Public Health and Emergency Services plays many roles in contributing to the health and wellbeing of the residents of Waterloo Region. We are pleased to serve our residents by providing programs and services that promote healthy living and healthy growth and development, while monitoring population health, protecting health and preventing disease.

This report highlights key accomplishments of Public Health and Emergency Services with our partners and through our commitment to service excellence.

Public Health Role

The main goal of Public Health 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 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 (e.g., food, water)
- Reduce and manage infectious disease risks
- Reduce the burden of preventable chronic diseases and injuries
- Monitor and report population health information (i.e., health surveillance and health status reporting)

Paramedic Services Role

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.

Paramedic Services Objectives

Ensure excellence in patient care by:

- Delivering high quality patient care every time (Advanced Life Support and Basic Life Support standards)
- Maintaining accurate and complete documentation
- Providing paramedics with the resources they need (i.e., vehicles and equipment that are ready every time)
# Table of Contents

## Partnerships
- Making the healthy choice the easy choice ............................................ 1
- Helping parents understand their babies and sleep .................................. 2
- Preventing infection in long-term care ..................................................... 3
- NutriSTEP® starts conversations about healthy eating .............................. 3
- Public Health hits the road ...................................................................... 4

## Service Excellence
- Paramedic Services master plan ............................................................. 5
- Anytime. Anywhere. ............................................................................. 6
- Well water testing in Mennonite communities ....................................... 7
- Improving health for Syrian refugees .................................................... 8

## Public Health and Emergency Services in Numbers
- Budget overview .................................................................................. 9
- Paramedic Services response time performance plan ............................. 10
- Statistics ............................................................................................. 11
Making the healthy choice the easy choice

Willpower alone is not enough to make healthy choices about what to eat or drink. In 2016 we worked with local municipalities to make the healthy choice the easy choice in our community. Waterloo Region is one of 45 communities across the province taking part in the Healthy Kids Community Challenge. The challenge brings our local communities together to promote healthy eating and physical activity in children.

Drinking water is the best choice when you are thirsty. Sixty-three new water bottle filling stations were installed across Waterloo Region. The new filling stations and other activities make it easier to choose water when you are thirsty.

We also worked with our area municipalities to evaluate the nutritional quality of food and beverages sold in recreation centres and made suggestions for healthier choices. The project was funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research.

Partnering with local municipalities helps us reach our larger community and make changes that will have a positive impact on our community’s health.

For more details on the Healthy Kids Community Challenge visit: www.regionofwaterloo.ca/healthykids

Beverages account for almost 1/2 (44%) of kids’ sugar intake every day.

Did you know?
7 Region of Waterloo municipalities actively participate in the Healthy Kids Community Challenge.
Helping parents understand their babies and sleep

The Waterloo Region Ontario Early Years Centres and Public Health partnered in 2016 to offer free sessions on sleep for parents of infants up to three months of age. The sessions provide practical information and realistic expectations for sleep.

The sessions are held at Ontario Early Years Centres in the Region. The centres provide a safety net of referrals, information, and programs for families. These sessions help parents and caregivers to understand their child’s sleep patterns and how babies communicate their needs through their own language of cues. The program focuses on parents being the expert on their own child and building on parents’ strengths. There is emphasis on each child being different and parents are encouraged to respond to their child’s individual needs, cues, and temperament.

In this first year, there were over 100 sessions held in Waterloo, Kitchener and Cambridge, with over 500 people in attendance. Promotion of the program will continue through Ontario Early Years Centres, local hospitals, primary health care providers and other community partners so that more parents can participate.

For more details on sleep sessions visit: bit.ly/InfantSleepingPoster

Did you know?
Over 500 people attended sleep sessions in Waterloo Region in 2016.
Preventing infection in long-term care

For more than 15 years Public Health has hosted a forum each fall that brings together staff from long-term care and retirement homes in Waterloo Region. The forum provides updates on best practices that help reduce the spread of infection and increase infection prevention awareness.

The forum is also an opportunity for long-term care and retirement home professionals to meet and learn from each other. Preventing and controlling the spread of infection is crucial in health care facilities because the residents often have decreased immunity, live in close quarters and have a lot of personal contact.

In partnership with Public Health Ontario, the forum is hosted by Public Health to keep our local community up-to-date on prevention best practices.

For more information visit: www.regionofwaterloo.ca/infectioncontrol

Did you know?
Over 150 people attend the forum each fall.

NutriSTEP® starts conversations about healthy eating

Approximately 17 per cent of Canadian children aged 18 months to five years may be at high nutritional risk. Public Health works to promote a tool called “NutriSTEP®.” This tool is a set of questionnaires that parents complete with a professional to help identify nutrition problems.

NutriSTEP® asks questions about food choices, eating habits, physical activity and growth. It also helps parents learn how to make their child a healthier eater, and to find community resources. Poor nutrition in the early years can result in growth problems, anemia, poor eating habits, and difficulties learning. Follow up support for parents includes education, resources, and referrals to community programs.

Working with partners like Ontario Early Years Centres and the school boards, Public Health is also promoting the online version, called Nutri-eSTEP. EatRight Ontario partners with us in this work. They fill out the questionnaires over the phone with parents who can’t complete them online. Public Health also holds screening events, attends school sessions, and uses social media to promote the tool.

For more information visit: bit.ly/EatRightChildren

Did you know?
Approximately 17% of children aged 18 months to five years may be at high nutritional risk.
Partnerships

Public Health hits the road

It is hard for people to focus on their health when they are facing other big and difficult challenges in their life. Public Health and Sanguen Health Centre have partnered to deliver mobile health services through Sanguen’s Community Health Van (“The Van”) to people who are facing stigma and marginalization and who are not receiving the health care service they need.

This partnership has allowed both Sanguen and Public Health to access these vulnerable priority populations by “meeting them where they are at” and building relationships and trust in order to provide them health care and referrals to services they need. Public Health started partnering on this initiative in August of 2016. The Van takes public health services on the road by having a public health nurse on board who provides sexually transmitted infection testing, bloodwork, pregnancy testing, emergency contraception, Naloxone kits and training, and other harm reduction services. Flu shots were offered in the month of November.

Public Health helps to staff The Van on Thursday nights servicing areas in Kitchener. The Van also provides services to Cambridge clients on Friday nights, and hopes to expand to other areas of the community and with more hours in the future. This initiative will assist us in reaching our most vulnerable residents.

For more information:
bit.ly/SanguenMobileVan

Did you know?
Public Health distributes Naloxone kits at no charge to anyone who is at risk of overdose, or who is worried about someone who might be.
Paramedic Services is a critical part of the Region’s commitment to supporting healthy living and preventing disease and injury. Paramedic Services presented an updated Master Plan to Regional Council in 2016 in order to guide decisions about goals, staffing, and equipment over the next 10 years so that we can improve service standards and response times for the public. Overall, the Master Plan is designed to ensure quality of care, so that the right care occurs at the right place and right time, and that resource levels meet peak demand in a reasonable time.

An increase in the volume of calls and ongoing delays during hospital offloading continue to challenge resources. We have seen a 50 per cent increase in ambulance responses over the past 10 years. We expect to see a 60 per cent increase over the next decade, and 90 per cent over the next 15 years.

This means that an infusion of additional ambulances, resources, and paramedic staffing is required to meet the demands of Waterloo Region.

Plans for 2017 in the updated Paramedic Services Master Plan include:

- Adding three ambulances to the fleet compliment
- Adding three 12-hour ambulance shifts starting July 01, 2017
- Hiring 15 paramedic staff as well as administrative and support staff
- Starting the planning and constructing of a new north end deployment centre (expected completion in 2019)

Regional Council approved the Master Plan in the fall of 2016. The improvements in the plan will help to deal with increased call volume, decrease response times, and improve the way current resources are used.

For more information visit: [bit.ly/PSVMasterPlan](http://bit.ly/PSVMasterPlan)
In early 2016 we received our official Baby-Friendly designation from the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada. This designation recognizes our work to support, promote and protect breastfeeding and to help families make an informed decision about infant feeding. We would not have received this designation without the support of our community partners.

We support families to breastfeed anytime and anywhere. We also work with community partners to create welcoming spaces for breastfeeding mothers and their families. Though we’ve received our designation we continue to improve our services to support breastfeeding in our community.

To better meet the needs of breastfeeding families, Public Health Breastfeeding Services moved from our local hospitals to our locations at 150 Main Street in Cambridge and 99 Regina Street South in Waterloo. The new locations are accessible by car or transit and offer free parking, to increase access to breastfeeding support.

In October we released a series of 11 breastfeeding videos that address many of the breastfeeding questions or concerns we hear from families. Topics include: signs your baby is hungry or full, how to break the latch, when to start feeding solid foods and more.

Our new clinics and videos are two examples of how we’re increasing our service to support, promote and protect breastfeeding.

To watch our videos visit: bit.ly/BreastfeedingVideosPlaylist
Well water testing in Mennonite communities

Municipal water is regularly tested but private wells are unique. It is the owner’s responsibility to test their private well water to make sure it is safe to use. Last year we started a campaign to increase well water testing across Waterloo Region. Since private wells are more common in rural areas we also wanted to increase well water testing in the Mennonite community.

In the spring and the fall, health inspectors were invited to 18 parochial schools where they handed out testing bottles used to collect well water samples for bacteria testing. The next day the health inspectors returned to the schools to pick up any completed samples that had been returned. The samples were sent to Public Health Ontario’s lab for testing. We had a great response rate at all schools, including one school where the students returned all of the sample bottles ready for testing.

Public Health aims to prevent or reduce illness from drinking water. Through this project we were able to connect with our Mennonite community to promote safe drinking water and help them increase their well water testing and awareness.

For more information visit: www.regionofwaterloo.ca/privatewellwater

Did you know?
269 calls were made to citizens about their private well water results in 2016.
Improving health for Syrian refugees

Canada made a significant commitment to relocate over 35,000 Syrian refugees in 2016. Providing immediate immunization and dental care to improve the health of 1,450 new arrivals from Syria was a priority for Public Health in 2016.

Nineteen immunization clinics were held for Syrian newcomers at various locations throughout the Region. Public Health partnered with Reception House and the Kitchener-Waterloo Multicultural Centre to provide client centered inclusive care. To date, Public Health has immunized over 750 clients who have resettled to Waterloo Region. Public Health continues to assist families with their immunization needs, provide support to primary care providers to build system capacity, and collaborate and coordinate with relevant sectors to ensure that systems, policies and programs meet the needs of immigrants and refugees.

Among Syrian refugees, many children and youth have urgent dental problems, such as large cavities or toothaches, that require dental treatment by a dentist or dental specialist. In 2016, we held 14 clinics with interpreter support to screen children under 18 and provide oral hygiene instruction. Over 450 children were screened and 241 were enrolled in the Healthy Smiles Ontario program so that community dentists could provide them with ongoing care. The dental care helped children and youth achieve improved oral health, contributing to their overall health – a critical component of the resettlement efforts.

For more information visit: http://www.wrwelcomesrefugees.ca

Did you know?

33 immunization and dental clinics were held in 2016 to support Syrian refugees.
Public Health and Emergency Services in Numbers

Budget Overview

2016 Operating Budgets

- Cost Shared Mandatory Programs $26,911,823
- Paramedic Services $26,637,000
- Healthy Babies Healthy Children $2,864,743
- Infant Development Program $1,071,602
- Other $883,599
- Healthy Smiles Ontario $981,000
- Infectious Diseases Prevention & Control $770,700
- Tobacco Programs $526,200
- Vector Borne Diseases $305,333

Total Budget $60,952,000

2016 Staffing

- Public Health 87% of budget relates to staffing 290.6 FTE*
- Paramedic Services 81% of budget relates to staffing 179.9 FTE 470.3 FTE

2016 Sources of Funding

- Provincial Funding (38.8M) 60%
- Regional Tax Levy & Reserves (21.7M) 36%
- Other (0.5M)

2016 Sources of Funding by Program

- Cost Shared Mandatory Programs
- Paramedic Services
- Healthy Babies Healthy Children
- Infant Development Program
- Other
- Healthy Smiles Ontario
- Infectious Disease Prevention & Control
- Tobacco Programs
- Vector Borne Diseases

* Full Time Equivalent
Public Health and Emergency Services in Numbers

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 those 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 targets approved by council were the same across most levels of urgency (i.e. CTAS levels) from 2015 to 2016. The CTAS-specific benchmarks set reasonable and achievable targets according to the urgency of the call: setting faster times for more urgent calls and progressively slower times for less urgent calls.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of call</th>
<th>Response Time Target</th>
<th>Approved 2016 ROW target</th>
<th>No. of calls in compliance</th>
<th>No. of calls</th>
<th>Per cent compliance</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 (Paramedic Services only)</td>
<td>270</td>
<td>679</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAS* 1</td>
<td>Paramedic Services response in 8 minutes or less (set by MOHLTC)</td>
<td>70% or better</td>
<td>416</td>
<td>4,580</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAS* 2</td>
<td>Paramedic Services response in 10 minutes or less</td>
<td>80% or better</td>
<td>5,339</td>
<td>6,757</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAS* 3</td>
<td>Paramedic Services response in 11 minutes or less</td>
<td>80% or better</td>
<td>14,857</td>
<td>18,696</td>
<td>79%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAS* 4</td>
<td>Paramedic Services response in 12 minutes or less</td>
<td>80% or better</td>
<td>6,565</td>
<td>8,095</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTAS* 5</td>
<td>Paramedic Services response in 12 minutes or less</td>
<td>80% or better</td>
<td>1,759</td>
<td>2,260</td>
<td>78%</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
### Public Health and Emergency Services in Numbers

#### At Home
- **3,663** Home visits conducted by Public Health Staff in Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program
- **1,181** Early breastfeeding contacts (includes home visits, clinic and telephone contacts)
- **591** Families who were provided service by Infant and Child Development Program
- **269** Calls to citizens about their private well water results

#### Communicating With Us
- **33,119** Calls received from the public through the Service First Call Centre
- **976** Calls to Child and Family Health programs
- **4,511** Calls related to environmental health programs
- **39** “Cessation-related” calls on the Tobacco Related Inquiries/Tobacco Information Line (TIL)

#### At Work
- **6,432** Routine inspections and re-inspections of food premises
- **42** Charges laid on food premises
- **121** Occurrences where food products were seized and destroyed
- **716** Routine inspections and re-inspections of recreational water premises (pools, wading pools, splash pads, water slide receiving basins, spas and whirlpools)
- **96%** Tobacco retailers compliant with the Smoke Free Ontario Act
- **1,135** Tobacco inspections including routine inspections of workplaces/public places and tobacco vendors

#### At School
- **1** School Board policy adopted to add/strengthen ultraviolet radiation prevention practices
- **15,441** JK, SK and grade 2 students screened for oral health
- **6.8%** of grade 2 students with two or more decayed teeth
- **19,335** Immunization notices sent to elementary and secondary students

#### In Our Clinics
- **745** Clients served at early breastfeeding contact clinics
- **24,836** Visits to dental, immunization, sexual health, and tuberculosis clinics
- **2,323** Visits to Public Health dental clinics
- **1,374** Visits to the tuberculosis skin test clinics (for testing)

#### In Our Clinics
- **6,562** Visits to Public Health’s Cambridge and Waterloo sexual health clinics

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**At Home**

- 3,663 Home visits conducted by Public Health Staff in Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program
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**At Work**

- 6,432 Routine inspections and re-inspections of food premises
- 42 Charges laid on food premises
- 121 Occurrences where food products were seized and destroyed
- 716 Routine inspections and re-inspections of recreational water premises (pools, wading pools, splash pads, water slide receiving basins, spas and whirlpools)
- 96% Tobacco retailers compliant with the Smoke Free Ontario Act
- 1,135 Tobacco inspections including routine inspections of workplaces/public places and tobacco vendors

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- 19,335 Immunization notices sent to elementary and secondary students

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**In Our Clinics**

- 6,562 Visits to Public Health’s Cambridge and Waterloo sexual health clinics
In Our Community

4,594 Healthy Babies Healthy Children screens conducted at prenatal, postpartum and early childhood stages

137,070 Vector-borne sites treated (catch basins, natural sites, and storm water management ponds)

475 Families who are confirmed with risk through an In-Depth Assessment for Healthy Babies Healthy Children

1,113 Rabies investigations

408 Confirmed enteric communicable disease cases (Food-borne, water-borne and parasitic diseases)

462 Public Access Defibrillators provided (with Heart and Stroke Foundation assistance) at public facilities

2 Public spaces built/renovated to incorporate shade principles (with support from Public Health)

15 Consultations including conducting shade audits with municipalities and school boards

7 Local community partners supported to implement 2016 Fall Prevention Month Campaign

393 Home safety checklists distributed to older adults at-risk for falls

190 Fall risk self-assessment tools distributed to older adults at-risk for falls

1,642 Community garden plots at 63 gardens across Waterloo Region

3,026 People reached by Community Nutrition Workers and Peer Health Workers

1,026 Sessions run by Peer Health Workers

63 Consultations with Health Care Professionals on integrating tobacco cessation into their practice

59 Health Care Professionals trained in tobacco cessation

100% of Invasive Group A Streptococcal cases where case investigation was initiated the same business day the case was reported

98.3% of confirmed gonorrhea cases where case investigation was initiated within two business days

Paramedic Services

48,561 Vehicle responses

13,428 Increase in vehicle responses since 2010

80% Emergency calls (code 4) reached within 9 minutes 37 seconds or less from time of ambulance dispatch

Information and Reports

32 Weekly Local Influenza Surveillance Bulletins

6 Community Data Requests

15 QuickStats

30 Health Reports

Online

30,583 Inspection Disclosure website sessions

90 Blog posts by healthy food system advocates on current food issues

656 People receiving bi-weekly WRFoodNews email newsletter

922 Registration codes provided for the Gift of Motherhood online prenatal program

1,744 Social media posts

135,132 Visits to the Public Health and Emergency Services website