

Renfrew County and District Health Unit

2008 Annual Report

What Public Health does...

Public Health is the organized efforts of society to improve health and well-being and to reduce inequalities in health. In Ontario, public health professionals work with different segments of society to **prevent** human disease and injury; **protect** people from environmental hazards; and **promote** behaviours that lead to good physical and mental health.

"Public health is focused on understanding and addressing the factors that underlie illness or good health." Dr. David Butler-Jones, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer

Who we are...

Renfrew County and District Health Unit is a non-profit agency governed by the Board of Health and funded by the Government of Ontario, the County of Renfrew, the City of Pembroke and the Township of South Algonquin. Our 68 staff serve approximately 100,000 people living in an area of 15,000 square kilometers.

"Promoting healthy people in a healthy environment"

Dr Michael Corriveau
Medical Officer of Health

Preventing Diseases

Many diseases are preventable. Public health offers services such as immunization and education to decrease the number of people who will become ill or die from infectious diseases.

In 2008, we published an analysis of the most common infectious diseases that are reported to Medical Officers of Health in compliance with Ontario's Health Protection and Promotion Act. **Reportable Diseases in Renfrew County and District** is available on our web site at: <http://www.rcdhu.com/community-health-status/index.htm>

Influenza immunization coverage

All Ontarians have access to free immunization against influenza, or "the flu." There is a new flu vaccine every year because influenza viruses are continually changing.

Reportable diseases in Renfrew County and District includes information on influenza immunization rates in certain high-risk groups. For the 2007/08 influenza season,

- 89% of residents in long-term care facilities received a flu shot (below the provincial objective of 95%);
- 77% of staff in long-term care facilities received a flu shot (above the provincial objective of 70%)
- 40% of hospital staff received a flu shot (below the provincial objective of 70% and below the Ontario average of 50%)

5,671 vaccinations (not including flu shots) were given to children, youth and adults at community clinics

84% of grade 7 students were vaccinated against hepatitis B

1068 travel health vaccinations were given

Safe water

Public Health Units work to prevent or reduce water-borne illness related to drinking water, and prevent or reduce illness and injury related to recreational water use. Through the Safe Water program, Public Health staff conduct surveillance and provide information and education.

Residents with their own wells or other private drinking water systems should have their water tested at least three times/year to check for bacterial contamination. The best times to have your water tested are during spring runoff, mid-summer and fall. This service is provided free of charge. Bottles for collecting water samples can be picked up at any Health Unit location.

6,444 private water samples were submitted through the Health Unit for laboratory analysis

16 boil water orders were issued

286 water samples were collected at 26 public bathing beaches

Promoting Health

Supporting student health

Renfrew County and District Health Unit works to support the health of children in schools. Public Health Nurses and Health Promoters work with teachers, students and parents in 52 elementary schools. We immunize, screen for dental problems, and promote healthy living.

Health Unit staff also offer information and support related to drugs and alcohol, sexual health, body image and healthy relationships at 10 area high schools.

Reducing chronic diseases

Our health professionals work in the community to help prevent chronic diseases. Working with other community organizations is an important part of health promotion activities.

As a member of the Champlain Cardiovascular Disease Prevention Network, we are working to reduce obesity in children and youth through a Healthy School-Aged Children Strategy. In 2008, network members and nine school boards signed **The Champlain Declaration: A Call to Action for Physically Active and Healthy Eating Environments in Schools.**

We work with the Community Resource Centre (Killaloe) to provide a healthy cooking program for 3 to 6 year olds and their caregivers called **Stir it Up with Kids in the Kitchen.** In 2008, staff from Ontario Early Years sites and other local organizations were trained to lead this popular program.

Preventing injuries

On average, more than 15 people each day visit Ontario emergency departments for injuries related to all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Males and females age 10 to 24 are more likely than other age groups to experience ATV injuries. In the summer of 2008 we launched a communication campaign to inform parents about the risks of children being injured while driving or riding as a passenger on an ATV.

Addiction to oxycontin, a pain medication that can produce euphoria, has been identified as a local health issue. In cooperation with community partners, we held a workshop for health and social service providers and families to share information about identification, treatment and prevention of oxycontin abuse. This work is in relation to our mandate to prevent injuries due to the abuse of alcohol and other drugs.

250+ people attended the Women's Wellness Festival on October 18 in Renfrew

3500 "Stay Safe" calendars were distributed to seniors

Promoting Health (continued)

Caring for families

The Family Health Program supports optimal physical, cognitive, communicative and psychosocial development of children and youth from before birth to age six.

The **Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program** is designed to give all new parents in Ontario the information and support they need to give their children a healthy start in life. As part of this program, public health nurses contact all new mothers (if they consent to their information being provided to public health by their hospital or midwife). This contact helps to identify any family needs and health issues and provides support and referrals. A home visit is offered, and through this moms can access supports such as breastfeeding advice, baby weighing or infant assessment.

Through assessment tools, sometimes it is identified that a child is at risk of not reaching his/her full potential and the family may benefit from more intensive services. These families are offered ongoing support through home visiting and service coordination. The support can begin before birth and continue if needed until the child is age six.

- 227** women attended prenatal classes
- 980** new mothers were contacted by a Public Health Nurse following discharge from a hospital
- 678** families accepted and received a post-partum home visit from a Public Health Nurse
- 1075** home visits were made by Public Health Nurses and Home Visitors to 106 families participating in the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program
- 1018** children received services at child health clinics

Breastfeeding is an important part of optimal health for both moms and babies. On October 11, 2008 at 11:00 a.m., breastfeeding mothers at registered sites in over 13 countries breastfed their children together as part of the **Global Breastfeeding Challenge**. The Renfrew County Breastfeeding Network organized local participation, and 22 moms in Renfrew County participated.

“It is truly surprising that in 2008 public breastfeeding is not universally supported as a normal human function. Breastfeeding is health promotion in action!” Quintessence Foundation, Global Breastfeeding Challenge sponsor

Protecting You

Food safety

The Health Unit works to prevent or reduce food-borne illness by regularly inspecting food premises, training food handlers, responding to reports of food-borne illness, responding to consumer complaints and dealing with events that may affect food safety.

1566	food safety compliance inspections were completed and 260 re-inspections were done to follow up on problems
388	people were certified through our Food Handler Training courses
73	consumer food safety complaints were investigated
32	cases of food-borne illness were investigated

Listeriosis is a food-borne illness that has recently been highlighted in the media. There are typically about 40 reported cases of listeriosis/year in Ontario. Between late July to September 2008, 41 cases of listeriosis were linked to foods produced by a single manufacturer. Two people in Renfrew County and District contracted the infection. Renfrew County and District Health Unit staff participated in a food recall check. This involved investigation of all hospitals, long-term care facilities, day cares, and grocery stores to ensure that all recalled food products were no longer available for consumption.

Rabies Prevention and Control

Rabies is a viral disease that is fatal to both humans and animals. The Health Protection and Promotion Act requires the reporting of animal bites to the Medical Officer of Health. It also requires that all owners of dogs and cats have them immunized against rabies. Public Health Inspectors carry out educational and enforcement activities related to the prevention of rabies in humans.

175	animal bite investigations were completed
28	cases in which vaccine kits were given to people with a possible exposure to rabies

Ensuring cleaner air in public places

The *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* protects the health of all Ontarians by prohibiting smoking in all enclosed workplaces and enclosed public places. As of May 31 2008, the *Act* also prohibits tobacco products from being displayed in retail stores. Health Unit staff support the implementation and enforcement of the *Act*. The tobacco display ban was readily adopted in Renfrew County and District. In 2008, Public Health Inspectors put an increased emphasis on compliance checks in workplaces.

258	workplace inspections were completed
395	vendor compliance inspections were completed (re: signage and display ban)

2008 Board of Health Members

Mayor Jack Wilson, Chair	County of Renfrew
Ms. Sheila Clarke, Vice-Chair	Provincial Appointee
Mayor Ann Aikens	County of Renfrew
Mr. Kenneth Bertrand	Provincial Appointee
Mayor Percy Bresnahan	Township of South Algonquin
Councillor Gary Severin	City of Pembroke
Reeve Tammy-Lea Stewart	County of Renfrew
Ms. Marcia Timm	Provincial Appointee
Warden Janice Visneskie	County of Renfrew

2008 Approved Budget

Total budget: \$8,056,885

Funding sources:

- Province of Ontario - 76%
- County of Renfrew, City of Pembroke and Township of South Algonquin – 18%
- Other sources - 6%

How the funds are allocated:

- Salaries, benefits and program costs – 84%
- Occupancy and communications – 5%
- Rebate to obligated municipalities –5%
- Other operating costs – 6%

Contact us...

Renfrew County and District Health Unit
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Health Info Line	613-735-8666
Immunization	613-735-8653
Environmental Health – Inspection	613-735-8654
Dental.....	613-735-8661
Health Promotion and Clinical Services	613-735-8651
Reception	613-732-3629
Facsimile	613-735-3067

Web site: www.rcdhu.com

Branch Offices

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