
Public Health Role

The main goal of Public Health and Emergency Services is to build healthy and supportive communities in partnership with others. The scope of public health services is determined by the provincial Ministry of Health and Long Term Care through the Health Protection and Promotion Act and the Ontario Public Health Standards. These standards ensure that a basic set of services are provided consistently across the province, while still allowing for local flexibility in responding to local issues.

Public Health Objectives

- Enable children to attain optimal health and development potential
- Prevent and minimize risk by reducing environmental and other potential hazards (food, water)
- Reduce and manage infectious disease risks
- Reduce the burden of preventable chronic diseases
- Monitor and report population health information (health surveillance and health status reporting)

Paramedic Services

The main goal of Paramedic Services is to decrease premature morbidity and mortality by providing effective and efficient emergency medical services. Paramedic Services operates under a number of legislative and documented requirements, including the Ambulance Act. Paramedic Services is required by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to be re-certified every three years in order to be issued an operating certificate. The re-certification process confirms compliance with the legislation and regulations and involves an Ambulance Service Review conducted by the Ministry of Health.

Paramedic Services Objectives

Ensure Excellence in Patient Care by:

- Delivering high quality patient care every time (Advanced Life Support and Basic Life Support standards)
- Accurate and complete documentation
- Providing paramedics with the resources they need (vehicles and equipment ready every time)
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The New Parent Resource Guide

The New Parent Resource Guide provides up-to-date information and website links on many topics, such as pregnancy, breastfeeding, parenting, growth and development, and nutrition. Intended for families and caregivers with children from prenatal to six years of age, the New Parent Resource Guide is published by Parent Guide Inc., and developed in collaboration with Region of Waterloo Public Health, Ontario Early Years Centres, and Cambridge Memorial and Grand River Hospitals.

In 2014, a number of enhancements were made to the Guide, including:

- Increasing its size to 8”x10” to allow for larger font
- Adding spiral binding to make it easier to record information in the Baby’s Passport to Health and Feeding Records sections, which parents can share when visiting health professionals
- Colour-coding headings and banners by topic area to make it easier to locate sections within the Guide

Families with newborns can get the Guide from the hospital or their midwife. Families who have older infants and young children can get a copy at Ontario Early Years Centres.

To see the New Parent Resource Guide online visit: http://bit.ly/1HVFxmy

Infection Control Forums

Every year, staff in Public Health hold forums in our community for our health care partners to receive updates on infection prevention and control best practices.

In partnership with the Waterloo Wellington Infection Control Network (WWICN), Region of Waterloo Public Health hosts Infection Control Forums for Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes twice a year. Through presentations and displays, information is shared that is current and specific to the facilities. Topics covered include infection prevention and control best practices, reportable diseases, emerging issues related to infectious disease management, environmental cleaning, enteric and respiratory outbreak management, and an annual influenza vaccination promotional campaign known as the Big Shot Challenge.

Public Health also holds an annual forum for licensed child care centres in Waterloo Region where topics such as environmental cleaning, enteric and respiratory outbreak management, immunizations, dental care, physical activity for children and healthy eating are addressed through presentations and displays.

Over 100 attendees representing close to 50 facilities and hospitals
Food Safety Training Certification

Food handlers build on their professional food handling skills, improve their knowledge of safe food handling and earn their Public Health recognized Food Handler Certification through Conestoga College, which delivers the certification program on behalf of Region of Waterloo Public Health. Food Handler Certification is recommended for all persons who work in institutional, retail, restaurant or wholesale food services, with the objective to maintain a high level of food safety and sanitation practices, to reduce the risk of food-borne illness.

In its efforts to expand participation, Public Health will continue its collaboration with Conestoga College to ensure Provincial standards for food safety training are being met and to promote the training program to food handlers in the Region. In 2014 there were 1,132 food handlers certified through the College.

For more information visit: http://bit.ly/1iHI7Bm

Oral Health Peer Worker Approach

As a key component to implementing Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) - a no-cost dental program for eligible kids 17 and under - Public Health partners with Kitchener Downtown, Langs and Woolwich Community Health Centres to use a peer worker approach. Working with a peer health worker effectively facilitates the connection between families without dental coverage to the on-site Public Health dental hygienist and the Healthy Smiles Ontario initiative through education and awareness.

Peer workers are employees of the Community Health Centres and have expert knowledge with the unique populations they serve. The role of a peer worker is to:

- Promote Healthy Smiles Ontario and community dental services
- Assist clients to complete the Healthy Smiles Ontario application
- Facilitate client access to dental services
- Promote oral health/skill and knowledge building through presentations and resources
- Provide outreach to the population served by the Community Health Centre

Each peer worker completes the 13-week Public Health Peer Training program, attends dental staff meetings and is provided with ongoing mentoring by Public Health Dental Hygienists.

For more information visit: http://bit.ly/1b5bHc8

1,132 certifications in 2014

478 children enrolled in the Healthy Smiles Ontario program
PARTNERSHIPS

Smoking Treatment for Ontario Patients (STOP) Program

The STOP Program is a province-wide initiative run by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) that delivers smoking cessation treatment and counselling support to eligible Ontario smokers who wish to quit smoking. In 2014, Region of Waterloo Public Health partnered with CAMH to offer “STOP on the Road” workshops in Waterloo Region.

Prior to this partnership, Public Health could only offer these workshops when CAMH staff were available to attend, limiting the number of workshops offered. Trained nurses from Region of Waterloo Public Health can now dispense nicotine replacement therapy using a medical directive, provide a one-hour educational presentation on quitting smoking and collect study data, which is sent back to CAMH for study follow-up. In 2014, there were a total of six workshops held in Waterloo Region with 150 smokers receiving a kit containing a five-week supply of nicotine replacement therapy patches to make a serious quit attempt.

Data from the STOP workshops offered in Waterloo Region between October 2011 and September 2014 shows that 23 per cent of participants were not smoking at six month follow-up.

For more information visit: http://bit.ly/1jnzawU

Harm Reduction and Social Determinants of Health Partnerships

Region of Waterloo Public Health works in partnership with a number of community members and organizations to address harm reduction as it relates to substance use in Waterloo Region. Expanding harm reduction programs and services and increasing public awareness of substance use is one of Public Health’s goals.

As part of its work to address harm reduction, Region of Waterloo Public Health has partnered with Preventing Overdose Waterloo Wellington to provide overdose education and prevention training to students in Grades 9 and 12 at Elmira District Secondary School. This program was requested by both students and staff after the loss of a student from an accidental overdose in April of 2013.

To further address substance use and to help reduce the number of preventable deaths due to opioid overdose, Region of Waterloo Public Health began its Naloxone Distribution Program in June 2014. Naloxone is a prescription medication that can be used in the event of an opiate overdose. Naloxone-based overdose prevention programs involve education and training which includes information about how to recognize the signs of an opiate overdose and how to administer Naloxone. Since the program started, Public Health has distributed 32 Naloxone Kits.

For more information visit: http://bit.ly/1Fvbj9k
Reducing Hospital Offload Delays

The time that it takes from the arrival of the ambulance at the hospital Emergency Department to the transfer of the patient to a space in the Emergency Department and turnover of the care to the Emergency Department staff is known as an offload delay. Offload delays prevent Paramedics from being reassigned to other calls.

Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services continues to work closely with Emergency Department Managers and the CEOs at Grand River, St. Mary’s and Cambridge Memorial Hospitals to develop new and innovative strategies to improve transfer of care processes and to monitor transfer of care time. Paramedics and representatives from the hospitals and the local dispatch centre have completed process mapping sessions with the goal to improve data collection and patient flow.

To date there has been a significant decrease in the total offload delay time at all three hospitals within the Region of Waterloo since the beginning of 2013. We wish to ensure this trending continues and we continue to collaborate with area Emergency Departments to reduce offload delay where possible.

NutriSTEP®

The NutriSTEP® preschool screening tool is a questionnaire that parents complete about their children that are between 18 months and 5 years old. The questionnaire asks parents about their child’s food choices, eating habits, physical activity and growth. After completing the questionnaire with a professional, parents are taught more about nutrition, given resources and referred to community programs based on the needs of their child. The questionnaire takes less than ten minutes to complete.

NutriSTEP® can be used to help improve the health of children by:

- Letting parents know if their child is at risk for poor nutrition.
- Teaching parents more about nutrition.
- Supporting referrals to community programs.

Public Health is working with local organizations, including Ontario Early Years Centres and school boards to promote the online version of the questionnaire, which is called Nutri-eSTEP. Region of Waterloo Public Health is also working with EatRight Ontario, who will complete the questionnaire over the telephone with families who are unable to complete it themselves online.

For more information visit: http://bit.ly/1FkicvL

72% Increase in NutriSTEP® screens completed at Child Health Fairs from 2013 to 2014

29,337 patient transports to hospital emergency departments in Waterloo Region
Nursing Student Preceptor Program

One of the ways that Region of Waterloo Public Health supports nursing workforce development is through the Nursing Student Preceptor Program. In the Preceptor Program, a nursing student is paired up with a Public Health Nurse (Preceptor) to receive training and gain practical experience through a placement with Public Health for a defined period of time. In 2014, Public Health placed 26 nursing students, with the majority of those students coming from Conestoga College.

Public Health, along with industry colleagues from other health care organizations, attend Program Advisory Committee Meetings semi-annually for the Nursing Program at Conestoga College. These meetings provide an opportunity for all to exchange information and dialogue on issues and trends that may enhance and impact the student placement experience for Conestoga College students. The meetings also provide an opportunity for Public Health to educate its colleagues on what exactly Public Health is and what it means to be a Public Health Nurse.

A Nursing Student Preceptor Program evaluation, completed by Region of Waterloo Public Health in 2014 with input from Conestoga College, has resulted in a number of enhancements for 2015 that will ensure the continuous provision of a quality program for nursing students.

For more information visit: http://bit.ly/1IB0B1F

Emergency Preparedness

All Public Health units in Ontario are required to effectively and consistently respond to emergencies with public health impacts. Emergency preparedness requires planning and activities to prevent, protect against, respond to, and recover from emergencies that may put human health at risk, such as extreme weather events and infectious diseases.

As the World Health Organization declared an Ebola emergency in 2014, Paramedic Services partnered with Public Health’s Infectious Diseases Division to plan and prepare for a potential Ebola emergency in Waterloo Region. Paramedics received Ebola awareness training, emergency plans were developed in collaboration with local hospitals and the dispatch centre, and representatives from Paramedic Services and Public Health participated in weekly national teleconferences with health care organizations for the purpose of sharing information and best practices from across North America.

Nearly 200 local paramedics, as part of their mandated Continuing Medical Education, received training on Personal Protective Equipment and its proper usage in the event of a suspected case of Ebola in Waterloo Region. The training received in 2014 has led to enhancements in how Paramedic Services operate, including equipping all ambulances with specialized protective gear.
Active and Safe Routes to School

In 2014, the City of Waterloo sponsored and partnered with the Waterloo Region District School Board, Waterloo Catholic District School Board, and Region of Waterloo Public Health on the Active and Safe Routes to School pilot project to post signs and paint activities on sidewalks within 400 metres of eight Waterloo elementary schools. The signs and painted activities are intended to encourage more children to walk or bike to school and to address a perceived barrier of being too far from the school to do so.

The pilot project aims to:

- Raise awareness among students and parents about the amount of time it takes to walk or cycle to school from locations approximately 400 metres from the school site
- Encourage parents who need to drive their children to school to drop them off and pick them up at the sign locations to reduce congestion around the schools and allow students an opportunity to walk at least five minutes
- Make walking to school fun by adding an element of play (e.g., hopscotch, paw prints, numbers painted on sidewalks and walking routes)

Having more children walk or bike to school will increase their physical activity, reduce traffic congestion at school sites, decrease vehicle emissions around school sites and foster independence in children by encouraging and supporting the adoption of active transportation methods to schools.

For more information visit: http://bit.ly/1PGBg6T
Exploring Community Paramedicine

Sometimes, frequent 911 callers need care that is different from the type of care provided in an emergency room. Through Community Paramedicine, Paramedics have an opportunity to apply their training and skills beyond their traditional role by working with other health care professionals to ensure their patients receive the right type of care, which will allow them to continue to live independently in their homes and communities. This new role is under exploration both provincially and locally.

In 2014, Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services began to collaborate with other regions to learn more about Community Paramedicine best practices and also forged a partnership with the Community Care Access Centre. With a goal to reduce calls and trips to the emergency room through non-traditional response and referral, Paramedic Services continues to gather and analyze statistics on current calls in its efforts to help seniors and other patients with chronic conditions manage their conditions better and stay healthy.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children

Ontario’s Healthy Babies Healthy Children program helps children get a healthy start in life. A child’s early years, from before birth to age six, are very important to lifelong health and development. Healthy babies are more likely to develop into healthy children and healthy adults.

Identifying families who are interested in and would benefit from support is important to help children reach their full developmental potential. A Public Health Nurse and Family Visitor team helps parents to set and meet goals that will enable their children to reach their optimal development. Families are provided with parenting knowledge and links to community programs and services.

Parents want their children to be healthy and happy. In Waterloo Region, there are many success stories of families who have benefited from the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, including help for parents struggling with depression, and for parents with few supports or resources. In the Healthy Babies Healthy Children program, a new parent will learn how to provide a stable, safe and stimulating environment for their baby. Parents may learn how to access services such as the food bank, keep doctors’ appointments for their child and themselves and much more. The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program helps all parents see the potential within themselves and lays the foundation for a brighter future for children in Waterloo Region.

For more information visit: http://bit.ly/1JHxN6q
Early Breastfeeding Contact Clinics

Breast milk is the ideal source of nutrition for babies, providing all the nutrients a baby needs for proper growth and development. Breastfeeding also offers many benefits for both baby and mother. Both the World Health Organization and Health Canada recommend exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life. In order for mothers to establish and maintain a positive breastfeeding experience, support may be needed. One of the available supports is the Early Breastfeeding Contact Clinic, run by Region of Waterloo Public Health at Cambridge Memorial Hospital and Grand River Hospital. The hospitals not only provide the space but also refer mothers to the clinic.

Any mother who is not receiving breastfeeding support from another health care professional can attend the clinic where she will receive a one-on-one breastfeeding assessment and support from a Public Health Nurse who has additional breastfeeding training. In 2014, there were 489 clinic visits and 435 telephone contacts.

Vaccine Distribution

Influenza (commonly known as “the flu”) is a serious, acute respiratory infection that is caused by a virus. Some people who get the flu can become very ill. Each year, the World Health Organization recommends the composition of the flu vaccine based on which strains are circulating in the hemisphere. With a good match between the flu strains in the vaccine and the circulating flu strains, the vaccine can prevent flu illness in about 65 to 85 per cent of healthy children and adults.

In the most recent 2014/2015 flu season, a total of approximately 150,040 vaccines were delivered compared to 127,138 in the 2012/2013 flu season.

On the rise also is the number of vaccines delivered to the public by pharmacists. In the 2014/2015 season, pharmacists delivered 47,690 of the total number of vaccines as compared to 11,960 in the 2012/2013 season. In addition, our community has seen a rise in the number of pharmacies that participate in the Immunization Program. In 2012/2013, 21 pharmacies participated. This number increased to 100 in the 2014/2015 season. Members of the public can also get the vaccine at community flu clinics and through participating doctors’ offices.
Budget Overview

**2014 Operating Budgets**
- Cost shared mandatory programs: $28,039,787
- Emergency Medical Services: $23,428,796
- Healthy Babies Healthy Children: $2,864,743
- Healthy Smiles Ontario: $829,339
- Infectious Disease Prevention and Control: $695,648
- Tobacco programs: $493,700
- Vector Borne Diseases: $384,267
- Other: $1,361,730
- **Total Budget**: $58,098,010

**2014 Sources of Funding**
- Provincial funding: $38,158,820
- Regional tax levy: $19,237,480
- Fees and charges: $481,352
- Other sources of funding: $220,358
- **Total Funding**: $58,098,010
Paramedic Services Response Time Performance Plan

Under regulations, Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services is responsible for the development of a patient focused Response Time Performance Plan (RTPP). This plan measures emergency and non-emergency response times to all 911 calls, including for sudden cardiac arrest. The RTPP is reviewed on a yearly basis and Regional Council approves the RTPP to be submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) prior to October 31st yearly. The RTPP for 2014 was approved by Council to remain the same as 2013 until such time as more data was available to alter the plan should it be required.

The results of the Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services RTPP for the past year were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Call</th>
<th>Paramedic Services Notified (T2) to Arrive Scene (T4)</th>
<th>Approved 2014 ROW Target</th>
<th>Compliance to the Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sudden Cardiac Arrest</td>
<td>Defibrillator Response in 6 minutes or less (Set by MOHLTC)</td>
<td>50% or better (EMS Only)</td>
<td>220 39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAS* 1 Resuscitation</td>
<td>Paramedic Services Response in 8 minutes or less (Set by MOHLTC)</td>
<td>70% or better (EMS Only)</td>
<td>303 66%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAS* 2 Emergent</td>
<td>Paramedic Services Response in 10 minutes, 30 seconds or less</td>
<td>80% or better</td>
<td>4,035 83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAS* 3 Urgent</td>
<td>Paramedic Services Response in 10 minutes, 30 seconds or less</td>
<td>80% or better</td>
<td>11,536 78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAS* 4 Less urgent</td>
<td>Paramedic Services Response in 10 minutes, 30 seconds or less</td>
<td>80% or better</td>
<td>5,048 74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAS* 5 Non urgent</td>
<td>Paramedic Services Response in 10 minutes, 30 seconds or less</td>
<td>80% or better</td>
<td>1,367 71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Overall, Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services is performing well with regard to response times, with trends moving in a positive direction.

Region of Waterloo Paramedic Services strives to provide Excellence in Patient Care, while remaining responsive and cost efficient for the residents of and visitors to Waterloo Region.

*CTAS = Canadian Triage Acuity Scale
**Child And Family Health**
- 494 Clients served at early breastfeeding contact clinics
- 4,221 Families who were screened with a Healthy Babies Healthy Children Screen at prenatal, postpartum and early childhood stages
- 376 Families who are confirmed with risk through an In-Depth Assessment for Healthy Babies Healthy Children
- 1,581 Calls received from the Service First Call Centre
- 21 Community partner organizations participating in Child Health Fairs
- 389 Children referred to the Infant and Child Development Program
- 781 Families who were provided service by the Infant and Child Development Program
- 106 Attendees for Preparing for Parenthood sessions
- 150 Multicultural Prenatal Health Fair attendees
- 24 Group interactions at Ontario Early Years Centre as part of the One Stop service
- 4,942 Home visits conducted by Public Health staff in Healthy Babies Healthy Children program
- 239 Children screened for growth and development milestones at Child Health Fairs
- 1216 Early breastfeeding contacts

**Health Protection and Investigation**
- 24 Charges laid on food premises
- 4 Closures of food premises
- 81 Occurrences where food products were seized and destroyed
- 689 Routine inspections and re-inspections of recreational water premises (pools, wading pools, splash pads, water slide receiving basins, spas and whirlpools)
- 716 Routine inspections and re-inspections of personal service settings
- 150,262 Vector-borne sites treated (catch basins, natural sites, and storm water management ponds)
- 1092 Rabies investigations
- 417 Confirmed enteric communicable disease cases (food-borne, water-borne and parasitic diseases)
- 65 Institutional, child care centre and community outbreaks
- 1,430 Tobacco inspections including routine inspections of workplaces, public places and tobacco vendors
- 98% Tobacco retailers compliant with the Smoke Free Ontario Act
- 286 Support calls for private well water owners with adverse sample results

**Epidemiology and Health Analytics**
- 34 Weekly Local Influenza Surveillance Bulletins
- 2 Data Requests for community partners
- 4 Reports on local risk factors in local community
- 3 More comprehensive Health Status Reports

**Paramedic Services**
- 37,274 Patient contacts
- 5,993 Increase in patient contacts since 2010
- 425 Public Access Defibrillators provided (with Heart and Stroke Foundation assistance) at public facilities
- 30 Ambulances and Response Vehicles operated from 10 stations

**QuickStats**
- 5,239 Routine inspections and re-inspections of food premises
### Infectious Disease, Dental & Sexual Health

- 2,930 HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) tests conducted
- 454,363 Needles distributed through Waterloo Region’s needle exchange program
- 2,054 Confirmed infectious disease cases (excluding enteric illness)
- 12 Confirmed active tuberculosis cases (32 suspect cases investigated)
- 1,326 Visits to the tuberculosis skin test clinic

### Healthy Living

#### Sun Safety
- 1 School Board adopted a Sun Safety and Shading policy to improve sun safety on school grounds (Waterloo Region District School Board)

#### Injury and Substance Misuse Prevention
- 8 Municipalities worked with Public Health to further develop a Municipal Alcohol Policy
- 6 Community presentations on Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines

#### Peer Program
- 4,619 People reached by Community Nutrition Workers and Peer Health Workers (46% people on low income, 77% parents with young children)
- 1,495 Sessions run by peer workers

#### Healthy Food Systems
- 26,421 Visits to the Food System Roundtable website
- $30,032 in funds secured from external sources for healthy food system research and advocacy projects
- 601 People receiving bi-weekly Waterloo Region Food News email newsletter

#### Tobacco Cessation
- 96 Health Care Professionals trained in tobacco cessation
- 43 Consultations with Health Care Professionals on the integration of tobacco cessation into their practice and organizational systems
- 125 “Cessation-related” calls on the Tobacco Information Line (TIL)

#### Workplace Health
- 439 Workplace Health Intermediaries (representing 212 workplaces in 2014) are active members of Project Health. The potential reach is 60,000-86,000 employees (20% of Waterloo Region’s workforce).
- 8,533 Sessions/visits to projecthealth.ca (by 6,406 distinct users with a total of 24,628 pageviews in 2014)
- 71 Consultations provided by Project Health staff to workplaces (38 workplaces in 2014)
- 28 Third party consultations provided by Project Health staff to other health units, workplace wellness consulting firms, and professional associations

### Healthy Food Systems

- 50 Pedometer Kit loans through Waterloo Region Walks’ and Kitchener Public Library’s Pedometer Lending Program pilot.

### Workforce Health

- 547 Participants attended Project Health Lunch and Learns on various health topics (16 lunch and learn in 2014)

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### Dental Screening

- 22,317 elementary schools
- 57 secondary schools
- 233 Region of Waterloo Public Health dental clinic

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Prepared by:
Health Communications, June 2015

Accessible formats of this document are available upon request.