

TIMISKAMING HEALTH UNIT

ANNUAL REPORT

2012



Services de santé du
TIMISKAMING
Health Unit

Photo: Kirkland Lake Snow Dump. Taken the first day of the Kirkland Lake forest fire. Photographed by Kelly Bodick. (May 2012)



A few words from



the Medical Officer of Health

Human beings are social animals that have evolved to live in families and communities. Any discussion about the health of individuals requires us to engage with the communities where we live, learn, work and play. Much of our focus during 2012 was community based. Witnessing the residents of Kirkland Lake during their preparations for possible evacuation in the face of an approaching forest fire confirmed much of what we believe to be true about northern and rural communities. They stepped up to the task and worked tirelessly without complaint. THU was proud to be a partner of the Emergency Operation Group, led by the Municipality of Kirkland Lake, and offered a public health lens on the necessary requirements should an evacuation be needed.

The launching of our comprehensive School Health Program endeavours to build upon our existing Healthy Babies Healthy Children program by fostering good health choices and behaviours as the children in our communities grow and learn. We have also made further efforts to improve internal and external communication, and found new and creative ways to enhance service delivery. Engaging with our staff, community partners, residents, and stakeholders during the development of our new strategic plan ensured that we will continue to move forward in a direction that will be supportive to all individuals and their communities.

It was an exciting year that brought us closer to the people we serve, and what better way to understand the needs of your population than to be fully engaged in it.

Dr. Marlene Spruyt

Medical Officer of Health (Acting), Chief Executive Officer
Timiskaming Health Unit

People are connected - 76% of Temiskaming residents feel a strong sense of belonging to their local community, compared to 68% of Ontario residents.

Communication

Communication is about sharing information, reaching people, and trying to grab their attention when doing so. At times, it is easy to get wrapped up in too many high level reports, or heavy advertising pieces that lack creativity. In 2012 the Timiskaming Health Unit took a look at how we could improve on the flow of information and our external messaging.

For the Public

A Snapshot of Public Health in Timiskaming - A simple one page, plain language document was created that gave straight forward, interesting facts related specifically to our district. Different from our formal reports, the “snapshot” was developed as a unique, user friendly reporting tool that could easily be taken away for reading and future reference.

Creative Advertising Campaign - Using everyday situations in an entertaining way, “The Unhealthy Adventures of Sally and Johnny Doe” brought a series of messages to life as they captured the attention of many readers and listeners.

Food Premise Inspection Disclosure - Through a hosted link on our THU website our food premise inspection site was made available to the public. Owners/operators of food premises were engaged in the process and were encouraged to provide feedback before the launch to the general public. Following the trend in public health of providing interactive online tools to consumers, this project has undoubtedly enhanced the service we provide. It allowed us to customize the needs of our district, increase efficiencies in data entry, while providing fair accountability for operators.

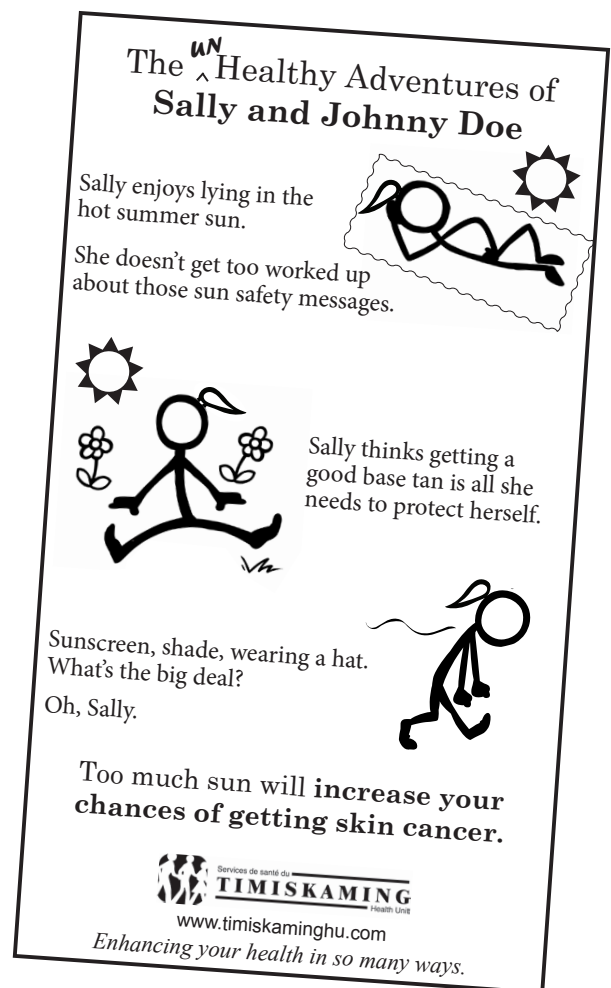
For our Partners

Public Health Matters – With a revamped format our MOH/CEO re-established our external news letter for primary care partners. “Public Health Matters” is a bi-annual publication that gives insight on emerging issues in public health, clarification on

various protocols, and general comments on public health matters that also cross over to the primary care environment.

For our Staff

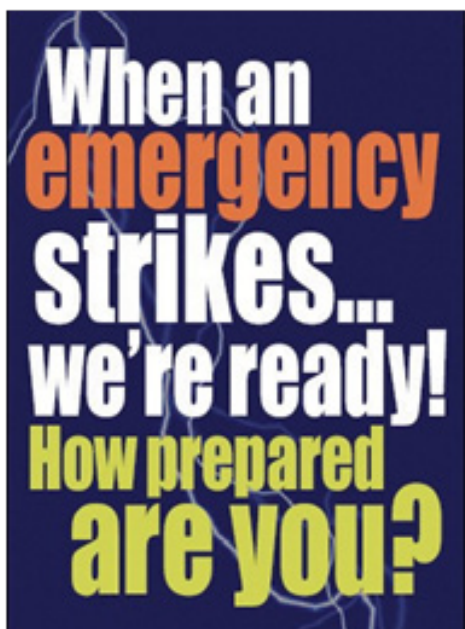
In The Loop - External communication plays a huge part in the role of public health. That communication is fostered by having an internal staff that are connected to one another. With this thought in mind the internal newsletter “In The Loop” was reintroduced. This seasonally published communication, created “by staff, for staff” connects employees across offices, programs, and disciplines. In a large geographic area, such as the Temiskaming district, this newsletter is just one way to help keep everyone connected and share in the accomplishments of the Timiskaming Health Unit.



Emergency Preparedness

Internal Planning

We are forever telling the general public that the best way to deal with an emergency situation is to be prepared for it. Taking a piece of our own advice we focused on our own emergency response plan and incident management system. A complete review of our existing plans and procedures took place. Improvements, including an in-depth risk communication strategy contributed to a final product that has put our agency in a well prepared position going forward.



Having solid plans on paper is the first step, but sharing that information across the agency is the final key to being truly prepared. During a session of our Grand Rounds an orientation and education presentation on the new incident management system was held, ensuring the provision of emergency preparedness and response was understood by everyone.

What Can Happen

“What are the chances of something happening anyway”? A comment you often hear when people put off planning for an emergency situation. In emergency planning it is never about what will happen, it is about what can happen. In May 2012, a potential crisis hit our district, showing exactly “what can happen”. A massive forest fire burning just a few kilometers from the Town of Kirkland Lake put everyone on high alert. The town activated their emergency response plan, and along with the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) led a command team that involved numerous organizations and agencies, including the MOH/CEO of the Timiskaming Health Unit. The collaboration was impressive, and although everything was in place for an evacuation, fortunately the great work of the MNR forest fighting team got the fire under control and it did not penetrate the town. This event put everyone’s emergency planning to the test, and proved that being prepared is the best way to deal with an emergency situation. It also allowed for some lessons learned which were incorporated into the revised emergency plan of the Timiskaming Health Unit.

Community Support

In addition to being involved in a major community emergency like the Kirkland Lake forest fire, the Timiskaming Health Unit also supported and participated in numerous municipal emergency preparedness activities. The Township of Coleman held an emergency table top exercise. The City of Temiskaming Shores not only held a table top exercise, but also a full emergency response exercise. Additionally, the community pulled together to hold “Emergency Preparedness Day”, an event for the public to come out and learn how to be prepared for an emergency situation. Various emergency response groups and support services were present, including representatives from our public health team.

Learning from our children - Numerous elementary school children attended Emergency Preparedness Day. Taking the message of “Have a Plan” home with them was a great learning experience for everyone.

Schools and Youth

Healthy Learners are Better Learners – New School Health Team at THU

In keeping with best practice and local and provincial priorities, the THU formalized a school team in July of 2012. The goal is to influence the health and wellbeing of school-aged children and youth in Timiskaming by using a Healthy School or Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach, and to coordinate work with schools to increase effectiveness and efficiency.

A Comprehensive School Health (CSH) approach means school-based health promotion is planned in an integrated and holistic way. It involves engaging the whole school (staff, parents, students and community agencies) to work together to create an environment that will have a positive impact on a child's health and learning.

Most health units have adopted a Healthy Schools Process, or equivalent, for the delivery of school health programs/services. How teams are structured varies considerably.

At the THU, Public Health Nurses (PHN) will work with schools to build relationships using a CSH approach.

This work may include:

- supporting schools to; assess, plan, implement/ integrate and evaluate comprehensive health promotion initiatives
- consulting on curriculum, policies and ways to make the healthy choice the easy choice at school
- offering in-school programs
- linking with THU services and resources and other community partners and resources

Our work with schools may involve THU topic specific staff e.g. Sexual Health Nurse, Public Health Dietitian, Public Health Promoter, Public Health Inspector.

School Program highlights:

- healthy eating (Nutrition Tools For Schools®), active living, tobacco and substance use
- sexual health, growth and development, hygiene
- school immunization clinics
- student Health Survey results
- dental screening
- three Public Health Nurses helping to deliver Roots of Empathy
- youth engagement and youth peer programs
- food safety
- mental health & addiction services

Education has a powerful influence on health.

Healthy young people are better learners and more likely to complete their education.

CSH approaches can improve health and educational outcomes.

*School Health Guidance Document
Ontario Public Health*

Service Delivery

Daycare Dental Screening

With a strong dental screening program already in place for schools our dental team explored new options for providing services to additional groups of children. The pre-school aged population who attended a registered daycare facility was an obvious choice. Extending dental screening services to these locations proved to be a very successful venture. The added benefit of having the opportunity to provide these young children with an early life message of “good oral health is important for your overall health” is something that will help to keep them smiling in the future.

Additional Flu Shot Clinics

Planning is always a key component in everything we do in public health. However, what happens when you need to react to a situation that was unforeseen? Provincially, 2012 was trending to have lower flu shot recipients than usual. This was also the case in the Temiskaming district. With our pre-planned flu shot clinics already completed efforts were made to create an additional push to help change the low trend. Within two weeks we had our plan of targeting people at local high traffic venues in place, sites confirmed, advertising running, and clinics held.

Further to this community based approach we also added more evening flu shot clinics at our local offices. Giving people various options to obtain their flu shot was another way we contributed to increasing our overall uptake.

Beating the trend - 41% of Temiskaming residents were immunized against influenza, compared to 32% of Ontario residents.

French Language Services

In 2011 a partnership between the Timiskaming Health Unit and the Centre de santé communautaire du Temiskaming was formed in order to improve the addiction and mental health services being offered to the francophone population in the most rural areas of our district. The project began with the community of Virginiatown, in 2012 it was expanded to include the town of Larder Lake. Working collectively can lead to better overall service for the people of Temiskaming.

Office Relocation

Location, location, location. You often hear those words associated with the real estate world, but when you are trying to ensure the best possible access for the people you serve, location plays a big part. Last year the Timiskaming Health Unit’s main office in New Liskeard re-located to a centralized location within the downtown core. Making access easier by simply being in a new location had an immediate impact.



Improved accessibility - 6% increase in client traffic four months after our main office re-location.

Moving Forward

Providing programs and services that meet the needs of our district is part of our ongoing commitment to the people we serve. Ensuring those programs and services are being directed by a common focus and long term vision is crucial to our overall success. In accordance with this, the Timiskaming Health Unit entered into the strategic planning process. Lead by an external consulting group, the process followed the Appreciative Inquiry (AI) model to understand and leverage the organization's key strengths. Additional tools and research were also utilized in order to have a complete environmental scan to work with. Now, with a solid plan, built on transparency and engagement, the Timiskaming Health Unit is well positioned to move forward over the next five years.

Transparency

- Project lead by external consultants
- Internal strategic planning group included management and staff from various programs
- Numerous forms of engagement opportunities

Engagement

- Internal feedback sessions with all staff and management
- Public sessions in various areas of the district
- Face-to-face interviews with key partners and stakeholders
- Online surveys

Outcome

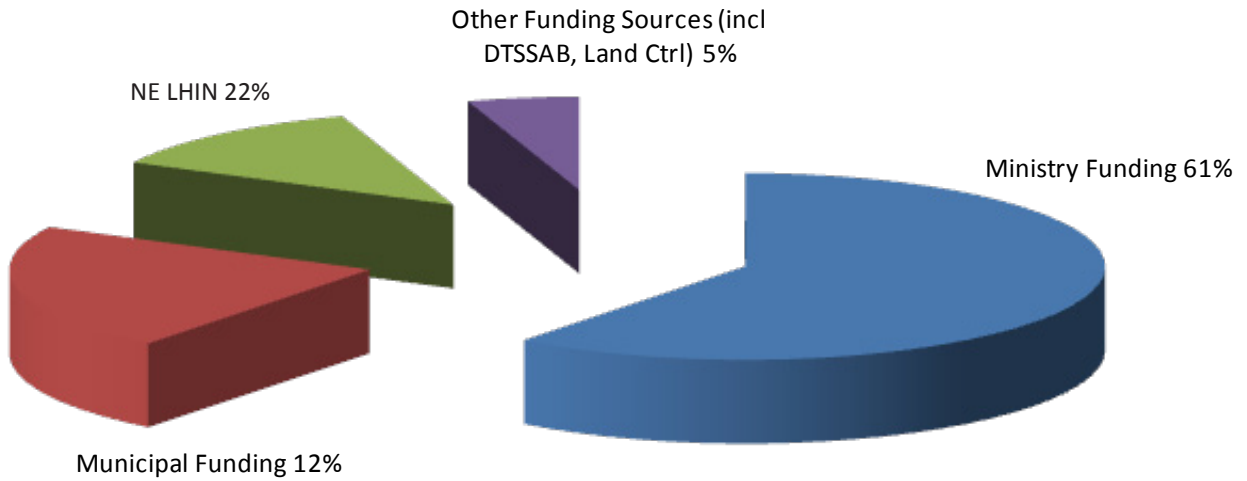
- Five year strategic plan developed and distributed

Strategic Directions for the Timiskaming Health Unit

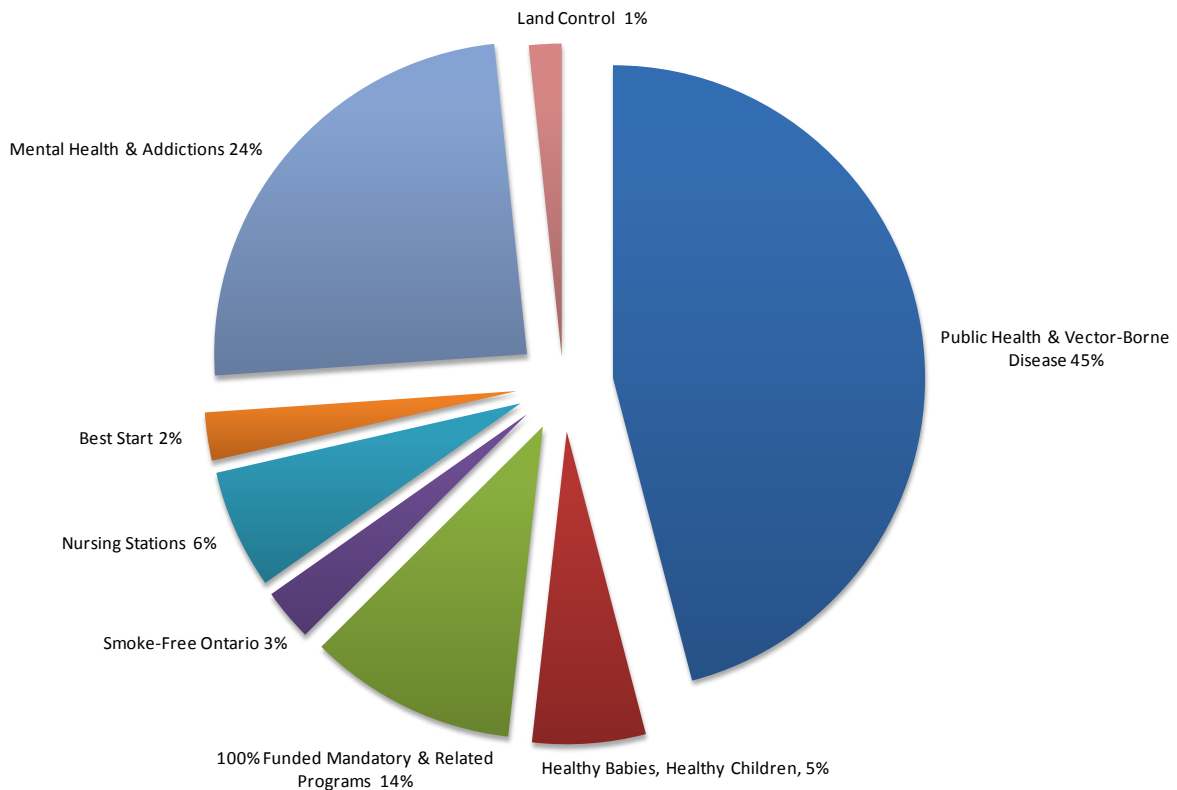


2012 Budget

Total Revenues



Total Expenditures



2012 Board of Health

Carman Kidd, Chair - City of Temiskaming Shores

Tony Antoniazzi, Vice-Chair - Town of Kirkland Lake

Merdy Armstrong - Township of McGarry/Gauthier & Towns of Larder Lake & Virginiatown

Sylvia Fenton - Public Appointee

Louise Hayes - Townships of Armstrong, Hudson, James, Kerns & Matachewan

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

Mike McArthur - City of Temiskaming Shores

Norm Mino - Town of Kirkland Lake

Jamie Morrow - City of Temiskaming Shores

Sue Nielsen - Towns of Cobalt and Latchford, Municipality of Temagami, and Township of Coleman

Richard Pollock - Towns of Englehart, Charlton, Townships of Chamberlain, Evanturel, Hilliard & Dack

Office Locations

New Liskeard

247 Whitewood Avenue,
Unit 43

705-647-4305
1-866-747-4305

Dymond

883317 Highway 65,
Unit 3

705-647-8305
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

Nursing Stations

Elk Lake

71 Front Street

705-678-2215

Matachewan

81 Matheson Street

705-565-2351

For more information contact:

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