

On Our Radar

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Tobacco use, a deeply concerning issue in Timiskaming

Tobacco use continues to be an urgent issue in Timiskaming. While the overall rate of tobacco use appears to have declined somewhat from previous years, 1 in 4 Timiskaming people smoke, which is much more than the provincial rate of 17%. In addition to continuing our work to reduce tobacco use, we are also now responding to the rapid uptake of nicotine use and other harms related to vaping among youth. Given the health-related harms associated with smoking and evolving evidence for harm associated with vaping, local rates of smoking and vaping are deeply concerning. A briefing note on the evolving vaping context including local action will be shared in the October Board of Health meeting package.

Tobacco-Free Movies

The Ontario Government has launched a [consultation](#) on the modernization of the *Film Classification Act, 2005*. Alongside others in Ontario Public Health, THU will submit a response to this consultation highlighting the causal relationship between on-screen tobacco use and the initiation of smoking among young people and our particular local concern given Timiskaming's higher-than-average rate and earlier age of initiation of tobacco use. The consultation closes on October 28, 2019.

Federal Election and Policies and Programs for Public Health

Timiskaming Health Unit staff joined regional, provincial and national public health peers by launching a federal election campaign. Building on the work of others, and adapting work from Public Health Sudbury and Districts, THU's local campaign aimed to raise awareness about important public health issues influenced by federal level policies and programs and to increase awareness of the importance of voting as well as barriers to voting for some population groups. THU will monitor for opportunities to continue to link action on public health matters that are influenced by federal policies and programs.

For more information, visit the THU web page [Elections-Health-Matters](#).

#Vote4Public Health

#Public Health Matters

Timiskaming Health Unit in Action

Our people – our stories.

Strategic Program Updates

Healthy Eating in Recreation Settings Healthy Public Policy

- Initially part of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge, this project included public consultation, education, and partnership with canteen operators.
- City of Temiskaming Shores has now approved By-law 2019-152 which indicates adoption of a Healthy Eating in Municipal Recreation Settings Policy.
- The project is now being replicated in partnership with the Town of Kirkland Lake.

School and Childcare Health

- Child Care finished the 3rd quarter with 1105 attendees in programs across the district. In Q3, THU staff worked with childcare operators to pilot a move to electronic sharing of files for efficiencies and effectiveness related to regulations and mandates for both parties related to immunization.
- Worked with a local school and community stakeholders as well as engaged local youth to inform the application of grants to support an identified need for youth co-led after-school activities in Cobalt.

Healthy Growth and Development

- Staff are planning a second Peer Support training for volunteers for the Breastfeeding Peer Support Program.
- Car seat clinics were held in collaboration with the OPP as part of the seatbelt awareness campaign. This activity also received positive local media attention.
- Staff worked with CMHA to offer Interpersonal Psychotherapy Training with a focus on prenatal and postpartum periods with psychiatrist Dr. Vivian Polak. Over 40 staff across the district received training.

Oral Health

- Staff are working with other Northern health units on common themes related to the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP) such as staff development and program needs. Additionally, a letter was sent to local dentists explaining the OSDCP and inviting potential partnerships to offer services to eligible seniors. Currently, three dental offices have asked to receive more information on the program.

Harm Reduction

- Supported CMHA and CSCT in the installation of a community sharps disposal bin in New Liskeard.
- Provided safe sharps handling presentations to staff at the City of Temiskaming Shores & Town of Kirkland Lake.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC)

- Planned for the local annual Infection Prevention and Control Education events which are organized jointly with Public Health Ontario's North East office. This year, we are piloting a series of interactive webinars with keynote speakers from Health Quality Ontario, Public Health Ontario, and the Timiskaming Health Unit.

Sexual Health

- Staff have been working on quality improvement initiatives such as improving screening forms and developing forms for health care provider reporting purposes.
- Completed a research summary on methods to improve HPV vaccination uptake. We will be applying the findings to future campaigns and program activities.

Seasonal Influenza Immunization Program Planning

- Significant planning has occurred for the 2019-2020 Influenza season to prepare for promoting and delivering community clinics in November. Our community clinics will continue to be offered with some staffing and time adjustments based on demand and trends.
- Our flu clinic survey last year informed our communications campaign this year with an emphasis on newspaper ads and poster distribution, especially in Francophone organizations.



Upcoming Events

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

November

- ✚ Ontario Active School Travel Workshop.
- ✚ Ontario Public Health Fall Forum [Health and Climate Change](#).
- ✚ Nutrition Connections Forum: [Health and Sustainable Eating, Leading the Shift](#).
- ✚ Canadian Centre on Substance Use [Issues of Substance Conference](#).

- ✚ National Treaty Recognition Week. General information can be found [here](#).
- ✚ alPHa Fall Symposium and Section Meetings. Program information links are found [here](#)

December

- ✚ THU staff development and appreciation
- ✚ THU management training

Human Resource Update

The comings and goings of our colleagues

New Staff:

- Public Health Nurse, New Liskeard, Maternity Leave Contract (Sept.2019-June.202)
- Public Health Nurse, Kirkland Lake, Maternity Leave Contract (Oct.2019-June.2020)
- Manager of Human Resources & Special Projects, 2-year Contract (Oct.2019)
- Senior PHI, Kirkland Lake, Permanent (October 2019)
- Dental Assistant, Kirkland Lake, Permanent (November 2019)

Current Vacancies/Postings:

- Dietitian, New Liskeard or Kirkland Lake, Permanent
- Program Manager of Infectious Diseases/CNO, Maternity Leave Contract

