

# **RENFREW COUNTY AND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT**



**Our Road to the Future (2015 – 2019)**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

*Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District*

## MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

Public health programs and services are a critical part of the health system in Ontario. With emphasis on prevention, health promotion and healthy public policy, public health strives to move upstream, to improve the health of the whole population.

I am pleased to share with the people of Renfrew County and District and all of our partners, the 2015-2019 Strategic Plan for the Renfrew County and District Health Unit. This plan outlines the strategic directions and priorities for public health in Renfrew County and District. This ambitious plan was developed based on valuable input from key stakeholders including health unit employees and community partners. By continuing to work together with a common mission and vision, we will collectively shape the face of public health in our region over the next five years and ensure *“Optimal Health for All”* in Renfrew County and District.



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**Dr. Maureen Carew**  
**Medical Officer of Health**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

A Strategic Plan is an enormous undertaking that could not be achieved without the help and involvement of many individuals. The Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) would like to thank all of our community partners for their passionate contribution during the consultation process.

We would also like to thank Ms. Marilyn Halko from the RCDHU, who graciously provided some of the scenic photos from Renfrew County and District for this report.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Renfrew County and District Health Unit has conducted a strategic planning process to develop a vision and set of priorities for 2015 to 2019. The Strategic Plan Steering Committee directed a series of surveys and focus groups to obtain feedback and insight from the Board of Health, employees and key stakeholders. This process informed an analysis of the Health Unit's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Stakeholder input, supplemented with research and the completion of an environmental scan, led to the formulation of the Health Unit's strategic directions for the future. A summary of the key components of the Strategic Plan is presented in this report. The Vision and Mission statements are summarized below along with the four strategic directions and priority areas for action.

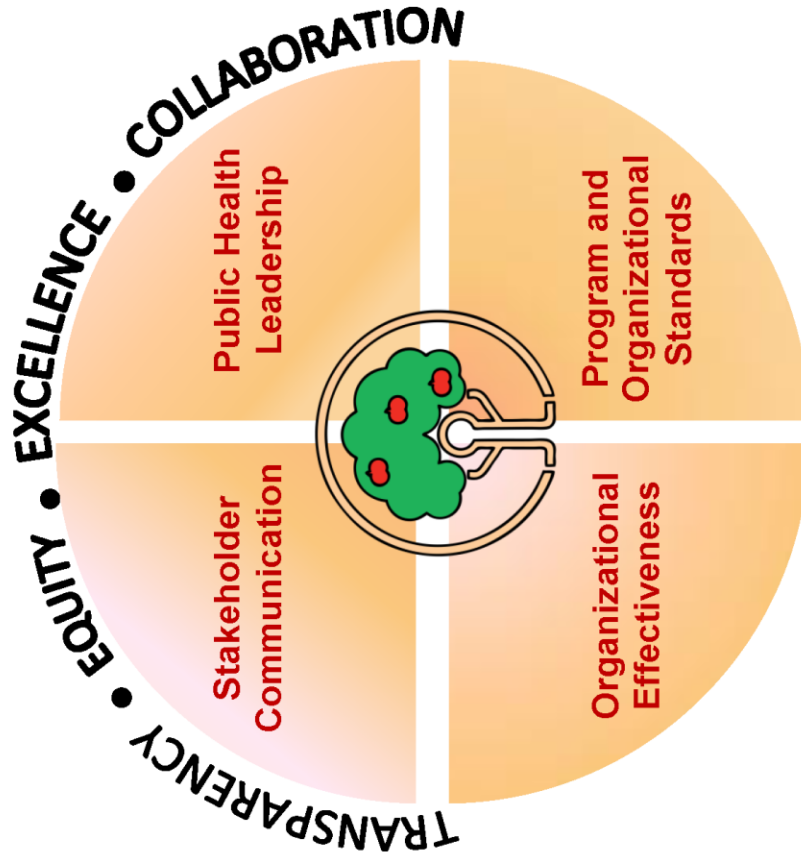
Vision	Mission
<i>Optimal health for all in Renfrew County and District.</i>	<i>Renfrew County and District Health Unit protects and promotes the health and well-being of all residents through leadership, partnership, accountability and service excellence.</i>

- 1. Implement the Ontario Public Health Standards and the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards**
  - Enhance programs and services supporting the social determinants of health
  - Build capacity to support evidence-based practice, program planning and evaluation
  - Enhance management operations to support communications, information management and human resources planning
- 2. Strengthen Renfrew County and District Health Unit's position as a leading partner in public health**
  - Expand partnerships at local and regional levels
  - Enhance leadership of public health locally
  - Build capacity internally to support the health unit as a leader in public health
- 3. Foster an effective and supportive organization**
  - Cultivate a collaborative work environment
  - Align organizational structure, culture and capacity to ensure service excellence
  - Promote performance through continuous quality improvement
- 4. Enhance communication**
  - Strengthen communication internally and externally to build the agency profile
  - Optimize the use of technology and innovation
  - Enhance sharing of population health information

## Renfrew County and District Health Unit Strategic Plan 2015 - 2019

### MISSION

*Renfrew County and District Health Unit protects and promotes the health and well-being of all residents through leadership, partnership, accountability and service excellence.*



### VISION

*Optimal health for all in Renfrew County and District*

## Strategic Directions and Goals:

### Implement the Ontario Public Health Standards and the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards

- Enhance programs and services supporting the social determinants of health
- Build capacity to support evidence-based practice, program planning and evaluation
- Enhance management operations to support communications, information, management and human resources planning.

### Strengthen Renfrew County and District Health Unit's position as a leading partner in public health

- Expand partnerships at local and regional levels
- Enhance leadership of public health locally
- Build capacity internally to support the health unit as a leader in public health

### Foster an effective and supportive organization

- Cultivate a collaborative work environment
- Align organizational structure, culture and capacity to ensure service excellence
- Promote performance through continuous quality improvement

### Enhance communication

- Strengthen communication internally and externally to build the agency profile
- Optimize the use of technology and innovation
- Enhance sharing of population health information



## Renfrew County and District Health Unit Strategic Plan 2015 - 2019

### MISSION

*Renfrew County and District Health Unit protects and promotes the health and well-being of all residents through leadership, partnership, accountability and service excellence.*

### VISION

*Optimal health for all in Renfrew County and District*

## Strategic Values

#### Transparency

We operate ethically and transparently in the service of our communities.

#### Equity

We recognize and appreciate the diversity in Renfrew County and District and endeavour to address the unique needs of our population.

#### Excellence

We are committed to providing the best possible services for individuals and communities. We embrace a culture of continuous improvement, evidence-based decision-making and life-long learning.

#### Collaboration

We work with community partners to achieve shared goals.

**Renfrew County and District Health Unit also embraces these values:**

**Accountability**

**Communication**

**Courage**

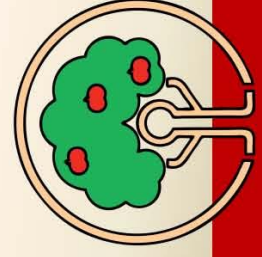
**Innovation**

**Engagement**

**Leadership**

**Respect**

**Sustainability**



# 2015-2019 STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE RENFREW COUNTY AND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

## 1.0 Introduction

The Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) is a local public health organization in Ontario serving the County of Renfrew, the City of Pembroke, the Township of South Algonquin and most of Algonquin Provincial Park.

The province of Ontario, through the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) establishes the provincial priorities and standards for all 36 local public health agencies in Ontario. The guiding purpose of the HPPA is to “provide for the organization and delivery of public health programs and services, the prevention of the spread of disease and the promotion and protection of the health of the people of Ontario.”<sup>1</sup>

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) has implemented Public Health Funding and Accountability Agreements with Boards of Health, which define the delivery of public health programs and services according to the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) and the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards (OPHOS). A requirement of the OPHOS, is the development of a Strategic Plan to ensure the existence of a shared vision for the organization, to establish strategic directions that address local contexts and to integrate local community priorities with provincial mandates and directions.

The Renfrew County and District Health Unit has completed its 2015-2019 Strategic Plan. Clearlogic Consulting Professionals were retained to facilitate the planning process and conducted stakeholder consultations, under the guidance of the RCDHU Strategic Plan Steering Committee comprised of the Board of Health Chair, the Medical Officer of Health as well as Health Unit employees.

This document outlines the process undertaken to collect and compile information used in the plan’s development. It includes an overview of the stakeholder engagement methods, the vision and mission statement formulation, development of the four strategic directions and related priorities, the organizational values and the findings from the environmental scan. Also presented is a description of how the RCDHU Strategic Plan aligns with other provincial health sector plans including Ontario’s Public Health Sector Strategic Plan<sup>2</sup> and Ontario’s Action Plan for Health Care<sup>3</sup>.





## 2.0 Methodology

In the summer of 2014, the Renfrew County and District Health Unit initiated a process to develop a five-year strategic plan. Following the retention of an external consulting firm, the strategic planning process began in August 2014.

### 2.1 Background

Strategic Plans require the support and commitment of not only the Board of Health and employees, but also community stakeholders. The planning process involves considerable effort in engaging participants, collecting and analyzing information and reporting results.

To guide the planning process, RCDHU initiated a Strategic Plan Steering Committee (SPSC) which met frequently during the planning period between August and December 2014. The SPSC included frontline employees, managers and leaders of the organization.

#### **Strategic Plan Steering Committee members:**

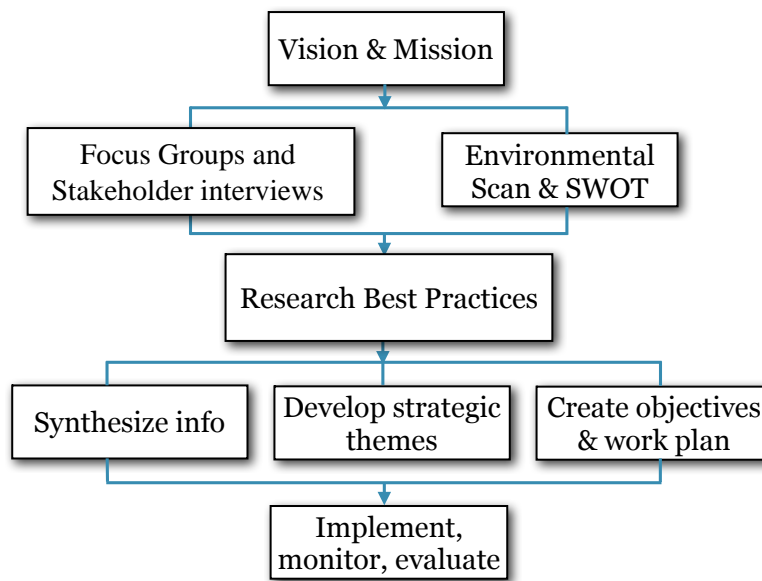
- Mayor Jack Wilson, Board of Health Chair
- Dr. Maureen Carew, Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer
- Ms. Agnes Atkinson, Public Health Inspector
- Mr. Mike Grace, Acting Manager, Environmental Health
- Ms. Theresa Mann, Public Health Nurse
- Ms. Colleen Musclow, Health Promoter
- Ms. Carla Walters, Manager, Health Promotion & Clinical Services

To assist with communications, the consultants developed a project website that contained progress reports, schedules, survey tools, milestones and other information relating to the planning process. The website was updated throughout the life of the strategic planning process.

### 2.2 Developing the Draft Vision, Mission and Values

The overall process for the RCDHU Strategic Plan is described in Figure 1. As a first step, the consultants met for a half-day session in September 2014 with the Board of Health to develop the draft vision and mission statements and consider the values to guide the organization over the next five years. These draft statements were then shared with employees and community stakeholders and were further refined to shape the Vision, Mission and Values of the Health Unit.

**Figure 1: Strategic Planning Process**



## 2.3 Employee Consultations

Employees contributed to the development of the strategic plan through two consultation sessions held in September 2014. The sessions were structured as an interactive workshop and were designed to communicate the value and impact of strategic planning and to collect as many insights and ideas from employees as possible.

## 2.4 Surveys

Online surveys were developed and tailored to obtain specific feedback from each of the following stakeholder groups:

- RCDHU employees
- Board of Health Members
- Municipal stakeholders

## 2.5 Focus Groups and Stakeholder Interviews

The consulting team held focus group sessions in September and October 2014 to obtain feedback from external partners. Invited participants included stakeholders from a variety of sectors including hospitals, long term care, primary health care, education, social services, community services, child and youth programs, francophone and Aboriginal partners. Key informant interviews were organized for participants who were interested in contributing to the process, but who were unable to attend the focus group sessions.

## 3.0 Vision and Mission Statements and Values

### 3.1 Vision

The Board of Health finalized the following vision statement:

***Optimal health for all in Renfrew County and District***

The vision statement expresses the “ideal state” for the Health Unit, i.e. where the organization aspires to exist in the future. During the consultation process, comments from stakeholders suggested that the vision should express:

- Inclusiveness and equity – reflected in the term *all*.
- The term *optimal* suggests the highest possible level of achievement and overall aspiration of the organization.

### 3.2 Mission Statement

The Board of Health, employees and Steering Committee provided input to shape the following Mission Statement:

***Renfrew County and District Health Unit protects and promotes the health and well-being of all residents through leadership, partnership, accountability and service excellence.***

The mission statement features the following components:

- **Purpose Statement** - *the health and well-being of all residents*
- **Operations Statement** - *protection and promotion activities*
- **Values** – *leadership, partnership, accountability, service excellence*

### 3.3 Values

Organizational values represent important aspects of an organization’s identity and are considered the guiding principles that underlie decision-making, prioritization and service delivery.

The following four values were identified as the primary values for the RCDHU:

1. **Transparency:** We operate ethically and transparently in the service of our communities.
2. **Equity:** We recognize and appreciate the diversity in Renfrew County and District and endeavor to address the unique needs of our population.
3. **Excellence:** We are committed to providing the best possible services for individuals and communities. We embrace a culture of continuous improvement, evidence-based decision making and lifelong learning.
4. **Collaboration:** We work with community partners to achieve shared goals.

**In addition to the above, the organization embraces the following values:**

Accountability	Engagement
Communication	Leadership
Courage	Respect
Innovation	Sustainability

## **4.0 Environmental Scan**

An environmental scan was conducted to provide a greater understanding about the socioeconomic and health environment in which RCDHU operates. In the context of health promotion, this process considered health indicators and behaviours as well as the broader social determinants of health.

### **4.1 Socio-Demographic Profile**

#### **4.1.1 Population Growth & Size**

The Renfrew County and District Health Unit serves the geographic area of the County of Renfrew, the City of Pembroke and the Township of South Algonquin including Algonquin Provincial Park.

The total population of Renfrew County and District was 102,620 according to the 2011 Census.<sup>4</sup> This represents a 3.2% increase from 2006.<sup>5</sup> During the same time period, the population of Ontario increased by 5.7%.

**Renfrew County and District is comprised of 19 municipalities including:**

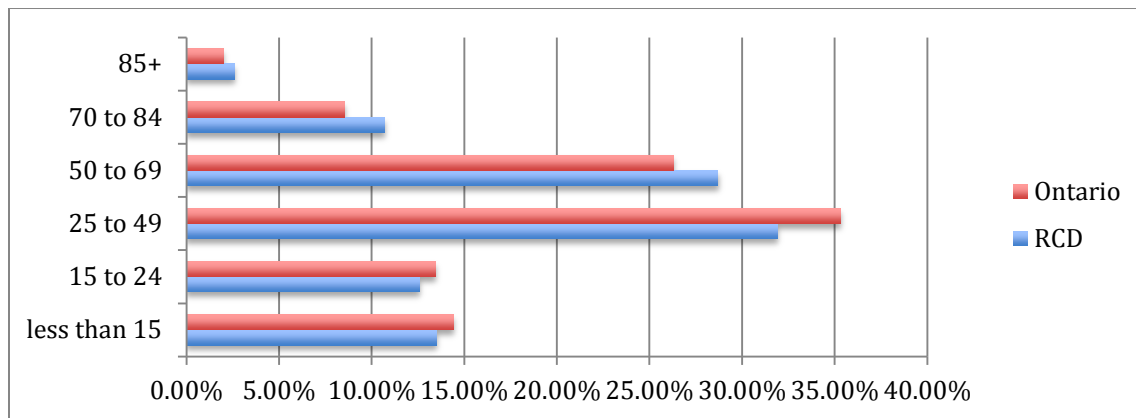
- Admaston/Bromley (Township)
- Arnprior (Town)
- Bonnechere Valley (Township)
- Brudenell, Lyndoch and Raglan (Township)
- Deep River (Town)
- Greater Madawaska (Township)
- Head, Clara and Maria (Township)
- Horton (Township)
- Killaloe, Hagarty and Richards (Township)
- Laurentian Hills (Town)
- Laurentian Valley (Township)
- Madawaska Valley (Township)
- McNab/Braeside (Township)
- North Algona Wilberforce (Township)
- Pembroke (City)
- Petawawa (Town)
- Renfrew (Town)
- South Algonquin (Township)
- Whitewater Region (Township)

With a land area of 8,313 square kilometres, the population density in Renfrew County is 12.3 persons per square kilometre. Almost half (47.9%) of the population live in rural areas (compared with 20.0% in Ontario).

### 4.1.2 Age and Gender Distribution

In 2011, the median age of the population in Renfrew County and District was 44.1 years, which was slightly higher than the provincial median of 40.6 years.<sup>4</sup> The Renfrew County and District populace was almost equally divided between males and females. Figure 2 shows a higher proportion of adults aged 70 and above in Renfrew County and District. As well, the proportion of the population over the age of 50 in Renfrew County and District increased from 36.7% in 2006<sup>5</sup> to 40.7% in 2011.

**Figure 2: Age Distribution, Renfrew County and District and Ontario (2011)**



Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, Renfrew County, 2011

### 4.1.3 Life Expectancy and Fertility Rates

Ontario has one of the highest life expectancies in Canada and among the countries of the developed world. In 2013, a newborn female in Ontario could expect to live 83.6 years, and a newborn male 79.2 years.<sup>4</sup> Life expectancy in Renfrew County and District in 2013 was comparable to Ontario at 82.8 years for females and 79.0 years for males.<sup>4</sup>

In 2011, the fertility rate in Ontario was 1.52 and in Renfrew County and District, the rate was 1.04.<sup>4</sup> These rates are less than the population replacement level of 2.1 children per woman.<sup>6</sup> Between 2009 and 2013 however, the number of live births increased in both Ontario and in Renfrew County and District (Table 1).

**Table 1: Hospital Births, Renfrew County and District and Ontario, 2009-2013**

Year	Renfrew County and District (Number of births)	Ontario (Number of births)
2009	1013	141,670
2010	1092	139,673
2011	1069	139,434
2012	1104	140,169
2013	1130	137,609

**Source:** Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, IntelliHealth Ontario. Extracted January 29, 2015.



#### 4.1.4 Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

According to the 2011 Statistics Canada National Household Survey,<sup>7</sup> 88% of people in Renfrew County and District identified English as their only language, while 0.2% spoke French only and 11.8% were bilingual. These figures were consistent with the Ontario rates of 86%, 0.3% and 11% respectively. The next most popular languages spoken in Renfrew County were German (1,105 persons) and Polish (1000 persons).

The Algonquins of Pikwàkanagàn First Nation is situated on the shores of the Bonnechere River and Golden Lake. The population was 435 according to the 2011 Census. In Renfrew County and District, 2,075 people (2.1%) reported in the 2011 National Household Survey, being a Registered or Treaty Indian and 7,610 (7.6%) reported having Aboriginal identity. Of those with Aboriginal heritage, 37.4% identified as being Métis and 56.4% identified as being First Nations.

In the same survey, 1,970 (2%) of the Renfrew County and District population identified themselves as belonging to a visible minority compared with 26% in Ontario. As well, just over 5% of persons in Renfrew County and District identified themselves as having immigrant status compared with 28.5% for the province of Ontario.

## 4.2 Economic Profile

### 4.2.1 Income and Employment

The 2011 Statistics Canada National Household Survey provided data regarding income and earnings in Canada. As presented in Table 2, the median after-tax income for households in Renfrew County and District in 2011 was \$54,074 and for individuals, the after-tax income was \$27,610. These income levels were slightly lower than the provincial figures of \$58,717 and \$28,118, respectively. The prevalence of low income as measured using the Statistics Canada after-tax Low Income Measure (LIM) was found to be slightly lower in Renfrew County and District (11.7%) in comparison with Ontario (13.9%). As well, using the same measure, a lower percentage of children and youth in Renfrew County and District were living in poverty (13.3%) compared with children and youth in Ontario (17.3%).<sup>7</sup>

**Table 2: Income and Employment, Renfrew County and District and Ontario**

	Renfrew County	Ontario
<b>Median After-Tax Household Income (\$)</b>	54,074	58,717
<b>Median After-Tax Income Individuals (\$)</b>	27,610	28,118
<b>Percentage of Households with After-Tax income &lt; \$20,000</b>	11.8%	11.7%
<b>Percentage of Households with After-Tax income ≥ \$80,000</b>	39.0%	54.1%
<b>Prevalence of low income based on after-tax low income measure (Overall)</b>	11.7%	13.9%
<b>Prevalence of low income* based on after-tax low income measure (&lt; 18 years of age)</b>	13.3%	17.3%
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	7.9%	8.3%

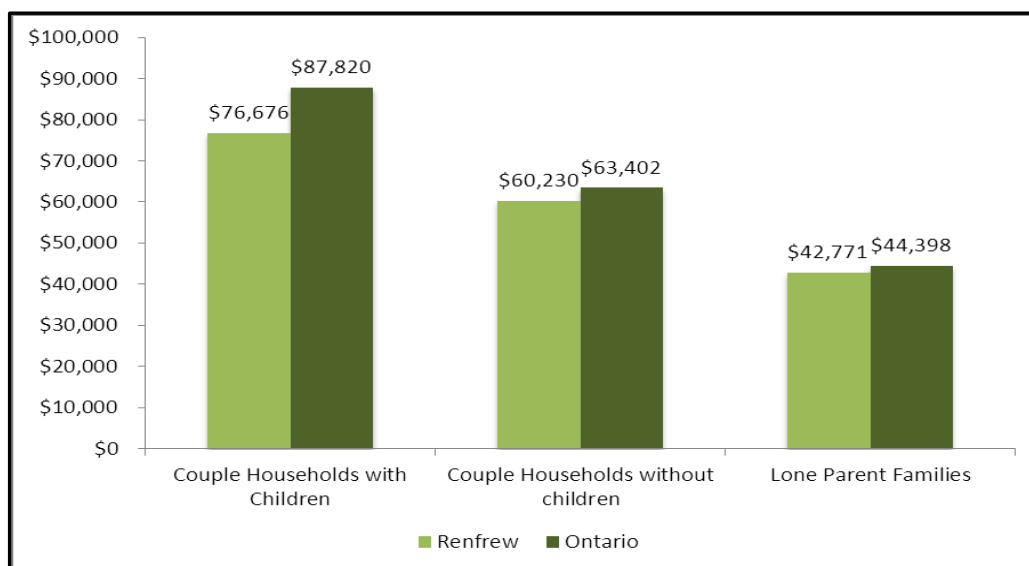
**Source:** 2011 Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, Renfrew County and District

\*Low income is defined by the After-Tax Low Income Measure (LIM – AT).

The unemployment rate in Renfrew County in 2011 was 7.9% which was slightly lower than the provincial rate of 8.3%. Public Administration (17.7%), Retail and Trade (12.2%), Health Care and Social Assistance (11.5%), Manufacturing (7.8%), and Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (7%) and Construction (7.1%) represented the largest industry sectors in Renfrew County and District in 2011.<sup>7</sup>

Income levels according to household family description are presented in Figure 3. For “Couple Households with Children” the median after-tax income level in Renfrew County and District in 2011 was 14% lower (\$76,676) than the provincial level of \$87,820. The median after tax income for “Couple Households Without Children” was \$60,230, which approximated the provincial figure of \$63,402. For “Lone Parent Families” in Renfrew County and District, the median after-tax income was \$42,771 which was similar to the Ontario level of \$44,398.

**Figure 3: Median After-tax Income in Renfrew County and Ontario by Household (2011)**



**Source:** 2011 Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, Renfrew County and District

## 4.2.2 Education

According to Statistics Canada, in 2011, 31% of the population of Renfrew County and District (over the age of 15 years) completed high school compared with a 27% completion rate for Ontario. Another 47% completed some form of post-secondary training which was somewhat less than the provincial rate of 55%. The proportion of residents completing high school in Renfrew County and District increased from 26% in 2006 to 31% in 2011.<sup>7</sup>



**Table 3: Education Levels, Renfrew County and District and Ontario**

Highest level of education	Renfrew County	Ontario
<b>No high school certificate; diploma or degree</b>	21%	19%
<b>High school certificate or equivalent</b>	31%	27%
<b>Post-secondary certificate, diploma or degree</b>	47%	55%
• College; CEGEP, other non-university certificate or diploma	10%	7%
• University certificate or diploma below bachelor level	23%	20%
• University certificate, diploma or degree at bachelor level or above	2%	4%
• Bachelor's degree	8%	14%
• University certificate, diploma or degree above bachelor level	4%	9%

(Total Population aged 15 years and over by highest certificate, diploma or degree)

**Source:** Statistics Canada, National Household Survey, Renfrew County and District, 2011

## 4.3 Technology

Many people now seek health information from online sources. In Ontario, 84% of households had internet access in 2012. Access was related to income with almost all households in the top income quartile (99%) having internet services, compared with 61% of households in the lowest income quartile.<sup>8</sup>

In Renfrew County and District, internet access is good in urban areas but may be limited in more rural areas. Internet availability however, improved in 2014. Both the reach and speed of existing DSL<sup>9</sup> services in Renfrew County and District have expanded. Download speeds of 15Mbps have become available through a fibre optic cable network, and new access points have been added to the existing network. Areas that cannot connect with a wired service can access the Internet through a satellite connection that provides speeds of up to 10Mbps.<sup>10</sup>

These upgrades are part of the Eastern Ontario Regional Network project that is jointly funded by the Governments of Canada and Ontario, the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus Inc. and private sector investors.<sup>11</sup>

## 4.4 Geography

Geographically, RCDHU provides services to a region covering 14,980 square km in the Ottawa Valley in Eastern Ontario. The area is popular with cottagers, as it has more than 900 lakes and four major river systems. Given the vast geography and rural location, there are limited public transportation services. People who wish to travel between communities in general, must take a private vehicle.

## 4.5 Health Outcomes and Health Behaviours

Data regarding health outcomes and lifestyle behaviours for the population of Renfrew County and District are presented in the tables below. Where possible, local data is compared with the province as well as other rural areas in Ontario.<sup>12</sup>

With respect to health care services (Table 4), the proportion of residents who had access to a regular medical doctor in Renfrew County and District was approximately 87% which is slightly lower than the provincial rate of 91%. Regarding the distribution of physician services, the number of family physicians per population in Renfrew County and District was slightly higher than the provincial rate but there were fewer specialist physicians (35/100,000 vs 99/100,000) in Renfrew County and District compared with the province of Ontario.<sup>13</sup>



**Table 4: Health Care Utilization, Renfrew County and District and Ontario, 2013**

Indicator	RCDHU	Ontario
Regular medical doctor	87.2%	91.1%
General family physicians/100,000	101	95
Specialist physicians/100,000	35	99

Statistics Canada, Renfrew County and District Health Unit Health Region Profile, 2013  
Catalogue no. 82-228-XWE. Ottawa

The 2011-12 Canadian Community Health Survey (CCHS) collected information on self-reported perceived health status.<sup>13</sup> For Renfrew County and District, 56.8% of the population reported having excellent or very good health (compared with 60.4% in Ontario), 67.6% felt they had excellent or very good mental health (compared with 72.4% in Ontario) and 19.9% reported they felt their lives were extremely or quite a bit stressful which was slightly lower than the Ontario rate of 22.8%. Compared with the province, the results suggest slightly lower levels of perceived good health and mental health in Renfrew County and District but lower levels of perceived stress in the region.

The prevalence of self-reported chronic conditions as captured from the Canadian Community Health Survey is presented in Table 5 below.<sup>13</sup> The data indicate that the prevalence of diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and asthma in Renfrew County and District was similar to the occurrence of these conditions in Ontario and in other rural areas of the province (Table 5).

**Table 5: Chronic Diseases, Renfrew County and District and Ontario, 2011-12**

Disease	RCDHU (%)	Ontario (%)	Rural (%)
Asthma	9.1	8.0	8.3
Heart Disease	5.5	4.2	4.1
Diabetes	5.9	5.6	5.2
High Blood Pressure	16.7	14.7	15.7

Age Standardized rates (percent of the population aged 12 years and over)

Caution: Use with caution for asthma, heart disease and diabetes (Statistics Canada)

**Source:** Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion. Public Health Ontario, 2014

Regarding health behaviours (Table 6), certain behaviours were found to be elevated in Renfrew County and District as compared with Ontario. This pattern was observed in other rural areas as well. Compared with the province, the rate of underage drinking was 20% higher among youth (ages 12 to 17 years) living in Renfrew County and District. A higher proportion of adults in the region (54.9%) reported alcohol intake exceeding the low risk drinking guidelines compared with Ontario (44.4%). Although statistically significant differences in rates were not found for smoking, obesity and physical inactivity, the results indicate these risk factors are highly prevalent across the province and in Renfrew County and District.



**Table 6: Self-Reported Health Behaviours, Renfrew County and District and Ontario, 2011-12**

Behaviour	RCDHU (%)	Ontario (%)	Rural (%)
<b>Alcohol Intake High*</b>	54.9¶	44.4	55.4
<b>Underage Drinking**</b>	55.9¶	36.6	47.5
<b>Obesity in Adults***</b>	20.6	15.5	19.5
<b>Overweight Adults***</b>	27.0	28.9	30.3
<b>Obese + Overweight Youth***</b>	34.8	24.0	32.3
<b>Vegetables and fruits (5 or more per day)</b>	39.7	38.5	41.1
<b>Current Smokers</b>	20.8	15.5	21.7
<b>Physically active during leisure time</b>	31.3	30.5	33.0
<b>Moderately active during leisure time</b>	26.3	24.6	25.2
<b>Inactive during leisure time</b>	42.3	44.9	41.8

Age Standardized rates where applicable

¶ statistically significant (difference with Ontario)

**Source:** Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion. Public Health Ontario, 2014

\* Alcohol consumption exceeds the Low-Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines (either guideline #1 or #2)

\*\* Youth aged 12-18 years

\*\*\* Self-reported height and weight was used to calculate Body Mass Index (BMI). BMI is used to classify body weight according to health risk. It is calculated by dividing a person's weight in kilograms by the height in meters.<sup>2</sup> BMI cut-offs for underweight, normal weight, overweight and obese have been defined.

## 4.6 Provincial and Regional Directions

A strategic plan considers the external environment and directions of key partners. In developing its plan, RCDHU considered alignment with the plans and strategies identified below.

**Table 7: Alignment of RCDHU Strategic Plan and Provincial Plans and Strategy**

<b>RCDHU's 2015-2019 Strategic Plan Directions</b>	<b>Ontario Public Health Sector Strategic Plan “Make No Little Plans”</b>	<b>Ontario Public Health and Organizational Standards</b>	<b>Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Ontario Action Plan for Health Care</b>
<b>Implement the Ontario Public Health and Organizational Standards</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Strengthen RCDHU's position as a leading partner in public health</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Foster an effective and supportive organization</b>	✓	✓	✓
<b>Enhance communication</b>	✓	✓	

### 4.6.1. Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

According to the Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care report released in 2015 by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, the government of Ontario aspired to improve health care service delivery and planning to ensure Ontarians had improved access to high quality health care services provided in an efficient environment.<sup>3</sup>

Regarding Public Health, the Action Plan referenced the need to:

- address preventable diseases due to high tobacco use, diet and lack of physical activity
- improve coordination between various health care providers in a health care system
- improve the use of technology
- utilize evidence-based actions

### 4.6.2 Ontario Public Health Sector's “Make No Little Plans”<sup>14</sup>

In 2013 the Ontario Public Health Sector released a strategic plan entitled “Make No Little Plans” which established the 15 to 20 year vision, mission, values and strategic goals for the public health sector. The strategy also included five collective areas of focus for development in the immediate three to five years.<sup>2</sup>

**The Ontario Public Health Sector Strategic Plan has five strategic goals:**

1. Optimize healthy human development
2. Improve the prevention and control of infectious diseases
3. Improve health by reducing preventable diseases and injuries
4. Promote healthy environments, both natural and built
5. Strengthen the public health sector's capacity, infrastructure and emergency preparedness

**The plan also identifies “Collective Areas of Focus” for the Public Health Sector that include:**

1. Early childhood development including mental wellness and resiliency
2. Immunization
3. Physical activity and healthy eating
4. Tobacco and alcohol use
5. Built environment
6. Information and knowledge systems
7. Collaborative mechanism
8. A highly competent workforce

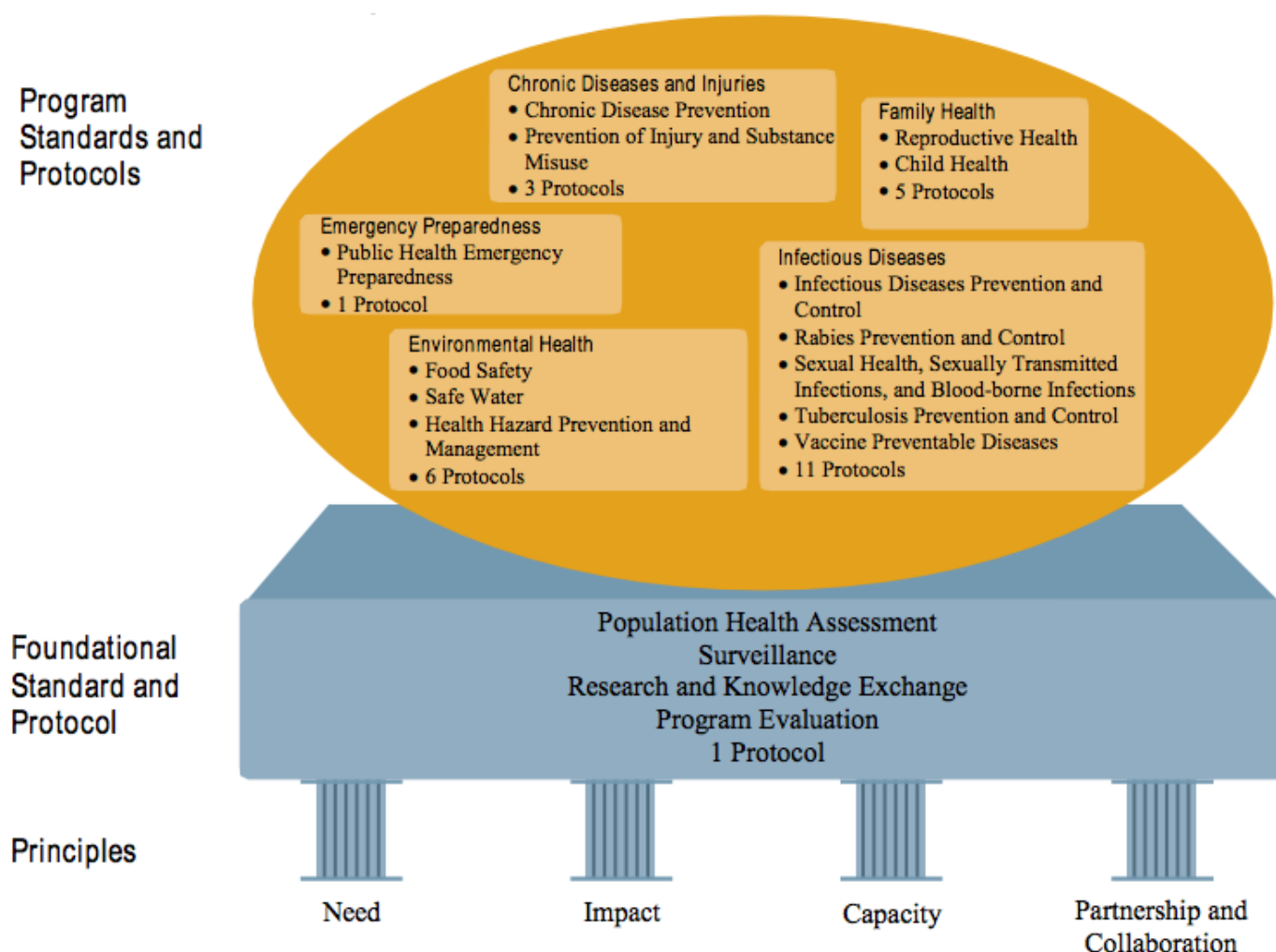
By focusing on enhancement of the OPHS and considering the provincial priority areas, the RCDHU Strategic Plan will become aligned with provincial priorities and standards. In particular, priorities relating to healthy human development, the prevention and control of infectious diseases, addressing preventable illness and injuries, and promoting healthy environments will be considered under RCDHU Strategic Direction 1.

### **4.6.3 Ontario Public Health Standards**

The RCDHU Strategic Plan was developed to align with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Ontario Public Health Standards. The first strategic direction of the RCDHU Strategic Plan outlines priority areas for implementing the OPHS to enhance the delivery of programs and services.

In addition to the foundational standards (Population Health Assessment, Surveillance, Research and Knowledge Exchange, Program Evaluation), Health Units are required to deliver programs and services that contribute to the physical, mental, and emotional health and well-being of all Ontarians. To accomplish this goal, Boards of Health are responsible for the assessment, planning, delivery, management, and evaluation of a variety of public health programs and services that address multiple health needs of the population including the social determinants of health.

**Figure 4: Ontario Public Health Program Standards**



#### 4.6.4 Local Health Integration Network

The Champlain Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) plans, coordinates and funds health services for the following health care sectors within the Champlain region in Ontario:

- Hospitals
- Community Care Access Centre (home care)
- Addictions and Mental Health Agencies
- Community Support Services (such as Meals on Wheels)
- Community Health Centres
- Long-Term Care Homes

The Champlain LHIN's Integrated Service Plan for 2013-2016 recognizes shared goals with Public Health. The Plan states that: "to prevent illness and injury, and improve our population's health, the LHIN needs to work with public health partners and others within and outside of healthcare".<sup>15</sup>

As with other health care stakeholders, the RCDHU partners with the Champlain LHIN in developing a coordinated approach to the prevention of diseases and injuries and the promotion of health in Renfrew County and District. The communications and leadership directions within the RCDHU strategic plan will be developed over the next five years to ensure strengthening of partnerships with key community stakeholders such as the Champlain LHIN.

#### **4.6.5 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA)**

Ontario has two pieces of legislation that address accessibility for individuals with disabilities: The Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001 (ODA)<sup>16</sup> and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA)<sup>17</sup>. The ODA requires communities with more than 10,000 residents to appoint an Accessibility Advisory Committee and to publish an annual Accessibility Plan. The AODA has a mandate to develop and implement accessibility standards. As of 2012, the Accessibility Standard for Customer Service is the only AODA standard to be made into law.

Accessibility standards under development with AODA include the following:

- Information and Communication
- Employment
- Transportation
- The Built Environment

Renfrew County and District Health Unit has developed policies and procedures in keeping with the AODA which are available on the RCDHU website.



### **5.0 SWOT Analysis**

Assessment of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats forms the SWOT analysis of a Strategic Plan. An organization's assets, effective systems and resources are considered strengths. Weaknesses are internal factors preventing the organization from operating at optimal efficiency and effectiveness.

Opportunities allow the organization to move forward, while threats are external factors that can negatively affect operations and jeopardize success.



Table 8 below highlights the key SWOT elements that informed the RCDHU Strategic Planning process.

**Table 8: SWOT Analysis for the Renfrew County and District Health Unit**

Strengths	<--INTERNAL-->	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership is active and visible</li> <li>• The organization is motivated to collaborate and enhance services</li> <li>• Excellent program delivery by front line employees</li> <li>• Good orientation for employees and collaboration within and between departments</li> <li>• Strong collaboration and sharing with community partners</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highly hierarchical organizational culture</li> <li>• Program evaluation is limited</li> <li>• Dedicated expertise in epidemiology and communications is limited</li> <li>• Communication tools need improvement/development (e.g. Website, social media, intranet)</li> <li>• Employees at partnership tables have limited decision-making authority</li> </ul>
Opportunities	<- EXTERNAL->	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders want, need, and are open to RCDHU taking lead and being a strong partner</li> <li>• Emphasis on Social Determinants of Health (SDOH) and population health approach at the provincial level</li> <li>• Stakeholders seeking accurate, timely local health information/expertise</li> <li>• Other organizations have resources to share (e.g. tools, practices, expertise)</li> <li>• Technological options available</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Addressing key SDOHs (e.g. income, education and employment) is challenging</li> <li>• Vast geographic area for service delivery</li> <li>• People seek online health information from unreliable sources</li> <li>• Rapidly changing and variable use of technology</li> <li>• Aging population residing in a vast rural area</li> </ul>

## 6.0 Strategic Directions

Strategic plans are developed around a series of broad directions. Each direction contains several priorities that address gaps and leverage opportunities for action. Developing strategic directions involves considering not only the opportunities and potential projects identified, but also the SWOT analysis, environmental scan and best practices in organizational development.

The directions themselves act as a means of organizing the activities in the plan and broadly link to the mission and vision statements. There are four proposed strategic directions for the RCDHU Strategic Plan:

- 1. Implement the Ontario Public Health Standards and the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards**
- 2. Strengthen Renfrew County and District Health Unit's position as a leading partner in public health**
- 3. Foster an effective and supportive organization**
- 4. Enhance communication**

Each direction includes a group of priorities described in the sections that follow.

## **6.1 Implement the Ontario Public Health Standards and the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards**

In Ontario, Public Health Units must comply with provincial organizational and program standards as set by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Both the Board of Health and employees at the Health Unit recognize the importance of providing mandated and customized services to the population through a strong community organization.

During the planning process, stakeholders encouraged the Health Unit to improve communications, enhance human resources planning and information technology to ensure the health unit is well equipped to proactively address community health needs. These identified priorities align with the Ontario Public Health and Organizational standards.

Actions under this strategic direction include:

- Enhance partnerships, programs and services to identify and address local needs and social determinants of health
- Build capacity to support evidence-based practice, programming and evaluation
- Enhance management operations to support communications, information management and human resource planning

## **6.2 Strengthen Renfrew County and District Health Unit's position as a leading partner in public health**

Stakeholders were pleased to see the Health Unit's leadership taking an active and visible role in communications and coordinating projects aimed at improving population health in the region. During consultations, partners suggested that the Renfrew County and District Health Unit become a more visible leader in the community and focus on partnership development and joint program delivery where appropriate over the next five years.

Actions that the Health Unit could undertake to fulfill this strategic direction include:

- Expand partnerships at local and regional levels
- Enhance leadership of public health locally and regionally
- Build capacity internally to support the Health Unit as a leader in public health

## **6.3 Foster an effective and supportive organization**

Findings from the focus group consultations, employee sessions and stakeholder surveys indicated that RCDHU provided excellent front-line services and has the potential to be an even more effective organization. Stakeholders felt that the Health Unit should prioritize the provision of innovative and meaningful health programming throughout the region and re-align the culture to empower and support employees.

It was also noted during the consultation process that the organization has a highly hierarchical structure and employees have limited delegated decision-making at partnership tables.

Activities the Health Unit could undertake to fulfill this strategic direction include:

- Cultivate a collaborative work environment
- Align organizational structure, culture and capacity to ensure service excellence
- Promote performance through continuous quality improvement

## **6.4 Enhance communication**

In keeping with implementation of the Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards, RCDHU requires a comprehensive strategy to guide the development and delivery of internal and external communications.

Renfrew County and District Health Unit serves a population with diverse needs across a vast geography. The region has an aging population, communities with low income, few transportation options and a French language minority. Further, Renfrew County and District has geographic spots with sporadic internet access and simultaneously, an increased demand for online services and information.

Although employees have good communication skills, the health unit lacks an organization-wide communications strategy, an intranet to share information and has no dedicated communications expertise. Stakeholders recommended that the Health Unit boost its website presence, use innovative and varied communications methods (e.g. social media) to reach the diverse population and provide accurate and timely health information to the public, health professionals and community partners.

Activities the Health Unit could undertake to fulfill this strategic direction include:

- Strengthen communication internally and externally to build the agency profile
- Optimize the use of technology and innovation
- Enhance sharing of population health information

## **7.0 Summary**

Renfrew County and District Health Unit has embarked on a journey to achieve “Optimal health for all in Renfrew County and District.” Between 2015 and 2019, the Health Unit will implement the directions of the Strategic Plan. While continuing to provide the mandated activities of public health, this plan sets the course for RCDHU to build strong partnerships, engage communities, expand communications and provide leadership in public health in Renfrew County and District. In moving forward, we will embrace the values of transparency, equity, excellence and collaboration and will work closely with our communities, external agencies, families and individuals using evidence-based practice to promote and protect the health of our population.

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- <sup>17</sup> Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005, S.O. 2005, c.11.