

2009

# Timiskaming Health Unit

ANNUAL REPORT



Services de santé du  
**TIMISKAMING**  
Health Unit

[www.timiskaminghu.com](http://www.timiskaminghu.com)



*Designed in-house  
by the health unit's  
Communications  
Team.*

# Health Unit



## Message from the Acting Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Pat Logan

The past year provided many significant challenges for us. Amidst considerable internal changes, we were faced with the H1N1 influenza pandemic. As well, much effort and energy was required for the planning of the International Plowing Match (IPM).

As host to last autumn's IPM, we saw the influx of tens of thousands of visitors to the district. The Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) played a large role in ensuring the event's success. Countless hours of planning, as well as our presence at the event, was appreciated by many. Our Public Health Inspectors, Public Health Nurses, Land Control Officer, Health Promoters and support staff are to be commended, not only for their efforts, but for a job incredibly well done.

As autumn colours gave way to winter's early bleakness, we were faced with the H1N1 influenza pandemic. Virtually all staff were called upon with increased workloads and responsibilities. The pandemic was met by incredible effort. Some staff members made personal sacrifices in order to ensure the health unit's effective response. It is a truism that difficult times breed champions and the inspiration provided by many of our staff was admirable.

Again, the effort put forth this past year has been indeed remarkable. I stand in awe of what we, as a team, are capable of.

### VISION STATEMENT

*Total wellness  
of our  
community.*

### MISSION STATEMENT

*Promote  
health, prevent  
illness.*

# 2009 Board of Health

**Brian Hughes, Chair** (January – September) – Temiskaming Shores

**Merdy Armstrong, Vice-Chair** - Township of McGarry & Gauthier and Town of Larder Lake

**Julie Crouse** - Town of Kirkland Lake (Chair, November-December)

**Linda Cunningham** - Town of Kirkland Lake

**Sylvia Fenton** - Public Appointee

**Kelly Foley-Conlin** - Townships of Armstrong, Hudson, James, Kerns & Matachewan

**Audrey Lacarte** - Townships of Brethour, Harris, Dymond, Harley and Casey, Village of Thornloe

**Mike McArthur** - Temiskaming Shores

**Judy Pace** - Temiskaming Shores (October – December)

**Harvey Middaugh** - Towns of Englehart, Charlton, Townships of Chamberlain, Evanturel, Hilliard & Dack

**Burl Regan** - Temiskaming Shores

**Doug Shearer** - Towns of Cobalt, Latchford, Municipality of Temagami, and Township of Coleman

## Health Unit Locations



### New Liskeard

421 Shepherdson Road  
(705) 647-4305 / 1-866-747-4305



### Dymond

883317 Highway 65, Unit 3  
(705) 647-4305 / 1-866-747-4305



### Englehart

81 Fifth Street  
(705) 544-2221 / 1-877-544-2221



### Kirkland Lake

31 Station Road  
(705) 567-9355 / 1-866-967-9355



### Elk Lake

Community Health Centre  
(705) 678-2215



### Matachewan

Community Health Centre  
(705) 565-2351

# Infectious Disease Program

## Mumps Catch-Up

With a rise in the number of mumps cases in university and college students across Canada, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care provided funding to offer post-secondary students a second dose of mumps vaccine.

In the district of Timiskaming, 740 mumps vaccine doses were given at college campuses and health unit office locations between February and March of 2009.

## H1N1 Influenza Pandemic

By far, the most notable public health event of the year began in mid-March, with health officials reporting a new strain of influenza (H1N1). By the end of April the first cases were confirmed in Canada. In June, the World Health Organization officially declared a global influenza pandemic, the first in over 40 years. The THU reported its first case of H1N1 at the beginning of July.

“I got my H1N1 shot today. They were very well organized...kudos to our health unit. Lots of people but moved along quickly. We were in and out of there in 35 minutes! Well done!” *(client)*

The THU had been planning for an eventual pandemic or emergency situation for several years. We quickly activated its plan and systems when the pandemic was declared. Here are some of the highlights:

- staff were reassigned to new roles
- staff adopted a new computer system to fast track the collection of information from clients and report to the ministry on flu shot clinics
- regular special meetings occurred with staff and community partners
- media was increased and resources were provided to the public on topics such as how to prevent the spread of the flu, what are the signs and symptoms of illness, when to seek help and how to care for ill family members at home
- tracking of the number and type of flu cases was increased in partnership with local hospitals and physicians
- work with our school and daycare partners was enhanced to ensure they had all of the information needed and to monitor illness rates
- 12,081 doses of H1N1 vaccine were given by THU staff in 2009 through school immunization and community clinics
- vaccine was distributed to local health care partners for their clients



## Seasonal Influenza Vaccination

Immediately following the H1N1 pandemic vaccine program, the annual seasonal flu vaccine was provided to the residents of Temiskaming through community and school clinics. The lack of circulating seasonal flu virus and perhaps confusion regarding the need for the vaccine may have contributed to a reduction in the number of regular flu shots provided by THU staff in 2009 (5,781 doses).

## A Northern First

### If You Build It – They Will Come!

The District of Temiskaming (Earlton, ON) made history in 2009 by hosting the first International Plowing Match (IPM) and Rural Expo in Northern Ontario.

During this event (September 22 to 26, 2009), our district experienced a significant influx of visitors of all ages. Over 80,000 people passed through the IPM gates and nearly 2,500 RVs took up residence on the IPM grounds.

True to our vision and mission, the THU recognized the 2009 IPM as an opportunity to collaborate and work with community partners to promote and protect health, and prevent disease. This event also provided a unique opportunity to reach our rural, francophone and aboriginal populations.

The following highlights some of the public health functions and THU program areas involved in the IPM:

**Surveillance** - for an outbreak of illness at a mass gathering involving an influx of visitors and exposure to sources of illness from common food and water sources.

### Disease Prevention and Health Protection

- **Environmental Health**

*Food Safety* - THU received 28 applications for Special Event Food Permits prior to the event. Thirty six food vendors, with a total of 49 individual premises were identified. During the course of the event, Public Health Inspectors conducted 167 inspections.

*Safe Water* - Due to excellent planning & collaboration, the environmental health department did not receive a single call or complaint during the event pertaining to adverse water at the IPM.

- **Infectious Disease**

*Hand Hygiene* - Given the type, size and timing of this event and with H1N1 on the horizon, the THU

### FAST FACTS

#### Infectious Diseases

- 6 individuals presented with positive mantoux tests resulting in 10 people for contact tracing.
- staff responded to 9 institutional respiratory outbreaks and 7 enteric outbreaks.
- 40 cold chain inspections (responded to 7 failures)

#### Vaccine Highlights:

- 338 HPV vaccinations given to gr. 8 girls
- 321 gr. 7 students received the Menactra/MenC vaccination
- 740 doses of mumps vaccine were given
- 6,581 flu shots given for the 2008/2009 season
- 1,378 international traveler consultations

#### Rabies:

- 71 animal bites investigated
- 4 individuals received post exposure vaccination



enhanced the hand hygiene options on the IPM grounds. Waterless hand washing stations and signage were provided.

#### Health Promotion and Disease Protection

- Multiple Programs** - Within tented city of the IPM and Rural Expo, the THU staffed two interactive information booths. The District Tent booth provided information regarding land control and septic systems and the Education Tent booth covered health promotion topics across many public health programs.

Planning for this unique event began years in advance. Staff rallied together and excelled at meeting the THU's objectives and represented the THU and public health extremely well.

"I have never seen a health inspector presence like this, it is very reassuring." (*public and vendors*)

"Thank you for doing your job." (*public*)

"It's great to see you here every day, keeping an eye on everyone." (*public, vendors, staff*)

"During the installation of the waterless hand washing stations, several people commented that it was a great idea and vendors thanked us for installing them". (*IPM volunteer and THU staff*)

"The booth was busy the entire shift! I talked to a lot of people about health promotion topics" (*Health Promotion Staff*)

"I believe that the THU's representation to seek compliance with the Smoke-Free Ontario Act (SFOA) at the IPM played a significant role in educating the public on the SFOA and in the protection of the public from secondhand smoke". (*Tobacco Enforcement Officer*)

## Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention Program

### Making the Healthy Choice the Easy Choice Where We Live, Learn, Work and Play

In 2009, the THU embarked on a very exciting project with community partners and funds from the Heart and Stroke Foundation's KidFit/Spark Together for Healthy Kids grant. With a goal of creating a campaign that helps an entire school community embrace a healthy school nutrition environment, the following project activities were outlined:

- Consult with over 12 elementary school communities through project input sessions
- Develop the campaign based on local input
- Recruit local pilot schools for campaign implementation
- Secure funds for project expansion
- Complete evaluation & reporting
- Launch the campaign with local school partners

Eleven out of twelve schools applied to be one of eight pilot schools to receive this campaign along with public health support. By engaging the entire school community (boards, councils, staff, students, parents, and community partners) this project will enhance access to healthy food choices for children and youth in Timiskaming, building on the Call to Action for Healthy Weights-Healthy Lives in Timiskaming.



## Youth Against Tobacco Industries in Timiskaming (YATIT) 2009 Highlights:

- Hosted a free skate event during 'National Non-Smoking Week' (80 participants). Created several sport related promotional items and a tobacco free sports rink board ad.
- Partnered with Kirkland Lake (KL) Festivals Committee for 'Through with Chew Week' to host free matinees reaching over 400 youth and adults.
- Participated in KL Minor Hockey Bantam tournament via information booths, packages for all the teams and a survey for coaches regarding tobacco product use.
- Hosted a free movie night (152 people) on May 31<sup>st</sup> 'World No Tobacco Day'. Took to the streets of KL with a chalk attack chalking their messages regarding tobacco product use.



While ministry funding for this program was discontinued in August, public health staff is confident youth engagement strategies will continue.

## 2009 Tobacco Control Highlights

### Driven to Quit Challenge

The 2009 campaign marked the highest number of local registrants to date (106).

### Stop on the Road

In partnership with Addictions and Mental Health staff, 51 participants received brief counseling and free nicotine replacement therapy.

### Smoke Free Ontario Act (SFOA) – Smoke-Free Cars with Children

On January 21, 2009 the provincial government announced a new law that made smoking in a motor vehicle while children under the age of 16 were present, illegal. A provincial media campaign was enhanced regionally and locally. This included television ads, vinyl folders and ice scrapers with related messaging for vehicles.

### *FAST FACTS*

#### **Tobacco Enforcement**

- 387 educational visits
- 29 complaints 22 of which were not covered by SFOA regulations (ex. drifting smoke)
- 22 warnings were issued
- 6 charges were laid
- 96% compliance with SFOA legislation for Tobacco Vendor-Youth Access

# Creating Healthy and Safe Communities

## THU Community Partnership Highlights

### Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)

- Participated in RIDE programs with over 27 snowmobilers and 400 vehicles stopped.
- Held first annual Strides for Change walk with 60 participants and over \$5,400.00 raised.
- Erected first 911 billboard encouraging drivers to report suspected impaired driving.
- Engaged over 1,900 students with the multimedia show "Wasted".

### Timiskaming Road Safety Coalition (TRSC)

- Partnered with local secondary schools for the Ministry of Transportation Ontario's 95% Challenge, encouraging students to come up with creative ways to educate their peers on seat belt use.
- Distributed 75 ice thickness cards at the South Temiskaming Activity Trail Organization ice fishing derby.
- Held the Spring Seat Belt/Baby Ride Campaign. Sixty three vehicles were stopped for proper installation of child safety seats.

### KidSport Temiskaming

- KidSport helps kids (aged 5-18) overcome barriers preventing or limiting their participation in organized sport, the benefits of which are many. This is achieved through the issuance of registration fees and/or equipment.
- KidSport committee members include representatives from local community agencies and organizations.
- In 2009, in the south end of the district KidSport hosted its 5th annual Equipment Swap and in the north end Hockey Heritage North provided an equipment exchange program.

### Roots of Empathy

- Through local agencies and schools working together, 195 children received the Roots of Empathy program.

### Timiskaming Heart Health Partnership

- THU's Heart Health Program and Healthy Communities Team: hosted three community partner luncheons. Over 83 participants heard about our local health status, and the new Healthy Communities Ontario approach, and local partner projects and initiatives. Each session included round-table discussions on how we can work together to "*make the healthy choice, the easy choice*" for all in Timiskaming. Evaluations of these events told us that our partners truly value these sessions and want more!

### **FAST FACTS**

#### **Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention**

- 221 children received grants from Kidsport
- 59 drop-in car seat inspections at THU – 27 (54%) installed by technician and 7 (22%) had been installed correctly by parent
- an estimated 1,647 students, 2,087 parents, and 138 school staff, were reached through a healthy school nutrition environment project

### Kirkland Lake Drug and Alcohol Coalition

- Kirkland Lake Drug and Alcohol Coalition's main focus in 2009 was the creation and ongoing promotion of the Kirkland Lake OxyContin Task Force. The task force was created in order to address the issue of the increasing use of prescription medications by young people in Kirkland Lake. The task force includes representatives from the health unit, Canadian Mental Health Agency, Centre de santé communautaire du Timiskaming, Kirkland Lake Hospital, Family Health Team, media, OPP and representatives from the methadone clinic and community. The goal of the task force is to create awareness of the dangers of prescription medication, reduce the stigma associated with addictions and improve the service availability for those individuals seeking treatment. The group participated in local events, generated media coverage and went into the schools to talk about the dangers of prescription medications.



### Timiskaming Health Unit Focuses on Excellence

In early 2009, the THU management team initiated the agency's Focus on Excellence, a process to embrace quality and workplace wellness. A project charter was drafted to define the approach to achieving Level 1 of the National Quality Institutes' (NQI) Quality and Workplace Wellness Criteria for the Public Sector. A cross-disciplinary Excellence Committee was formed to lead policy development and a variety of communications for the initiative. In 2010, the THU will apply for Level 1 certification and begin the journey to achieving Level 2. Even though there are 4 possible levels of certification, the Focus on Excellence will cultivate a way of thinking and operating that is expected to continue for years to come.

# Environmental Health Services

## Small Drinking Water Systems

The Small Drinking Water System (SDWS) program transfer to public health in 2009 came with the introduction of two new computer programs:

- The computerized Risk Categorization Tool (RCAT) which all Public Health Inspectors (PHI) will use for all SDWS site-specific risk assessments.
- The Laboratory Results Management Application (LRMA) which enables labs to directly report results for drinking water samples via an electronic database. All PHIs have now received SDWS program training as well as webinar training for RCAT and LRMA.

### *FAST FACTS*

#### **Food Safety**

- 30 Food Handler Certification sessions held.
- 390 Food Handler Certification participants.
- 494 Food Safety Inspections completed.

#### **Safe Water**

- 3 public beach closures
- 4 boil water advisories issued for municipal drinking water systems

#### **Land Control**

- 200 private sewage disposal inspections
- 110 Class 4 Certificates of Approval issued

## Policy Review

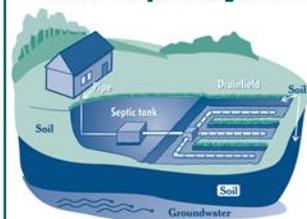
A complete review of the THU Public Bathing Beach policy and procedure occurred in 2009 to update and ensure consistency with Ontario Public Health Standard requirements. The THU identified 17 local beaches and conducted risk assessments to determine the need and frequency for beach water sampling. Two beaches required weekly sampling while the remainder required monthly sampling. This represented a significant time savings for the summer students which enabled them to complete emergency shelter assessments and obtain training in land control and inspection services.

## Process Improvements

In 2009, the THU implemented the electronic inspection program Hedgehog. This program is used for maintaining an inventory of most facilities that are inspected within the Environmental Health program within the THU area. The program is also used in the field (using laptop computers and portable printers) to record and print on-site inspection reports. All PHIs received training on this program in 2009.

Hedgehog can also generate many types of reports for both PHIs and management. These reports can be as specific or as general as needed and can be done by anyone with access to the program. Examples of useful reports include facility reports containing contact information and percent completion reports for all facilities or sorted by risk category.

### **Your septic system is your responsibility!**



- **Pump frequently**
- **Use water efficiently**
- **Flush responsibly**

**Land Control Office**  
 (705) 544-2221  
 1-877-544-2221



The inspection team attended a training session on enforcement under the Provincial Offences Act. New ticket books have been distributed to all offices and all certified PHIs have a Provincial Offences Officer badge.

## Health Hazards

The THU commissioned a report to assess the status of local health and environment in the Timiskaming district. This report entitled, "A Compilation of Environmental Information on the Timiskaming Health Unit Area" provided the THU with a scan of environmental information within the district and has helped to inform Health Hazard programming decisions. To help disseminate the information contained within the report, a series of mini-reports are being developed and published and will later be collated into a single Local Health and Environment Report (Clean Timiskaming). In 2009, the second mini-report in the Clean Timiskaming series - Clean Air - was developed and released. Clean Air discusses both indoor and outdoor air quality, sources of air pollutants and ways to help reduce air pollutants.

The Children's Health and Environment Community Partnership, known as the CHEC Partnership (or CHECP), is a new affiliation of agencies in the Timiskaming district supporting children's environmental health. This new organization provides common ground for organizations to work together to protect children's health from environmental contaminants.

This partnership held its "Lunch and Launch" event at the Waterfront Inn in April 2009. The partnership hosted a two day workshop May 25 and 26, 2009 in Englehart, and a one day workshop June 18, 2009 in Kirkland Lake. Parents, children and service providers (who work directly or indirectly with children) were invited to attend. Participants learned why children are vulnerable to environmental health hazards and were provided with practical advice about how to make children's environments safer. The partnership continues to be active in the community.

## Emergency Preparedness

Some of the 2009 accomplishments for Emergency Preparedness include:

- Participation in Temiskaming Shores Emergency Preparedness Day in coordination with the Temiskaming Hospital
- Implementation of the THU Incident Management System
- Completion and updates to the THU Business Continuity Plan
- Updates to the THU Pandemic Influenza Plan
- Updates to the THU Emergency Response Plan
- THU conducted a pandemic emergency tabletop exercise to assist in preparation for pandemic events

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## Seeking Answers to Important Questions

Twenty one local schools participated in a youth survey by 599 elementary and secondary schools students. This survey gets at topics eating habits, physical activity, tobacco use, and mental health.

Sixty-two people across the district completed a Walkable Community Survey.

The annual Nutritious Food Basket costing revealed that the weekly cost of feeding a family of four in 2009 was \$174.47.

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## Family Health Program

### Pre and Postnatal Nurse Practitioner

On April 1, 2009, the Healthy Beginnings Clinic opened in New Liskeard. The goal of the clinic is to provide wellness and care for women planning a pregnancy, pregnant women and new mothers and their children up to six years of age who do not have access to a physician or other primary health care provider. Funded by the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, the Healthy Beginnings Clinic builds on the goals of Best Start and the THU Child and Reproductive Health program guidelines which are:

*"To enable individuals and families to achieve optimal preconception health, experience a healthy pregnancy, have the healthiest newborn(s) possible and be prepared for parenthood"; and*

*"To enable all children to attain and sustain optimal health and developmental potential."*

Over the first 9 months of operation, the clinic had 208 visits from 84 new clients with new clients being added every week. Of these visits, close to 80 have been prenatal and postnatal clients; over 180 are clients who do not have a physician and approximately 40 are children 0 to 6 years of age. In order to reduce the duplication of service, there is close collaboration between this new clinic and the staff of THU's Healthy Babies Healthy Children program.

Promotion of the clinic has been through media, pamphlets and presentations to those community partners most likely to refer to this clinic.

### FAST FACTS

#### Sexual and Reproductive Health

- 4,200 condoms distributed
- 2,730 clients seen at Sexual Health clinics

#### Family Health

- 2,589 infants attended Well Baby clinics
- 78% of newborns were breastfed
- 56% of pregnant women attended prenatal classes
- 313 babies born
- 1,915 Nipissing Developmental Tools mailed

#### Community Health Centres – Elk Lake & Matachewan

- 1,140 clients requested nursing services
- 6,424 telephone consultations with nursing services
- 927 clients seen by physician

## Preschool Speech and Language

### Talking Tots 2009 Highlights

The THU Preschool Speech and Language (PSL) services delivered bilingual Hanen® workshop "Encouraging Language Development in the Early Childhood Setting" to 200 participants. In addition, training in Hanen® "Learning Language and Loving It" was offered to two childcare operators for a total of 36 individuals successfully completing the training. In addition, PSL staff offered 2 practicum placements to students from the Communication Disorders Program at Georgian College.

The PSL program began offering Auditory Verbal Therapy to children with diagnosed hearing impairment. As well the Infant Preschool Clinic was launched offering multi-disciplinary team assessments to children aged 0-4.

## Dental Health

A child's oral health has a significant impact on their overall health. Studies have shown that individuals with low incomes have tooth decay rates and treatment needs that are as much as three times greater than people with higher income levels. Pain from tooth decay can result in absence from school, and can greatly affect a child's ability to learn and concentrate. In the past, the Children in Need of Treatment (CINOT) program provided urgent and essential dental care free-of-charge to children from birth to age 13, in low income families throughout the Timiskaming district. In January 2009, the program expanded to include youth age 17 and under. Our Dental Services team provides screening in elementary schools yearly.

### FAST FACTS

#### Preschool Speech and Language (PSL)

- 95-105 preschool children on active caseload
- 1,290 visits made to provide speech and language services
- 83 new assessments of preschool children were completed
- 64 stage 2 infant hearing screenings were conducted

#### Dental

- 1,789 children received dental screening
- 133 children received dental coverage via CINOT

## Addictions and Mental Health Services

### Creating Awareness

The Addictions and Mental Health team has been busy over 2009 creating partnerships with other agencies within the community in order to increase access to services for those individuals with addictions or mental health challenges. Internal process improvements have led to increased capacity of clinicians to serve clients and an increased focus on promoting the program within the community has improved the awareness of the services that the health unit offers in this area.

### Methadone

The Methadone program continues to be a busy growing program. The initial hesitancy of the community in having this type of program in the town of Kirkland Lake seems to be diminishing. The team has had positive feedback from medical professionals and the local OPP commenting on the benefits of the Methadone Maintenance program. Addiction physicians work with clinicians through video conferencing and attendance at the Methadone clinic to provide ongoing care for clients addicted to opiates and narcotics.

### Rendez-Vous Place

Rendez-Vous Place (RVP), the social recreation drop-in centre for clients with mental illness, has doubled its membership under the leadership of its current clinician. This club house modeled program provides clients in Temiskaming Shores the opportunity to participate in activities, learning sessions, craft and hobby sessions, as well as being active volunteers in the running of this program and providing weekly lunches. Clinicians attend RVP to provide counseling sessions to clients both one on one and in groups.



## Postpartum Mood Disorders (PPMD) Project – Right on the mark!

After receiving funds to lead the development and implementation of a new program in Timiskaming to bridge gaps for women experiencing mood changes before and after pregnancy, the THU carried out an in-depth program evaluation. Two THU staff attended the 2009 Women's Mental Health in Ontario conference hosted by the Women's College Research Institute in Toronto. A poster presentation described the PPMD project and key findings from the evaluation. This conference confirmed that programs being developed in Northern Ontario are in line with new developments in the field of women's mental health elsewhere in Ontario.

### ***FAST FACTS***

#### **Addictions and Mental Health**

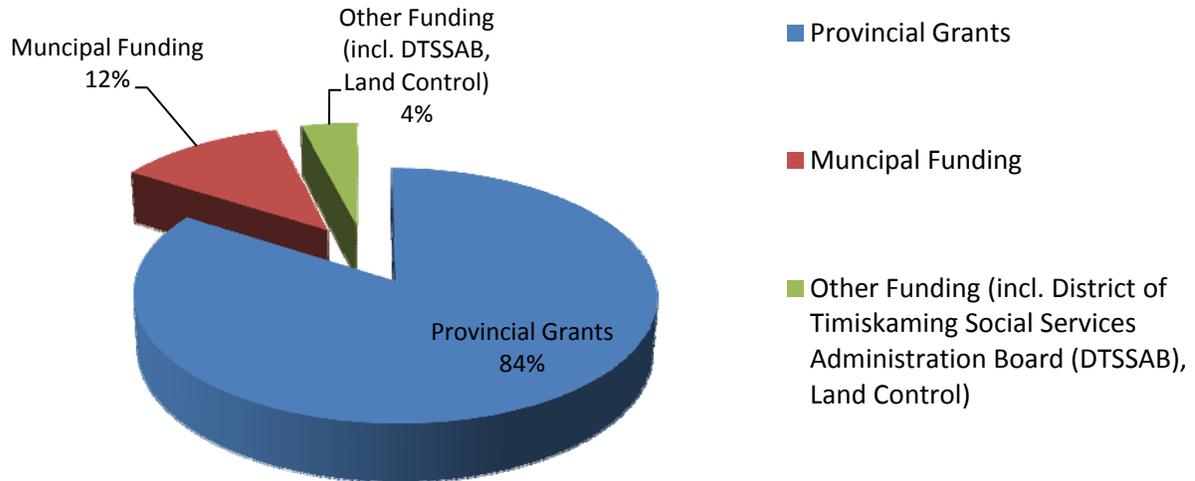
- 129 crisis Line calls
- 22 dual diagnosis admissions
- 275 mental health admissions
- 264 addiction admissions

#### **Smoking Cessation**

- 85 clients registered for Quit Smoking 101

# Budget - 2009

## Revenues



## Expenditures

