

**2022**

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# **District Area Snapshots of Public Health**

**LaCloche Foothills area**

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February 2023



**Public Health  
Santé publique**  
SUDBURY & DISTRICTS

## Message from Dr. Penny Sutcliffe

Collaborative. Compassionate. Strong. Resilient. As I reflect on 2022 and the difficult two years before that, these are a few of the characteristics that come to mind when I think of the people, partners, and communities in the Public Health Sudbury & Districts (Public Health) service area. The COVID-19 pandemic was like nothing any of us have seen or experienced firsthand before. As the Medical Officer of Health, I am proud of how we responded locally and humbled by the way communities collaborated to support the local response to ensure the health and safety of not only ourselves but also those around us.

In February 2022, Public Health released its COVID-19 [Recovery Plan](#), signalling hope and a brighter future for the communities that we serve. While Public Health remains committed to providing ongoing services to prevent transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and protect individuals from severe COVID-19 illness, we also recognize the importance of resuming the other public health programs and services traditionally offered to promote health and prevent disease. Public Health's *Recovery Plan* identified four community-focused recovery priorities for public health action in support of healthy communities locally: Levelling up opportunities for health, fostering mental health gains, getting children back on track, and supporting safe spaces. Recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic will take time and will require the collective and collaborative action of individuals and community partners alike. Progress is and will continue to be made. This 2022 Snapshot of Public Health provides just a few highlights of the public health programs and services that occurred in the LaCloche Foothills area. As we transition from risk to recovery and resilience, I look forward to further strengthening relationships so we can collectively achieve **healthier communities for all**.

### Dr. Penny Sutcliffe

Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer  
for Public Health Sudbury & Districts

### Our vision:

Healthier communities for all.

### Our mission:

Working with our communities to promote and protect health and to prevent disease for everyone.

### Strategic Priorities:

- 1 Equitable opportunities
- 2 Meaningful relationships
- 3 Practice excellence
- 4 Organizational commitment

### Our Values:



Humility



Trust



Respect

## Introduction

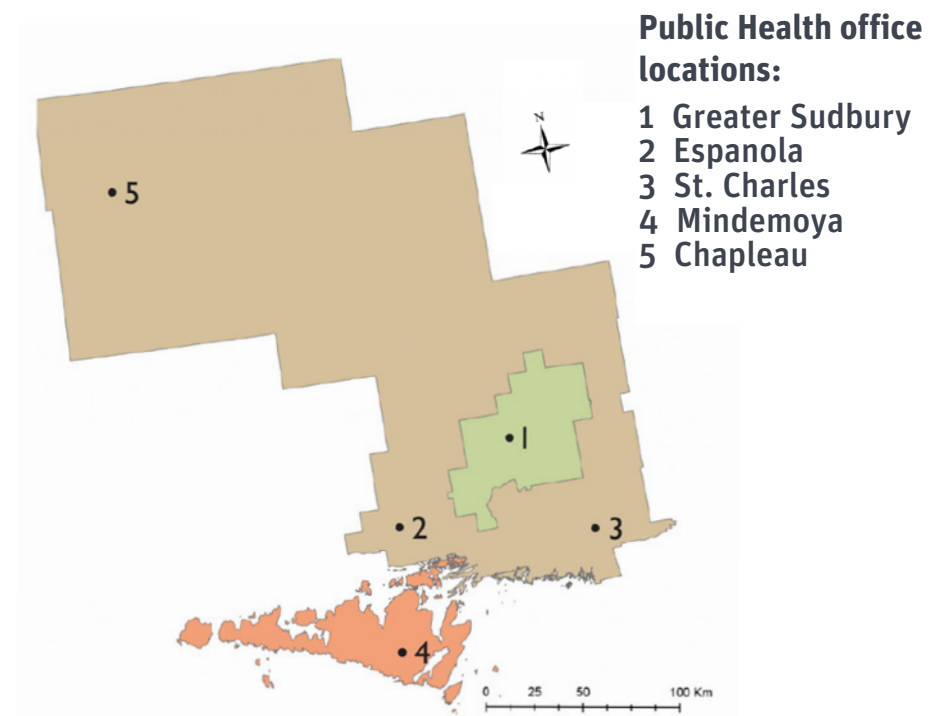
In the 2022 District Area Snapshot of Public Health for LaCloche Foothills area, readers will find a brief overview of Ontario's public health system, including our local public health agency, Public Health Sudbury & Districts (Public Health). The 2022 District Area Snapshot report includes highlights of public health activities in the LaCloche Foothills area during the 2022 calendar year and is not meant to be an exhaustive accounting of all programs and services offered. While the 2022 District Area Snapshot also includes highlights of local COVID-19 response activities in the LaCloche Foothills area, the focus of the report is on the resumption of non-COVID-19 public health programs and services.

Public health programs and services are often a joint effort, in collaboration with the public, community agencies, and municipalities. We all have a role to play in ensuring equal opportunities for all for health; in creating vibrant and safe communities where all individuals can achieve their optimal health and well-being. For Public Health, this is our primary focus. As illustrated in our video, [\*Public Health: an investment in our community's health is an investment in you\*](#), Public Health often works behind the scenes and may not always be visible, but it is always present. This Snapshot report tells the story of local public health; informing readers about how their public health investments are being spent to prevent illness, promote health, and protect us all.

## A bit about the LaCloche Foothills area

Public Health is proud to work with and for the people who live, learn, work, and play in the **1 142** square kilometres that makes up the LaCloche Foothills area as well as one First Nation. Home to approximately **9 374** people, the LaCloche Foothills area comprises approximately **2%** of the Public Health service area and **4.6%** of Public Health's total population. Residents in the LaCloche Foothills area speak predominately English or French at home (**97.8%**), while

the remaining **2.2%** report speaking one of the following languages at home: Dutch, Pennsylvanian German, German, Polish, Spanish, Gujarati, Hindi, Korean, Mandarin, Cantonese, or American Sign Language. Approximately **9.8%** of the population reports their first official language spoken to be French, **0.1%** report their first official language spoken to be both French and English, and **89.9%** of the population reports their first official language spoken to be English. Approximately **0.4%** of the population report their mother tongue as Indigenous (Ojibway, not otherwise specified). Though the LaCloche Foothills area experienced a **2.1%** decrease in its population between 2016 and 2021, it remains a vibrant community to call home (*Source: Statistics Canada, 2021; Public Health Sudbury & Districts Dashboard*).



**Figure 1:** Map of Public Health's service area and the location of its five offices.

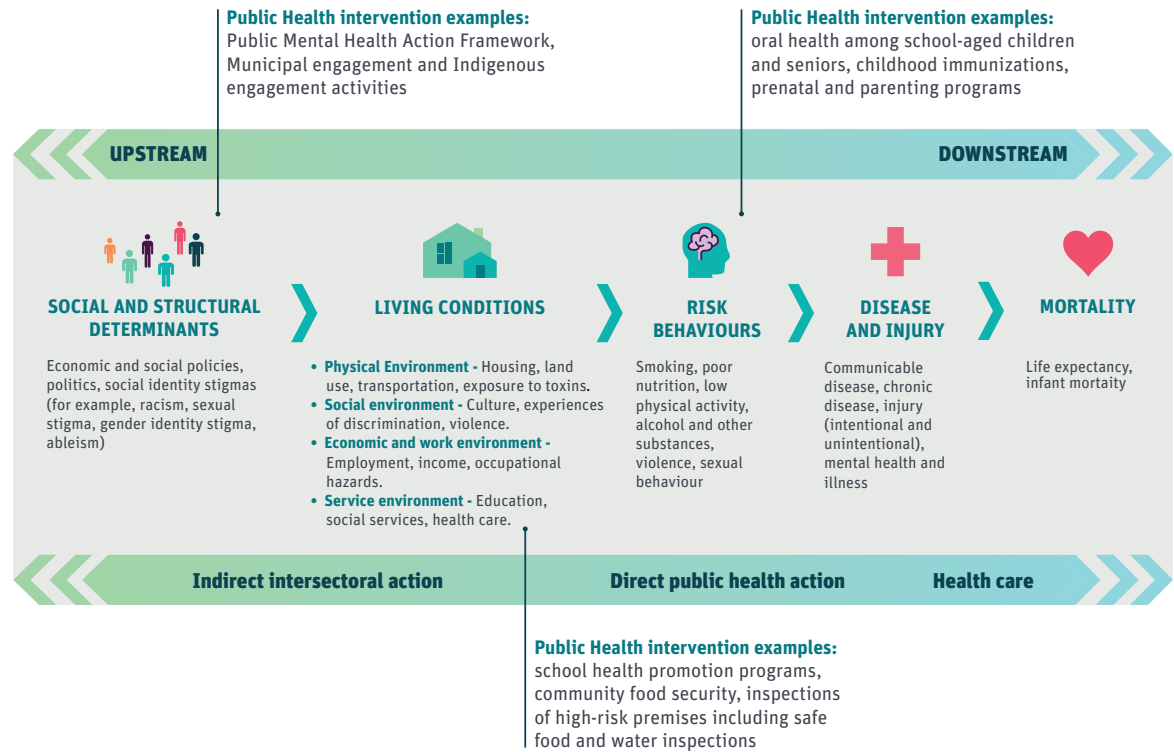
# Ontario's public health system

The public health system aims to support the health of the entire population, while at the same time “levelling up” so that there is a smaller gap in health and well-being outcomes between groups that have more and less opportunities for health. Given the many factors that influence health, Public Health’s actions are diverse. Public Health’s mandate includes the explicit requirement to reduce inequities in health and support opportunities for health for all. As a result, public health action often targets “upstream” structures and systems that are beyond an individual’s control—yet are important determinants of health. Public health initiatives further “downstream” are especially focused on supporting those who are more at risk or who are experiencing greater disadvantages (**Figure 2**). Specific examples of upstream and downstream actions of Public Health are overlaid in **Figure 2**. Often confused with the publicly funded health care system, the public health system emphasizes upstream actions to create fairer systems and structures to reduce health inequities. This is a defining feature of the public health system.

In Ontario, there are **34** publicly funded public health agencies responsible for delivering local public health programs and services mandated by the Ontario Public Health Standards, under the provincial *Health Protection and Promotion Act*.

These agencies are governed by boards of health who must uphold the *Act* for the benefit of the communities they serve. In addition to these **34** local public health agencies, Ontario’s public health system is comprised of provincial ministries and agencies, all working in collaboration with primary health care providers and laboratories, among others.

As with other publicly funded services, public health is a “public good” available to everyone. Approximately **90%** of a local public health agency’s budget is cost shared between the province and local municipalities, with the province contributing up to **70%** of this funding. Some other programs are fully funded by the provincial government.



**Figure 2:** Continuum of interventions to address the determinants of health©. All rights reserved. Chief Public Health Officer’s Report on the State of Public Health in Canada: A Vision to Transform Canada’s Public Health System. Public Health Agency of Canada. Modified, adapted and reproduced with permission from the Minister of Health, 2023.

# Your local public health unit

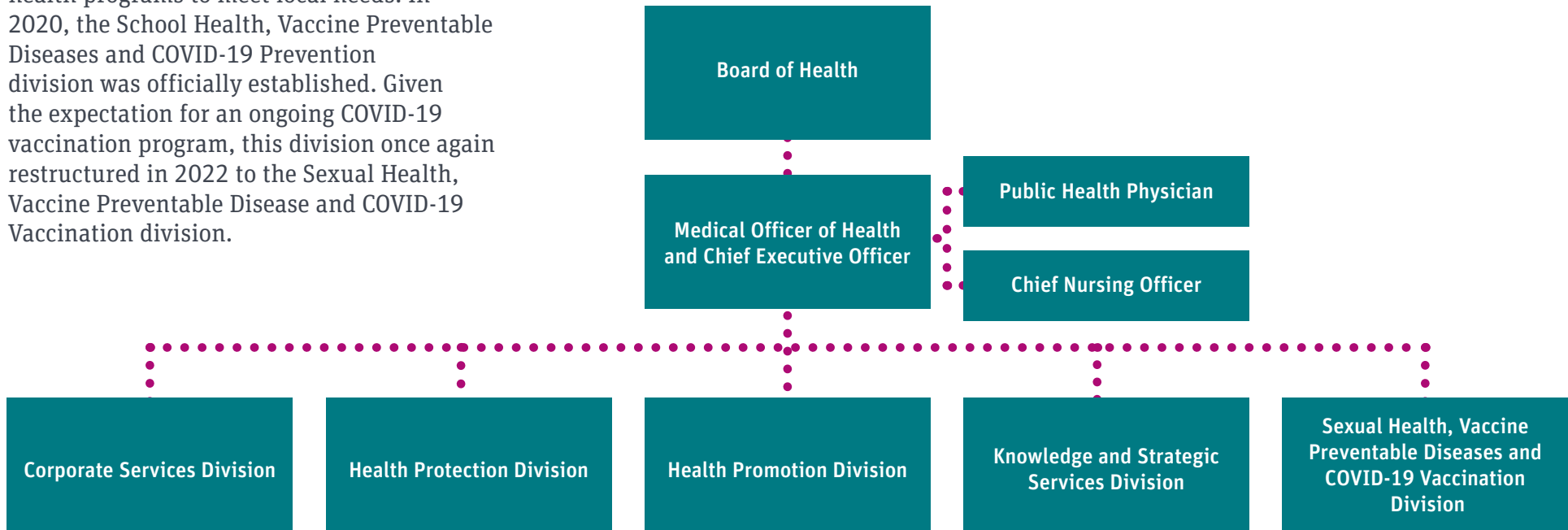
## Public Health Sudbury & Districts' structure

An autonomous Board of Health governs Public Health Sudbury & Districts. Membership on the Board is determined by legislation and includes municipally appointed representatives from across Public Health's service area in addition to provincial appointees. The LaCloche Foothills area is represented by one individual appointed by the municipality.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Public Health realigned to effectively deliver public health programs to meet local needs. In 2020, the School Health, Vaccine Preventable Diseases and COVID-19 Prevention division was officially established. Given the expectation for an ongoing COVID-19 vaccination program, this division once again restructured in 2022 to the Sexual Health, Vaccine Preventable Disease and COVID-19 Vaccination division.

In addition to disease prevention, Public Health also provides a variety of programs and services to protect and promote the health of the people in the communities we serve in an efficient, effective, and evidence-informed manner. Overall, programs and services are delivered by five divisions with each reporting to the Medical Officer of Health, who reports to the Board of Health.

**To be confirmed**  
Council of the Town of Espanola, the Municipal Councils of the townships of Baldwin and Sables-Spanish Rivers and the Municipal Council of The Corporation of the Township of Nairn & Hyman  
**2023 Sudbury & District Board of Health**



## A snapshot of public health services in 2022

### All hands on deck: responding to the COVID-19 pandemic locally in 2022

Programs and services offered by Public Health between 2020 and 2022 appear vastly different from years prior. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Public Health prioritized actions to reduce the transmission of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and prevention of severe COVID-19 disease. These actions included ongoing education about prevention, monitoring of cases and outbreaks, and Public Health's COVID-19 vaccination program. COVID-19 remains a threat to community health. In 2022, **7** outbreaks occurred in the LaCloche Foothills area. The COVID-19 vaccination program remains an important service that would not have been possible without the support and collaboration of so many community partners. In 2022 alone, for the LaCloche Foothills area, **4 837** vaccines were administered in **68** Public Health-led vaccination events. Ongoing generosity and support from numerous municipal partners, long-standing recurring clinic venues (such as the Espanola Regional Recreation Complex), pop-up and mobile bus clinic venues, primary care partners, and local First Nation communities, helped make the 2022 vaccine program possible. To better serve those living in the LaCloche Foothills area, Public Health also began offering regular COVID-19 vaccination clinics led by Public Health's public health nurse in the Espanola office.

Additionally, Public Health partnered with the Ministry of Health and Canadian Red Cross Mobile Vaccination Team to deliver an additional vaccination clinic in the region during the Team's vaccination blitz in early November.

#### Did you know?

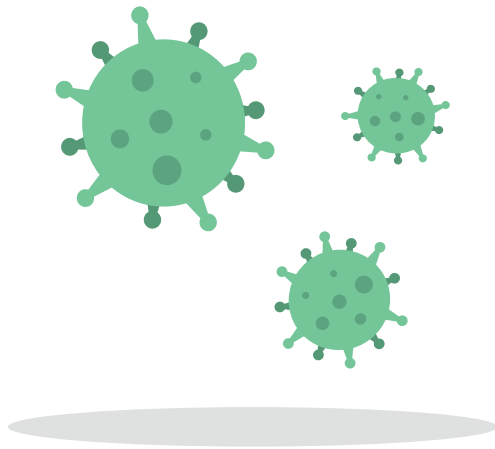
Public Health Sudbury & Districts has a diverse team of public health professionals to carry out its mission and public health mandated programs. These include but are not limited to public health physicians, public health nurses, public health inspectors, dental educators and hygienists, registered dietitians, epidemiologists, data analysts, health promoters, and more. We also employ a number of technical and support staff who assist in the operational functions of the organization and the programming we undertake in the various communities throughout the LaCloche Foothills area.



## Other programs and services of public health importance

### Health Protection in 2022

In addition to responding to the local COVID-19 pandemic, Public Health continued to deliver a variety of essential programs and services in the LaCloche Foothills area, although capacity to deliver was impacted due to the redirection of staff to support COVID-19-related services. The following section provides highlights of these programs and services that aim to prevent disease and protect health for all residents in the LaCloche Foothills area.



### Control of infectious diseases and infection control

- **6** cases of reportable diseases investigated (includes, for example, enteric, vector borne, blastomycosis, and antibiotic resistant organisms (AROs) such as Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae)
- **6** cases of reportable diseases investigated (includes, for example, chickenpox, encephalitis, iGAS, invasive H. influenzae, influenza, meningitis—bacterial and viral, tuberculosis, and monkeypox)
- **587** COVID-19 cases investigated
- **20** child care, personal service settings, or long-term care facilities inspected
- **21** reportable diseases (sexually transmitted infections) investigated

### Vaccine preventable disease

- **10** cold chain visits completed, and **3 696** publicly funded vaccines provided to all healthcare providers
- Provision of school immunizations:
  - Hepatitis B, meningococcal, and human papillomavirus vaccines administered in **5** elementary schools
  - Adacel® vaccine administered in **2** secondary schools
  - **26** immunizations administered at the Espanola office location (includes **8** hepatitis B, **8** human papillomavirus, and **10** menC-ACYW-135)



## Sexual health

- **32** client visits conducted in the Espanola office
- **2** clients seen in local high school
- **4** clients seen by sexual health clinic physician or nurse practitioner at the Espanola office location (includes MPX PrEP services)
- **21** clients provided services through Nurse on Call



## Smoke-free Ontario Act enforcement

- **22** youth access inspections (**13** tobacco related, **9** e-cigarette related)
- **22** display and promotion inspections conducted (**13** tobacco related, **9** e-cigarette related)
- **8** complaints investigated
- **2** compliance inspections or checks of schools conducted
- **2** sale or supply charges or warnings issued
- **0** smoking or vaping charges, **1** warning in prohibited school area

## Food safety

- **96** inspections of food premises completed
- **64** food recalls with follow-up responses completed
- **22** special event food permits issued
- **5** food complaints addressed



## Did you know?



To provide quality public health programs and services within the LaCloche Foothills area, Public Health has aligned its highly skilled and trained staff with the communities' needs. Public Health has an office in Espanola from which four public health nurses, one public health inspector, one family home visitor, and one office assistant support Public Health programming for the residents of the LaCloche Foothills area. Other services are provided to the LaCloche Foothills area residents where and when needed by Public Health main office staff and include, for example, healthy eating programming supports, dental health services, planning and evaluation supports for a variety of public health program areas, as well as support for emergency preparedness and response.



## Vector-borne diseases, rabies, and Lyme disease

- **35** mosquito traps set
- **94** mosquitos trapped
- **2** pools tested for eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) or West Nile virus (WNV)
- **13** animal exposures to rabies investigated, **1** animal submitted
- **6** ticks submitted for testing

## Emergency response

- **1** Municipal emergency response exercise completed
- **2** Emergency Management Committees participated on

## Part 8 land control

- **36** sewage system permits processed
- **2** sewage completion notices
- **1** private sewage complaint addressed
- **12** renovation applications processed

## Health hazards

- **1** health hazard complaint investigated



## Recreational water

- **2** beaches inspected weekly, total of **4** beach inspections, **20** bacteriological samples taken
- **4** public swimming pools or spas inspected
- **2** splash pads or Class C facilities inspected

## Small drinking water systems

- **4** small drinking water systems inspected
- **4** small drinking water systems risk assessments completed
- **4** small drinking water systems directives completed

## Did you know?



Health protection staff are available to participate in tabletop emergency preparedness exercises upon request and often comment on plans or proposals that may have a public health issue.

## Drinking water

- **43** adverse drinking water reports investigated
- **2** boil water advisories or orders issued
- **10** bacteriological samples taken



## Healthy Babies Healthy Children

- **170** home visits conducted
- **8** new families followed
- **1** referral to community services completed
- **2** external referrals to the program
- **Thirty-four** 48-hour calls to parents that provided consent and live in the LaCloche Foothills area
- **3** breastfeeding clinic appointments



## Dental services

- **733** elementary school children participated in the dental screening program
- **64** children screened at school and referred to a family dentist for urgent care
- **18** children received preventive care at a public health office location



## Climate change

Climate change is now recognized as a leading threat facing public health today, and the consequences of climate change are already being felt. Impacting human health through heat waves, wildfires, vector-borne diseases, and weather-related events such as flooding, extreme storms and freezing rain, strategies are urgently needed to protect us and the communities we live in. To help communities prepare for and adapt to the current climate crisis, Public Health prepared the [\*Climate Change in Sudbury and Districts: Assessing Health Risks and Planning Adaptations Together\*](#) report, which includes modelling projections for the impact of climate change in the LaCloche Foothills area in the years to come. Public Health is proud to support municipalities and community partners in developing strong environmental policies and contribute to the safety and well-being of people today and for generations to come.

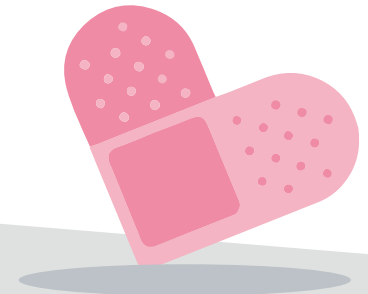


## Bouncing back. Building forward.



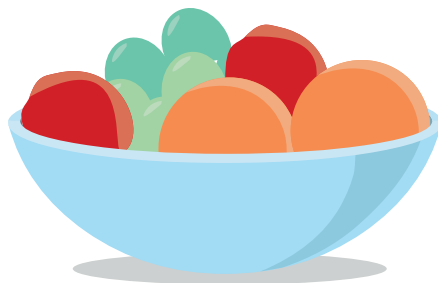
## Health Promotion

Public Health plays a key role in the promotion of health and well-being and the prevention of chronic diseases and injuries. Unfortunately, for some period of time, responding to the local COVID-19 pandemic required the redirection of approximately **75%** of all Public Health resources. This redirection, including a redeployment of most staff, required many programs and services to be paused or stopped altogether. In 2022, Public Health began the journey of recovery, which included the repatriation of many of its Health Promotion staff. Given the intense and prolonged response to the COVID-19 pandemic, many Public Health staff focused their health promotion efforts in 2022 on re-engaging with community partners on shared areas of concern and community need. The following narratives provide a snapshot of a few of these health promotion collaborations that have reignited in 2022.



## Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program

The Northern Fruit and Vegetable Program (NFVP) is funded by the Ministry of Health in partnership with the Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers' Association and administered locally by staff from Public Health. From November to June, participating schools received weekly deliveries of fresh produce in efforts for a healthy lifestyle and diet. The distribution and provision of vegetables and fruit through the NFVP was modified to meet COVID-19 health and safety protocols. This program provides one serving of vegetables and one serving of fruit per week to elementary school children in the LaCloche Foothills area. It helps increase likeability, acceptance and consumption of fruit and vegetables among school-aged children. In the LaCloche Foothills area, a total of five schools, including First Nation schools, participated in the NFVP reaching 1 129 students during the 2021–2022 school year. In partnership with participating schools, Public Health staff will continue to administer the NFVP in the coming school year.



## Community Drug Strategy including needle exchange program and naloxone expansion

In the LaCloche Foothills area, mental health promotion and substance use programing continued to be identified as a priority. To support this priority, Public Health continued to offer an active harm reduction distribution program from the Espanola office throughout 2022. This is a free and confidential program that provides harm reduction supplies and services to people who use drugs. It aims to reduce the risks of getting or passing on infectious diseases, like HIV and hepatitis C, and reduce risks associated with using drugs. In 2022, 811 naloxone kits and refills were distributed to the LaCloche Foothills area. To support continued naloxone distribution, staff from the community family health team and Birch Island Band Office were offered a refresher course on naloxone distribution. Public Health will continue to work in collaboration with local partners to support those with substance use disorders through the distribution of harm reduction kits, naloxone, and increased access to safe needle disposal kiosks in the community.



## Parenting program

Raising healthy families benefits everyone in our community. As recovery work was underway, Public Health staff re-established previous partnerships with community partners to provide better support to families in our community. In partnership with Our Children Our Future, Public Health co-facilitated a variety of programs and workshops such as *Creating Healthy Babies*, *Bounce Back and Thrive*, and a Triple P group. In September 2022, the *Creating Healthy Babies* program was offered virtually and in person every two weeks. This prenatal program provides expectant individuals nutritional, educational and emotional tools to help them develop a healthy baby during their pregnancy. The *Bounce Back and Thrive* 10-week virtual program was offered to parents and those in parenting roles with children under the age of nine to help them develop resiliency skills and increase their capacity to provide caring relationships. The Triple P group was offered virtually to parents with children aged 2–10 and provided parents with simple and practical strategies to build healthy relationships with their children. Public Health will continue to collaborate with local partners to offer programs that are free, voluntary and aim to increase parents' confidence and capabilities in being positive role models for their children.

## Good Food Market

Food affordability and healthy eating continues to be a priority for residents in the LaCloche Foothills area. In partnership with Better Beginnings Better Futures, Public Health funded and helped promote the Good Food Market in Sagamok First Nation. The Good Food Market is a traveling market on wheels that provides fresh produce, sourced locally, when possible, to community members that live in areas with limited access to a grocery store. For these community members, consumption of healthy foods is often limited due to factors such as expense, availability, and accessibility. Increased access to affordable fresh produce means improved diet quality for individuals who need it most. From July to October 2022 the Good Food Market stopped weekly in Sagamok First Nation to provide fresh produce to community members at a reduced cost. In the coming years, the market plans to increase the number of its locations in the LaCloche Foothills area.



