

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: April 8, 2024

Celebrating Canadian Public Health Week, April 8 to 12

NORTH BAY, ON - Today, April 8, marks the start of Canadian Public Health Week. It's a time to celebrate the contributions of public health and its workforce through actions that are vital to improving the health and well-being of Canadians.

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) is one of 34 public health units in Ontario that provides health promotion, health protection, disease prevention, emergency management, and population health assessment and surveillance programs and services. The Health Unit promotes and protects the health of over 125,000 residents across 31 municipalities, four unorganized areas in most of the Nipissing District and all of the Parry Sound District. We partner with nine First Nations communities and with Indigenous agencies to support Indigenous people in the area.

While an acute care setting treats people who are unwell, public health units work upstream to create policies and opportunities to prevent people from getting sick or injured, create and maintain supportive environments, build resiliency, decrease health inequities and promote social conditions that improve health and well-being. Public health recognizes that health is affected not only by access to health care but by the places we live, play and work. We look to address equity and the underlying social determinants of health like income, education, community support and early childhood development that impact our opportunities to be healthy.

To address health equity, public health monitors and reports on the relationship between social factors such as income and health outcomes in our district; collaborates with community partners and groups who work with people facing health inequities; adapt our services to include those who experience barriers to reaching their optimal health; and engage in the development of policies that seek to address the social determinants of health. This work can also be seen through the relocation of the Health Unit's Parry Sound office, resulting in increased accessibility by the public and increased clinical care, such as the new dental suite.

Here is a small snapshot of some of the work completed by the Health Unit in 2023:

Disease Prevention and Outbreak Management

There were 1,925 [diseases of public health significance](#) reported to the Communicable Disease Control program, 133 confirmed outbreaks managed, and two Infection Prevention and Control investigations conducted. Communicable Disease Control staff worked with over 70 congregate care settings, hospitals and other health care and social service agencies to provide education and guidance on infection prevention and control.

*Your lifetime partner in healthy living.
Votre partenaire à vie pour vivre en santé.*

myhealthunit.ca

📍 345 Oak Street West,
North Bay, ON P1B 2T2

📞 1-800-563-2808
705-474-1400

📠 705-474-8252

📍 90 Bowes Street, Suite 201,
Parry Sound, ON P2A 2L7

📞 1-800-563-2808
705-746-5801

📠 705-746-2711

Family and New Parent Supports

Seven hundred fifteen people received breastfeeding education either in-person or by phone/email, while an additional 1,981 used the Family Health Information Line (1-800-563-2808 ext. 5351) for consultations. The Health Unit's Healthy Babies Healthy Children program conducted 742 postpartum follow-ups and home visits to families.

IMPACT

The Health Unit's IMPACT account, a youth-focused Instagram account led by the Healthy Schools team, gained 100 new followers, ran five contests and created/shared 133 posts. The account focuses on school health topics such as healthy eating behaviours, healthy sexuality, vaccinations, mental health promotion, oral health and more.

Inspections

The Health Unit's Public Health Inspectors conducted 1,636 food premise inspections at 1,039 food premise locations resulting in 394 re-inspections. Two hundred and seven pools/spas/splash pads were inspected. The public can view inspection results at myhealthunit.ca/CheckThenGo.

Tobacco Enforcement Officers completed 234 inspections at 112 tobacco vendors resulting in 11 re-inspections. 25 warnings were issued to tobacco vendors.

The Health Unit had 7,903 private water samples submitted by homeowners and investigated 554 animal bite reports. One hundred forty-one human acquired ticks were also submitted for testing.

Oral Health

Over 4,000 school dental screenings took place and 967 children received dental care through the Health Unit's Healthy Smiles Ontario program. Our Adult Dental program provided dental hygiene and treatment to 444 adults. The Ontario Seniors Dental Care program saw 1,061 seniors at the Health Unit's clinic.

Sexual Health & Harm Reduction

The sexual health clinic had 1,966 in-person visits. Staff provided a range of services such as testing, treatment and education, including providing 412 pap tests for individuals without a primary care provider. Our Harm Reduction staff provided services to 1,141 clients and 357 naloxone kits to individuals.

Vaccines

Twelve thousand three hundred and fifty-four routine childhood vaccines were administered and 16,990 vaccine records of children and youth were assessed for childcare and school attendance. Additionally, 7,301 flu vaccines, 13,428 COVID-19 vaccines and 1,801 travel vaccines, resulting in a total of 37,509 vaccines administered across the district in 2023 plus 550 tuberculin skin tests.

Work in Schools

The Health Unit joined [Planet Youth](#), which has 21 coalition member organizations. The Healthy Schools team had 59 schools, accounting for 11,770 students, participate in the [Northern Ontario Fruit and Vegetable program](#). The Outdoor Ways of Learning and Sharing program had 36 teachers from 18 schools across four school boards participate resulting in 896 students experiencing the outdoor learning program.

Healthy Living and Public Policy Advocacy

Healthy Living released the 2022 Cost of Eating Well report and advocated locally and provincially for income solutions to address high food insecurity rates. Advocacy for legislative and system changes also occurred regarding modernizing alcohol marketplace and product sales and preventing and reducing intimate partner violence.

The Health Unit began working with community partners to develop an Indigenous Wellness Circle (IWC) to better support its engagement with Indigenous communities and to foster meaningful relationships.

For more information on what the Health Unit does, visit myhealthunit.ca.

- 30 -

Media Inquiries:

Alex McDermid, Public Relations Specialist

P: [705-474-1400](tel:705-474-1400), ext. 5221 or [1-800-563-2808](tel:1-800-563-2808)

E: communications@healthunit.ca