

2018 Community Report



PublicHealth
WELLINGTON-DUFFERIN-GUELPH
Stay Well.

Table of Contents

Strategic Plan and Directions.....	1
2018 Board of Health Members	2
Message from Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health & CEO.....	3
Message from George Bridge, Chair of the Board of Health	4
Funding WDG Public Health	5
Your Health.....	6
Harm Reduction.....	7
Opioids	7
Cannabis.....	8
Alcohol.....	9
Flu Season	10
Vaccine Distribution	11
Tuberculosis Exposure Response.....	13
Clinical Services.....	14
Sexual Health	14
Immunizations	14
Travel Health.....	14
Infectious Disease Control.....	15
Your Kids	16
Wee Talk.....	17
Oral Health	18
Helping You And Your Family.....	19
Your Home.....	21
Flooding.....	22
Radon.....	22
Your Community	23
Rabies	24
Food Service Inspections	24
Surveying Our Youth	26
Community Health Van	28

Strategic Plan and Directions

2016-2020 Strategic Plan

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health helps people stay well. As an essential part of the healthcare system, we are committed to the health and well-being of the communities we serve. Our Strategic Plan establishes priorities, guides decision-making, aligns resources and inspires staff.

Vision

Everyone has the opportunity for health and well-being.

Mission

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health uses an innovative approach to deliver evidence-informed programs and services to meet the distinctive needs of our communities.

Mandate

The Province of Ontario mandates Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health to provide programs and services that prevent disease, protect health and promote the well-being of individuals.

Values

- **Advocacy:** Public Health advocates for policies and strategies that improve the health and well-being of people where they live, learn and play.
- **Engagement:** Public Health builds and maintains meaningful relationships with clients and stakeholders for the well-being of the communities we serve.
- **Excellence:** Public Health is committed to the delivery of high quality, evidence-informed programs and services.

- **Respect:** Public Health is dedicated to providing an inclusive environment that respects diversity.
- **Transparency:** Public Health is accountable and fiscally responsible to staff, communities and partners.

Strategic Directions

Our strategic directions provide the framework for our day-to-day work. We have selected four priorities that will transform our vision, mission, mandate and values into action.

Health Equity

We will provide programs and services that integrate health equity principles to reduce or eliminate health differences between population groups.

Organizational Capacity

We will improve our capacity to effectively deliver public health programs and services.

Service Centred Approach

We are committed to providing excellent service to anyone interacting with Public Health.

Building Healthy Communities

We will work with communities to support the health and well-being of everyone.

2018 Board of Health Members

Nancy Sullivan

Chair
Provincial Appointee
Representing the City of Guelph

Allan Taylor

Vice-Chair
Provincial Appointee
Representing the County of Dufferin

Dennis Lever

Secretary-Treasurer
Warden, County of Wellington
Mayor, Township of Puslinch

Margaret Abbink

Provincial Appointee
Representing the City of Guelph

William Baxter

Provincial Appointee
Representing the County of Wellington

Christine Billings

Councillor, City of Guelph

George Bridge

Councillor, County of Wellington
Mayor, Town of Minto

Guy Gardhouse

Councillor, County of Dufferin
Mayor, Township of East Garafraxa

Cam Guthrie

Mayor, City of Guelph

June Hofland

Councillor, City of Guelph

Nancy MacDonald

Provincial Appointee
Representing the County of Wellington

Ken McGhee

Councillor, County of Dufferin
Deputy Mayor, Town of Mono

Lambert Otten

Provincial Appointee
Representing the County of Wellington

Chris White

Councillor, County of Wellington
Mayor, Township of Guelph-Eramosa

Dr. Nicola Mercer

Ex-Officio Member
WDG Public Health, MOH & CEO

Message from Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health & CEO

Change and Consistency

It is a time of change for Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) Public Health. Again. 2018 brought changes to the Public Health Standards from the province that outlined the key priorities and activities of public health units. WDG Public Health staff have worked hard to implement the new Standards throughout our Agency. This work ensures the effective delivery of programs that positively impact the health and well-being of everyone in Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph.

With even more changes announced by the Province recently, including the creation of 10 regional public health agencies to provide public health services rather than the existing 35 local health units, there is more change on the horizon.

WDG Public Health is no stranger to change and is ready to build a strong public health system within an integrated health system while maintaining a commitment to provide the local services needed.

Public health services are very broad and reach almost every aspect of daily life. Some of the services which are critical to community health and safety include: safe water, food safety, dental services, family health, vaccinations, disease protection and promoting healthy lifestyle choices.

These services help keep communities healthy and reduce the burden on local hospitals and physicians. At the same time, WDG Public Health works with community partners to support responding to crises such as the epidemic of opioid use or controlling a potential measles or mumps outbreak in local schools.

Public health services will continue to be needed and provided in local communities both during and after any organization changes that occur within the public health sector of the healthcare system. Our structure may be changing but our commitment to the work of public health is not.

All of us at WDG Public Health are committed to helping you, your family and your community stay well. Please feel free to browse through our 2018 Community Report and see the work we have been doing and will continue to do for years to come.



Message from George Bridge, Chair of the Board of Health

Public Health is Local Health

2018 was a busy year for Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. It was also a busy year for the County of Wellington, County of Dufferin and the City of Guelph. Our municipalities are growing as more people discover these great communities.

Among other activities, WDG Public Health worked with local municipalities on how to better plan new neighbourhoods to promote health through walking, greenspace and accessibility. WDG Public Health is also a key partner with police, EMS, hospitals and community partners in responding to local crises such as opioid use.

The Board of Health, which governs the work of WDG Public Health, is made up of local municipal leaders and community representatives. The Board of Health approves the budget, ensures resources are available, and that staff and facilities are in place so WDG Public Health can deliver services directly to our constituents.

This partnership has been going on for decades. The formation of WDG Public Health was the amalgamation of three distinct health units: Dufferin County Health Unit (founded in 1946), Wellington County Health Unit (founded in 1947) and City of Guelph Health Unit (founded in 1951). They merged in 1967 to form WDG Public Health.

Public Health's role in local healthcare is continuing to evolve and expand with new services at the local level such as vision screening for young children and dental care for qualifying seniors. Public Health is part of our community from well water testing, emergency planning, disease outbreak management, family health and health protection, to name just a few priorities.

One area of particular interest to me is the ongoing work of WDG Public Health in understanding the mental health challenges of all residents, including our students. This information is used to help individual schools understand the mental health climate in their classrooms as well as inform community partners how they can better meet the mental health needs of residents.

WDG Public Health's work in influencing people's lives, homes and communities is firmly rooted in the long history of municipal partnership. I look forward to seeing WDG Public Health's mandate evolve and I am confident it will in a way that continues help to all residents stay as well as they can.



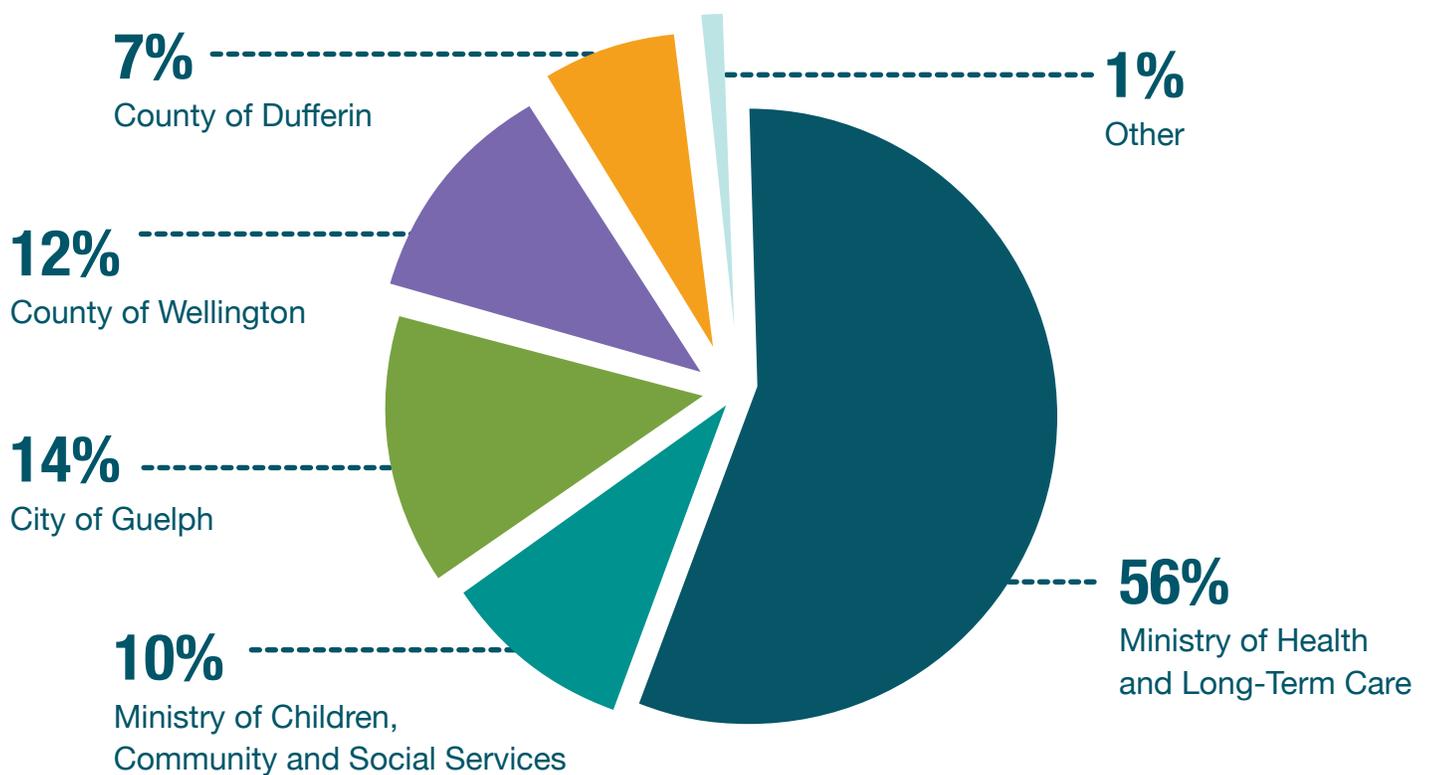
Funding WDG Public Health

The 2018 total operating budget for Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health was \$27,205,896.

Public Health receives funding from multiple sources:

- The Province of Ontario provides funding through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. In 2018, the Province of Ontario provided funding for 66 percent of the total operating budget.
- The municipalities of Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph provide funding based on the population of each municipality relative to the total population of the region. Population numbers are determined by the most recent Census. In 2018, the County of Wellington contributed 12 percent of the total operating budget, the County of Dufferin contributed 7 percent and the City of Guelph contributed 14 percent.

As a publicly funded organization, Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health reports under the accounting standards of the Public Sector Accounting Board (PSAB). The financial statements are subject to an audit by an external audit firm as outlined in *The Municipal Act*. The full audited financial statements for the year can be found at wdgpublichealth.ca.



Your Health



Harm Reduction

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (WDG) Public Health reduces the burden of preventable injuries and substance use, including the use of tobacco, e-cigarettes, alcohol, cannabis, opioids and other illicit substances. These harm reduction programs include public education, advocacy at the provincial and municipal levels, and working with community partners and local clients.

Opioids

 wdgpublichealth.ca/harmreduction

Within the past five years, emergency department visits and deaths due to opioids have been steadily increasing in Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph. Working with community partners, WDG Public Health provides local surveillance data, evidence and best practices to inform the development of a coordinated and comprehensive community response.

HEALTH ALERT
PURPLE FENTANYL/PURPLE HEROIN

PURPLE FENTANYL/PURPLE HEROIN IN GUELPH

There have been reports of 3 deaths from possible overdose in Guelph and 2 overdose reversals in the past few days.

There are also reports of purple fentanyl/purple heroin in the Guelph community that may be causing these fatalities and overdoses.

Reduce your risk

- Carry Naloxone
- Never use alone
- Use the Overdose Prevention Site which is supervised by health professionals at Guelph's Community Health Centre

Get a naloxone kit

People who use drugs or their friends or family members can get a naloxone kit from:

The Overdose Prevention Site/Guelph Community Health Centre 176 Wyndham Street North 7 days a week from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.	Sanguen Health Centre 176 Wyndham Street North Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health 160 Chancellors Way Monday - Friday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Guelph Community Health Centre 176 Wyndham Street North Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Wednesday and Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

ARCH
Unit 110, 77 Westmount Road
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Wednesday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.
Friday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Many pharmacies also carry naloxone kits.


WELLINGTON GUELPH DRUG STRATEGY

For example, WDG Public Health developed an Overdose and Drug Use Information System (ODIS), which brings together data from multiple sources and enables situational awareness about opioid use, including mapping by neighbourhoods where overdoses are occurring. WDG Public Health also developed an Opioid Overdose Alert System in collaboration with local partners. This system collects real-time information on opioid-related incidents from 10 local organizations including hospitals and police services. When abnormal patterns emerge, an alert is triggered to inform the community and allow agencies, people who use substances, EMS and other stakeholders to respond. Six health alerts have been issued since July 2018. Using social media, the alerts reach thousands of residents quickly.

An opioid health alert.

identify the substance use patterns, experiences and needs of people who use illicit substances in Guelph. The findings will be used to inform local community priorities and actions. Next, input will be sought from those who live and use drugs anywhere in Wellington and Dufferin Counties.

WDG Public Health also created and released a series of videos and public advertisements to inform people who use substances about ways they can reduce their chance of harm, and to decrease the stigma associated with harm reduction.

Cannabis

 [talkingaboutweed.ca](https://www.talkingaboutweed.ca)

Cannabis became legal on October 17, 2018. WDG Public Health is not opposed to legalization, but there is a lot of information about the health impacts of cannabis that residents should know so they can minimize any harm that could result from cannabis use.

In order to better understand community levels of knowledge and opinions about cannabis, WDG Public Health initiated a public survey. Over 2,400 residents responded to the online survey between June 7 and July 8, 2018. It included questions about attitudes toward cannabis use, knowledge of the health effects of cannabis, interest in using cannabis once legal, current cannabis use behaviours, and impacts of cannabis use.

WDG Public Health engaged community partners and groups of local youth to plan, develop and implement a campaign to raise awareness about potential cannabis-related harms. WDG Public Health created and shared short videos (30 seconds) focusing on key health messages about cannabis and inviting viewers to visit [talkingaboutweed.ca](https://www.talkingaboutweed.ca) to learn more and find resources. The videos were shown on the website, on our Facebook, Twitter and YouTube accounts, and in local movie theatres.

WDG Public Health also provided recommendations to local municipal councils regarding cannabis retail stores. While it's important for cannabis to be accessible to address the illegal market, that accessibility needs to be balanced with an evidence-informed approach that protects public health and safety. We know from alcohol and tobacco that increased availability of a substance leads to increased use. Increased use leads to increased harms. This is why WDG Public Health's recommendations encouraged a precautionary approach with stricter regulations to try to minimize health and social problems.



Still from the cannabis campaign video [Talking About Weed...and Parenting](https://www.wdgppublichealth.ca/talkingaboutweed-parenting) ([wdgppublichealth.ca/talkingaboutweed-parenting](https://www.wdgppublichealth.ca/talkingaboutweed-parenting)).

Alcohol

 alcoholstories.ca

WDG Public Health continued to spread awareness about the impacts of alcohol on individuals and the community through the Last Call campaign.

This public education and awareness campaign featured video interviews with diverse community members, including people with lived experience of alcoholism, police officers, physicians, a student, a parent, healthcare professionals and a politician. Each person told their story about how alcohol has impacted their lives or the community. The campaign aimed to start conversations about alcohol-related harms.

The campaign website alcoholstories.ca showcased the videos and also includes content related to the local impact of alcohol and community resources for help with alcohol issues. Select videos from the campaign were featured in pre-show advertisements at Galaxy Cinemas in Guelph and promoted through unpaid social media posts, paid social media advertisements, blog posts and community partner organizations.

Provincial policy changes are making alcohol easier to access. The Alcohol and Gaming Commission of Ontario is responsible for assessing liquor license applications, but municipalities may update and/or revise municipal licensing bylaws to strengthen the protection of public safety and property standards. Because there is substantial evidence that increasing alcohol availability increases alcohol-related harms, WDG Public Health is working with municipalities to explore ways to reduce or mitigate these harms through municipal policy.



Still from Sue's Story, part of the [Last Call Alcohol Stories](https://alcoholstories.ca) (alcoholstories.ca) video series.

Flu Season

 wdgpublichealth.ca/flu

Influenza, or the flu, and its complications are a leading cause of death and disability in Canada. According to the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), 12,200 flu-related hospitalizations occur on average, in Canada, each year and approximately 1,365 flu-related deaths occur yearly in Ontario. The highest mortality rate typically occurs among adults 65 years of age and older.

Flu vaccines offer protection against influenza-related complications. Vaccination is particularly important for groups at high risk of complications including young children, older adults, Indigenous peoples and pregnant women.

WDG Public Health offers influenza vaccine free of charge each year to all individuals six months of age and older who live, work or go to school in Ontario. At the same time, WDG Public Health promotes getting the flu shot throughout the community by:

- Distributing vaccine products to local healthcare providers and long-term care and retirement homes.
- Monitoring pharmacies for quantities on hand and ensuring the transport and storage of vaccines meets best practices so the vaccines are as effective as possible.
- Providing clinic appointments for influenza vaccine administration at WDG Public Health offices throughout flu season.
- Publicly promoting the importance of influenza vaccination and other measures people can take to prevent the flu.

WDG Public Health distributed a total of 54,212 vaccine doses to local healthcare providers and facilities between September 15, 2018 and March 15, 2019. WDG Public Health nurses administered a further 3,385 vaccine doses at special community-based flu clinics and through appointments at WDG Public Health offices.

Local pharmacies ordered an additional 31,830 doses through their distribution centre. Overall, a total of 89,427 doses of influenza vaccine were either administered by WDG Public Health or distributed to partners in the community.

Responding to tragic flu deaths

Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health is well prepared and practiced to ensure timely, safe and effective response to community members, partners and stakeholders.

The coroner reported to WDG Public Health two flu deaths of children who attended the same school in February 2018. A review by WDG Public Health determined the two children's deaths did not support that direct transmission had occurred from one child to the other and the two cases

should be treated as unrelated. The school continued to carry the same risk of spreading the flu as anywhere in the community despite the tragic coincidence of two student deaths.

The community, understandably, felt their children were threatened and began to keep them out of school. As news spread, parents in different communities began keeping their children home.

WDG Public Health responded to the concern rising in the community by reaching out to the media and on social media to inform the community that, although the flu should be taken very seriously, there was no heightened risk at any one location and the flu shot was your best protection.

To respond to community demand for the flu shot, WDG Public Health set up community walk-in clinics offering flexible day, evening and weekend hours in Guelph, Fergus and Orangeville. The clinics ran from February 9-16 and saw a total of 3,535 doses of influenza vaccine administered. After February 16, flu immunizations could be arranged by appointment at each office, or as always, from a local pharmacy or healthcare provider.

WDG Public Health's Facebook and Twitter accounts played a key role in informing residents about flu clinics, answering questions from concerned parents and motivating the community to take action by getting the flu shot.

The week of coverage also included a Facebook Live event on February 15, where Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health and CEO, and Dr. Matthew Tenenbaum, Associate Medical Officer of Health, answered questions live from the public over Facebook. The event reached almost 3,700 unique viewers.

WDG Public Health is prepared to control the spread of disease and respond to concerns about the health and safety of individuals, families and the entire community.

Vaccine Distribution

Publicly funded vaccines are available to all community members who have a primary health care provider. For community members without a primary healthcare provider, vaccines can be readily accessed through any of our WDG Public Health offices.

WDG Public Health receives weekly shipments of publicly funded vaccine from the Ontario Government Pharmacy (OGP). WDG Public Health distributes this vaccine to physicians' offices, long-term care homes, hospitals, community clinics and group homes and is responsible for cold chain management and education. From January to December 2018, WDG Public Health distributed \$7,127,738 in vaccine to community partners in Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph.

WDG Public Health packs and distributes vaccines to all community healthcare providers except pharmacists. Pharmacists receive their vaccine directly from a Ministry-designated distributor. Currently pharmacists carry only publicly funded influenza vaccine and any vaccine they purchase themselves.

Ensuring Students Are Fully Vaccinated

The *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) requires all families with children attending school to provide WDG Public Health with record of their child's immunization against designated diseases. Health Units are required to assess students' immunization records. Students without the required immunizations or a legal exemption may be suspended from school.

6,598

Letters were distributed in November 2017 to students/parents/guardians informing them that Public Health did not have their complete immunization records



Total letters sent



ISPA mandated immunizations provided



Conscience or religious belief exemptions filed



Suspensions enforced

Over 95% of suspended students were back to school within a week

2,788

Calls fielded by the vaccine-preventable diseases help line by WDG Public Health nurses, January 2 - April 9, 2018.

1,432 1,356

Outgoing

Incoming

Community Cold Chain Excursions

WDG Public Health is accountable for reporting vaccine wastage incurred by pharmacies, for conducting routine vaccine fridge inspections to ensure cold chain (transport and storage) protocols are adhered to and responding to incidents where vaccines may be comprised due to a break in the cold chain (i.e., the temperature at which they are stored is outside the safety range).

In 2018, the WDG Public Health Cold Chain team responded to 42 cold chain excursions reported by community healthcare providers, including physicians and pharmacists. Follow-up to reported

excursions is a comprehensive process involving assisting the healthcare provider to resolve the immediate cold chain issue and following up with the vaccine manufacturer(s) with regard to the time and duration of exposure to assess whether the vaccine can be used or must be wasted. Education on cold chain storage and handling is provided where required.

During cold chain related investigations other issues are often discovered, such as expired product in the facility or oversupply of vaccine on hand. The vaccine management team will work with the healthcare providers to mitigate these identified concerns. Re-inspections and unscheduled audits are conducted in cases where reoccurring issues are attributed to human error.

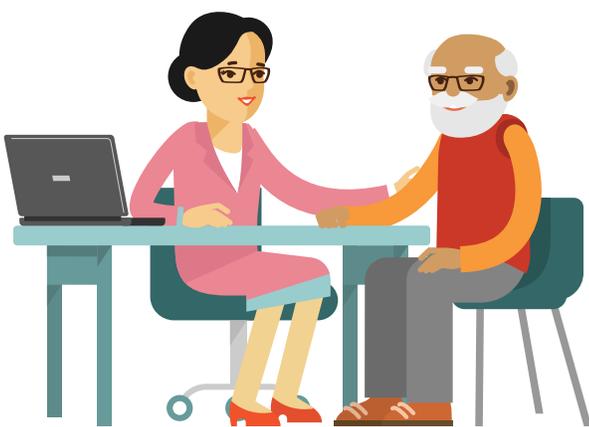
Tuberculosis Exposure Response

The Medical Officer of Health and WDG Public Health nurses and inspectors are prepared to respond 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to control the risk of infectious diseases of public health significance. One such disease is tuberculosis (TB). All physicians, laboratories, institutions, hospital administrators and schools must report any suspect or active case of TB to WDG Public Health.

In 2018, Homewood Health Centre, one of Canada's largest facilities for medical treatment of mental health and addiction disorders, was subject to a prolonged exposure to a single case of active TB.

The Medical Officer of Health and WDG Public Health's Control of Infectious Diseases team worked with Homewood administrators and staff to ensure notification, testing and follow-up took place for the safety of all former and current patients, employees, students and volunteers who could have been potentially exposed.

Although the risk to any individual was low, WDG Public Health tested anyone at risk to ensure the safety of all staff and patients. WDG Public Health monitored all test results while conducting 445 individual tests along with a contracted healthcare provider.



Tuberculosis rates in Canada are considered low. However, if someone does have an active TB infection they can be treated with antibiotics. Symptoms of TB include a persistent cough for three weeks or more, fever, night sweats and weight loss.

In most cases, TB germs do not make a person sick because the body's immune system is able to control the infection. If a person's immune system cannot stop the TB germs from growing, they will develop active TB. Active TB is infectious and can spread to other people if the germs are found in the lungs or airways.

85 Tuberculosis clients were seen at WDG Public Health facilities in specialized clinics

Clinical Services

WDG Public Health's Clinical Services team works directly with clients to provide sexual health counselling and services, immunizations and travel health services that help to reduce the burden of communicable diseases and infectious diseases in our community and beyond.

 wdgpublichealth.ca/clinical

Sexual Health

WDG Public Health's sexual health clinics provide a safe and comfortable opportunity for clients to access sexual and reproductive health services, which includes birth control, pregnancy testing and sexually transmitted infection testing. All services are confidential and available for both teens and adults. Free condoms are also available, and most birth control is available free of charge for those under the age of 25.

Immunizations

In 2018, WDG Public Health administered 12,113 government-funded vaccinations and distributed vaccines to all community healthcare providers with the exception of pharmacies.

Immunizations for both children and adults are a high priority for WDG Public Health to protect individuals and communities from serious diseases. WDG Public Health specializes in knowing the immunization schedule for government-funded vaccines to provide the best protection against serious vaccine-preventable diseases. A WDG Public Health nurse can advise individuals, including parents of young children, on the vaccines they or their family members need to stay well.

Travel Health

WDG Public Health travel clinics help clients protect themselves against diseases when travelling to other counties. A travel nurse provides personalized travel advice to clients and administers the vaccinations determined necessary based on travel destination.

17,047
Total appointments

12,113
Immunization appointments

2,595
STI clinic appointments

1,187
Travel clinic appointments

10,053
Vaccines given in clinics

2,887
TB skin tests

2,681
Calls counselled by a WDG Public Health Nurse

Infectious Disease Control

WDG Public Health works to manage cases of reportable infectious diseases in the community. This includes bloodborne infections, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases. It also includes managing flu, intestinal and respiratory outbreaks among vulnerable individuals in long-term care homes and retirement homes.

WDG Public Health nurses and inspectors work 24/7 to ensure timely and effective detection, identification and management of exposures and local cases/outbreaks of infectious and communicable diseases of public health significance.

The goal is to ensure there are limited secondary cases for the disease that is reported to WDG Public Health.



Long-term care or retirement homes were supported by WDG Public Health to contain outbreaks



804

Lab-confirmed or diagnosed-by-physician cases of infectious disease were followed up by WDG Public Health nurses to support the patient and determine the risk of illness spreading or if a location has a cluster of illnesses



982

Calls to the control of infectious disease phone line from places like daycares and long-term homes, as well as members of the public, were followed up by WDG Public Health nurses or inspectors

Your Kids



Wee Talk

wdgpublichealth.ca/weetalk

Wee Talk is a preschool speech and language service for children in Wellington and Dufferin Counties and the City of Guelph. The program serves children from birth to entry into Senior Kindergarten.

Wee Talk is a free service that is funded by the Province and WDG Public Health. Together with local community partners, Wee Talk provides information, education, therapy and programming to preschool-aged children and their caregivers.

After a free assessment with a speech-language pathologist, it may be recommended the child receive services to support their speech and language development. To receive those services, parents/caregivers must attend a one-hour orientation session within three months of the child's initial assessment before being placed on the waiting list. These orientation sessions are hosted at WDG Public Health's locations and delivered by a speech-language pathologist.

The orientation session provides a basic understanding of speech and language development, an overview of the services and programming and offers parents the opportunity to ask questions.

After listening to parents in the program it became apparent that the in-person orientation posed some constraints on attendees around scheduling, transportation and child care. In response, WDG Public Health developed an online Wee Talk orientation program. With the session online, parents



Still from the [Wee Talk promo video](http://wdgpublichealth.ca/weetalk) (wdgpublichealth.ca/weetalk)

802

Preschool-aged children were referred to Wee Talk

and caregivers will be able to complete the orientation in the comfort of their home on any device without time/scheduling, transportation or child care barriers. The online orientation will begin to be offered as an alternative to parents and caregivers beginning in Spring 2019.

Oral Health

wdgpublichealth.ca/oral-health

The Oral Health Team achieves timely and effective detection and identification of children and youth at-risk of poor oral health outcomes.

Their interventions are effective. Overall, the oral health of children and youth in Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph has improved as evidenced by the decreasing percentage of screened children identified with urgent dental needs from a high of 4.3 percent in the 2010/11 school year to 1.82 percent in the 2017/18 school year.



That is significant. Consider that in 2015, 50 children visited Guelph General Hospital and Groves Memorial Hospital with toothaches, tooth decay and infections around their gums and teeth. At a cost of approximately \$513 per visit, the cost to the healthcare system was \$25,650.

These immediate savings do not include the lifelong benefits of avoiding replacement fillings that can turn into more complicated and expensive treatments such as crowns and root canal therapy or the additional costs to the acute healthcare system for many chronic health conditions linked to poor oral health.

In partnership with school boards and schools WDG Public Health also conducts in-school oral screening, fluoride varnish applications (at select schools), and collects oral health data for school-aged children and youth. Registered dental hygienists visit elementary schools and provide a quick check of students' teeth and let parents know if there are any oral health concerns.

The Oral Health Assessment and Surveillance Program includes school screenings that identify children with urgent and non-urgent dental needs. Oral Health Team staff then facilitate referral to care so that children receive necessary dental care. In the classroom, Oral Health Team staff also provide education to students about healthy eating and proper toothbrushing.

This program screens Junior Kindergarten, Senior Kindergarten, Grade 2 and Grade 7 students in schools across Wellington County, Dufferin County and the City of Guelph and includes:

- 89 publicly funded elementary schools
- 14 publicly funded high schools
- 16 private schools (7 in Guelph, 3 in Orangeville, 6 in Wellington)
- 22 parochial schools

At WDG Public Health dental clinics, registered dental hygienists screen for oral health concerns, clean teeth, apply fluoride and sealants, and teach how to properly brush and floss. There is also information and resources available about brushing, healthy eating and other ways to keep mouths healthy.



1,077

Students received a preventative fluoride varnish application by a WDG Public Health dental hygienist

In 2018 WDG Public Health opened the doors to a new dental clinic at the Chancellors Way location and welcomed a dentist, Dr. Baseer Mohammed (“Dr. B”). Dr. B and a team of dental hygienists and assistants provide basic preventive, routine and emergency dental care to eligible children and youth who are enrolled in the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) program. For children living outside of Guelph, WDG Public Health can help enroll families in the HSO program to access services at a private dental office in their area.

Helping You And Your Family

 wdgpublichealth.ca/LTP

 [LetsTalkParenting](#)

 [LetsTalkParents](#)

 1-800-265-7293 ext. 3616

The growth and development of healthy children is a major motivator for WDG Public Health. Healthy behaviours learned in early childhood are often maintained in the teenager years and then as healthy adults.

That is why WDG Public Health considers supporting healthy pregnancies, breastfeeding, growth and development, mental health, preparation for parenting and positive parenting key to keeping whole communities as healthy as possible. Our services are designed to help families stay healthy throughout a family's development.

1,882

New parents received phone support and advice from WDG Public Health nurses after the birth of their baby

WDG Public Health is looking at innovative ways to encourage preconception awareness and skills. With about 50 percent of pregnancies unplanned, lifestyle choices can impact a child even before they're born. WDG Public Health is looking at helping build dialogue between a patient and her doctor about her health even before pregnancy may be considered.



3,124

Visits to families were made by WDG Public Health nurses and home visitors to help with parenting issues

Once pregnant, new parents can come to WDG Public Health for prenatal classes that help them prepare for birth, breastfeeding and baby. If in-person classes are not possible because of a busy family life or other issues the prenatal program is available online. In response to parent feedback

WDG Public Health launched the online course to ensure more parents can benefit from years of WDG Public Health expertise and commitment to healthy families.



2,485

New parent information packages distributed through local doctors and midwives

After the baby arrives, nurses and family visitors through the Health Babies Healthy Children program can support new parents with caring for their new baby, parenting, feeding

and understanding their child's behaviour, as well as connecting to appropriate resources. They work with families to create safe and supportive environments that promote healthy growth and development.

Public Health works to ensure individuals and families have increased knowledge, skills and access to local supports to effectively foster healthy families at different life stages. Individual breastfeeding support is available as are community breastfeeding clinics. Let's Talk Parenting offers free advice on pregnancy, baby care, child health and parenting.

943

Parents called the Let's Talk Parenting line to discuss parenting issues with a WDG Public Health nurse



Your Home



Flooding

wdgpublichealth.ca/flooding

Flooding is the number one threat to property and people in southern and central Ontario. Flooding is more likely in the spring, when there are still ice jams on rivers and heavy rains while the ground remains frozen.

Through a partnership with Dufferin and Wellington Counties, WDG Public Health created an online Flood Guide to help residents prepare for floods, reduce the risk of illness and injury during a flood, and safely clean up after a flood. The Flood Guide also reviews emergency preparedness and potential hazards like injuries, mold, contaminated food and water, and infections.

Radon

wdgpublichealth.ca/radon

During November, WDG Public Health hosted three radon and lung cancer drop-in information sessions at recreation facilities in Guelph, Fergus and Orangeville. Members of the public were able to learn about radon gas, ask questions and purchase a radon test kit for their home at a discounted price.

There was a total of 319 attendees, a 21 percent increase from 2017 sessions, and a total of 418 radon test kits were sold (201 at the sessions and 217 via an online purchasing option). Ninety-four feedback surveys were completed at the sessions which indicated that 86 percent of respondents learned new information about radon, 96 percent of respondents plan to test their homes for radon and 99 percent of attendees would recommend attending an information session to family or friends.



Guelph radon information night, November 5, 2018.

Your Community



Rabies

wdgpublichealth.ca/rabies

WDG Public Health works to prevent the occurrence of rabies and educates the public about the serious risk to humans and pets. If left untreated rabies is always fatal. If there is suspected human exposure it's vital that "post-exposure" treatment is administered as soon as possible through WDG Public Health, a family doctor or a local emergency room.

In 2018, there were five positive rabies cases locally. Four of these cases included two skunks in Elora, a bat in Guelph and a skunk in Mapleton.

The fifth case resulted in multiple individuals being exposed. On August 28, 2018, a bat dove into the quarry swimming area at Belwood Lake. Swimmers tried to rescue the bat and carried it to a picnic table where several adults and children may have touched it. The bat was ultimately retrieved by Grand River Conservation Authority staff and tested positive for rabies. After learning of the event, WDG Public Health issued a media release and social media messaging informing the public that any swimmers who may have touched the bat should go to the nearest emergency department. Fortunately, no human cases resulted from this incident.

Each spring, as the weather warms and more wild animals emerge, WDG Public Health shares information with the public about the importance of vaccinating pets, staying away from wild animals, knowing the warning signs of rabies in animals, and what to do if you see an animal that you suspect could be positive for rabies.



Food Service Inspections

wdgpublichealth.ca/inspections

To protect you and your family against food-borne illnesses, WDG Public Health inspects all venues where food is sold, from the hot dog stand at the corner of Quebec and Wyndham in downtown Guelph to the restaurants lining Broadway in Orangeville. Even the deli counters serving food at the Zehrs in Fergus will receive an unannounced visit from a WDG Public Health inspector specializing in food safety.

Child care, hospital and long-term care kitchens; convenience stores that serve food; and catering companies are all inspected by WDG Public Health to ensure that when you go out you can dine safely.

All WDG Public Health inspection results are available to the public at checkbeforeyouchoose.ca.

Inspections are conducted between one and three times per year depending on the types of food prepared and people served. A full-service restaurant will be inspected three times per year to ensure the process of storing, preparing and serving a meal are following best practices for food safety. A pizza store that is assembling large amounts of prepared food will receive at least two inspections and a deli that is simply serving prepared food would receive at least one inspection annually. WDG Public Health will also inspect a food venue if a complaint is received.



2,600 Restaurants and food premises received an unannounced inspection by WDG Public Health

If there has been an emergency situation like a fire, power outage or flood, WDG Public Health will inspect the premises before it reopens to serve the public and any new food venue has to be inspected by WDG Public Health before celebrating their grand opening.

During food safety inspections, public health inspectors look for:

- Food temperatures
- Food preparation (cooking, storage, receiving)
- Employee hygiene (handwashing)
- Equipment and utensil sanitation
- Food sources
- Pest control
- Facility sanitation (floor, walls, garbage)

If an infraction is found, WDG Public Health notifies the operator and may do a re-inspection. Depending on the circumstances, operators can be issued a Provincial Offence Notice (ticket) or an Order under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. An Order requires the



1,375

Individuals received food handler training

operator to do or refrain from something. An Order may require closure of the premises.

Each month, WDG Public Health offers food handler training courses in our test kitchens in Guelph and Orangeville to those who serve food to the public. The Food Safety program also has 24/7 on-call availability to receive reports of and respond to food safety needs in the community after normal working hours.



261

Inspections at pools and splash pads



16

Inspections at public service settings (hair salon, tattoo studio, etc.)



40

Inspections at spas

Surveying Our Youth

How are young people doing in our community and in school?

 wdgreportcard.com

To help us answer that question, WDG Public Health conducts a Youth Survey every three years for Grade 7 and Grade 10 students. These grades were selected to address gaps in locally available data regarding the health and wellbeing of adolescents.

The Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Youth Survey collects information on a range of topics, including:

- Community and school environments
- Family and peer relationships
- Physical, mental and sexual health
- Substance use

The 2017-18 version of the Youth Survey included several new questions. These questions address bullying, daily video game use, e-cigarettes, cannabis, use of cough or cold medicine to get high, sending sexual photos or messages (“sexting”) and experiences of unwanted sexual activity. The survey was completed by more than 5,300 students across the three school boards.

The Youth Survey revealed trends in what is happening in the lives of local youths and helps teachers and principals understand what is happening outside the classroom that is impacting day-to-day life in the classroom.

Each school gets a custom profile of their student body and specific results are shared with principals and school board administrators. These reports contain information on demographics, school culture, challenges facing students and what protective factors are, or could be, in place. In the spring of 2018, 82 school profiles and 5 school board profiles were shared.

The goal of the Youth Survey is to create a shared understanding of students’ health and development. The survey helps service providers gain valuable insight into the well-being and behaviours of local youth. The knowledge gained from the survey is used to identify issues to focus on at the school, board and community levels.

The 2017-18 WDG Youth Survey results have been shared widely with community groups and service providers. In-depth reports are being developed on topics such as LGBTQ youth.

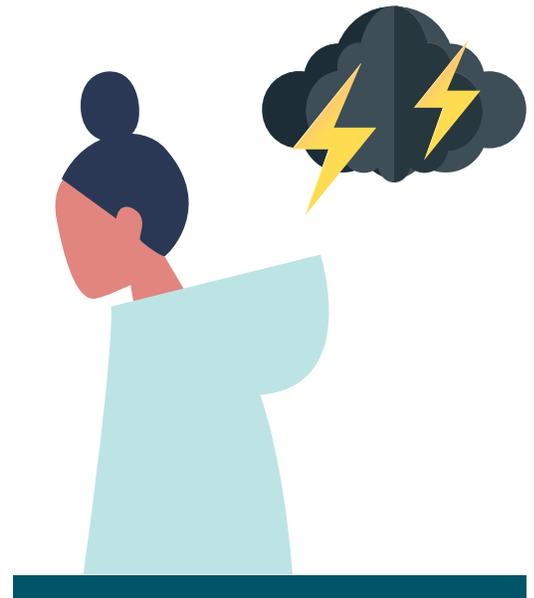
Below are key highlights from the 2017-18 Youth Survey. For more information on these and other findings, visit wdgreportcard.com.

Substance Use

- The proportion of students who reported binge drinking in the last year decreased by 20 percent between 2014-15 and 2017-18.
- The percentage of students who reported using prescription pain pills without a prescription in the last year increased between 2014-15 and 2017-18, especially for Grade 7 students.
- Cannabis use did not change between the 2014-2015 survey and the 2017-2018 survey. Grade 10 students were much more likely to report cannabis use (23 percent) than Grade 7 students (1 percent).

Mental Health

- Female and non-binary youth (who do not identify as male or female) report consistently poorer mental health than male students. This gap was especially evident among Grade 10 students.



Grade 10 girls are facing substantial mental health challenges

- 11 percent of students were at risk of depression. Non-binary (36 percent) and female (15 percent) students were more likely to be at-risk than male students (6 percent).
- 9 percent of Grade 7 students and 13 percent of Grade 10 students reported thoughts of suicide in the past year.

Sedentary Behaviour & Physical Activity

- Screen time outside of school has increased for all grades and genders. Since 2011-12 the number of students who reported more than two hours of screen time a day has increased by 40 percent.
- 25 percent of students report meeting the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for physical activity (at least 60 minutes per day).
- The number of days students reported being physically active was strongly associated with mental health outcomes.

The survey is conducted by WDG Public Health in partnership with the Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Coalition for Report Cards on the Well-Being of Children, the Upper Grand District School Board, the Wellington Catholic District School Board and the Dufferin Peel Catholic District School Board.

Community Health Van

WDG Public Health provides programs and services that create opportunities for everyone to attain their full health potential without disadvantages due to social circumstances.

Reducing or eliminating barriers between population groups, while building healthy communities that support the health and well-being of everyone is a key priority in all program planning at WDG Public Health.

The Community Health Van was established in 2017 in partnership with HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health (ARCH) and the Sanguen Health Centre, with funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation. The Van provides health and support services to individuals who might otherwise not be able to access them from traditional community services.

Since it began operating and throughout all of 2018, the van was visited almost 5,000 times by 1,800 individuals. The outreach services include handing out over 511 naloxone kits along with overdose prevention training. Visitors can receive blood tests for hepatitis and HIV. Vaccinations for influenza and hepatitis A and B are offered along with minor wound care. In the past year the staff and volunteers collected and disposed of 10,187 used syringes.

The Community Health Van's peer support workers, outreach staff, volunteers and nurses make referrals to other community services while supplying van visitors with nutrition and hydration support and personal hygiene items including soap, razors and tampons.

They have also supplied visitors with 1,785 pairs of fresh socks, 281 winter jackets and 1,079 pairs

of winter gloves, hats or scarves.

The Community Health Van is an innovative example of community partners working together to meet specific local needs by providing medical care, mental health support, vaccinations, hepatitis testing and education in a manner that is accessible to individuals who may otherwise not benefit from these services because of social marginalization.



Community Health Van staff.

Guelph

160 Chancellors Way

Fergus

474 Wellington Road #18, Suite 100

Orangeville

180 Broadway

Shelburne

167 Centre Street (Mel Lloyd Centre)

 1-800-265-7293

 wdgpublichealth.ca

