeding, car seats, immunization, mental health, nutrition, physical activity, positive parenting, postnatal and newborn health, preparing for pregnancy, sexual health, sleep, smoking, starting solids, substance use and services at THU.

Road Safety and Car Seat Safety

Work completed:

- From January to June 2023, THU has completed eleven car seat inspections.
- THU partnered with Timiskaming Child Care, Beaverhouse FN, and NEOFACS to offer Child Passenger Safety Technician training to ten local providers.

Healthy Eating

Work completed:

- Prepared resources about introduction to solids, picky eating, nutrients.
- Updated the parental guide with nutrition information and prepared a factsheet on the “Division of Responsibility” and building a positive feeding experience.
- THU's dietitian and HG&D PHNs completed two presentations at EarlyOn (Haileybury and KL) on introduction to solids and child feeding. 12 families in total attended.
- Adapted nutrition content from Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health regarding healthy eating during pregnancy and lactation. Prepared social media content for infant feeding resources.
- Timiskaming Breastfeeding Buddies; supported with social media posts related to nutrition; promoted messaging about the importance of folic acid consumption prior to conception and engaging in healthful behaviours.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) Program

The HBHC program continues to be prioritized as the goal of the program is to optimize newborn and child healthy growth and development and reduce health inequities for families. The program includes the following components: (1) Screening – prenatal, postpartum and early childhood (2) In-depth assessment (IDA) contact and assessment for families with risk (3) Postpartum Contact (4) Blended Home-Visiting and Family Service Plan.

From January to June 2023, we have had 145 live births in the THU area. The table below outlines the percentage of births that received a prenatal and postpartum screen as well as the percentage of eligible children (6 weeks to 70 months) who received an early childhood screen. We have seen an increase in families accessing the HBHC program in the south end of THU’s catchment area since resuming regular programming.

Percent of births receiving a prenatal and postnatal HBHC screen and % of eligible children with an early childhood HBHC screen in Timiskaming Health Unit area.							Provincial Target
Screen	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Jan to June)	
Prenatal	71%	82%	65%	82%	75.4% (46.5%)	65.5%(40%)*	10%
Postpartum	97%	96%	70%	84%	82.8% (69.8%)	82.8% (77.5%)*	80%
Early Childhood	6%	3%	2%	0.7%	3.6% (68.4%)	2.7% (59.3%)*	5%

*Clients who are considered high-risk as defined by the Healthy Babies Healthy Children Screen

Blended Home-Visiting (BHV) Program:

Healthy Babies Healthy Children In-Depth Assessments (IDA), Home Visits and Family Service Plans		2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Jan to Jun)
Number of individuals confirmed with moderate or high risk (eligible for home visit) through an IDA	Prenatal	-	16 (66.6%)	6 (54.5%)	11 (91.7%)	7 (87.5%)	41 (43.2%)
	Postpartum	-	33 (53.2%)	16 (51.6%)	34 (73.9%)	30 (73.2%)	93 (77.5%)
	Early Childhood	-	18 (72%)	9 (90%)	11 (78.6%)	21 (77.8%)	36 (61%)
Number of families served with ≥ 2 home visits		-	41	26	29	46	40
Number of families who received an IDA.		-	111	52	72	76	42
Number of families with a family service plan initiated		-	-	10	9	30	20
Total # of Home Visits (with a FHV, PHN or both)		418	206	140	88	498	349

HBHC Screening and Hospital Liaison

Work Completed:

We continue to offer daily weekday hospital liaison visits to Temiskaming Hospital. These visits also allow the PHNs to complete a formal post-partum Healthy Babies Healthy Children screen as mandated by the ministry. The visits also enable PHNs to assist families with breastfeeding and to discuss and promote services at THU and within the community. We continue to explore ways in which we can strengthen our relationships with our local delivering hospital and primary care partners that see prenatal and postnatal patients to help support and increase our screening opportunities.

School and Child Care Health

Oral Health and Vision Screening:

The dental team returned to regular work in schools in September 2022.

Work Completed:

Since the return to in-school services to complete dental screenings, an increase in dental decay rates have been noted (33% for the 2022-2023 school year). In-school screenings were missed during the COVID-19 pandemic related to school closures. We are now seeing longer wait times for children to be seen in dental offices for exams and treatment, especially those on government funded programs. Many children are utilizing our preventive clinic and services and are being monitored regularly for any dental issues that need further assessment from a dentist. Similarly, the vision screening program was also impacted.

Variance: More dentists are no longer accepting dental funded programs as the reimbursement rate is drastically low. This is noted across the province as well.

Oral Health - Dental Screenings									
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Jan to June)
Pre-Kind/Kind & Grade 2 In-School Mandatory Program	555	937	800	624	925	279	0*	518	400
Pre-Kind/Kind, Grade 2, 4 & 7 In-School Mandatory Program	---**	---**	----**	985	1840	632	0*	751	893
Additional Grades In-School Screening	1043	2217	1350	654	915	0*	0*	53	13
Office Screenings	292	238	248	231	193	105	150	88	306

*This program was impacted by staff redeployment to the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact of COVID-19 measures on school partners.

**Data for this section was not captured in the same fashion it was starting in 2018, therefore it is not specific to the grades required.

Vision Screening Program:

School Vision Screening Program						
Senior Kindergarten Students	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Jan to June)
Number Screened	146	143	0*	0*	0*	383
Number Referred to Optometrist for Vision Exam	62	63	0*	0*	0*	134

*Similar to oral health, this program was impacted by resources being redeployed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the fact that schools were shut down at times and/or not allowing outside people in when they were open.

School Health Immunization and Licensed Child Care

Work Completed:

- The school team continued with school immunization clinics in the spring of 2023, where they offered routine immunization and catch-up vaccines.
- In June 2023, THU began updating the school immunization process. This included adapting an online process to support the ISPA (Immunization School Pupils Act). ISPA enforcement will resume with the upcoming 2023-2024 school year. The ISPA process will be in place for September 2023.
- Support and collaboration continue with our licensed child care providers. The child care team has updated their process and it now better aligns with the school team process.

Variance:

- We did not enforce the Immunization School Pupils Act (ISPA) during the 2022-2023 school year due to capacity. Porcupine Health Unit, with whom we share 3 common school boards, also did not enforce the ISPA.

Comprehensive School and Child Care Health

Work Completed:

- We continued to distribute biweekly school community e-blasts to Principals with curriculum link resources. The purpose of the eblasts is to share school-related content with all schools across our district. These topics also align with THU's mandate, such as: physical activity, immunization, mental health, or healthy eating.
- Collaboration continued with Porcupine Health Unit as we made updates to the JK resource.

Infectious Diseases and Infection Prevention and Control

Work Completed:

- We continued to support our local schools with IPAC resources as needed.
- [A Guide to Common Infections](#) was created and uploaded to the THU website. This resource was created in partnership with Porcupine Health Unit to support schools and child care providers with information on how to manage common infections.

Healthy Eating and Active Living

Work Completed:

- Delivered bicycle rodeos to two schools (4 classes).
- Developed new active travel resources for teachers in both French and English: Classroom package includes virtual bicycle safety presentation, student evaluation, teacher feedback form, student cycling pledge.
- Contributed to the Youth resilience Instagram page (21 posts).
- Supporting the Red Cross with Student Nutrition Program.
- Revision of the NFVP Food Literacy resource.
- Planning and coordinating NFVP, deliveries and troubleshooting.
- Promoting curriculum resources to teachers by writing two e-blasts on promoting food literacy in schools and weight bias in schools.

Sexual Health and Healthy Sexuality

Work Completed:

- Supported schools to deliver sexual health curriculum-based learning.
- Began reviewing resources that could be used to help support curriculum-based learning on sexual health.
- Worked with KLDCS on how to re-start a healthy relationship clinic at the school.

Variance:

- Due to the timing of the above request from KLDCS, we were not able to get the clinic running by the end of the 2023 school year. We plan on meeting with the school this coming 2023-2024 school year to determine next steps.

Substance Use

Work Completed:

- Distributed updated progressive enforcement of tobacco use toolkit to school boards.

Variance:

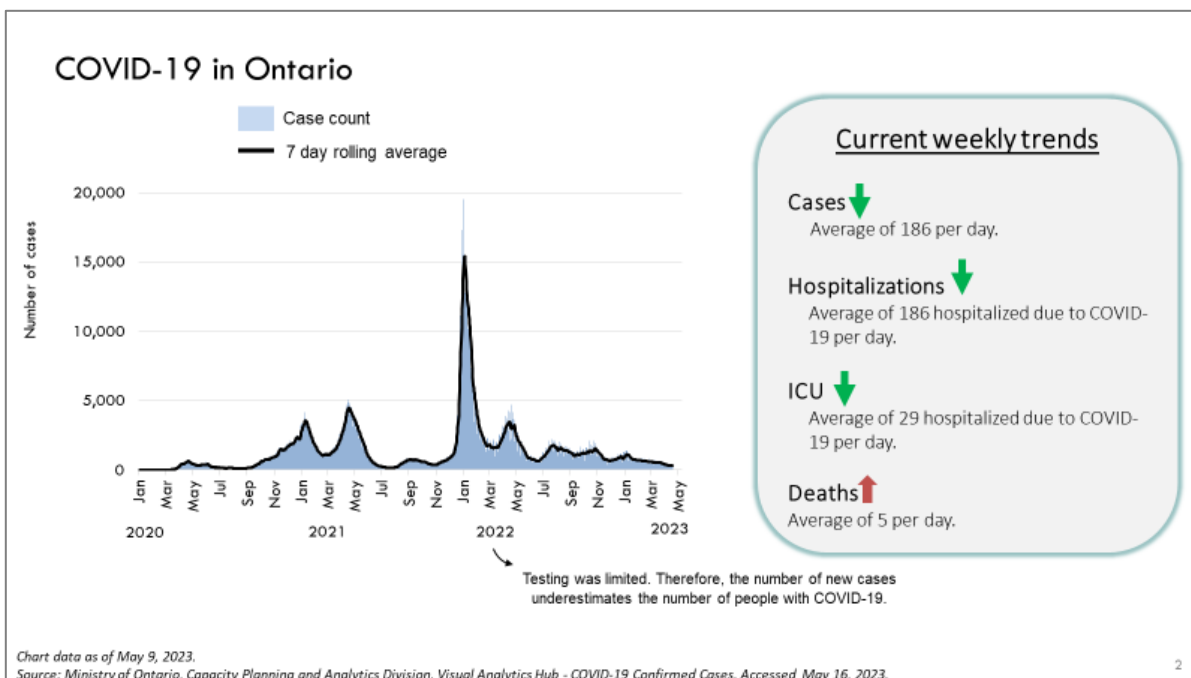
- Tobacco resources to schools to be distributed in fall with broader vaping prevention campaign.

Infectious and Communicable Disease Prevention and Control

2023	Number of outbreaks	Number of cases			Number of deaths
		Staff	Resident /patient	Visitor	
Long-Term Care & nursing homes	10	95	275	5	0
Hospitals	3	11	65	0	5
Congregate living	2	5	29	0	1
TOTAL	15	111	369	5	19

COVID-19 rates in Timiskaming and Ontario

- COVID cases in THU district decreased from January to end of June.
- A total of 15 outbreaks were noted in the first half of the year
 - LTCH/RH – 4
 - Community Living – 6
 - Acute Care - 5



COVID-19 Communications

Below are some highlighted areas of work addressing COVID communication needs.

Public and external

- Webpages were maintained to keep information current regarding local and provincial guidance and recommendations for the public and various sectors including regulation changes. Master Schedule for vaccine opportunities was updated weekly and re-done monthly to reflect clinics for the month.
- Clinic schedules, vaccine opportunities and recommendations, current case situation and vaccination by the numbers are posted to social media weekly.

Media relations

- Media questions continued to be fielded from media locally and across the province.
- A weekly page in The Speaker ran from January to June 2023. All content was bilingual. The bottom half of this page is a calendar of upcoming COVID-19 vaccine clinics. The top half of the page consists of a short article, most often using the text from a recent social media post that has been deemed priority. The purpose of this page is to reach people, primarily seniors, who don't use social media.

Internal

- Updates for our area and for the province were communicated internally via all-staff emails as well as a virtual all-staff meeting.
- Social media pages from other Ontario health units are monitored for internal planning.

COVID-19 Support and Resources phone line

From January to March 2023, the phone line continued to be supported by a casual staff member and monitoring gradually decreased from daily to 2-3 times per week to accommodate the volume of calls received. The number of calls per week averaged 3-5. The public was encouraged to call the provincial COVID support line. The COVID-19 Support and Resources phone line was discontinued at the end of March 2023 and calls were transferred to the IPAC PHN or the Intake nurse.

COVID-19 Booking phone line

The COVID-19 booking phone line was maintained by a core team of THU staff for the first part of 2023. Our communication encouraged residents to book their COVID-19 vaccine appointment through the provincial booking site. Since January, we are averaging 10 calls per week that are being monitored by one THU contract staff. We continue to promote and encourage clients to book their COVID-19 vaccine on-line; clients who do not have access to a computer and the internet can call the COVID-19 booking line for an appointment.

IPAC Hub

Work continued through the first half of 2023 using the IPAC Hub model, with THU staff providing regular education and support to congregate care settings in the district (5 Long Term Care, 1 Retirement Home and 4 Community Living Sites). Meetings were held as requested, as often as monthly, and updates from the province were provided as available with the settings to ensure all IPAC measures were in place for the safety of the residents in those homes. Staff maintain their dedication to this project, and we are hopeful that funding will be continued in the future.

Work completed:

- Education sessions provided to LTCH/RH and CL partners on topics such as hand hygiene, reprocessing, and PPE.
- Internal committee continues to meet weekly to discuss outbreaks and relevant topics.
- Participate in the Regional IPAC Hub table which was meeting every 2 months.
- Complete and submit monthly reporting tool on THU IPAC activities.
- Completed IPAC audits to several settings within the district.

Variance:

- Unable to complete IPAC audits/site visits to all congregate care settings due to staff limitations.

Other Diseases of Public Health Significance

Reportable Diseases and Infection Control								
Client Services	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 Jan-Jun
Reportable Investigations (non-STI)	73	65	111	91	154	652	1,342 (1314 were COVID)	270 (246 were COVID)
Outbreaks - Institutional	14	29	33	18	25	16	18 (15 were COVID)	24 (15 were COVID)
Outbreaks - Community	0	0	0	0	2	23	0	0
Animal Bite Reporting	29	85	77	72	64	62	74	74
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)	82	61	78	67	75	69	28	21
Personal Service Settings Inspections <i>(hair salons, tattoos, piercings, aesthetics)</i>	47	50	52	49	31	10	14	8

Sexual Health Program

The goal of the Sexual Health Program is to promote healthy sexuality.

Sexual health services at THU include:

- STIs and testing,
- Pregnancy testing/options counselling,
- Sexuality,
- Sexual health
- Free condoms
- Low-cost birth control

Sexual Health								
<i>Client Services</i>	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Jan-Jun)
Male Clients	129	127	164	308	292	142	68	78
Female Clients	864	805	644	1014	690	295	137	90
% of clients between 12-24	-	-	66%	63%	56.3%	49.2%	46.8%	61.8%
Contraceptives (sold)	929	846	198	195	72	38	29	5
Contraceptives (prescribed)	-	-	-	-	138	47	83	31
Plan B	41	25	23	25	16	3	13	1
STI Tests	215	201	257	329	241	102	111	56
Pregnancy Tests	28	36	37	39	20	12	19	9
Blood-Borne Infection Tests	124	97	140	148	58	27	42	14
Treatment Prescribed for STI	-	-	-	-	-	29	40	7
Pap tests	-	-	-	-	-	10	11	1

Work completed:

- Created “business card” with healthy sexual health messaging for youth in collaboration with the school team.
- Created a poster of Sexual Health program services to be distributed to local youth.
- Created social media posts on the sexual health program in collaboration with the youth initiative.
- Connected with partners (DSBONE, Beaverhouse First Nations) to discuss bridging services.

Variance:

- Limited outreach to secondary school students (in-school service) due to staffing capacity and limitations.

Immunizations

Immunization – Vaccine Safety and Vaccine Administration

COVID-19 Vaccine Program

Communications:

Continued social and traditional media and building on partnerships with community organizations to reach specific populations. From January to June 2023, communications focused on changing guidance and reopening of services as well as eligibility and addressing hesitancy.

Other COVID-19 vaccine program highlights:

- Weekly COVID-19 Vaccine Operational and Planning calls continued throughout the first half of 2023.
- We continued to work and support our local pharmacies who helped continue to have COVID-19 vaccines available at local pharmacies throughout the district (New Liskeard, Kirkland Lake and Englehart).

- We worked with and supported primary care providers who continue to offer the COVID-19 vaccines to their patients.
- We returned to Bear Island to offer COVID-19 vaccinations (February 24, 2023).

Routine Immunizations

Immunization Program				
Immunizations Administered in Office	NL	KL	ENG	Total 2023 (Jan-Jun)
# of clients receiving immunizations	524	286	94	904
# of immunizations administered	845	487	165	1,497
Note: These numbers do not include Influenza Vaccine <i>Generated from PANORAMA-R07090 Immunization Administered or Wasted at Health Unit</i>				

2022-2023 Universal Influenza Immunization Program

Year	Vaccine Fridges - Cold Chain Inspections					
	KL		NL		ENG	
	Total inspections	Total failures	Total inspections	Total failures	Total inspections	Total failures
2018	15	11	32	10	5	1
2019	15	7	30	12	10	2
2020	18	11	24	3	8	1
2021	19	4	28	3	9	0
2022	19	9	25	4	8	0
2023	3	8	10	0	3	1

Travel Health Vaccine Program

Travel Health Consultations							
Office	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023 (Jan-Jun)
Kirkland Lake	259	210	208	109	0	95	128
New Liskeard	620	695	611	324	64	396	336
Englehart	<i>(included in New Liskeard Statistics)</i>						

Land Control

Septic Systems	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
<i>Permits Issued</i>	131	111	124	38	66	76	106	125	32
<i>File Searches</i>	60	60	66	28	55	65	54	53	13
<i>Severance/Subdivision</i>	15	15	29	10	13	8	13	14	6

Safe Water

<i>Drinking Water</i>	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Small Drinking Water Systems	19	13	48	2	3	36	26
<i>Recreational Water</i>							
Public Beaches (<i>Seasonal Jul-Aug</i>)	16	17	17	19	0	0	0
Pools	25	18	28	8	13	8	6
Recreational Camps/Beachfront (<i>Seasonal Jul-Aug</i>)	11	9	11	0	5	9	1

Variance: Inspections of Small Drinking Water Systems (SDWS) were very limited in 2020 and 2021. We began to catch up on this in 2022 and in the first half of 2023, however there is still additional catch up to complete. Our goal is to have this back to regular levels in 2024.

Healthy Environments and Climate Change

In the first half of 2023 we continued to analyze the findings in the climate change and health [report](#), which was completed through the collaborative project of the northeastern health units. To increase the awareness of this topic the report was released and plans for next steps have been worked on in 2023. Our approach at this point has been to use the report to assist with prioritizing health concerns related to climate change that are of a greater risk specifically in our district. In partnership with Porcupine Health Unit, THU will continue to work to identify adaptation and mitigation strategies while still leveraging the knowledge and experience of the initial group when appropriate.

Variance: There is a great deal of work that still needs to be done to engage local stakeholders, community partners and the public. Some type of engagement implementation plan needs to be developed, however resources and other priorities have not allowed for it to this point.

Another variance in line with the healthy environments and climate change portfolio is our mosquito trapping/testing program for Vector Borne Disease, mainly West Nile Virus. We have not been able to operate this trapping program since the pandemic began. We are fortunate that our district has not shown the required high temperature degree day patterns in the past that are needed for the mosquitos to carry the virus. However, as the effects of climate change continue this situation could change and the mosquito trapping/testing program could be a higher priority.

Food Safety

Food Premises - Compliance Inspections									
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
High Risk	165	184	109	93	88	47	29	29	23
Medium Risk	206	110	187	214	192	96	60	93	71
Low Risk	149	204	160	129	135	62	58	126	68
Total	520	498	456	436	415	205	147	248	162

Variance: We have really made progress in compliance inspection levels in the first half of 2023 and by the end of the year we will surpass the totals we had during the three years of the pandemic. However, we are still not on track to end the year with pre pandemic totals. As we work through recovery, and prioritize accordingly, we are utilizing our resources as best as possible, but having to spread them out, leading to some improvements yet gaps as well.

Food Handler Certifications									
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Englehart	63	26	23	75	58	3	24	10	18
New Liskeard/Tem	90	68	144	351	182	19	55	29	98
Kirkland Lake	70	41	58	127	15	34	5	12	3
Total	223	135	225	553	255	56	84	51	119

Variance: Due to capacity constraints, we have not been able to conduct food handler courses in the north end of the district, although online courses are always available anytime.

Upcoming Events



The following list contains *some* of the upcoming events and opportunities that THU staff are participating in or supporting.

- **Management Team – National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools Evidence Workshop – October**
- **OnCore training for 12 selected staff - October**

Human Resource Update

The comings and goings of our colleagues



New Staff:

- Public Health Dietitian, New Liskeard, Contract (March 2023 – March 2024)
- Director of Strategic Services & Health Promotion, New Liskeard, Permanent (April 3, 2023)
- Test Shopper, New Liskeard, Casual Student (March 13, 2023)
- Public Health Promoter/Drug & Alcohol Strategy, New Liskeard, Contract (May 2023-May 2024)
- Manager of Infectious Diseases/Vaccine Preventable Diseases, New Liskeard, Permanent (May 2023)
- Public Health Promoter/CSWBP, New Liskeard, Contract (June 2023-June 2024)
- Program Assistant, New Liskeard, Part-Time Contract (June 2023-December 2023)
- Public Health Nurse/ID & VPD, New Liskeard, Permanent (August 21, 2023)

Retirement:

- Public Health Nurse, New Liskeard (June 27, 2023)

Resignation:

- Director of Strategic Services & Health Promotion, New Liskeard (February 24, 2023)
- Public Health Promoter/Drug & Alcohol Strategy, Remote (January 13, 2023)
- Public Health Dietitian, New Liskeard, June 16, 2023)

Current Vacancies:

- Public Health Inspector, New Liskeard, Contract
- Dental Assistant, Kirkland Lake, Contract

Report contributors: Randy Winters –Director of Corporate & Health Protection Services, Erin Cowan –Director of Strategic Services & Health Promotion/CNO. Program Managers: Ryan Peters, Angie Manners, Amanda Mongeon, Jennifer Cardinal. Executive Assistant: Rachelle Cote.