



PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITY'S HEALTH

Ottawa Public Health's 2019-2022 Strategy
2021 Q2 Progress Update

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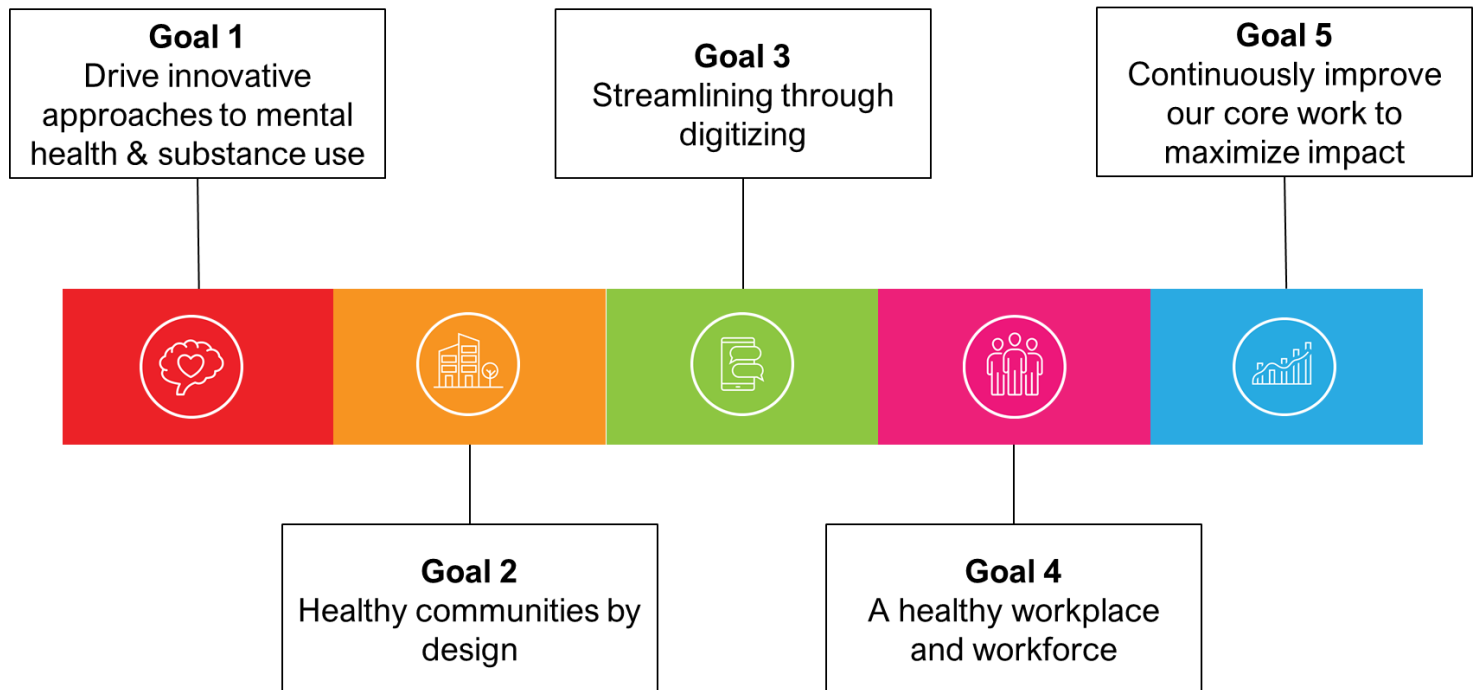
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Strategic Goals





Goal 1 – Drive innovative approaches to mental health and substance use – Status, Highlights and Achievements

Quarterly Status

Q1 2021

Q2 2021

Q3 2021

Q4 2021

Highlights

Workshops and Training

- Mental Health Promotion & Stigma Reduction workshops were delivered to almost 100 participants.
- The Launch of the *have THAT talk* about Racism video series webinar during Mental Health Week was viewed by over 325 people.
- Continued to foster resilient communities by using targeted strategies to address risk factors and promote protective factors for mental health by providing mental health workshops to 42 participants; mental health crisis management training to 42 faith leaders; and mental health promotion workshops for African Caribbean Black (ACB) communities including presentations to 163 attendees during Black Mental Health Week.

Resource Development and Promotion

- Physicians Update article on the opioid and overdose crisis, the current situation in Ottawa and support for physicians with screening, treatment and harm reduction.
- Updated overdose awareness posters and postcards with QR codes and adapted these bilingual resources into additional languages (Arabic and Somali). Distributed posters in community pharmacies, through the community outreach unit, and provided postcards to local pharmacists to include with the mail out naloxone kits program.
- Promotion of mental health and substance use resources to partners, primary care physicians, pharmacies and the public in order to facilitate increased access to mental health and substance use services. This includes posting mental health and substance use fact sheets and posters at mass immunization clinics (ex. City Hall, Nepean Sportsplex, etc.).
- Your Minute Campaign - OPH partnered with YouthNet, the Kids Come First Health Team and The Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative to launch the Your Minute in a Pandemic Video Campaign. Local youth groups shared their messages of hope, resilience, and coping strategies during the #COVID19 pandemic. To date, the campaign videos have received over 2,000 views on the English Instagram account and over 1,500 views on the French.
- Launch of [haveTHATtalk About Racism](#) with over 1,800 views to date.
- Worked with Orléans Health Hub to design, develop and deliver voluntary smoke and vape-free signage for their property.
- In partnership with Tungasuvvingat Inuit, OPH developed an education and promotion postcard in

Inuktitut, English and French to expand awareness of the NRT services available to Inuit and First Nations people.

- OPH supported the construction industry by delivering a workshop to the National Capital Heavy Construction Association (NCHCA) Health & Safety Committee, which is comprised of health and safety professionals from many of their contractor members. The workshop covered the topics of Substance Use and Mental Health and provided an overview of local resources. OPH is currently engaging and meeting with the local construction industry to share Stop Overdose resources and meeting regularly to explore and deliver on additional ways to support the construction community moving forward.
- In June, OPH and OCAP partners launched the [Ottawa Community Action Plan \(OCAP\)](#) website, which provides access to information related to the OCAP in one consolidated space. It showcases how the Ottawa community is working together to drive action to address stigma related to substance use, providing access to harm reduction services and creating a more centralized and simplified way to access substance use and mental health services in Ottawa.
- In response to a request for additional sessions, OPH provided another round of workshops to City Councillors and their staff on Stigma related to COVID-19, Mental Health and Substance Use. The workshops equipped attendees with knowledge and tools to communicate with residents about COVID-19, mental health and substance use in a way that can help residents feel supported and informed without perpetuating further harm.

Programming and Collaboration for System Change

- Expansion of Ontario Naloxone Distribution Program to include Ottawa Paramedic Services as well as working with the Ministry and Ottawa Police Services to explore naloxone kit distribution.
- Launch of the Safer Supply Ottawa local Community of Practice.
- Participating on the local 'Getting to Tomorrow' working group to plan a community stakeholder conversation including those with living experience on decriminalization of people who use controlled substances and the legalization of drugs (event planned for September 2021)
- Transitioning back to full tobacco and vape enforcement duties with necessary health and safety protocols in place.
- Working with The Ottawa Hospital (TOH) and community providers on developing a plan to better support those with substance use disorder in hospitals and those transitioning out of hospital.
- Development of OPH's Anti-Racism/Anti-Oppression Workplace policy aimed at creating a positive work environment for OPH employees while recognizing and preventing racially inequitable outcomes.
- Collaboration with African, Caribbean and Black (ACB) partners in creating a centralized list of culturally appropriate mental health services for Ottawa's ACB community.

Challenges

- Overdoses continue to increase and the proportion of the population reporting mental health needs has risen in the pandemic, requiring additional approaches across multiple organizations and sectors.
- Decreased capacity due to temporary changes in positions and staff leaves.



Goal 2 Healthy Communities by Design - Status, Highlights and Achievements

Quarterly Status

Q1 2021

Q2 2021

Q3 2021

Q4 2021

Highlights

COVID-19 Awareness and Behaviours

In January 2021, OPH enlisted EKOS Research Associates to conduct telephone polling among Ottawa residents to learn more about their perceptions of COVID-19 vaccines, and potential barriers to uptake. By the end of May, a total of 1643 respondents completed the EKOS survey. Results are unchanged from Quarter 1 and highlights include:

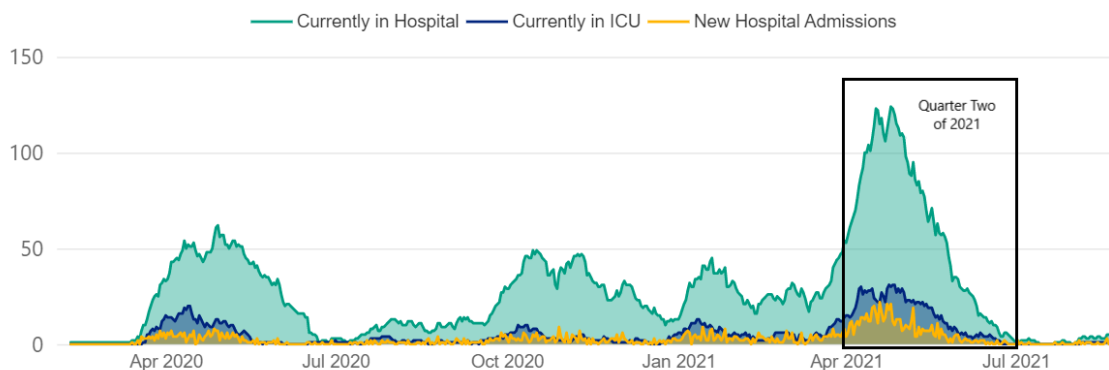
- 90% of respondents indicated they will continue taking precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (wearing a mask and physical distancing) over the next 6 months.
- 86% of respondents intend to get a COVID-19 vaccine once available
- 68% of respondents feel they have enough information about COVID-19 vaccine to decide whether to get vaccinated

OPH continued to provide communications to support informed decisions. In May, OPH launched the [“Community Immunity: It Starts with You”](#) campaign to encourage residents to get their first dose of the vaccine. OPH also developed a [“How to talk vaccines”](#) guide to help residents talk to their friends, family members, colleagues, and employees about getting the COVID-19 vaccine as well as a series of [videos](#) to encourage residents to get vaccinated and break down the myths of vaccination. The OPH Communications Team disseminates these products through various channels on a regularly basis to provide residents with reputable, evidence-based information.

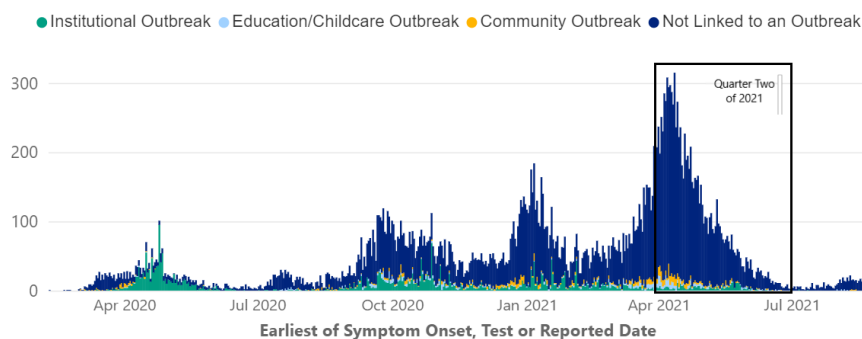
COVID-19 Control and Containment in Ottawa

The start of the quarter was among the most challenging times of the pandemic with the number of people testing positive for COVID-19, hospitalizations, outbreaks, and mutations hitting all-time highs as well as the expansion of the COVID-19 immunization campaign. After peaking in mid-April, a gradual improvement occurred for most COVID-19 indicators. Most notably, weekly COVID-19 rates went from 208.5 cases per 100,000 people per week at their peak in mid-April to 13.7 per 100,000 people per week by mid-June. On June 11th, the Province moved to Step 1 of its reopening plan.

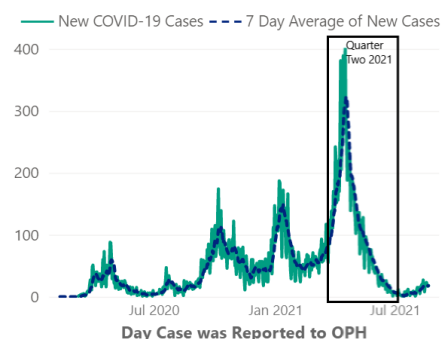
Hospitalizations of Ottawa Residents with Confirmed COVID-19



Outbreak Association



Newly Reported COVID-19 Cases by Day



Late in Q2, there was a reduction in people seeking COVID-19 testing as well as a fluctuating COVID-19 viral signal in wastewater. However, the level of transmission in the community at the start of the summer 2021 was still much higher than that of summer 2020. In addition, there are more transmissible COVID-19 variants being detected.

As part of its COVID-19 case and contact management process, OPH continued to communicate with every resident who received a positive COVID-19 test result, as well as notify residents deemed to be a high-risk close contact of these individuals. OPH also investigated all reports of COVID-19 illnesses in workplaces by working directly with the individuals who tested positive as well as with the workplace itself to determine risk of transmission and risk to employee/public health and safety.

Most known exposures continue to be from household and social contacts (51%), followed by outbreaks (9%). For every positive case, the Case and Contact Management team investigates the origins of infection to prevent onward spread, yet 28% of the time, individuals are unable to identify a source, suggesting undetected community spread.

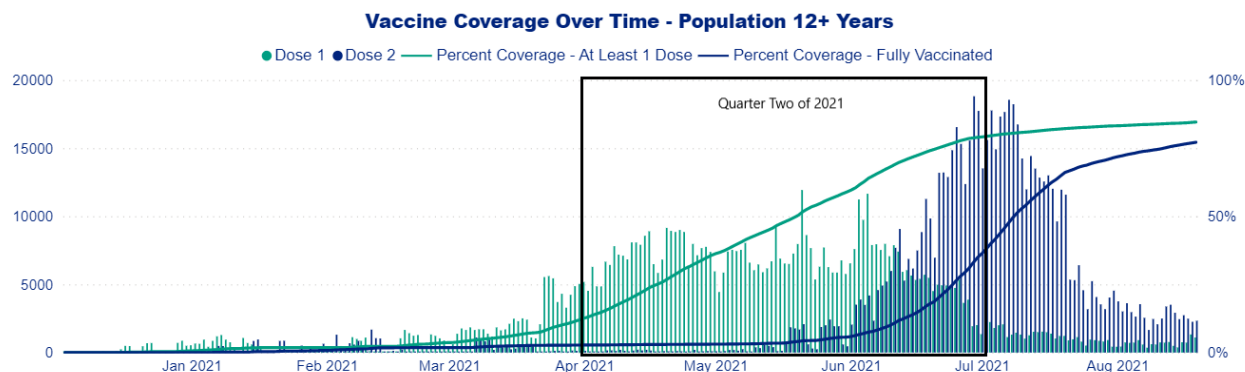
Though OPH saw a decrease in outbreak numbers in Q2, there continued to be ongoing outbreaks in institutional settings and workplaces and continued work aimed at preventing outbreaks through promotion of appropriate infection prevention and control practices.

COVID-19 Vaccination Program

With respect to our vaccination efforts, by the end of June, 79% of Ottawa's eligible population (12+ years) received at least one dose and 35% were fully vaccinated. As for Ottawa's overall population, 69% of residents received their first dose and 30% were fully vaccinated.

OPH and the City of Ottawa continued to operate community clinics at locations across the City and pop-up clinics in priority neighbourhoods. COVID-19 vaccines are also available at pharmacies in and around Ottawa, as well as in some primary care settings.

The vaccine rollout continued to incorporate neighbourhood-based approaches, which includes supporting individuals disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and who may face increased barriers to accessing the vaccine. In addition, with the expansion of eligibility to include 12- to 17-year-olds, OPH's primary focus for this age group was having eligible youth fully vaccinated before the start of school.



Supporting communities at higher risk of COVID-19 to get vaccinated

OPH worked closely with community partners throughout Q2 to build vaccine confidence, increase vaccination coverage rates and support sectors to operate safely in the transition between reopening stages/steps. Some key examples of the work of OPH's Community Operations Branch include:

- Engage with sector partners to understand gaps, assess information needs, develop resources, and support the integration of COVID-wise behaviours into their operations. This included providing up to date and accurate information on vaccination options, as well as Provincial re-opening and Stay-at-Home order announcements in a variety of ways, including email communication, phone calls, virtual information sessions, partner meetings, focus groups, web content and more. These sectors included businesses, sports teams and associations, events, childcare, places of worship, day camps, post-secondary institutions, youth and young adult organizations, groups representing older adults, volunteer organizations, stakeholders representing landlords and property managers, and more. Some key examples of this work include the following:
 - Worked with Faith Leaders and Places of Worship to disseminate messages proactively to sector-wide distribution list (approx. 350 recipients) to provide situational awareness and to thank Faith Leaders for their leadership. In Q2, messages focused on the emergency brake shutdown/Stay-at-Home Order/transition to the Reopening Framework, reminding congregations about being COVID-wise during notable religious holidays (e.g. Ramadan), highlighting mask/physical distancing/screening requirements, providing links to OPH signage/resources and sharing mental health resources.
 - Worked closely with City partners in Children's Services to support vaccination efforts for the childcare sector. This included focused conversations about the vaccine rollout and supporting the sector through the Provincial announcement that childcare providers would be prioritized for vaccine eligibility. OPH also engaged with more than 20 key stakeholders in the childcare sector to understand the barriers licensees may be experiencing with respect to obtaining their vaccinations and followed-up by collating resources and information to ensure providers/managers were empowered with the requisite information to make informed decisions about obtaining vaccination. Information about the importance of vaccination, availability of community and pop-up clinics, the safety of interchanging mRNA vaccines, and more was also provided regularly
 - Supported businesses with information and resources about COVID-19 vaccinations by updating

the COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit for Employers, communicating about the necessity of health and safety protocols and formal safety plans, hosting business reopening workshops to support reopening after the Provincial Stay-at-Home order, highlighting the importance of mental health and resources to support employers and their employees, and providing general issues management support. On May 27, OPH partnered with the Ottawa Coalition of Business Improvement Areas (OCOBIA) to host, promote and deliver a webinar focused on assisting businesses with reopening safely following the Provincial Stay-at-Home Orders. Approximately 150 people joined the webinar, which was also posted on OCOBIA's website for anyone not able to view live. Moreover, 23 newsletters were sent to OPH's Business and Sports, Recreation and Fitness distribution lists, reaching over 1,930 contacts.

- Worked closely with the Ottawa Health Team, Emergency Operations Centre and the immunization program to offer vaccination options to reach residents living in high priority neighbourhoods to increase coverage equitably with other neighbourhoods. Worked closely with community partners to select familiar and accessible locations within neighbourhoods to increase convenience. Offered 74 Pop Up clinics and door-to-door vaccination in 15 Ottawa Community Housing complexes, in partnership with the Ottawa Health Team.
- Outreach to priority communities disproportionately affected by COVID-19 to reduce barriers to access the vaccine through appointment distribution. These efforts included conversations about the vaccine and involved multilingual staff to reduce barriers to information. Additionally, support was enhanced at testing and vaccine clinics with diverse language support to engage with clients, answer questions and provide referrals to wraparound services to better serve the community. Coordinated outreach efforts with the community engagement team and partners for in person and online resulted in 30,495 interactions in Q2.
- Partnering with community organizations to host public town halls in multiple languages, featuring the voices and perspectives of health professionals from diverse ethnocultural backgrounds. OPH lead 22 townhalls in 8 different languages (English, French, Swahili, Creole, Arabic, Kirundi, Somali, Bengali) from April to June. These town halls have enabled a dialogue where OPH and partners have listened and addressed concerns from residents while highlighting credible sources of information to assist in building vaccine confidence. Feedback from these sessions continues to influence our planning, operations, and engagement work. This has included shifting staffing to ensure employees with diverse language abilities are working at specific pop-ups to support residents in their first language; allocating additional accessible parking spaces and adapting processes to better support individuals living with disabilities; and learning new ways to share credible information with diverse audiences to help build vaccine confidence.
- Working with community partners and service providers, using a train-the-trainer model, to help build capacity to discuss vaccines with residents and help build vaccine confidence and support people to access vaccines. This work is supported through a variety of resources such as FAQs, tips on talking about vaccines and a "Vaccine 101" presentation. In April, 5 service provider presentations were delivered, reaching 490 people with the capacity to share and deliver presentations with their clients and network. A French and English presentation was recorded and posted to YouTube, resulting in over 250 views supporting service providers.
- Working with Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health and Akausivik Inuit Family Health Team to plan for access to culturally safe COVID-19 vaccinations for First Nation, Inuit and Métis community members in Ottawa. Since mid-February, OPH has partnered with Wabano, Akausivik and Tungasuvvingat Inuit to offer Indigenous-specific clinics. Through these partnerships, by the end of June 2021, approximately 30,000 first and second doses of the COVID-19 vaccine had been provided. OPH and partners are

committed to ensuring that members of First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities can access the vaccine as quickly and safely as possible.

- OPH is also partnering with the Ottawa Aboriginal Coalition's Research Committee on a study to understand and document First Nation, Inuit and Métis people's experience with COVID-19 from the perspectives of community members as well as Urban Indigenous service providers in Ottawa.

Official Plan and Climate Change

As members of the Official Plan team, OPH continued to support the draft Official Plan by providing health expertise at public consultation and engagement sessions and informing revisions to the policies. In addition, OPH supported the City's climate change vulnerability assessment, including ongoing internal and external engagement.

Challenges

Ministry Direction

Adapting to the frequent guidance changes and complexity of the vaccine program has been challenging.

Staffing

With increasing pandemic and core operational demands, it is a challenge to balance the need for agility and moving highly skilled employees to where they are most needed in the organization, as well as ensuring team / employee continuity and capacity.

Behaviours

Vaccine hesitancy remains a challenge and is being addressed through community outreach and communication strategies.

The Communications team is noticing some messaging fatigue around vaccines.



Goal 3 – Streamlining through digitization - Status, Highlights and Achievements

Quarterly Status

Q1 2021

Q2 2021

Q3 2021

Q4 2021

Highlights

Case and Contact Management System

In April, OPH fully adopted the provincial COVID-19 case and contact management solution (CCM), realizing the benefits of working in a centralized system with all 34 health units. In total, 670 OPH staff were onboarded and are actively managing COVID-19 cases, contacts, outbreaks, and adverse events following immunization (AEFI) in the system.

There is ongoing engagement with the Ministry of Health (Ontario) as the system stabilizes, including refining Ontario Laboratories Information System (OLIS) integration and the release of COVaxON vaccine data to CCM. As the system completes its technical evolution, efforts will be directed towards preparation for the expansion of CCM to incorporate all diseases of public health significance.

Locally, OPH teams continue to refine their processes and move from stabilization to operationalization of CCM. This includes reviewing enhanced features in CCM, such as automation, and incrementally incorporating them into current processes.

COVaxON

Over the last 3 months, the COVID-19 vaccine response hit its peak, with as many as 20,000 doses being administered per day in Ottawa through a variety of delivery channels including pharmacies, hospitals, primary care, neighbourhood, mobile, pop-up, and community mass immunization clinics. All of these doses were administered using the COVaxON database. OPH continued to provide responsive onboarding and operational support to over 6000 users, with roughly 40% of those being from external community partners.

Challenges

The ever-evolving CCM system development, coupled with changes to case and contact management guidelines, remain a challenge for OPH. This evolution draws on resources and requires a constant effort in change management across programs.

A key challenge related to COVaxON has been related to the onboarding of primary care physicians. OPH continues to work with the province and the primary care sector to look for ways to automate and integrate COVaxON with primary care EMR systems.

Our local privacy and security posture remains a priority. With system maturity and business process changes, it is crucial that technical and procedural safeguards follow suit. Ministry of Health (MOH) engagement in relation to these safeguards is a dependency. Collaboration with MOH is ongoing and internal procedures are in place to address all gaps within OPH control.



Goal 4 – A healthy workplace and workforce - Status, Highlights and Achievements

Quarterly Status

Q1 2021

Q2 2021

Q3 2021

Q4 2021

Highlights

Spring 2021 Employee Pulse Survey: Showed improvements from employees when compared to the Fall 2020 Employee Pulse. Mental health concerns aren't as high as they were in the fall. Balancing constant change and shifting workload due to the pandemic is less challenging, so is maintaining team spirit and feeling a sense of connection to co-workers. Significantly more employees feel supported by their leader and feel their leader embodies servant leadership behaviours than they did in the fall. There is more clarity regarding Service Area goals as well as personal goals and priorities.

Employee Recognition Event: Over 500 OPH employees attended an annual recognition celebration. Service milestones were celebrated at this annual event. Evaluation feedback was very positive.

Wellness@Work Action Plan: Updated with feedback collected through the Spring Employee Pulse and through the Recovery Planning Employee survey to focus on rejuvenation as we begin the recovery planning process.

Communication: The Wellness@Work committee continues to have a strong presence in the Daily Buzz, emails from Dr. Etches and Town Halls. Messaging during Q2 focused on:

- Employee Recognition
- Recharge
- Wellness and mental health

Leadership Toolkit: W@W presented a Wellness Toolkit focused on recovery planning with OPH Leaders (e.g. supervisors). This toolkit offers a variety of mental health information and supports.

Challenges

The Spring Employee Pulse survey showed that OPH Managers and Program Managers are faring worse when compared to OPH Employees and/or City Managers and Program Managers.

- 88% indicated it is somewhat or very challenging to balance constant change and shifting workload because of the COVID-19 pandemic (compared to 51% of City of Ottawa Managers/PM's)
- 88% indicated their workload is heavy or very heavy (compared to 86% of City Managers/PM's)
- 38% indicated their energy level had been very low/exhausted in the last week (compared to 7% of City of Managers/PM's)
- 25% indicated they can't concentrate at all and are totally mentally drained (compared to 0% of City Managers/PM's)
- 51% indicated they are never or rarely able to disconnect from work during off hours (compared to 27% of City Managers/PM's)

Feedback from all OPH employees on the Spring Employee Pulse indicated that:

- General well-being has deteriorated for 47% of employees since the pandemic.
- Work demands have increased for 83% of employees (compared to 54% for City-Wide) yet productivity is similar to what it was prior to the pandemic or has improved.
- Many temporary employees face uncertainty regarding their future roles and are seeking clear communications as plans develop.



Goal 5 - Continuously improve our core work to maximize impact - Status, Highlights and Achievements

Quarterly Status

Q1 2021

Q2 2021

Q3 2021

Q4 2021

Quality Improvement Initiatives Undertaken

COVID-19

Process Improvements

- Migrated COVID-19 reporting from the COVID-19 Ottawa Database (COD) to the provincial Case and Contact Management (CCM) solution.
- Introduced evidence-informed approaches to improving case and contact management.
- Established crisis surge approach (RAP - Rapid Alternate Practice) when cases continuously exceeded 200 per day. During surge, the Case Management team only conducted rapid case intakes.
- To keep web content up to date, a weekly Quality Assurance working group was pulled together to review changes to guidance and procedures and update OPH's website accordingly.
- Continually adapting processes and communication for Neighbourhood Pop-up vaccination clinics to ensure all partners receive outreach and promotional materials in a timely manner.

Technology and Automation

- The Community Operations team is now using Active Campaign software to streamline stakeholder communications and be able to obtain data on effectiveness of these communications.

Documentation, Resource Development and Training

- Developed case and high-risk contact letters to assist with surge. Letters are sent to cases to have them assist with contact tracing.
- Case management conducted documentation audits to increase standardization of work across team members.
- Provided ongoing in-service sessions, training, and daily reminders to ensure staff were kept up to date with the latest information.
- Utilizing the recommendations from Ontario's Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission Report, IPAC created an outbreak prevention site visit plan. The plan includes a prevention site visit checklist, useful educational videos, and audit tools to share with facilities, as well as an evaluation survey for post-visit feedback.
- The Immunization team provided training to staff through educational modules to prevent needlestick injuries and shoulder injury related to vaccine administration (SIRVAs) at OPH COVID-19 Vaccine clinics. These training modules were mandatory for all new staff working in OPH COVID-19 Vaccine

clinics.

- Developed and launched the [COVID-19 Vaccine Toolkit for Employers](#) to support workplaces, increase vaccination among employees, and establish supportive policies and best practices to encourage vaccination.

Non-COVID-19

- Continuous assessment of treatments to be provided in the dental clinics based on patient volume and clinic capacity.

Highlights

COVID-19

- The Case Management team successfully transitioned to CCM in mid-April in partnership with OPH's Digital Solutions team. This included training over 300 case management employees, re-defining many processes, and enhancing QA audits to rectify any data entry issues early.
- Case Management also worked with provincial workforces to increase capacity during surge periods and database migration with over 1300 cases managed by this group.
- Several quality improvement initiatives were undertaken to prevent SIRVAs and needlestick injuries and several additional initiatives will continue to be implemented.
- In collaboration with Immunization, IPAC has contributed significant resources to promoting vaccination and reducing barriers for LTCH and RH staff, surrounding vaccine access. Staff vaccination rates increased by 30 percentage points in LTCH to 86% and 40 percentage points in RH to 85%.
- IPAC continues to coordinate outreach and prevention strategies with the Regional Infection IPAC Team including, on-site mentorship and IPAC education to facilities.
- OPH IPAC is working closely with the Regional IPAC to scope an Outbreak 101 Community of Practice in the Fall of 2021.
- Neighbourhood Pop-up Vaccination clinics: Facilitated planning, outreach and onsite clinic support for 76 clinics, which resulted in 44,281 doses administered.
- The Community Operations team provided Vaccine 101 workshops and Townhall sessions in eight languages to provide evidence-based information on COVID vaccination from trusted community leaders.

Non-COVID-19

- Providing client satisfaction surveys to HGD clients in other languages to increase response rate.
- Dental revenues at 50% of pre-pandemic quarter for the first time since March 2020.

Challenges

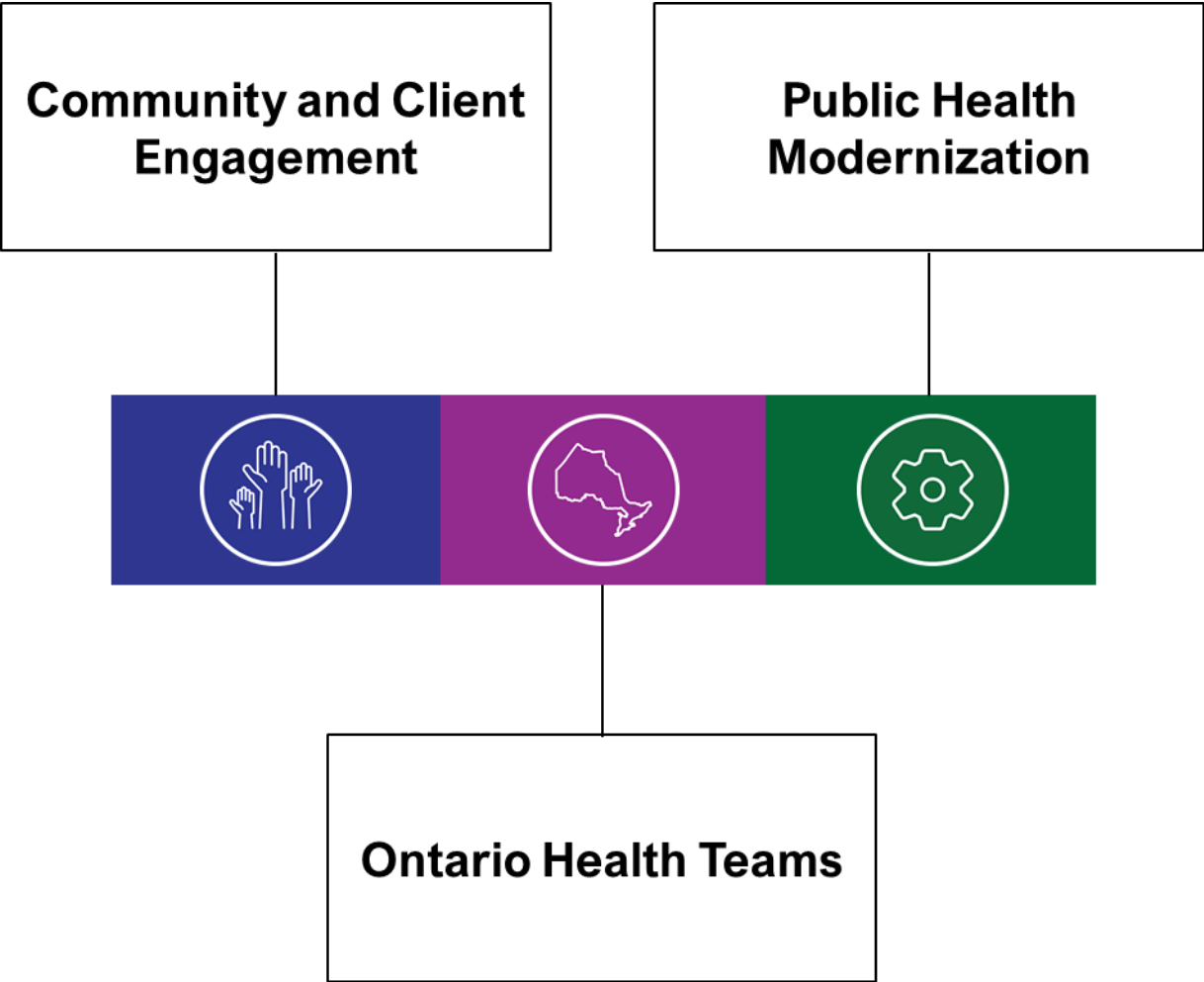
COVID-19

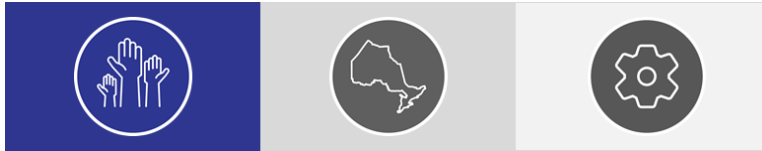
- Highest surge of cases coincided with the transition to CCM in April and saw case counts of 500-600 per day at peak which meant the CM team had to prioritize work and focus on rapid case intakes only.
- Demand for epidemiological input, products, and public inquiries continues to be high.
- Rapid onboarding and training of new staff, with varying levels of immunization experience, combined with the high volume at OPH COVID-19 Vaccine clinics, presented challenges in ensuring staff had the support they needed while also maintaining quality control.
- Staffing challenges due to transitions, vacation, and other leaves.

Non-COVID-19

- Staffing for non-COVID programs and services is still limited due to the demands of the COVID-19 pandemic and vaccine response.
- Staffing challenges due to transitions, vacation, and other leaves.
- The Dental team has been working at capacity managing emergency visits and thus unable to decrease the waiting list.
- Increase in demand for sexual health services with limited appointment availability has led to increased wait times.

Transformational Initiatives





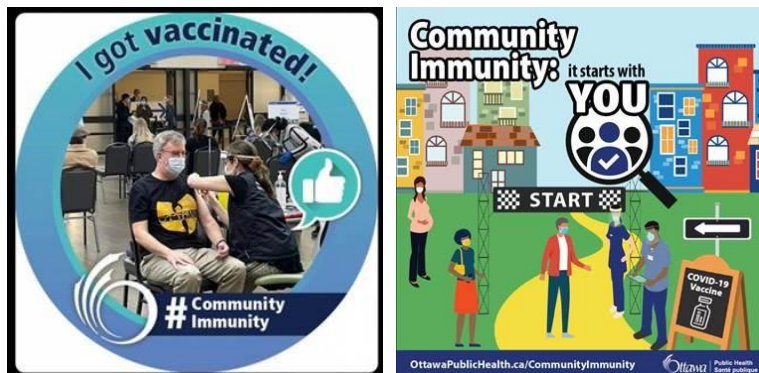
Community and Client Engagement - Highlights and Achievements

Projects/Initiatives Undertaken

- Continued engagement with elected officials and various stakeholders to keep them informed about OPH's work as well as respond to questions and concerns.
- Engagement with hospital partners in discussions regarding the pressures on the health care system to guide our key messages. OPH also stayed connected with hospital communications partners on media opportunities and messaging.
- The MOH began regularly scheduled 1:1 meetings with the Executive Director of the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership (OLIP) to align strategies to support communities with greater proportions of newcomers and racialized populations.
- The Communications team continues to leverage its social media channels (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, YouTube) to engage diverse population-based segments in different ways (e.g. parents, youth, older adults). The team reads and responds to all messages, mentions and private messages.
 - This allows for OPH to be highly responsive and engaged with the community, flag risks for other areas of the department, and anticipate potential issues and pitfalls for crisis communications. This approach continues to be recognized by several other jurisdictions as a best practice for communications and community engagement.
- The Mental Health and Substance use unit, in collaboration with OCAP partners, is developing a course for the Learning Centre on the power of language with the goal of reducing stigma experienced by people who use substances and with mental health concerns.
- OPH partnered with Kids Come First, The Ottawa Child and Youth Initiative, YouthNet and many local youths to promote their stories of resilience, hope, and positive coping strategies throughout the pandemic.
- The Harm Reduction team is participating on the local 'Getting to Tomorrow' working group to plan a community stakeholder conversation including those with living experience on decriminalization of people who use controlled substances and the legalization of drugs (event planned for September 2021)

Highlights

- Over 700 media inquiries, interviews, and availabilities.
- OPH website's Virtual Assistant (Bruce) answered over 47,000 questions.
- OPH's main Vaccine webpage: 989,378 users and 3,610,519 page views
- Development of a Return-to-Work Toolkit, with guidance from the Infection Prevention and Control and Mental Health and Substance Use teams, for employers to utilize with employees.
- Launch of multiple products and resources to curb vaccine misinformation and encourage vaccine uptake.
- Utilization on #CommunityImmunity on social media resulted in 1.4M impressions



Challenges

- The pandemic response and visibility of OPH has resulted in greater inquiries and demands for responses.
- Staffing challenges due to transitions, vacation, and leaves.
- Some residents and stakeholders are seeking a full reopening while public health remains concerned about delta variants. Messaging has become a challenge to get through the noise.



Ontario Health Teams – Highlights and Achievements

Projects/Initiatives Undertaken

OPH continues to contribute to the work of four Ottawa-area OHTs:

- 1) Ottawa Health Team-Équipe Santé Ottawa (OHT-ESO)
- 2) Ottawa East OHT
- 3) Kids Come First Health Team
- 4) Four Rivers OHT

Highlights

- The OHT-ESO continued its engagement and outreach activities to increase vaccination rates across priority neighbourhoods. Work continues in Quarter 3 and will focus on diverse, tailored approaches to reduce barriers to vaccination.
- A formal evaluation of the OPH/OHT-ESO referral program for wrap-around supports commenced in Q2. The referral program was introduced in October 2020 for clients/contacts facing barriers to safe isolation and access to testing. Evaluation results will be available later this year.
- Kids Come First officially launched phase one of 1call1click.ca on June 14. This unique service helps children and youth in Eastern Ontario get the right mental health and addiction care, when and where they need it.
- Four Rivers OHT submitted its Full Application in April and completed a virtual site visit with Ministry of Health officials on June 8. The team anticipates advancement to the OHT approval stage and is taking steps to create a working infrastructure. OPH will seek to be an Engaged Partner and participate on relevant action teams where feasible.
- As part of the Ottawa East OHT RNAO Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO), the OPH Healthy Growth & Development Team completed all requirements of the Person and Family-Centred Care best practice guidelines (BPGs) and started planning for implementation of a second BPG (perinatal depression). Using BPGs ensures we are striving towards the best standard of care for our clients.

Challenges

Capacity of our leaders and subject matter experts to contribute to the various committees and work groups continues to be overstretched due to the pandemic response and vaccination efforts.



Public Health Modernization – Highlights and Achievements

Projects/Initiatives Undertaken

- A critical component of OPH's on-going work in the area of public health modernization included strengthening and leveraging local, regional and provincial partnerships. OPH continues to work closely with many regional health and social partners to support the vaccine roll and to support a regional approach to IPAC and outbreak management, capitalizing on local public health expertise and connections at the regional level.

Highlights

- While the provincial government has not communicated its intention to resume consultations and/or planning regarding Public Health Modernization, OPH has sought to capitalize on the lessons learned from the pandemic, our new partnerships, new ways of working and reaching our community members by developing a Recovery Plan for OPH.
- OPH's Recovery Planning will build on OPH's submission to the provincial consultation on Public Health Modernization, as well as integrate lessons learned from the COVID-19 response. The plan will be informed by OPH employees, partners, the City of Ottawa's Recovery planning, as well as local data and evidence regarding health and social needs post-pandemic.

Challenges

- Complexity of balancing recovery and COVID-19 response and vaccination resources and work.
- On-going changes in provincial guidance (regarding re-opening, vaccine administration, etc.) has resulted in challenges with communications and providing supports to Ottawa's community (e.g., schools, businesses, residents).