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## On Our Radar

### Hot topics

- **Transparency - Disclosure of Information** - the modernized [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability \(2018\)](#) now have an explicit requirement for Boards of Health to publically disclose results of all inspections or information in accordance with protocols and regulations. The inspection topics range from food and water safety to infection prevention and control to tanning beds and tobacco and electronic cigarette sales and display. Working with the ministry, we will be planning and implementing additional ways to publically disclose the required information.
- **Cannabis legalization and regulation** developments including the final Senate debate and vote June 7, 2018. Public health is working to support our communities through this transition.
- The [Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017](#) coming into force on a day to be proclaimed by the Lieutenant Governor. Once in force, the SFOA, 2017 will repeal the existing Smoke-Free Ontario Act and Electronic Cigarettes Act, and replace them with a single legislative framework. The SFOA, 2017 will regulate the sale, supply, use, display, and promotion of tobacco and vapour products, and the smoking and vaping of medical cannabis.

## Timiskaming Health Unit in Action

**Our people – our stories.**

### General Report

The first quarter of 2018 was a very busy time as staff responded to the continuous roll out of protocols and guidelines that support implementation of the modernized *Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS): Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability (2018)*. Furthermore, in addition to ongoing planning and program and service delivery, for the first time, all Public Health Programs were required to submit content for our submission of an Annual Service Plan to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. This plan is to communicate our program plans related to budget expenditures and in accordance with the new OPHS and based on local need. This required submitting an overall community assessment summary and describing the needs of the population we serve using most recent available data. Moreover, we were required to describe programs within each

overarching program standard, list program objectives, key stakeholders and partners, indicators of success and related intervention activities and related budget expenditures. In total, over 40 programs were described in the Annual Service Plan template.

In Q1, another edition of [Public Health Matters](#) was developed and circulated to local Health Care Providers which included local data on reportable disease rates.

There was also extensive activity internally as well as with some external partners, to use data to inform program and service delivery as well as healthy public policy dialogue. This included discussions and presentations on poverty and the impact of income and income disparities as a powerful determinant of health.

## Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being

During Q1, staff continued planning for activities for the upcoming quarters. In addition, we ran a [Winter Sun Safety Campaign](#) targeting outdoor recreationalists and wrapped up implementation of the [Healthy Eating in Recreation Settings](#) project in Temiskaming Shores. In partnership with the City of Temiskaming Shores, this project has resulted in the addition of healthy menu options to the base requirements for those interested in operating any of the canteens within the municipality's recreation facilities. This is a great example of the long-term success that can come from positive partnerships. We are now planning steps to reach out to other operators in the district to explore similar opportunities.

## Substance Use and Injury Prevention

We began 2018 with a [Rethink Your Drinking: Cancer campaign](#) to continue building awareness of [Canada's Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines](#). We also worked with the City of Temiskaming Shores in applying a public health lens on reviewing and revising their Municipal Alcohol Policy, again emphasizing the importance of standard drink sizes and limiting exposure of alcohol and alcohol marketing to youth.

We partnered with NEOFACS to promote and deliver a local [Safe Talk Suicide Alertness Training](#). High interest led to a second session being scheduled and a third training is being considered due to expression of interest.

With positive Mental Health explicitly listed as a topic in numerous programs standards in the modernized Ontario Public Health Standards, Q1 saw many staff working together to further assess the local situation and plan staff training and other activities to support this in our communities.

With confirmation from the NE LHIN that the 3-year [Stay on Your Feet Project](#), to prevent falls among older adults, will be renewed for a further three years, staff are working to clarify objectives and deliverables and begin planning for the next year's activities in Timiskaming and along with the rest of northeastern Ontario.

Lastly, our efforts in reducing tobacco harms across Timiskaming have continued with, among a variety of other activities, expansion of our Nicotine Replacement Therapy voucher program to a multitude of service providers and of course enforcement activities. During Q1, THU issued 1 charge for smoking in an enclosed workplace, and 16 warnings. 12 of these warnings related to smoking on hospital property.

## Healthy Growth and Development

**Healthy Babies – Healthy Children (HBHC):** The BORN-ISCIS provincial initiative was launched locally in January thanks to a partnership between THU and the Temiskaming Hospital. This initiative enhances the way in which key maternal child screening information moves between hospitals and public health and ensures that the needs of mothers and newborns are met. Public health's HBHC program staff use this screening information to prioritize home visits and supportive community care for women and newborns. Since the launch in January, HBHC staff have noticed a decrease in the amount of missing, incomplete and duplicate screens and strengthened partnership collaboration.

**HBHC Protocol (2018):** In January, the Ministry of Children and Youth Services released an updated version of the [Healthy Babies Healthy Children Protocol](#). This protocol aligns with the Healthy Growth and Development Program Standard in the modernized Ontario Public Health Standards (2018). A guideline document is currently in development, and focuses on:

- Improving the effectiveness of the response to screening results;
- Introducing streamlined processes focusing on consent and technology;
- Strengthening the program's ability to support the complex needs of some families;
- Streamlining data requirement and focusing on outcome measurement.

## School Health

The first months of 2018 involved launching the [Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program](#) in Timiskaming area schools. In addition, the tobacco youth champions at our local secondary schools were very active. THU staff supported them in their efforts to raise awareness amongst their peers and adult allies about the harms of commercial tobacco use and tactics used by the tobacco industry. Staff along with other community partners attended training regarding an innovative "[Weed Out the Risk](#)" educational program to address road safety risks of driving under the influence of marijuana for youth drivers.

## Infectious and Communicable Disease Prevention and Control

**Influenza/Vaccine Preventable Diseases.** Nursing staff and support staff wrapped up influenza immunization season and began to return unused flu vaccines and anticipate wastage numbers. An evaluation of our community flu clinics was completed to examine how we can improve our program in a changing environment with pharmacy involvement of flu vaccine immunization. Timiskaming, like the rest of the country, saw earlier-than-usual arrival of Influenza B, which made for a very busy flu season.

**Outbreaks.** THU staff have been busy supporting the annual winter spike of institutional outbreaks and continuing to improve the tools that support institutions in managing and mitigating outbreaks. In Q1, there were four daycare *enteric* outbreaks in total. There were eight institutional *respiratory* outbreaks, six of which were in long-term care homes and two were in daycares. Influenza A was the causal agent of three of the outbreaks, Influenza B was identified in two of the outbreaks, respiratory syncytial virus was identified in one of the outbreaks, and the other two were due to an unknown causative agent.

**Sexual Health/Harm Reduction.** Staff are navigating several changes to the modernized Ontario Public Health Standards (2018), as well as revised guidelines for the management of Hepatitis C. The needle exchange program continues to grow, as well as the naloxone dispensing activities. Timiskaming Health Unit purchased two community sharps disposal bins that will be installed in an accessible outdoor area at our New Liskeard and Kirkland Lake offices in the spring. The Harm Reduction Enhancement Program will see a concentrated effort as a new staff member was welcomed to lead the program. Priorities in the next quarter are to connect with and engage partners in assessing the local context and priorities for action as part of a community overdose response plan or drug strategy, as well as to set-up Naloxone distribution to fire departments and eligible community agencies and developing an early warning surveillance system.

## Environmental Health & Emergency Preparedness

**Food Safety.** With new regulations and protocols coming into effect July 1, 2018, there are many new practices the environmental health team are looking at. One particular item of focus is interpreting and assessing the impact of the requirement for certified food handlers on site at all food premises during every hour of operation. We anticipate an increased need for local food handler training and are planning to deliver more courses. A communication summarizing the main changes in the regulations was developed and sent to all food premises, which also included a schedule of food handler courses we are offering in 2018.

**Safe Water.** Along with safe food regulation changes there are also many within safe water. One item that is on the forefront is the safety requirements for recreational camps, and specifically the lifeguard requirements. Review is underway to determine if operators meet the new requirements or if additional training needs to be held.

**Rabies (Infectious and Communicable Diseases).** Another item that had been worked on in the first quarter is a communication piece to Veterinarians in our district. It summarized changes to the rabies regulation and protocol, which included reporting requirements for them, along with information for the public in regards to pet vaccination requirements. Although Veterinarians are not responsible to enforce these regulations, public health will work with them in partnership as they have a face to face relationship with the target client group.



## Upcoming Events

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

- **April 17-19-21** – Food Handler Courses
- **May** – NE Youth Tobacco Champion Summit
- **May 2** – Weeding Out the Facts: A Community Discussion About Youth Marijuana Use
- **May 7** – Emergency Preparedness Week, Mental Health Awareness Week.
- **May 10** – Food Handler Course
- **May 10** – ALPHA Fitness Challenge
- **May 17** – THU celebration of National Nurses Week (week of May 7)
- **May 31** – World No Tobacco Day
- **June** – Safe Kids Week
- **June 5** – Food Handler Course
- **June 21** – [National Indigenous Peoples Day](#)

# Human Resource Update

## The comings and goings of our colleagues



### New Staff:

- Family Home Visitor – New Liskeard - Contract (*March 2018-March 2019*)
- Public Health Nurse – New Liskeard – Contract (*Apr.2018 – Sept.2018*)
- Public Health Dietitian – New Liskeard – Contract Extension (*Apr.2018-Sept.2018*)
- Public Health Inspection – District – Contract (*Apr.2018-September 2018*)

### Resignation:

- Research-Analyst-Policy-Planning – New Liskeard - Contract (*Feb 2018*)

### Current Vacancies:

- MOH-CEO – New Liskeard - Permanent

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