



Thunder Bay District Health Unit

2017

Annual Report

TBDHU.COM

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Message from the Board of Health Chair



On behalf of the Board of Health for the Thunder Bay District Health Unit I am pleased to introduce our 2017 annual report. This report reflects a culmination of the hard work that staff and management carry out each day to advance public health in the Thunder Bay District.

2017 represents the first year in the implementation of TBDHU's 2017-2020 strategic plan, which was approved by the Board in December 2016 after an extensive engagement process with TBDHU staff and community partners. Over the next four years, our focus will be on four strategic priority areas: Communities and People First, Indigenous People, Mental Wellness and Organizational Effectiveness.

In 2017, some of the key projects arising from these priority areas included the establishment of the Indigenous peoples' working group, the implementation of a risk management framework and the development of an Indigenous cultural competency training to be taken by all staff in 2018.

As you read through this report, you'll see how the good work of the Health Unit staff continues to align with the strategic priorities and the public health mandate established by the Ministry of Health & Long-Term Care. From research to community outreach, I'm sure you will agree with me that the work of public health is diverse and vital to the health of our community. I applaud our dedicated employees for their ability to meet the demands of this important work and encourage you to read this report to learn how the Thunder Bay District Health Unit continues to play an integral role to the health system of the Thunder Bay District.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. [unclear]', written in a cursive style.

2017 Board of Health

Alana Bishop, Municipality of Oliver
Paipoonge

Andy Major, Township of
Manitouwadge

Andrew Brigham, Provincial
Appointee

Jack Masters, Provincial Appointee

Connie Bryson, Provincial
Appointee

James McPherson, Municipality of
Greenstone

Jay Daiter (*Vice Chair*), Provincial
Appointee

Karen Morley, Town of Schreiber &
Terrace Bay

Terry Fox, Town of Marathon

Aldo Ruberto, City of Thunder Bay

Norm Gale, City of Thunder Bay

Roger Shott, Municipality
of **Neebing**/Township of Gillies

Maria Harding, Provincial
Appointee

Don Smith, Municipality of Shuniah

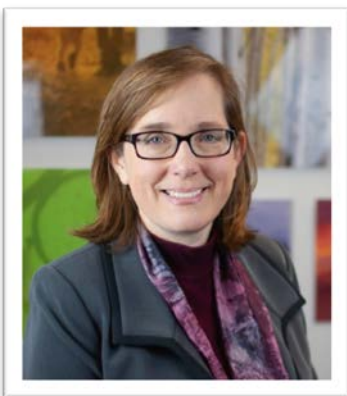
Richard Harvey, Townships of Red
Rock, Dorion and **Nipigon**

Joe Virdiramo (*Chair*), City of Thunder
Bay

Bob MacMaster, Townships
of **Conmee** & O'Connor

For a list of current Board of Health members and their contact information, visit: [Board of Health Members](#)

Message from the Medical Officer of Health & Chief Executive Officer



I am pleased to present the TBDHU 2017 annual report to the communities and people that we serve.

2017 was a time of transformation in Ontario's public health system. Beginning in 2016, the mandate for provincial public health units, the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), was extensively reviewed. Early in 2017, TBDHU staff and management provided feedback on the initial draft of the standards. Throughout the year, we participated in provincial discussions and meetings as the Standards and associated protocols and guidance documents were finalized – always bringing the needs and context of Northwestern Ontario and the Thunder Bay District to those discussions.

The updated Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability were released in November to take effect in January, 2018. We were encouraged to see a number of changes to the Standards that will benefit our area. These include: a more significant focus on mental health, including upstream prevention and promotion of mental wellbeing; improved direction on Indigenous engagement; and an increase in the scope of public health issues that we can address. These changes and more give us greater flexibility in being able to develop and tailor programming to the priority areas in our communities. All of this in addition to maintaining consistent and reliable programming in protecting health, including in the areas of infectious diseases, immunization, infection prevention and control, harm reduction, safe food and water among others.

The new Standards also place expectations on health units and Boards of Health for greater accountability. We must ensure that programs are well planned and designed to meet the needs of the population, and that we evaluate and monitor to assess if what we do is effective. This is important for instilling confidence that public funds are used efficiently and responsibly by public health.

All of these changes align remarkably well with the 2017-2020 TBDHU strategic plan and with the issues we see in communities, and with what we hear from you and from our community partners. As we anticipate implementation of the updated mandate in 2018, we know it will no doubt bring many opportunities, and challenges, in the coming years that we will continue to meet head on in order to provide exceptional public health service for this great region.

With that said, I want to thank all the staff and management of TBDHU for their dedication and commitment to public health and for the hard work they do every day to improve, promote and protect the health and wellbeing of the population in the District of Thunder Bay.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Hillier".

Highlights

Are You In? Encouraging Changes Toward Healthier Living



Click on the image to view the Are You In? promotion video

There's a movement of local residents who are making small changes for better health and everyone is invited to join in! That's the message from Are You In? — TBDHU's newest healthy living campaign. Launched in fall 2017, it encourages people to make incremental changes towards eating well and being more active for better health.

The campaign was developed to address Thunder Bay District's consistently higher rates of chronic diseases when compared to other regions in Ontario.

"We know that chronic conditions like diabetes, cardiovascular disease and certain types of cancers are preventable. If we can help get people on the right track now, we can prevent these

diseases down the road," says Lynda Fraser, health promotion planner.

To help reach the target audience of 35 to 50 year-old adults, extensive research and consultation with local stakeholders took place before the campaign's release. This was an important step that helped inform the development of the campaign and its key themes.

"We purposely promoted simple, straight-forward ideas to motivate people towards healthier living," says Fraser. "Messages like 'skip the juice and choose fruit instead,' or 'sit less and move more often' encourage people in our communities to eat healthier and increase their physical activity through small yet sustainable actions."

Campaign themes have rolled out in stages. The cornerstone of the promotion is a fun summer video showcasing local residents making healthy choices. This is complemented by posters, games and a pledge board where community members can post how they are "in." Social media has also been an integral component to this campaign, helping to effectively reach

the target demographic and facilitate contests to increase interaction with the public.

“Overall, we’re really pleased with the reception of this campaign. We’re getting important, health messages out

to our communities and the high engagement tells us we’re connecting.”

The campaign continues to be promoted in 2018 with a winter version of the video planned for release, as well as an evaluation of the campaign.

Tackling the Stigma of Mental Health in the Workplace



Click on the image to view the Get Real Photovoice video

An exhibit of snapshots and personal reflections is making its way throughout the region, raising awareness about mental health while inspiring positive change towards healthy workspaces.

As part of the Superior Mental Wellness @ Work Project, the Get Real photovoice campaign showcases the realities of workplace mental wellness in Thunder Bay and across the district through original photography and perspectives submitted by participants. Part of what made the project unique was the inclusion of personal stories,

which best practice research indicated would have the most impact on building empathy, compassion and understanding.

“Stigma is still a big factor preventing people from disclosing mental health concerns in their workplace and we wanted to create a safe space to do just that,” says Lynda Fraser, health promotion planner.

“We had to find a way to make people comfortable in telling their stories. The anonymous photovoice format was ideal for that. They could express themselves openly and creatively without fear of repercussion.”

Using social media, the TBDHU asked local residents to submit original photography to portray their mental health at work experiences. Fifty-seven eligible photos with captions were

collected that answered either or both of two questions: how do you really feel at work, and how do you take care of your mental health at work? Each entry is unique but collectively they shed light on the realities of mental health in area workplaces.

Several submissions were selected to be included in a mobile art exhibit that travels to different workplaces throughout the district. Almost every week since its launch in the fall of 2017,

the exhibit has been booked by businesses and organizations to encourage meaningful conversations on mental health.

In addition to the exhibit, other resources were created to foster dialogue including a web portal with mental health resources, social media posts and promotions, a calendar and a video sample of the entries posted to www.SuperiorMentalWellnessatWork.com.

Promoting Sun Safety through a Northern Vibe



Sun safety with a northern vibe

Skin cancer rates are increasing—even here in Northern Ontario—and the World Health Organization considers ultraviolet radiation (UVR) a Class 1 carcinogen. Yet, despite our region's short spring and summer seasons and our long, cold winters, people in Northwestern Ontario are regularly exposed to the sun, especially people

who work or enjoy recreation in the outdoors. That's why public health has a role in helping protect us from the harmful effects of the sun and reducing the risk of skin cancer.

In June 2016 the TBDHU launched Phase 1 of its three-year *No Tan is a Healthy Tan - Check the UV Index Every day!* awareness campaign. The campaign focused on Northwestern Ontario workers like those working in forestry, construction, and those working inside vehicles or using heavy equipment. Another target audience was Northwestern Ontario outdoor recreation enthusiasts like gardeners, skiers, bikers and anglers. The campaign

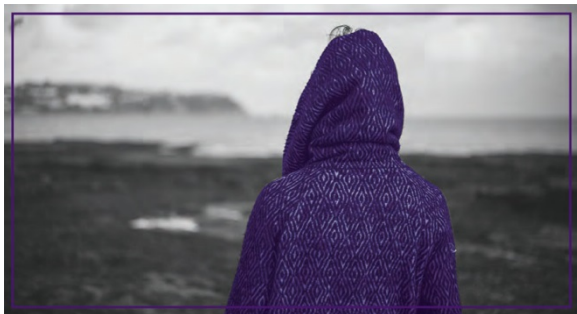
aimed to increase awareness and understanding of the ultraviolet index (UVI) tool to help people take appropriate sun safety precautions against harmful UV rays, and ultimately prevent skin cancer.

In 2017, Phase 2 of the campaign—*Be Winter Sun Savvy!*—was geared towards those who work outdoors and take part in recreational activities like ice fishing and skiing, where reflective surfaces like fresh snow and ice can increase UV exposure.

Phase 2 was promoted by a number of networks and agencies including the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and the Environment (CPCHE), Ontario Public Health Association (OPHA) and Toronto Cancer Prevention Coalition. It was adapted by Timiskaming Health Unit, who also translated the campaign into French.

The sun safety campaign continues in 2018 with messages reinforcing sun safety when vacationing in climates with extreme UV index, where sunburns happen quickly.

Examining Community Violence in Thunder Bay



Community violence is a public health concern. It not only affects the individuals and families who experience it directly, but the whole of society. In Thunder Bay, many individuals have experienced violence in their own homes, schools, neighbourhoods and even workplaces but because violence is vastly underreported due to fear and

stigma, statistics are not accurate. When taken alone, stats do not tell the whole story.

To gain a more accurate view of violence in the Thunder Bay District, the TBDHU, Thunder Bay Crime Prevention Council and the Thunder Bay Drug Strategy partnered in a project to collect information from both service providers and community members about their experiences with violence, and to solicit ideas that could be used to inform prevention strategies. The project, led by the TBDHU, began with a research phase.

Through focus groups with community members and interviews with stakeholders ranging from the justice system to the health sector, and child welfare organizations to Indigenous services, the TBDHU collected information from professionals. From this engagement, the importance of gaining deeper and broader perspectives about violence through public feedback emerged. To collect input from the larger community, an online survey was developed from the themes that emerged from the stakeholder engagement, and was distributed throughout Thunder Bay via social media, and agency and community outreach. In just 4 weeks, almost 1200 surveys were completed. This high response rate was deemed a success in itself for eliciting powerful qualitative and quantitative community feedback about the issue, and ideas on how to address violence prevention effectively, locally.

The findings and recommendations are presented in a report [Community Perspectives and Perceptions on Violence, Impacts, and Prevention Opportunities](#). The report brings attention to the services and supports

people are accessing, and has provided community partners useful information about the barriers and gaps in programming.

Two key findings include the prominent role of substance use in violence, and a strong correlation between the social determinants of health (e.g. insufficient housing) and community violence. Another finding from the research is that there is high local need for the primary prevention of violence. Based on this insight, and as a starting point, the TBDHU is currently working alongside school boards and community partners to establish and implement a comprehensive, evidence-based program to give youth the education and tools needed to prevent violence before it occurs.

Overall, the violence prevention project and the resulting report has provided the TBDHU and its partners with local evidence as the foundation to explore, develop and implement efforts to prevent and reduce harm from violence in Thunder Bay. The TBDHU looks forward in continuing to build capacity for a larger community violence prevention strategy.

Supporting Parents



It's been said that parenting is the hardest job in the world. Through mandated programming, the TBDHU provides resources and tools to help make this job just a little easier.

The reality is parenting begins before birth. This is why TBDHU's prenatal classes are offered both [in-person](#) and online at PregnantThunderBay.com. These training sessions provide information on the changing pregnant body and topics such as breastfeeding, caring for newborns and what to expect after baby comes.

Once baby arrives, new parents in Thunder Bay and the surrounding rural municipalities can attend one of TBDHU's outreach to parents programs, including the [Babies' Day Out](#) and Infant Parent Drop-in support groups. These classes are geared to parents looking to learn more about infant care, growth and development, and to parenting baby in the first year. They also provide

the opportunity for new parents to connect with each other and socialize.

As the child gets older, strategies and encouragement along the parenting journey are often what is needed most. The TBDHU offers support through the workshop-based programs Triple P Parenting and Circle of Security.

[Triple P Parenting](#) is a series conducted by public health nurses and early childhood educators and offered in the community at select schools and community agencies. "Misbehaviour is Normal" was offered in 2017, focusing on child behaviour and development and attracting 138 registrants. Also in 2017, two public health nurses were trained to be facilitators for a new, best-practice parenting program called [Circle of Security](#), an early intervention attachment-based program focused on how secure parent-child relationships can be supported and strengthened. Circle of Security was held multiple times throughout the year at the TBDHU and at various agencies to help with childcare and provide local access. In 2017, 208 caregivers registered for Circle of Security.

And, although not exclusively a parenting initiative, the [Healthy Kids Community Challenge](#) (HKCC) is an important program worth mentioning. This partnership with the City of Thunder Bay is all about supporting the well-being of our communities' children. Through focused initiatives, promotions and resources, HKCC encourages our

kids to eat healthy, be active and practice healthy behaviour.

It's not easy being a parent but the TBDHU is giving parents the tools—and encouragement—they need to become the competent and informed parents their child deserves.

Building Community Capacity for Public Health



Community capacity building is a key role for public health. Through a number of new initiatives, the TBDHU continued to provide training and education to service providers and community members to support ongoing wellness within our region. Some of these events included:

- **Pregnancy & Infant Loss Workshop:**

Provided to Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre staff, including health and social service providers, to help workers understand the best ways

to help families navigate through difficult times.

- Dr. Wayne Hammond's *A Strengths-Based Approach to Enhancing the Resilience and Capacity of Individuals to Thrive* Workshop:

Provided to school staff and youth workers, this initiative was linked to recommendations from the TBDHU's *Community Perspectives on Violence* report.

- **Mental Health First Aid Training:**

Provided to TBDHU's Healthy Schools and Healthy Babies Healthy Children staff and several TBDHU managers so that they can provide better support to clients, students, families and co-workers.

- Brief Tobacco Cessation Intervention Training:

Provided to health and social service professionals to increase skills to support pregnant women in the process of quitting smoking.

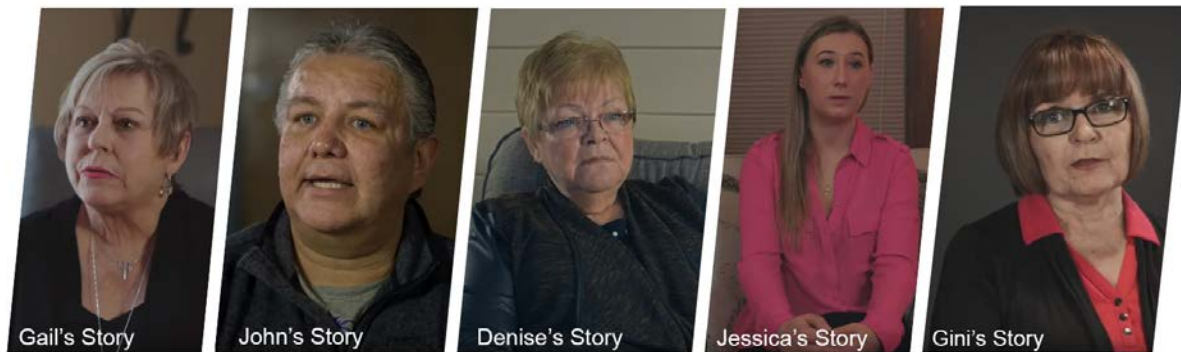
- Be a Health Mentor Training and Youth Engagement Training:

Provided to community partners who work with youth to offer education and support related to nutrition, sexual health, tobacco prevention and cessation.

- Naloxone Training and Education:

Provided to community organizations working with clients that use opioids.

Promoting Smoke-Free Living through Powerful Testimonials



Stories have an impact on people. In fact, true stories have been proven to be effective in building empathy, compassion and understanding. That is why heartfelt testimonials of Northwestern Ontario residents were used in a 2017 campaign to encourage people to quit smoking.

Five highly impactful videos featuring John, Denise, Gini, Gail and Jessica were produced. Each described their success at breaking-free from smoking, the anguish and harm the habit caused,

and the motivation for quitting, including lung cancer, the loss of a normal young adulthood, need for major surgery and a death in the family.

"These stories strike an emotional chord and really resonated with our audience," notes Dan DePeuter, Tobacco Control Area Network Coordinator. "Our region has the highest smoking rate in the province. Having real people from this region share their often difficult stories is a powerful way to send a message to the people who live here."

The videos played on television and social media and collectively reached over 53,000 people on YouTube. In addition to videos, the campaign included web ads and radio commercials directing the public to NWQuit.com, an online directory of regional cessation support services. Through this promotion, the nwquit.com directory received almost 5,000 visits.

"Video participants noted that community members would approach them on the street and say they were

inspired by the videos to quit smoking. This is exactly what we had hoped would come of this campaign," says DePeuter. "I think we're on the right track with these testimonials and I'm hopeful they will ultimately lead to increased quit attempts across the region."

The regional campaign led by the TBDHU was one of six similar campaigns carried out by health units throughout Ontario as part of a collaborative effort.

Engaging Youth for Mental Health Insight



Mindful Expressions participants in front of the art exhibit at Thunder Bay Art Gallery

Capturing the experiences and needs of local youth is a necessary step toward understanding how to develop effective programming for youth mental health promotion and suicide prevention. To accomplish this, the Youth Suicide Prevention Taskforce (YSPTF) launched *Mindful Expressions*, a local project in

which youth in Thunder Bay and the Red Rock area were engaged to create pieces of art to represent their own point of view.

The ambitious project, a partnership involving the YSPTF, the Children's Centre Foundation Thunder Bay, Community Arts and Heritage Education Project and the Thunder Bay Art Gallery, was developed with the intent of providing insights into youth needs and establishing priorities for program planning.

Thirty-four youth attended sessions held at schools, Evergreen United Neighbourhood and Waverly Public

Library in Thunder Bay, and the Chalet Lodge on Lake Helen Reserve. Each session was facilitated by an artist specializing in various mediums (sculptures, painting, etc.) who asked the youth questions about mental health, social environments, where students go for help and what resources the youth felt were needed to ensure mental wellness. From each session,

creative art pieces emerged reflecting the themes that arose from that gathering.

The project culminated in a 2017 youth art exhibit at the Thunder Bay Art Gallery and provided qualitative information for sharing with community partners to assist in the planning of mental wellness programming for youth.

Increasing Access to Life-Saving Naloxone



Stuart Boland and Rick Thompson, outreach workers with Superior Points Harm Reduction program

The impact of the opioid crisis in Ontario has been felt throughout many communities across the Thunder Bay District. Thankfully, naloxone is helping offset some of this impact.

Naloxone is a medication that blocks the effects of opioids and reverses the effects of an overdose. With the highest overdose rates in the province, the TBDHU welcomed the significant

changes to the Ministry's naloxone program in 2017, which increased access to this life-saving medication.

Through the changes, naloxone is now available as a nasal spray (instead of injection) making it easier to administer. Also, harm reduction programs in public health units—including TBDHU's Superior Points Harm Reduction Program—became distribution centres, supplying community partners and outreach programs such as Shelter House, P.A.C.E., NorWest Community Health Center, Balmoral Center and Elevate NWO with harm reduction supplies, including naloxone kits, for distribution.

"Previously, we would be one of the only programs providing naloxone kits

on the streets but now we are the central distribution point for many other programs,” says Rick Thompson, Superior Points outreach worker.

Through this new distribution system, 554 kits were given out in 2017 (versus 30 in 2016). Also, new partnerships have been developed with local organizations including Fort William First Nation,

Thunder Bay Police Services and Thunder Bay Fire Rescue.

“It really is a significant service for the community,” says Thompson. “By making it easier for clients to get their hands on naloxone, far more people are able to access it and that means more lives are being saved.”

Responding to the Opioid Crisis



The rapid increase in opioid-related harms in North America has created a public health crisis in our communities. Opioid poisoning is significantly impacting people who use drugs, their friends and families, and the healthcare system.

Prescription opioid use and opioid-related deaths are more common in the Thunder Bay District than the rest of the province. Harms related to opioid use have continued to increase over the past decade, with rates of emergency department visits and hospitalizations for opioid poisonings almost twice the provincial average.

Recognizing the urgent need for a proactive response to this growing issue, the Opioid Surveillance and Response Task Force was established as a subcommittee of the Thunder Bay Drug Strategy. As chair of the Task Force, the TBDHU works with 17 other organizations to better understand and mitigate the harms related to opioid use through coordinated efforts.

A significant accomplishment of the Task Force is the implementation of an emergency plan to address a sudden increase in opioid-related deaths, illness and injuries, and the detection of high-potency opioids in the Thunder Bay District. The Task Force also implemented an early warning and surveillance system to improve the flow and distribution of local opioid use data to the public, health care workers, emergency responders and other stakeholders. The system includes:

- An [online opioid information portal](#) on the TBDHU's website.
- An [online reporting system](#) for individuals who have experienced an unexpected bad reaction to a street drug.
- Standardized messaging for the media, healthcare providers, and other service providers to communicate events of concern, along with clear pathways for information release.
- Systematic collection and monitoring of emergency department visits and emergency medical services calls for opioid overdose.

The Task Force has also produced a situational assessment, which is being used to inform the development of the Northwest Regional Opioid Strategy.

Preventing HIV in Thunder Bay



The rate of new HIV infections in the TBDHU region is lower than the provincial average. However, when the TBDHU's Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Janet DeMille, recognized that other regions in Canada had experienced increases in new HIV infections among at-risk populations similar to those of Northwestern Ontario, research was conducted to learn more about the local HIV risk and inform program planning to prevent an increase in new infections.

To get a clear picture of the HIV landscape, community feedback was

paramount. Interviews were conducted with more than 50 representatives from organizations that provide services to persons living with HIV or those at risk of HIV, as well as individuals living with HIV. The interviews identified the gaps, opportunities and challenges in four key areas related to HIV in the Thunder Bay District: prevention; testing; care, treatment, and support; and stigma and the resulting discrimination.

"This level of participation is a success in itself," says Erica Sawula, epidemiologist. "The number of people providing input and the diversity of the organizations represented has contributed to us collecting robust data and creating an accurate depiction of the challenges with HIV prevention in our communities."

One of the key findings which emerged from the HIV profile created from the data was that while the Thunder Bay District's HIV rates were low and stable between 2005 and 2016, more than half of the people newly infected with HIV over this period were people who inject drugs.

"This is different than the most common risk factors in the rest of Ontario, yet similar to other regions that have experienced HIV outbreaks," notes Sawula. "And it suggests where to focus our efforts when planning ways to prevent HIV transmission and acquisition. This will be important to keep HIV rates low in years to come."

Before producing a final report, a community forum was held to share the

HIV profile, educate, engage and elicit feedback about HIV prevention. More than 80 community partners attended the forum. This forum helped to identify key priorities and carve out final recommendations for effective HIV prevention in Northwestern Ontario communities.

The recommendations, including actions to be taken by public health organizations, were considered during TBDHU's 2018 program planning. The actions will be revisited annually and viewed in the context of the current HIV incidence rates within the Thunder Bay District. A final report will be completed and shared with community partners in 2018.

Improving Food Safety with DineWise



2017 was a big year for improving food safety in Thunder Bay due to DineWise - a new program designed to improve compliance with food safety standards and reduce the risk of foodborne illness.

DineWise involves public health inspectors scoring food premises on their food safety practices using a letter grade of A, B, C or D. After the inspection, food establishments are required to post their grade for display at main entrances and pick-up windows.

"All this is giving patrons more information for their decision making," says Lee Sieswerda, manager of environmental health programs.

After six months of research and development, DineWise was then piloted in the field by public health inspectors for another six months before being officially launched.

"We tested the program extensively to be sure we were all reviewing the vendors the same way and were grading consistently. We then calibrated the scoring tool and created a vendor booklet which clearly lays out the scoring system. We also met with each vendor before launch to explain the benefits of the program," Sieswerda adds.

DineWise was launched at the outset of 2017 and is considered a success. Anecdotal reports from consumers indicate they like how the new signage helps them make decisions about where to eat. More substantially, though, there has been a dramatic improvement with vendor compliance with food safety regulations. In the pre-launch pilot

period when operators were not aware they were being scored, about 25% of food premises scored an A grade; since the program launched, over 85% have received an A grade. Moreover, the number of critical infractions—that is, violations of food safety practices that can pose an immediate threat to public health—found by public health inspectors during routine inspections decreased from 30 critical infractions per 100 inspections down to only 4.

"We are very pleased with the response from both the public and from food premises operators. The A grade has become a *de facto* standard for many people, which is more than we were expecting," Sieswerda notes. "The public should be aware that their food safety environment has dramatically improved over the last year. We have not seen any significant community-based foodborne outbreaks since we implemented the program."

Increasing Immunization Act Compliance



Gillian Major, public health nurse on the Vaccine Preventable Diseases team and Heather Cooke, public health nurse working in the District

Each year, the TBDHU staff throughout the District of Thunder Bay checks every child's immunization record to ensure they are up-to-date as per the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) - an Ontario law put in place to protect children from vaccine preventable diseases. At times, when records show children have not received required immunizations, public health may suspend them from school until they are up-to-date.

Reviewing records is a daunting task. Typically hundreds of children's records are flagged for missing immunizations. It can be equally difficult to reach families and schools to inform them of ISPA requirements and collect children's immunization histories to prevent suspensions. In 2017, staff took successful measures to improve the process for families and help reduce suspensions.

In Thunder Bay, the vaccine preventable diseases (VPD) team noticed that when contacting families about immunization requirements (especially for children just beginning school) families believed immunization records were being systematically sent to the TBDHU by health care providers. They were surprised to learn that the TBDHU only had record of these immunizations if they were submitted by either the parent or the health care provider.

To increase families' awareness of the ISPA, the VPD team focused on reaching families with children entering junior kindergarten. At the outset of the school year, families were sent a form requesting immunization information if the child's records were not on file or if the child was missing any immunizations. This proactive step gave families time to gather their child's immunization history and send it to the TBDHU before escalating the situation through a suspension notice.

For TBDHU staff working in the district, close-knit community living provided them a unique advantage in reaching families about childhood immunization requirements and helped to prevent students from receiving school suspension orders. Their familiarity with families, schools and health care providers made it easier to share information, listen to each stakeholder's needs, collaborate on the best steps for

getting students immunized, and provide personalized support. Through their engagement, they were able to reach most families about the immunization requirements and work with primary care providers to ensure quick access to missing immunizations prior to and after suspension letters were sent out.

The results of these strategic steps were impressive. In Thunder Bay, over 50% of the students with incomplete records submitted the required information after receiving the form. These students were then considered in compliance with the

ISPA. The outreach reduced the number of families receiving letters later in the year. In the district, only 33 students (16%) of the 208 elementary students with incomplete records were suspended. In the high schools, only 12 (21%) of 58 students were suspended.

TBDHU teams will continue to work strategically in 2018 to further increase compliance with the ISPA and prevent school suspensions.

In 2018, strategic efforts will continue to ensure high levels of compliance with the ISPA.

Fast Facts



861

children participated in
Early Years Oral Health
Fluoride Varnish program



118

schools participated in
Early Years Oral Health
Fluoride Varnish program



6244

children received oral
health screenings at
school



167

clients received tobacco
cessation counseling



415

tobacco vendor
enforcement inspections
conducted



6377

clients visited the sexual
health clinic



1913

food premise inspections
conducted



609

food handlers trained and
certified



1927

clients attended to by
nurse practitioner



413

animal bites investigated



499

public inquiries addressed
by public health
inspectors



334

people attended parenting
programs and workshops



800

clients attended to by
street nursing program



429

children received an early-
screen through Fair Start



883

kindergarten-aged
children screened through
Fair Start



18600

telephone client inquiries
received through main
reception



612

reportable disease cases
investigated



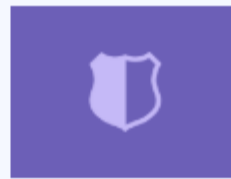
7731

in-person/walk-in client
inquiries received at main
reception



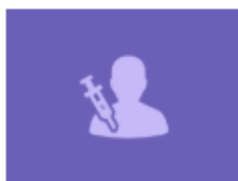
37

institutional outbreaks
declared and managed



138

annual fridge inspections
completed with vaccine
users



5000+

vaccines administered at
weekly immunization
clinics

Vision & Mission

Vision

To be leaders in creating healthy communities and healthy environments.

Mission

TBDHU is committed to meeting the public health needs of our citizens by delivering accessible programming of the highest standards in protection, prevention and health promotion.

Core Values

Dedicated | Responsive | Trustworthy | Healthy | Supportive | Fun

Area Served

The Thunder Bay District Health Unit oversees a geographic area of over approximately 230,000 square kilometres with approximately 146,000 residents.

Our main office is in Thunder Bay. Branch Offices and/or services are

located in Geraldton, Marathon, Nipigon, Manitouwadge and Terrace Bay. Visit our [Contact page](#) for a map of our region, with office locations, hours and contact information.

Programs & Services

The Thunder Bay District Health Unit manages many programs and services that promote health, prevent disease and injury, and protect all residents throughout the district. As a leader in creating healthy communities and

healthy environments, the TBDHU's mission is to meet the public health needs in these three areas by delivering accessible programming of the highest standards.

Healthy Families	Safe Communities	Health & Well-Being
Early Prenatal Classes	Infectious Disease Monitoring	Sexual Health Clinic
Oral Health Services	Public Health Inspections	Tobacco Cessation
Breastfeeding Clinic	Flu Clinics	School and Workplace Health
Fair Start Program	Injury Prevention	Substance Misuse Prevention
Nurse Practitioner Clinic	Emergency Preparedness	Healthy Eating
Parenting Programs	Immunization Clinics	Active Living