



BUILDING A HEALTHIER OTTAWA

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



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For more than 125 years, Ottawa Public Health has provided public health programs and services to individuals and communities while advocating for public policies that make Ottawa and its residents healthier. Protecting and promoting health and preventing disease is embedded in all that we do.



Message from the Mayor

In 2016, Ottawa Public Health continued to promote and protect the health and safety of the residents of the great City of Ottawa.

Ottawa Public Health is fortunate to employ devoted, enthusiastic and professional employees who strive for success in every facet of their work.

2016 saw the strengthening of many community partnerships, building on relationships that will drive success in the year ahead.

Moving forward, Ottawa Public Health will continue to shape the health of the citizens of Ottawa by improving and advancing healthy eating and active living initiatives, promoting positive mental well-being, ensuring optimal immunization rates, and further developing public health policy.

Together, we can enhance our programs and services to continue to build a City that remains engaged and committed to health and wellness.



His Worship, Mayor Jim Watson,
City of Ottawa



Message from the Chair of Ottawa's Board of Health

As Chair of Ottawa's Board of Health, I am delighted to present our 2016 Annual Report. I'd like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the work of our Ottawa Public Health employees, who have all played a vital role in the success of our programs and services.

The focus of the 2016 Annual Report is to highlight our past successes in promoting and protecting the health of those residing in Ottawa. With assistance from our partners, Ottawa Public Health has been able to make a difference in the lives of both the young and old.

Our partnership with the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, an award-winning centre that provides health-care education and services, led to the creation of a Dental Clinic to serve children, youth and registered Indigenous adults. Since launching, the program has seen over 300 visits. Also, as Ottawa began to see Syrian Refugees arrive in the City, Ottawa Public Health provided dental health screenings to over 900 Syrian Refugees as part of the smiles for Syrian refugees initiative. Dental volunteers gave over 1,000 hours to this vital initiative. These are only two programs – but certainly ones that have made a lasting impact.

As a team, Ottawa Public Health employees continue to drive the objectives of the



2015-2018 Strategic Plan forward by ensuring that we work to increase healthy eating and safe physical activity for all; promote alcohol moderation through awareness and education; increase immunization rates and reduce outbreaks across the City; and strive for increased advocacy in the development of health public policy.

I hope that this year's annual report provides you with an overview of the outstanding work of Ottawa Public Health, as well as a glance at the many dimensions of this City of Ottawa department.

Sincerely,

Councillor Shad Qadri
Chair, Ottawa Board of Health

Message from Ottawa's Medical Officer of Health

It is always my pleasure to present Ottawa Public Health Annual Report to our Board of Health, our clients, partners and all Ottawa residents. In honour of this sesquicentennial year, I was inspired by the City of Ottawa Department of Health's 1967 Annual Report, prepared by Geneva Lewis, R.N., B.Sch., P.H.N., Director of Public Health Nursing. Accordingly, I would like to borrow from that document to provide a glimpse into the evolution of Public Health in Ottawa over the years.

Ms. Lewis noted, in the 1967 Annual Report, that the "Ottawa Board of Health is older than Confederation, older than Ottawa, for in 1832, the Governor of Upper Canada issued an order for the formation of the first Board to control an epidemic of Asiatic Cholera among the immigrants who came to Bytown by way of the newly opened Rideau Canal." As soon as the epidemic subsided, that Board was deemed unnecessary and was discharged.

The report goes on to explain that in 1836 "there were no laboratory facilities and a citizen desiring an analysis of the mineral content of water sent it to the Royal College of Surgeons in London". The results would then be publicly published in the Bytown Gazette.

Another Board of Health was formed in 1847, in response to a typhoid epidemic. The Governor of Upper Canada sent word that "since Bytown had been incorporated, this Board could continue if the municipality would grant the needed subsidy for its existence." However, once the danger had passed, the Town Fathers could see no need and the



Board was once again discharged. By 1865, Ottawa had a health officer and in 1868, passed a by-law "to provide for the health maintenance of the City", which outlined the duties of the health inspector.

In 1890, the Health Department budget was \$5800, made up as follows:

- \$1000 – salary of the Medical Officer of Health
- \$700 – salary of the sanitary inspector
- \$900 – salaries for two (2) assistant sanitary inspectors
- \$100 – uniforms for inspectors
- \$1600 – grants to hospitals for the care of patients with contagious diseases
- \$500 – for removal of nuisances
- \$500 – for contingencies

In 1909, tuberculosis was recognized as a serious infectious disease and the Ottawa "Board of Health asked the Provincial Government to amend the Public Health Act so that the Board would have power to control the disease." This was eventually done in 1912.

The turn of the 20th century marked a new era for Public Health in Ottawa, with attention being directed “beyond the management of crisis towards positive prevention”. Water supply, sewage disposal, milk production and distribution, meat supply, plumbing, laundries, barber shops and housing all came under close scrutiny. Also, the condition of water in the Ottawa River was questioned and an attempt made to “prohibit the discharge of untreated sewage for a distance of 8 to 10 miles above the Chaudière Falls”.

In 1911, a “laboratory was equipped, a morgue was established, a veterinary was employed and a municipal abattoir and cattle yard was recommended, a plumbing inspector was hired and it was recommended that privy vaults be eliminated”.

By 1919, the Public Health Nursing Service had been organized and School Health Service was established in the separate schools, with each nurse serving the schools in her own district.

Fast forward 100 years – While Ottawa Public Health continues to address communicable disease cases, the health unit faces different challenges than it did in the past and our focus has expanded considerably. We now have a better-resourced, forward-looking organization focused on health promotion and disease prevention. These efforts are supported by epidemiological surveillance, analysis of innovative best and promising practices and a strategic plan developed by a supportive and forward-looking Board of Health.

As is demonstrated by this glimpse into our history and by the highlights from 2016 that are



outlined in the subsequent pages of this report, Ottawa Public Health is always evolving, always striving to improve and always looking for new and creative ways to meet the public health needs of Ottawa’s population.

For this issue of the 2016 Ottawa Public Health Annual Report, I, like Ms. Lewis, am indebted to Mrs. M. D. Pacio and those who assisted her in her research in 1967 and I add my gratitude to Ms. Geneva Lewis herself for her commemorative Annual Report in 1967.

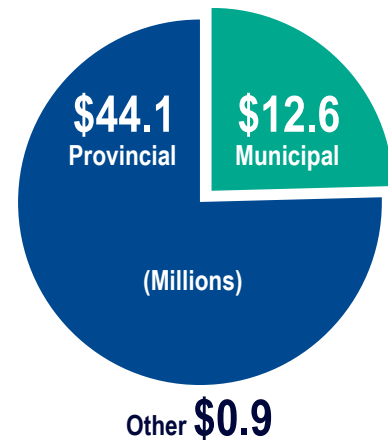
In closing, I thank all Ottawa Public Health employees for their hard work, professionalism and dedication in making Ottawa one of the healthiest cities to call home. And to our Board, our partners and our community, a word of thanks for all you do with us – we cannot do what we do alone.


Dr. Isra Levy

Thank You to Our Funders

Ottawa Public Health 2016 Sources of Funding

Sources of funding	Amount
Total Budget	\$57,765,000
Provincial Funding	\$44,053,000
Municipal Funding	\$12,611,000
Fees and Services	\$880,000



Ottawa Public Health Mandate

Ottawa Public Health provides public health programs and services to individuals and communities while advocating for public policies that make our city and its residents healthier. Ottawa Public Health is a teaching health unit and works with all post secondary educational institutions in the area.

Ottawa Public Health is governed by a Board of Health comprised of elected members of City Council and public members. The legal obligations and authority for public health in Ontario are established under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*. The Ontario Public Health Standards and Organizational Standards establish the requirements for fundamental public health programs and services. Ottawa Public Health services are funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, the City of Ottawa and the Ministry of Children and Youth Services.

Vision

All Ottawa's communities and people are healthy, safe and actively engaged in their well-being.

Mission

In partnership with the people and communities of Ottawa, Ottawa Public Health improves and advocates for health and well-being through prevention, promotion and protection.

Strategic Directions

Ottawa Public Health enters the third year of its *Building a Healthier Ottawa: Ottawa Public Health Strategic Plan 2015-2018*, continuing its efforts to advance health protection and promotion to all of Ottawa. The plan identifies specific strategic directions that ultimately ensure its objectives and goals are realized by 2018. The five strategic directions that will guide Ottawa Public Health through to 2018 are:

Inspire and Support Healthy Eating and Active Living

- Increase healthy eating and safe physical activity among people of all ages, from children to older adults
- Increase the number of people who use active transportation
- Contribute to building healthy, complete communities
- Enhance access to healthy foods
- Increase the number of people who have a healthy weight

Foster Mental Health in Our Community

- Enhance social connectedness and inclusion in our community
- Promote healthy coping mechanisms and resiliency across the lifespan
- Promote a culture of moderation and decrease harms related to alcohol and substance misuse
- Reduce the rate of suicide and other harms from poor mental health

Enhance Collective Capacity to Reduce Preventable Infectious Diseases

- Increase immunization coverage rates and reported coverage rates
- Enhance preparedness to respond to infectious diseases in our community
- Reduce outbreaks in our community
- Enhance partnership to leverage resources for maximum impact

Develop an Adaptive Workforce for the Future

- Create a work environment that supports innovation
- Enhance capacity to develop healthy public policy
- Enhance use and integration of evidence-informed decision making
- Enhance capacity to reach and serve diverse communities (specifically communities facing health inequities)

Advance Healthy Public Policy

- Enhance awareness and understanding of health implications of public policy
- Influence municipal and provincial decisions that impact health
- To be a public health knowledge resource

Annual Highlights

Quality

In 2016, Ottawa Public Health achieved a significant and very important milestone in its quality improvement journey when it was awarded Accreditation with Exemplary Standing from Accreditation Canada. This represents the highest possible level of accreditation, given exclusively to organizations that go beyond the requirements of Accreditation Canada and demonstrate excellence in quality improvement.

The quality journey is a rich one, full of learnings and improvements, which contributes to enhancing the great work that Ottawa Public Health does each and every day.



Clinical Programs

Ottawa Public Health staff managed the serious topic of substance misuse, specifically opioids and overdoses, which garnered much attention in Ottawa in 2016. Ottawa Public Health, in collaboration with the Overdose Prevention and Response Taskforce, launched a public awareness campaign called StopOverdoseOttawa.ca. The website raises awareness about the dangers of illicit Fentanyl and opioid misuse. Ottawa Public Health piloted harm reduction dispensing units, expanded distribution of naloxone (a drug to reverse the effects of an opioid overdose), and demonstrated support for supervised injection sites.

The Clinical Programs Branch assisted those in Ottawa facing health inequities through two specific initiatives: Syrian Refugees and Indigenous Health. Smiles for Syrian Refugees provided over 900 dental screenings to new refugees and treated over 500 patients in public health dental clinics. In total, dental professionals contributed over 1000 volunteer hours to assist with this initiative.

Ottawa Public Health assisted 65 Syrian refugee families integrate into the Ottawa community. Ottawa Public Health linked the families with the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario and other community resources to provide transitional support to families as they left the Refugee Assistance Program.

A new dental clinic was launched at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health to provide dental treatment in a culturally safe space. Ottawa Public Health assisted in over 300 oral health treatment visits. Ottawa Public Health has also been working with local Indigenous and non-Indigenous health sector partners on the development of a strategy intended to address identified health service gaps for First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples living in Ottawa. Consultations with community members and partners were completed in 2016.

Communicable Disease Control & Outbreak Management

In 2016, the Outbreak Management team conducted a number of investigations in a variety of clinical settings in the community and identified nine infection prevention and control lapses. A lapse is defined as a deviation from the infection prevention and control standards of care according to the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee, Public Health Ontario, and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC).

Ottawa Public Health became aware of these infection prevention and control lapses through complaints from residents, referrals from other organizations, communicable disease surveillance activities in personal services settings and in settings not routinely inspected by public health, and clinical settings in which the lapse is linked to the conduct of a regulated health professional.



Environmental & Health Protection

In addition to routine inspections and investigations, Ottawa Public Health Inspectors (PHIs) are available on a 24hr/7day basis to respond to community concerns, manage health hazards, and achieve MOHLTC Accountability Agreement targets. The Environment & Health Protection (EHP) Branch has also worked towards enhancing community engagement through the integration of client and partner-centred strategies to ensure evidence-informed decision making, tailoring programs to a local context and emphasizing continuous quality improvement.

With the support of the Board of Health, EHP launched an online trial colour rating system for food safety inspection results. The online trial colour rating system aims to increase public knowledge, awareness and access to inspection results in order to arm residents and visitors with all the requisite information to make informed decisions about where they choose to eat.

In addition, Ottawa Public Health completed consultations regarding a new regulatory initiative for personal service settings that focused on enhanced regulatory options designed to increase inspection effectiveness, promote infection prevention and control, and protect members of the public. These consultations were promoted in a variety of communication channels, including social media ads, email, in-person through PHIs seeking to engage internal and external partners, business owners and operators and the public to partake in a combination of online surveys, internal and external stakeholder focus groups, and phone interviews with an objective to better understand how to best protect and inform the public.

Emergency Preparedness & Response

In 2016, Ottawa Public Health programs and staff responded to twelve enhanced or activated responses which dealt with public health issues. Examples of responses included supporting vulnerable residents who were evacuated to City Emergency Reception and Lodging sites, ensuring water quality during the Rideau Street major sink hole occurrence and supporting the public health needs of Syrian Refugees arriving in Ottawa with immunization requirements and dental health issues. Ottawa Public Health was also activated to conduct contact tracing and assessment of all contacts exposed to cases of measles and cases of Hepatitis A. To minimize the risk of spreading measles in the community, over 500 individuals were assessed by Ottawa Public Health and 80 referrals made to other health units. To minimize the risk of Hepatitis A spreading in the community over 700 people were contacted with 580 of them given a prophylaxis.



Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health

Raising awareness about the fact that infants and young children have mental health has been a priority for our community. In Canada, less than five per cent of babies are born with any limits on their ability to develop, but by the time our children reach school, one in four have fallen behind – these numbers are the same for Ottawa. Ottawa Public Health has been working with multiple community partners to raise awareness about the fact that early childhood experiences impact developing brains for a lifetime. Our community partners have also joined the conversation and approximately 100 of them came together this past November to learn about Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health (IECMH).

Together, we are developing a collective voice with the community leaders of Ottawa on the importance of promoting and protecting IECMH.

Alcohol in Our Community

In 2016, Ottawa Public Health released the *Status of Alcohol: Let's continue the conversation* report. The report blended local data, evidence and lived experiences, and included a range of information collected from an online public survey that asked Ottawa residents to share their stories of harms of alcohol in our community. Over 2,000 online survey responses were collected and over 40 stakeholders also provided their input. In 2017, Ottawa Public Health will continue to build awareness of alcohol-related health effects through ongoing conversations with the community and stakeholders, setting the stage to assess local level alcohol policies.

Strategic Support

The Strategic Support Branch worked with other Ottawa Public Health branches and City partners to advance healthy public policy through the built environment, bringing health and well-being perspectives into decisions on community design and the built environment. Feedback took place in a range of policies and plans such as the Zoning By-law amendment relating to farmers' markets and community gardens, input on road traffic calming projects, contributions to the draft Urban Forest Management Plan, and participation in the development of Community Design Plans. These policies provided an opportunity to highlight the important health impacts of our natural and physical environments, including encouraging healthy eating and active living, promoting road safety, improving air quality and mitigating climate change, increasing access to green spaces, and reducing health inequities.

Residents and partners expect to be able to access health information and do business digitally through their smartphone, tablet, or desktop using new and interactive channels such as social media and video chat. To this end, Ottawa Public Health has developed a Digital Communication Strategy which will evolve our existing digital media landscape through an increased and coordinated use of web, mobile and social media. Phase 1 started in 2016 and involved laying out the building blocks of the strategy, with a focus on integrating existing Ottawa Public Health websites into one intuitive and robust web platform, and the introduction of new online capabilities such as appointment scheduling and social media integration. Future phases will focus on leveraging new multi-channel capabilities by integrating them into the new contact centre. This will allow for client inquiries to be received through a variety of ways, such as online chat, instant messaging, video conferencing and 'click to call' features.

Vaccine Preventable Diseases Program – Improved Client Experience

The Vaccine Preventable Diseases Program (VPD) initiated a number of quality improvement initiatives aimed at improving immunization reporting rates by parents, increasing access to publicly funded vaccines and finding efficiencies within our program. Reporting rates were improved through changes to the Ottawa Public Health online reporting form and partnering with CanImmunize App. These changes made it easier for parents to report their children's immunizations to Ottawa Public Health. In addition, the use of an automated dialer software enabled faster reach to more families to update and verify immunization records.

Access to publicly funded vaccines was increased by offering weekly and now daily immunization clinics at 100 Constellation Drive for families with barriers to access to a doctor. School catch-up and flu clinics for families with children under five years of age were also offered monthly in the east region of Ottawa. Ottawa Public Health flu clinics were realigned to be offered in areas of the city with limited access to pharmacies that offered influenza vaccination, such as rural areas, group homes and shelters.

Efficiencies were made within the VPD program that resulted in an increased capacity of nurses, improved school immunization clinic consent form and a more client-focused process for receiving immunization-related calls.

Ottawa Public Health by the Numbers

Helping Ottawa residents find their own pathways to healthy, safe and active lifestyles is what Ottawa Public Health employees seek to do every day. Here are some examples of what Ottawa Public Health has accomplished with its partners in 2016:

- 1905** Food handlers successfully passed the City training exam
- 10 590** Food inspections completed
- 1278** Public pool inspections completed
- 655** Syrian refugee families integrated into Ottawa
- 24 000** Dental clinic visits
- 105** People trained to use Naloxone
- 178** Naloxone kits handed out
- 40 537** Clients assisted through Ottawa Public Health Information Line
- 188** Intermediaries trained on Healthy Eating and Active Living guidelines
- 8150** Children in Ottawa's afterschool programs, child care and breakfast programs
- 880+** Visits were made to families in family and women's shelters, including St. Mary's Home, YMCA, and more.
- 900+** Syrian refugees included in the Smiles for Syrian Refugees initiative
- 500+** Patients received oral health treatment in our dental clinics
- 1453** Clients helped through smoking cessation services
- 5071** Parents meaningfully engaged at Parenting in Ottawa Drop-Ins
- 1032** Families attended in-person prenatal sessions
- 106** Unique workplaces actively engaged in mental health activities
- 1084** Teachers received capacity-building sessions
- 621** Media requests
- 48 767** Twitter followers (46,001 English / 2,766 French)
- 29 091** Facebook followers (across all Ottawa Public Health Facebook platforms)



THANK YOU to Our Committed Partners

Ottawa Public Health sincerely thanks its partners and volunteers for their continued confidence and support in ensuring the delivery of its many programs and services. Without their collaboration, Ottawa Public Health would not be able to remain as dedicated to the residents of Ottawa.



