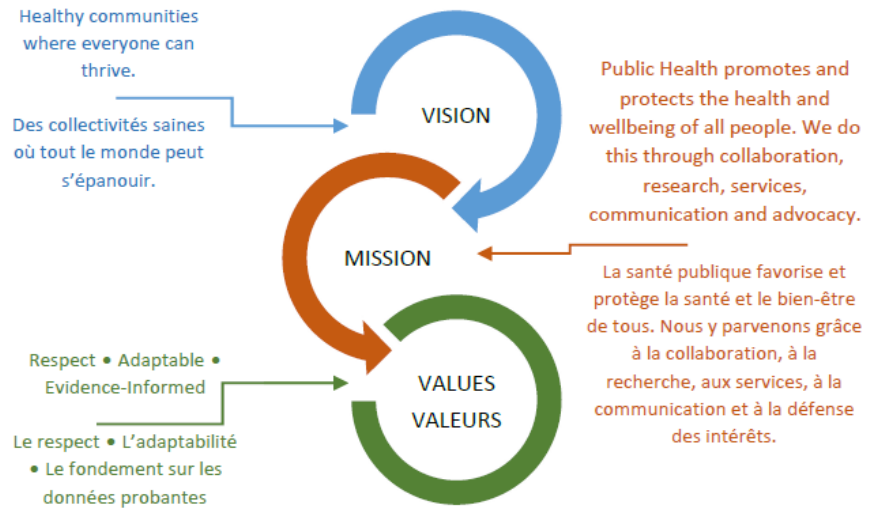


**Report Content**

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



## Introduction

In 2022, Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) remained sharply focused on local COVID-19 response while also striving to implement essential and highest priority programs and services to achieve population health outcomes.

As revealed throughout the pandemic, local public health is much more than infectious disease prevention and control. Local public health also works to prevent illnesses from happening it also promotes healthy environments and public policies that create the conditions to support and enable health for all. Public health works with other sectors to address the broader social, economic, and ecological circumstances that influence whether people can reach their full health potential. Those communities that experience unfair disadvantages in relation to housing, education, income, employment, food security, and other daily living conditions, also experience worse health outcomes as evident with the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>1</sup>

To the extent capacity permitted, THU moved forward on routinizing COVID-19 response work and recovery. These actions occurred within the broader contexts of the need for workforce recovery and a workplace transition to hybrid work model, a desire to learn lessons from our pandemic response, and unknowns about future interests and processes to transform Ontario's public health system. This year-end report to the Timiskaming Board of Health highlights the work of a dedicated, diverse and resilient THU workforce.

<sup>1</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada (2021). A Vision to Transform Canada's Public Health System. The Chief Public Health Officer of Canada's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2021. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/corporate/publications/chief-public-health-officer-reports-state-public-health-canada/state-public-health-canada-2021.html>

# In the Spotlight and On Our Radar

**Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy (TDAS):** The [launch of the finalized Strategy](#) occurred in December, 2022 with coverage from several media outlets:

- [Northern News - Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy releases plan for action](#)
- [CTV News Northern Ontario - Timiskaming Health Unit rolls out strategy to address substance abuse](#)
- CBC Sudbury Live Interview (Dec. 22)

To create a strategy that is truly *by* Timiskaming and *for* Timiskaming, advice, feedback, and recommendations were collected from stakeholders including the public. The results of the 2022 consultation are available [here](#) and a report to inform the consultation is [here](#).

THU has recently contracted, on behalf of TDAS, with VS Marketing to develop a dedicated website and branding strategy; this project will conclude by the end of March 2023. Members of TDAS are working now to implement the actions from the strategy and THU is supporting its monitoring and evaluation.

**Research Project: *Identifying enabling supports and structures that will strengthen response to future disruption:*** [This one-year research project](#) is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, to support municipalities in Northern Ontario with populations <10,000 and their associated local public health units in learning from the COVID-19 pandemic and identifying ways to strengthen and prepare for future emergencies. THU is a supporter of this project and will soon distribute the recruitment information to local municipalities.

**Canada's First Canadian Public Health Week** - In 2022, THU celebrated Canada's first inaugural [Canadian Public Health Week](#) (April). This included daily internal e-blasts and external social media posts recognizing our diverse local public health workforce and their contributions to THU's vision of *healthy communities where everyone can thrive*, addressing issues that are important to improving population health and well-being and reducing health inequities. This campaign illuminated how THU staff work through gathering and interpreting data, evaluation and research, collaboration, programs and services, communication and advocacy to fulfill our mandate, and how this work continued while responding to a global pandemic.

## Timiskaming Health Unit in Action

**Our people – our stories.**

### Foundational Standards

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

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. In 2022 the majority of population health assessment work over and above COVID-19 and other essential surveillance continued to be paused. The list below highlights some of this work;

- Ongoing COVID-19 surveillance reporting data summaries, reports, public webpage on indicators such as cases, outbreaks, hospitalizations and deaths and local wastewater surveillance program as well as COVID-19 vaccine indicators. Vaccine data analysis was often stratified by various variables to support tailoring the program for greatest reach.
- Daily review of Acute Care Enhanced Surveillance (ACES) trends and alerts of potential increases in emergency department visits and admissions to identify any emerging outbreak, anomalies, issues or concerns regarding COVID-19, respiratory syndromes and opioids.
- Provided epidemiologic support for responding to 2 local community foodborne illness outbreaks and for increased syphilis rates.
- Provided data to THU program and external partners on a variety of topics including supporting our local in-development Ontario Health Team (Équipe Santé des régions du Timiskaming Area Health Team). Topics include SDoH (income, food insecurity), morbidity and mortality for older adults, substance use data, birth data.
- Continued local Infant Feeding Surveillance System (IFSS) during routine HBHC calls to new parents.
- Continued to work toward the development of a local surveillance system for opioid surveillance and early warning system.
- Continued analysis, interpretation and reporting of local Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System module backlog.
- Conducted Nutritious Food Basket costing and analysis aiming for dissemination in 2023.

## Health Equity Highlights

The following section highlights local public health work in 2022 toward reducing health inequities such that everyone has equal opportunities for optimal health and can attain their full health potential without disadvantage due to social position or other socially determined circumstances.

- Consulted with First Nations community leaders and local Métis council for the development of THU's first iteration of a [land acknowledgement](#).
- Provided staff education on the impact of colonialism and of the social determinants of Indigenous health and the work of reconciliation and cultural public health practice during National Indigenous People's Day, National Indigenous History Month, National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, and Treaty Recognition Week and with the launch of THU's land acknowledgement through email blasts and a Grand Rounds. Developed a guidance document to support meaningful use of THU's land acknowledgement.
- Provided staff education on culture as a social determinant of health, as well as racism, gender identity and expression and sexual orientation through e-blasts recognizing Black History Month, International Women's Day, Day of Transgender Visibility, Pride Month, and St. Jean Baptiste Day. Staff also presented on Ramadan including "Fasting During Ramadan".
- Increased awareness of issues related to income and food security, paid sick days, housing, affordable oral health care, digital equity, and racism through communication campaigns related to the provincial and municipal election. Also implemented an awareness campaign focused on the issue of digital equity (traditional and social media, video).

Programs also embedded health equity strategies and approaches into their work in 2022, examples include:

- COVID-19: Continued implementation of the COVID-19 Timiskaming Connections Volunteer Line until April 2022 to connect volunteers with those experiencing barriers to isolating or following health measures, chaired and provided backbone support for the COVID-19 Timiskaming Collaborative whose aim was to prevent or mitigate health and well-being disparities due to COVID-19 and related response measures, supported the Temagami First Nation Control Group related to COVID-19 response, collaborated with Indigenous communities and health agencies re: access to vaccination, continued the [Closing the Digital Divide Project](#) with final distribution of devices and Internet services (reach of over 400 project applicants over 2 years) and a final microgrant component with 9 community organizations that serve individuals who experience low income and/or face significant barriers to accessing technology and whose projects enable Timiskaming residents to access internet services, develop digital literacy, and enhance digital skills.
- Substance Use Health: Supported the Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy to establish a People with Lived and Living Experience Committee.
- Healthy Growth and Development: Conducted health equity impact assessments for a HBHC prenatal screening project, healthy growth and development newsletter initiative and situation assessment for adverse childhood experiences.

## **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 2022 activity highlights for program planning, evaluation and evidence-informed decision making as well as for knowledge exchange and continuous improvement.

### **Program Planning, Evaluation and Evidence Informed Decision Making**

Due to significant reallocation of resources to the local COVID-19 response, a regular systematic program planning cycle was not carried out for 2022. However, as COVID-19 response work became routinized at THU over the year, staff were able to focus more resources on recovery. This required using the best available evidence from research, context, and experience to inform decisions on continuing, adapting, developing or discontinuing the delivery of public health programs and services for a local public health system that is responsive to current and emerging population health needs.

- Staff created and applied guiding principles and prioritization matrix for planning programs and services in a COVID-19 response context. Later in 2022, staff created guiding principles to support programs with resuming a rapid regular planning cycle for 2023.
- Comprehensive iterative planning occurred for COVID-19 general and COVID-19 vaccine programs. Research evidence scans were conducted regularly, with ongoing regular sharing of quantitative and qualitative data to inform decisions through incident management and later work group meetings. Phone line data was regularly analyzed and shared and in-action reviews/debriefs were conducted for THU's COVID phone line and mass immunization clinics to inform any real-time adjustments.
- Evaluation work ranging from planning to full implementation and reporting was carried out in 2022 for a number of initiatives including the COVID-19 Timiskaming Connections Line, COVID-19 Municipal Call,

Digital Divide Project, Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy, THU's internal Not Myself Today Campaign, Stand-Up Facilitator Training, IPAC Hub, Board of Health Self-Evaluation, local workplace Mental Health, Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program curriculum, healthy growth and development newsletters and HBHC prenatal project as well as formative evaluation research to better understand local food insecurity.

### **Knowledge Exchange and Related Engagement**

To support mutual learning and the exchange of information on factors that determine the health of the population to foster decision making that is responsive to local needs as well as collaborative problem-solving among community partners, policy-makers, health system and municipal partners and the public, THU engaged with numerous sectors and partners and the public.

- THU staff participated in a panel at the [Northern Directions Conference](#) (North Bay), hosted by the Northern Policy Institute and the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation. THU staff co-authored and participated in a panel titled *[Re]Framing Healthy and Resilient Communities* and on the final day presented [Connexions Timiskaming Connections: Learning from COVID equity measures to increase community resilience](#), describing work done in Timiskaming to mitigate equity related impacts of the pandemic and foster learning to reduce the impact of future emergencies.
- THU staff authored briefing notes on healthy public policy recommendations as well as provincial and municipal election issues briefing notes and public campaign related to opioid and drug strategy response and decriminalization of drugs for personal use, mental health, paid sick days, income security, affordable oral health care, digital equity, housing, racism, Indigenous health and well-being, climate change, and healthy built environment.
- Health system engagement included
  - Issued 21 alerts and 2 Public Health Matters Newsletters (April and November)
  - Participated in local in-development Ontario Health Team (Équipe Santé des régions du Timiskaming Area Health Team)
  - Hosted regular COVID-19 health system call
- Municipal engagement included
  - Developed 1 e-newsletter ([Fall 2022 edition](#)) for municipal staff and council.
  - Developed a [primer](#) to inform municipal candidates and voters of locally relevant issues of public health importance that fall within the influence of municipal governments. The primer was accompanied by a district-wide communications campaign which also highlighted the importance of getting out to vote.
  - Hosted regular municipal sector call related to COVID-19 with additional topics as requested.
  - Developed and circulated [Evidence and Promising Practices for Lowering Speeds on Municipal Roadways](#)
- School and Childcare sector engagement included
  - Held regular school board meetings in collaboration with Porcupine Health Unit
  - Held meetings DTSSAB and regularly attended childcare supervisor meetings
  - Connected with school leaders to identify mutual health and well-being goals for collaboration or support
- Multiple sector engagement included chairing and participating in the following
  - Timiskaming Children's Services Planning Table
  - Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy Steering Committee and working groups
  - Timiskaming COVID-19 Collaborative for Mitigating health and well-being disparities

## Emergency Management

In June of 2022, THU deactivated its Incident Management System for COVID-19 response as we endeavoured to routinize this work. Many emergency response functions continued to be practiced in 2022 as part of our local COVID-19 response. A recovery framework was drafted and deliberate management discussions occur at regularly scheduled meetings to discuss restoring and resuming, rejuvenating and reimagining.

## Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being

As 2022 progressed, redeployment to the COVID-19 response decreased and staff were able to continue increasing their time spent in addressing important health promotion initiatives.

### Active Living

- Collaborated with community partners for “Road Safety Education for Kids” in Temiskaming Shores. THU set up a booth and promoted Cycling Safety and Share the Road resources at the family event. Over 120 people signed in at the event.
- Collaborative program delivery and relationship building with the new Active Transportation summer student at the City of Temiskaming Shores.
- Launched [Walk ‘N Roll Timiskaming website](#), developed with funding from [Ontario Active School Travel’s Innovate Fund](#) and launched a Walk ‘N Roll Communications Strategy, with monthly social media promoting safe and active travel including active school travel on the Walk ‘N Roll Timiskaming [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages. Developed and published bilingual video series on cycling and pedestrian safety starring local elementary school students. [Pedestrian Safety 101](#) (133 views) / [Introduction à la sécurité des piétons](#) (87 views). [Bike Safety 101](#) (33 views) / [Introduction à la sécurité en vélo](#) (11 views).
- Supported Community Bike Exchange volunteers to deliver high school bike maintenance program to students at ESCSM and TDSS. Watch this [video](#) to learn about student involvement.
- Coordinated Temiskaming Shores [Community Bike Festival](#). Event gave away 97 bicycles and helmets.
- Participated in Temiskaming Shores [Road Safety For Kids event](#) (176 attendees), had booth with active travel information and resources and helmet fit demonstrations.

### Healthy Eating

- Participated in the pilot testing of updated Nutritious Food Basket tools. Data was collected from 10 stores using a hybrid model (6 in-person and 4 online). Data analysis is underway including preparing local food affordability scenarios integrating housing data collected from local community partners.
- Supported a Community Fridge project in collaboration with the Community Food Action Network, including the City of Temiskaming Shores, Literacy council and Le Centre d’Education des Adultes and THU. This includes implementation support, promotion and the development of an evaluation plan to launch the project in early 2023.
- Planned social media and promotional materials to provide evidence-based and accurate nutrition information to promote the health and well-being of the Timiskaming population for [Timiskaming Talks Nutrition Facebook Page](#). Currently, the page has 75 followers and 60 likes.
- Adapted social media content from the Dietitians of Canada Nutrition Month Campaign Key “ingredients” needed to change our food systems for a healthier tomorrow.

- Collaborated with Ontario Dietitians of Public Health (ODPH) to develop advocacy letter for inclusion of weight as a protected ground in the Ontario Human Rights Code. Collaborated with ODPH on developing a position statement and scenarios document to reduce weight bias and stigma in the healthcare system.
- As part of [Healthy Eating in Recreation Settings Project](#), conducted monitoring tour of summer concession stand “Snack Shack” and offered resources to promote healthy eating.
- Provided resources to a community partner to support a children's cooking camp in Temiskaming Shores.
- Drafted a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the Town of Kirkland Lake using updated nutrition standards.
- Provided weight stigma/bias and Food Insecurity content for THU’s [Healthcare provider newsletter](#).
- Presented to a group of youth 15–29-year-olds from Youth Job Connection (YJC) on “how to eat healthy on a budget” via a Teams meeting.
- Participated in a [panel discussion](#) on food insecurity among rural seniors and shared insights on upstream work and the public health perspective on seniors' nutrition in rural areas.

**Mental Health Promotion**

- Promoted Five Ways to Wellbeing in Nature Mental Health Week; delivered a social media campaign, hosted an internal staff event on the topic and launched a local workplace wellness challenge to area.
- As part of focus on [workplace mental health](#), released and analyzed a district-wide workplace wellness survey to know needs of local workplaces. In response to the results, organized and sponsored [Mental Health First Aid](#) training for workplaces, sponsoring training for 31 people from 22 workplaces.
- Certified 2 THU staff in Psychological Health and Safety, helping move forward workplace wellness at THU and our community.
- Connected with farming community to apply for farmers’ mental health grant; exploring opportunities to build on [Ontario’s Farmer Wellness Initiative](#).

**Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)**

The Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program continued to increase its capacity to provide free routine dental care as the pandemic response shifted during the first half of 2022. Partnerships were maintained with local oral health providers in the community and qualifying seniors from all areas of the district were able to receive care.

OSDCP	Q1 Total	Q2 Total	Q3 Total	Q4 Total	Year Total
Applied at THU	44	60	73	55	232
Applied Online	0	6	2	11	19
# of Unique Seniors Served THU	30	77	14	61	182
# of Total OSDCP Preventive Appointments at THU	35	83	14	65	197
# of Unique Seniors Served by Providers	132	160	138	124	554
# of Total OSDCP Appointments by Providers	159	185	170	172	686

## Substance Use and Injury Prevention

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

- THU successfully supported the Englehart Family Health Team in advocating for a publicly accessible sharps container in Englehart area in collaboration with community stakeholders.
- In addition to co-chairing and providing backbone support for the Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy, THU staff directly led planning and communication related to both the Prevention and Harm Reduction Pillars of TDAS, participated in the Communications Working Group and supported the Persons with Lived and Living Experience group.
- Submitted a Briefing Note [Decriminalization of Substance Use](#) to the Board of Health supporting several harm reduction actions at provincial and federal levels.
- Delivered a presentation on the [Icelandic Prevention Model](#) (Planet Youth) to the TDAS Prevention Pillar.
- Launched the [Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy](#). See the spotlight section above for more details.

### Needle Exchange and Harm Reduction Program

The Timiskaming Health Unit's Harm Reduction Distribution Program is designed to ensure that people who use drugs can have access to sterile injection equipment and safer inhalation kits to reduce the incidence and prevalence of HIV, Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and other harms. An increase in encounters has been noted from the previous year as public health measures changed throughout the pandemic.

Client Services	Internal Program					External Program				
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Total # Encounters NEP and Other HR Supplies	329	498	355	159	249	149	489	582	207	308
Total # of needles provided			24380	31638	37260			14447	8622	18057
Total # of bowl pipes provided			4620	12962	15366			5126	5429	8145
Total # of Naloxone kits provided			236	234	256			66	88	129
Total # of Naloxone refills provided			43	45	39			1	25	54

### Comprehensive Tobacco Control

- In 2022, 122 THU vouchers for Nicotine Replacement Therapy were redeemed by clients seeking support with tobacco cessation.
- Reduced [nicotine replacement therapy voucher provision](#) to community members while increasing referrals to provincial resources such as [Stop On the Net](#), Telehealth Ontario, Smoker's Helpline, and local STOP programs at local Family Health Teams.
- Engaged 4,412 people on Facebook with campaigns such as National Non-Smoking Week, World No Tobacco Day, Smoke Free Patio information, Stop on the Net cessation services, Best Gift Ever Holiday Campaign. Updated and renewed tobacco cessation advertising on Temiskaming Transit.



### **On- and Off-Road Safety**

- Met with concerned physicians and started a campaign to renew advocating for safer highway measures through Temiskaming Shores on Highway 11.
- Shared over 30 Letters of Support with MTO from various community partners and individuals who are supportive of the need for safety improvements on highway 11.
- Finalized and shared [Evidence and Promising Practices for Lowering Speeds on Municipal Roadways](#) - an evidence based report on safer systems approach to road safety, making our roads safer for all users.
- Delivered ATV safety messages via socials, lobby screens.

### **Injury Prevention -Other**

- THU participated on Steering and Advisory Committees to support the development of a Community Safety and Wellbeing plan for the district of Timiskaming and municipality of Temagami. This included participating in the identification of priorities and potential evidence-based actions.
- Hosted [Stand Up](#) training for 7 facilitators from Timiskaming Home Support, Centre de Sante Communautaire du Timiskaming and Temagami Family Health Team.
- Implemented a Fall Prevention Month campaign including print, radio, social media promoting staying active, social and strong. Delivered 2 [Fall Prevention Month](#) presentations at the Age Friendly Coffee House in Temiskaming Shores.
- Hosted a [Stay on Your Feet](#) booth at Age Friendly Fair reaching over 100 older adults.
- Supported [Timiskaming Rising Stars](#) troupe promotion and recruitment.

## **Healthy Growth and Development**

Throughout THU's sharp focus to on going COVID-19 response in 2022, most Healthy Growth and Development initiatives were prioritized over time to promote optimal preconception, pregnancy, newborn, child, youth, parental, and family health.

### **Breastfeeding and Infant Feeding**

- THU continued to support clients with the breast pump program. There was a total of 17 breast pump rentals in 2022.
- Maintained and supported the Timiskaming Breastfeeding Buddies Facebook group while the Breastfeeding Peer Program remained on pause in 2022.
- Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) monitoring and reporting remained on pause in 2022 and a process was undertaken to support a decision regarding re-designation for 2023.
- Lactation consulting support continued throughout 2022, with 15% of families having received at least one consultation.
- Implemented communication campaigns during World Breastfeeding Week and National Breastfeeding Week communicating the value of breastfeeding and local supports available.

### **Prenatal Education**

- Online bilingual courses continued for THU residents via Public Health Sudbury and Districts.
- THU partnered with Timiskaming Brighter Futures to complete 3 virtual prenatal sessions. A total of 31 mothers and 14 support persons attended either the Brighter Futures' classes or one-on-one prenatal/breastfeeding classes.

### **Well-baby Visits (WBV)**

THU offers WBV in our Temiskaming Shores, Kirkland Lake and Englehart offices. These visits reach children aged 0 to 6 years and offer services such as immunizations, weights and developmental screening. The clinics were held at least every 2 weeks throughout the year.

- In 2022, THU staff offered full components of WBV. There were 385 WBV in the New Liskeard office, 318 in the Kirkland Lake office and 11 WBV in the Englehart office.
- A healthy pregnancy and immunization campaign was launched in August to encourage families to get up-to-date on routine immunizations.

### **Mental Health**

- THU's HGD continued screening using the Edinburgh Postnatal Depression Scale prenatally, 48 hours after hospital discharge, and at 2-months and 6-months post-partum. These calls can be integrated with HBHC program calls. From Jan-Dec 2022 9 referrals for support services were made.
- Implemented a social media campaign highlighting local supports and information relevant to maternal mental health. This included awareness on pregnancy and infant loss and supports.

### **Parenting**

- Launched a positive parenting communications campaign adapted from KFL&A, encourages families to listen, respond and connect with their child using a conceptual model that presents four key constructs: Nurturing Relationships, Parental Wellbeing, Child's Emotional Safe and Stimulating Environments.

### **Road Safety and Car Seats**

- Delivered 26 car seat inspections occurred between January and December 2022.
- Training for new and existing inspectors was paused due to challenges with scheduling.
- A winter car seat communication campaign was launched in 2022 which highlights informing families of best practices in winter car seat use and bulky winter wear and promotion of inspection services.

### **Healthy Eating**

- Implemented communication initiatives on the Timiskaming Talks Nutrition Facebook page as well as on THU's website to promote food literacy and nutrition-related topics in 2022.
- Provided support to internal staff and external organizations as requested on a variety of topics to support families on topics such as picky eating, supplementation during lactation, infant feeding.
- Collaborated with Ontario Dietitians of Public Health (ODPH) to conduct an environmental scan of infant feeding resources to create a resource for the Ontario context.

### **Healthy Babies Health Children (HBHC) Program**

To achieve the MCSS funded HBHC program goal of optimizing newborn and child healthy growth and development and reduce health inequities for families receiving services in 2022, THU staff were prioritized to implement this program which includes the components of (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

In 2022, there were 274 live births in the THU area (see graph in [Appendix A](#) for birth trend over time). 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.

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	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (% identified High Risk) *	
Prenatal	79%	71%	82%	65%	82%	75.4% (46.5%)	10%
Postpartum	102%	97%	96%	70%	84%	82.8% (69.8%)	80%
Early Childhood	7%	6%	3%	2%	0.7%	3.6% (68.4%)	5%

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

**Blended Home-Visiting (BHV) Program:** Full components of the BHV program were offered in 2022. A second Family Home Visitor was added to our team (May) which has consequently increased our capacity.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children In-Depth Assessments (IDA), Home Visits and Family Service Plans							
		2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
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%)
	Postpartum	-	-	33 (53.2%)	16 (51.6%)	34 (73.9%)	30 (73.2%)
	Early Childhood	-	-	18 (72%)	9 (90%)	11 (78.6%)	21 (77.8%)
Number of families served with ≥ 2 home visits			-	41	26	29	46
Number of families who received an IDA.		-	-	111	52	72	76
Number of families with a family service plan initiated		-	-	-	10	9	30
Total # of Home Visits (with a FHV, PHN or both)		325	418	206	140	88	498

### HBHC Screening and Hospital Liaison

Daily liaison visits to Timiskaming Hospital were restarted at full capacity, 5 days a week, in August of 2022. These visits also allow the PHN's to complete a formal post-partum Healthy Babies Healthy Children screening as mandated by the ministry and assist families with breastfeeding and discuss services at THU and within the community.

## School and Childcare Health

### Oral Health Screening:

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

*\*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
Number Screened	146	143	0*	0*	0*
Number Referred to Optometrist for Vision Exam	62	63	0*	0*	0*

*\*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 Childcare

- School clinics were held for routine immunization in the fall of 2022 including offering catch-up.
- ISPA (Immunization School Pupils Act) virtual sessions for those requesting non-medical exemption.
- Ongoing support and collaboration with licensed childcare for immunization monitoring. In 2022 efforts to update and modernize the process initiated pre-covid were resumed.

### Comprehensive School and Childcare Health

School PHNs provided ongoing support to all Timiskaming area schools and childcare centres as needed, including private schools within our Anabaptist communities. THU continued to report monthly to the government of Ontario

- Developed and distributed biweekly school community eblasts to Principals with curriculum-linked health and education resources and updated THU website with curriculum linked resources for schools.
- Attended school council meetings at several local schools
- Collaborated with Porcupine Health Unit to develop and distribute [Ready, Set, Kindergarten! Junior Kindergarten Resource](#) and participated in one elementary school JK registration day

- Collaborated with school boards and Porcupine Health Unit to develop partnership agreements. Completed one of four partnership agreements.

### **Infectious Diseases and Infection Prevention and Control**

- THU continued to participate in regular meetings with the Porcupine Health Unit and with Directors of Education, school COVID-19 Leads and school transportation providers.
- THU continued to participate periodically in DTSSAB-hosted meetings with Timiskaming childcare providers to respond to questions related to COVID-19 measures
- Responded to questions and provided resource materials to schools and childcare related to infectious/reportable diseases

### **Healthy Eating and Active Living**

- Supported the implementation and coordination of the Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program in schools reaching students in Grades K to 8. Collaborated with Porcupine Health Unit to develop and evaluate [Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program Activity Calendar, Fact Sheets & Recipes](#) and [Implementation Guide](#),
- Provided nutrition content for school newsletters, body diversity content to share with schools, as well as regarding food policy consultation.
- Supported grant application resources and resources related to eating disorders
- Encouraged all schools to participate in Winter Walk Day (March) and Bike to School Week (May). Provided activity suggestions and participation incentives. Englehart elementary schools were supported with Winter Walk Day activities upon request.
- Supported a successful proposal to Temiskaming Foundation, in partnership with Town of Englehart, for new bicycle racks at 2 schools
- [Launched Walk n Roll Project in Town of Englehart](#), created and displayed outdoor banners in support of active school travel at three schools, thanks to funding the [Ontario Active School Travel Fund](#)
- Updated Bike Rodeo kit for grade 5/6 students, facilitated bike rodeos with 2 elementary schools
- Collaborated with Central Public School Parent Council to create [School Pick-up Planner](#)
- Teachers at the 6 schools in our [Active School Travel program](#) were provided with resources and activities to engage students in International Walk to School Month and Walk to School Day.
- Provided support to 6 schools to improve safety in their school zones as identified in their travel plans.
- Led the regional Active School Travel committee which includes school board representation
- Collaborated with four school boards, NEOFACS, CMHA and Porcupine Health Unit to plan Mental Health Week; facilitated regular meetings with School Mental Health Leads to support youth-led mental health initiatives.

### **Sexual Health and Healthy Sexuality**

- Created school curriculum kits to support healthy sexuality teaching in schools
- Held biweekly sexual health clinics at one secondary school, co-taught sexual health in 2 schools.

### **Mental Health Promotion and Substance Use Prevention and Harm Reduction**

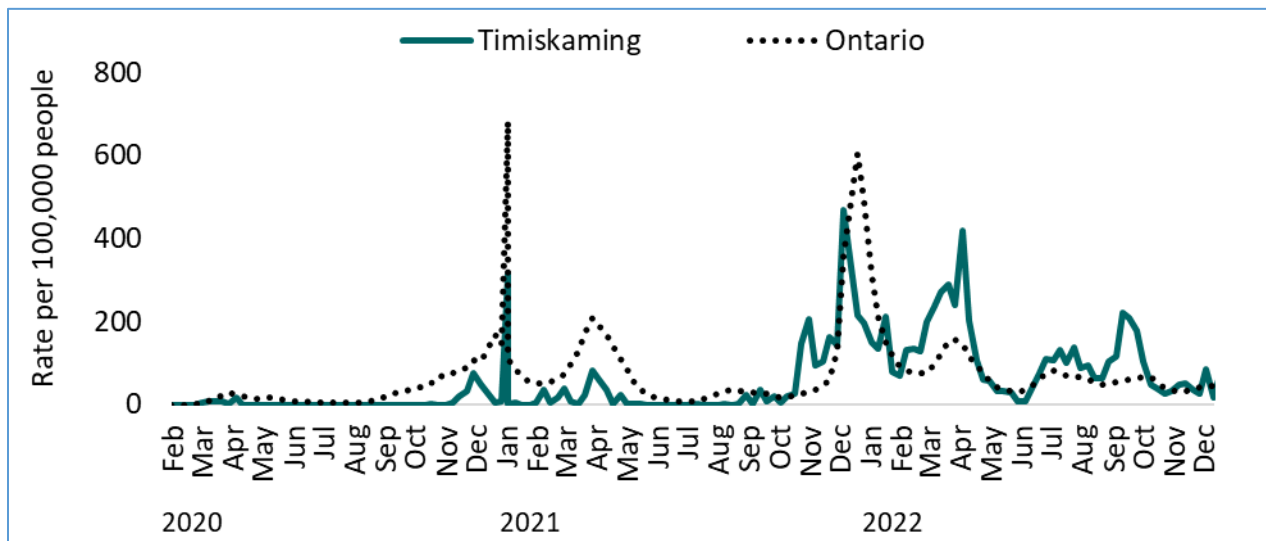
- Adapted and promoted [Prom Toolkit](#) with local secondary schools and parents/caregivers
- Supported 5 local secondary schools with implementing [Youth Mental Health and Addictions Champions program](#)

- Adapted an updated progressive enforcement toolkit for use in enforcing the [Smoke-Free Ontario Act](#), provided Schools with [resources to support tobacco use prevention](#).

## Infectious and Communicable Disease Prevention and Control

	Number of outbreaks	Number of cases			Number of deaths
		Staff	Resident /patient	Visitor	
Long-Term Care & nursing homes	10	95	275	5	13
Hospitals	3	11	65	0	5
Congregate living	2	5	29	0	1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>19</b>

### COVID-19 rates in Timiskaming and Ontario



Ministry of Ontario, Capacity Planning and Analytics Division, Visual Analytics Hub - COVID-19 Cases. Accessed February 8, 2023.

## **COVID-19 Communications**

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

### Public & 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. This resulted in 280 website updates in 2022, 51 of which were in Q4 (Note: this number is English only. The same number of updates were made in French). This is in addition to social media updates and direct email letters. Letters were sent to local businesses triggered by a local or provincial change. 28 updates were made in 2022, 2 of which were in Q4. Letters are publicly available [here](#).
- Monthly social media plans were created regarding public health measures with an average of 16 social media posts each month. Clinic schedules, vaccine opportunities and recommendations, current case situation and vaccination by the numbers are posted to social media weekly.
- MOH videos were created regarding major updates, such as the worsening COVID-19 situation in our district and vaccine Q&A. Videos were uploaded to Facebook, YouTube, and the website.
- **30** alerts were issued to health care providers to support timely guidance and directive updates.
- Approximately **30** media interview responses with Dr. Corneil in the speaker.
- Approximately **30** COVID-19 related issues in the Speaker.
- Liaison supports included **31** health system meetings, **18** municipal partner meetings and **41** meetings with Directors of Education, DTSSAB Children's Services and community collaborative. were released in 2022. 7 additional video updates (COVID topics but did not feature the MOH) were uploaded in January-June, with the majority of these focused on families (for example, vaccine clinic tour for families, reminder to screen, etc.)

### Media relations

- Media releases were distributed to local media and media who requested to be on our media distribution email list. Media questions were fielded from media locally and across the province. 3 media releases were distributed in 2022; all three were about COVID-19 deaths and were released in January 2022.
- A weekly page in The Speaker ran in January-December 2022. 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 virtual all-staff meetings 2 times in 2022.
- Social media pages from other Ontario health units are monitored for internal planning.

### **COVID-19 Support and Resources phone line**

The last half of the year saw a decrease in the number of public inquiries to the COVID-19 support and resources phone line. Changes in the provincial guidance and the shifting of the pandemic response to outbreak management in highest-risk settings only contributed to this decrease.

From July to December 2022, 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.

### **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 2022. Our communication encouraged residents to book their COVID-19 vaccine appointment through the provincial booking site. During changes in eligibility, we would see an increase in calls, where we would see about 30+ calls per day. Throughout the summer, we moved to a few key THU staff and casual staff to return booking phone line questions. An increase in calls were noted in the fall as the bivalent booster and influenza vaccine became available. Since December, we are averaging 10 calls per day that are being monitored by 1 THU contract staff. We continue to promote and encourage clients to book their COVID-19 vaccine on-line, however, to ensure health equity, 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 2022 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, 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 were dedicated to this project and we are hopeful that funding will be maintained for the 2023 fiscal year.

### **Other Diseases of Public Health Significance**

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



(hair salons, tattoos, piercings, aesthetics)							
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### Sexual Health Program

Sexual health services at THU include:

- Information on sexually transmitted infections (STIs), free testing and treatment of STIs;
- Confidential and anonymous HIV testing;
- Pregnancy testing and information about Emergency Contraception Plan B, affordable contraception and free condoms. The OHIP+ program (2018) decreased the demand for THU contraceptives;
- Pap tests to those less than 25 years of age.

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

## 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. Throughout 2022, communications focused on eligibility and addressing hesitancy. The communications strategy was data-focused, using evidence related to vaccine hesitancy and confidence and adjusting according to local vaccine uptake by age group, geography and other factors. Accordingly, late spring saw an enhanced investment in targeted strategies to reach youth under aged 30 [including a youth Q&A video series with the Acting MOH](#).

Other COVID-19 vaccine program highlights:

- For the first part of 2022, the ministry reporting remained weekly on sharing COVID-19 vaccinations uptake and information. As of July 2022, ministry reporting on COVID-19 vaccinations information went to monthly.
- Weekly COVID-19 Vaccine Operational and Planning calls continued throughout 2022.
- The COVID-19 vaccine campaign opened booster doses for the 60+ population, including First Nation and Métis individuals, and their non-Indigenous household members 18 years of age and older (April 2022). We ramped up local clinics to help support vaccinating this group.
- Booster doses for 6- to 11-year-olds opened April 2022.
- COVID-19 vaccine clinics remained weekly throughout 2022 for New Liskeard and Kirkland Lake office. Mid-year they moved to monthly for Englehart. In July and August, we offered pop-up clinics in smaller locations (Cobalt, Virginiatown, Larder Lake, Elk Lake and Earlton).
- Vaccine uptake remained consistent throughout 2022.
- 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 and supported primary care providers who continue to offer the COVID-19 vaccines to their patients.
- COVAX Modernization happened in June, this brought updates to the COVID-19 provincial vaccination data system.
- We returned 3 times to Bear Island to offer COVID-19 vaccinations (May 26, August 30 and November 4). Influenza was also offered at the November 4 clinic.
- Moderna product became available as the first product for those under 5 in August. The Pfizer pediatric product was available, September 2022.
- The bivalent booster dose was available in October. We saw an increase in attendance at the fall COVID-19 vaccination clinics.
- The Pfizer pediatric COVID-19 vaccine was made available to 5- to 11-year-olds, December 20, 2022.

**Routine Immunizations**

Immunization Program				
Immunizations Administered in Office	NL	KL	ENG	Total 2022
# of clients receiving immunizations	876	391	116	1383
# of immunizations administered	1380	644	198	2222
<b>Note: These numbers do not include Influenza Vaccine</b> Generated from PANORAMA-R07090 Immunization Administered or Wasted at Health Unit				

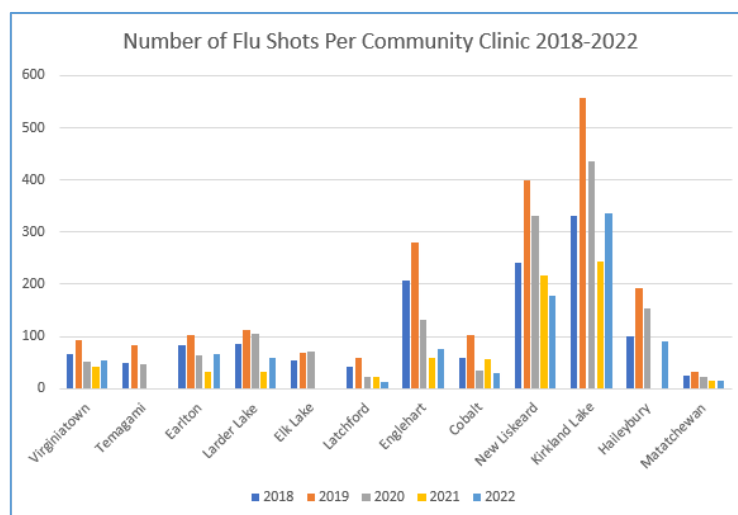
- Maintained routine vaccines in office throughout 2022 through WBC, intake and in-office school vaccine clinics throughout the district.
- Travel vaccines resumed in KL, March 2022.
- Planning in December indicated that we would resume monthly evening clinics in-office, the first Tuesday of every month for NL, KL and Englehart offices.
- We were able to have 2 internal VPD meetings to share and update staff on vaccines.

- New Publicly Funded Schedule came out in June 2022. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, eligibility has been extended on hepatitis B and HPV vaccines for school aged students.

### 2021-2022 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
2017	12	10	28	7	5	2
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

- Community flu clinics again this year were modified related to the COVID-19 pandemic and need to get the population vaccinated with the bivalent COVID-19 vaccine. We continued to offer influenza and COVID-19 vaccines at our regular venues, the first hour of the clinic offered COVID-19 vaccines and the latter part of the clinic offered influenza. Clients were encouraged to book their appointments on-line or call THU.
- Planning proved to be difficult as we remained busy with offering the COVID-19 vaccines as well. We were able to get communications out via social media as well as get posters posted throughout the district. We also relied on provincial and national media coverage to help promote the importance of the influenza vaccine this year.
- All our local pharmacies participated in the influenza campaign this year as well as our primary care partners which made accessing the vaccine easier for all. We also had our local paramedics offer influenza vaccines to homebound clients.
- This year we did not experience any delays in getting the regular influenza vaccine delivered. However, like all health units across the province, it was a challenge to secure the needed high-dose influenza vaccine. THU gave all high-dose vaccine to primary care providers to make sure those most high-risk get the high dose vaccine. Pharmacies throughout the district also had high dose supply.
- We offered in-office appointments for clients requesting this service.
- Community pharmacies continued to administer flu vaccines to individuals over the age of five. Pharmacies receive their influenza vaccines directly from their suppliers rather than through Health Units, however Health Units are required to track pharmacy influenza inventory in Panorama. Between October and December, local pharmacies provided over 2,900 vaccines.



Note: Missing data, Temagami & Elk lake ran their own clinics in 2021 & 2022 and there was no clinic venue for Haileybury in 2021)

### Travel Health Vaccine Program

Travel Health Consultations							
Office	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022 (Jan-June)
Kirkland Lake	272	259	210	208	109	0	78
New Liskeard	595	620	695	611	324	64	340
Englehart	<i>(included in New Liskeard Statistics)</i>						

Note: KL staff remained redeployed to COVID-19 work and did not see any tropical travellers between January and March 2022.

### Land Control

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

## Tobacco Enforcement

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

## Safe Water

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

## Healthy Environments and Climate Change

The focus of this area of work continued to be the collaborative project the northeastern health units had been working on in regard to climate change and health for northeastern Ontario. This multi-year project ended in 2022 with the final [report](#) being created. The information in the report will bring general awareness to health risks related to climate change, specifically in northeastern Ontario. It will also help public health, partners, and stakeholders plan adaptation and mitigation strategies as we move forward.

Food Premises - Compliance Inspections								
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
High Risk	165	184	109	93	88	47	29	29
Medium Risk	206	110	187	214	192	96	60	93
Low Risk	149	204	160	129	135	62	58	126
<b>Total</b>	<b>520</b>	<b>498</b>	<b>456</b>	<b>436</b>	<b>415</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>82</b>

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



## Upcoming Events

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

- [ROMA conference January 22-24](#). THU staff speaking on panel titled *Solutions for Healthy Rural Communities*
- In-person event: ***An Introduction to the Icelandic Prevention Model***. As part of Timiskaming Drug and Alcohol Strategy, Jon Sigfusson, Chair of the Board at [Planet Youth](#) will present Iceland's successful model for substance use prevention. **Riverside Place, New Liskeard on February 22 from 9:00am -12:00pm.**
- [Moving on Mental Health Planning Table](#) quarterly meeting January 30. This initiative across Timiskaming and Cochrane districts works to address targeted prevention and treatment for youth mental health and substance use. Attended by THU staff who support School Health and Healthy Growth and Development programs.
- Nutrition Month - March
- Eating Disorders Awareness Week (EDAW)- February 1 to 7

# Human Resource Update

## The comings and goings of our colleagues



### New Staff:

- Public Health Promoter – Communications, New Liskeard, Temporary (Sept 26, 2022)
- Public Health Promoter, Remote, Temporary (Oct 24, 2022 – Oct 27, 2023)
- Manager of Infectious Diseases, New Liskeard, Temporary (Oct 31, 2022 – June 30, 2023)
- Epidemiologist, Remote, Temporary (Nov 21, 2022 – Jan 31, 2023)
- Program Assistant, New Liskeard, Permanent (Nov 14, 2022)
- Research, Planning, Policy Analyst, Remote, Temporary (Jan 7, 2023 – June 30, 2023)
- Public Health Promoter, Remote, Temporary (Jan 16 – Dec 31, 2023)

### Resignation:

- Program Assistant, District Wide, Temporary (November 14, 2022)
- Research, Planning, Policy Analyst, Kirkland Lake, Permanent (December 2022)

### Current Vacancies:

- Human Resources Officer, New Liskeard, Temporary
- Public Health Promoter-School Health, Kirkland Lake, Temporary
- Public Health Registered Dietitian, District Wide, Permanent
- Public Health Promoter, District Wide, Permanent

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**Report contributors:** Randy Winters –Director of Corporate & Health Protection Services, Kerry Schubert-Mackey –Director of Strategic Services & Health Promotion. Program Managers: Ryan Peters, Angie Manners, Amanda Mongeon, Jennifer Cardinal, Emily Reynolds, Kassandra Plante. Executive Assistant: Rachelle Cote.

## Appendix A

