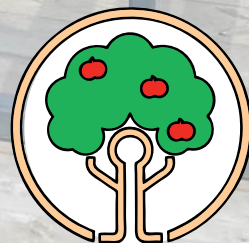


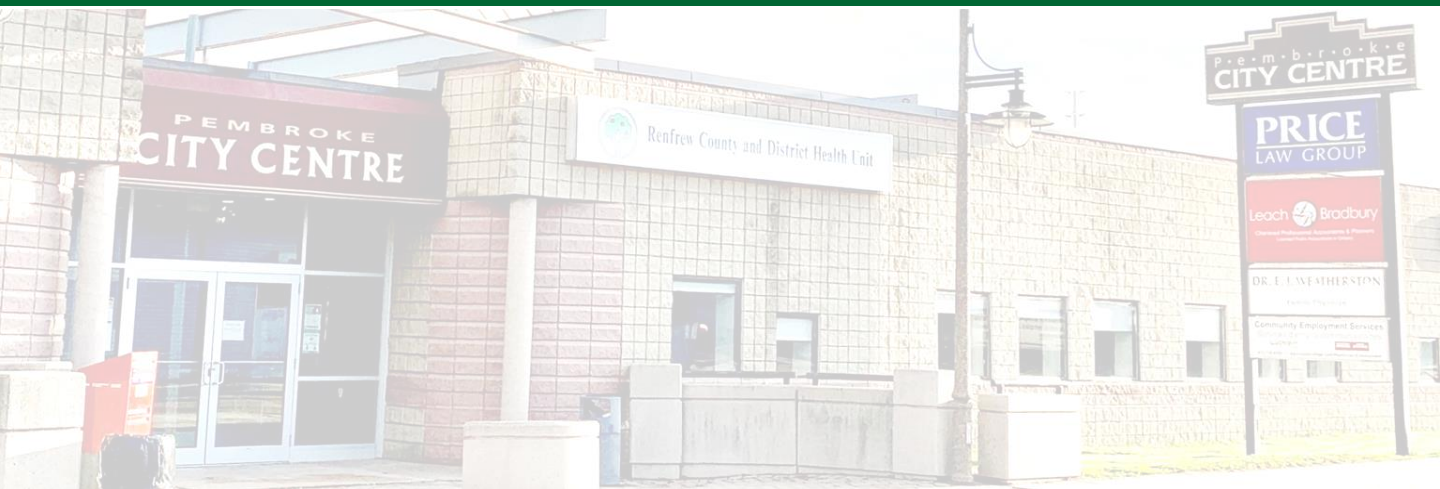
2022

ANNUAL REPORT

Renfrew County and District
Health Unit

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"





Connect with us



www.rcdhu.com



@RCDHealthUnit



(613) 732-3629 or 1-800-267-1097



141 Lake Street, Pembroke ON

Mission

Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District.

Vision

Renfrew County and District Health Unit protects and promotes the health and well-being of all.

Land Acknowledgement

Renfrew County and District Health Unit is located on the unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe People.

We honour the land and peoples of the Algonquin Anishinaabe, whose ancestors have lived on this territory since time Immemorial, and whose culture and presence have nurtured and continue to nurture this land.

We honour all First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, their elders, their ancestors and their valuable past and present contributions to this land.

Migwech



BOARD OF HEALTH

ADDRESS

It has once again been a privilege to work with the dedicated team of professionals at Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) in 2022. The year opened following the emergence of the Omicron variant, which resulted in the largest increase in COVID-19 activity yet seen throughout the pandemic. Later in the year there was a gradual lifting of public health measures and easing back to more familiar routines. By the end of 2022, RCDHU had resumed many of its regular public health programs and services.

Community and school vaccine campaigns delivered protection against COVID-19, influenza, and other vaccine preventable diseases, offering over 700 clinics across the health unit. These efforts included many catch-up clinics for school-age children who missed vaccinations due to pandemic disruptions. As a result, RCDHU achieved some of the highest student vaccination rates in the province.

Significant progress was made in restoring and strengthening comprehensive public health services, while still responding to COVID-19. RCDHU significantly expanded access to dental care services through the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, with over three times as many individuals enrolled relative to 2021. In schools, vision and dental screening was resumed. Additionally, RCDHU continued to increase the number of food safety inspections completed.

Opioid-related harms rose during the pandemic. In 2022, RCDHU continued providing supports to reduce these harms, including access to naloxone, along with sterile equipment to reduce blood borne infections. Relative to last year, nearly double the number of service visits were provided.



Dr. Jason Morgenstern,
Medical Officer of Health



Heather Daly,
Chief Executive Officer



Ann Aikens,
Chair, Board of Health



Staff investigated and responded to increased reports of infectious diseases in the community, with over 5,800 cases confirmed in 2022. In addition to COVID-19, many other diseases of public health significance returned and increased in number over 2022, culminating in the fall with the 'triple threat' of COVID-19, influenza, and RSV. This was the beginning of a new normal of elevated pressures from responding to both COVID-19 and pre-existing infectious diseases.

The RCDHU team continued to show exceptional resilience and dedication in 2022, responding to COVID-19 while also restarting and expanding broader public health services. We thank our employees, funding partners, the Ministry of Health, stakeholders, and community members for all their support throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Jason Morgenstern, Heather Daly, and Ann Aikens



STRATEGIC PLAN

In 2022, RCDHU was pleased to release the [2022 - 2026 Strategic Plan, Our Journey Forward](#). This plan outlines the direction and strategies RCDHU will follow to deliver successful, effective public health programs and services to Renfrew County and District (RCD) in the coming years.

The Strategic Plan was the result of comprehensive planning and collaboration, with input from employees, community partners, and Board of Health members.

Affirming RCDHU's Vision "Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District", the plan identifies a set of four strategic directions and goals which include:



Service Excellence



Workplace Wellness



Partnership

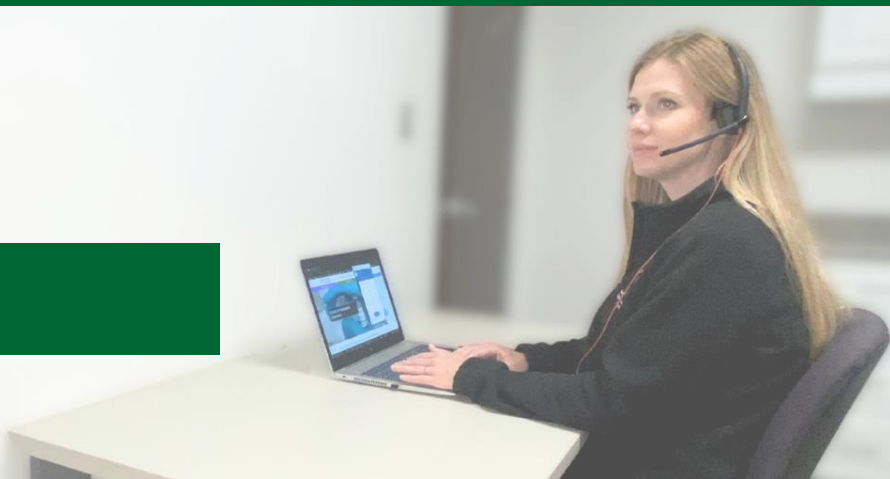


Communication

This five-year plan will guide RCDHU's journey forward.



COVID-19 RESPONSE



The year 2022 began with a new wave of COVID-19, driven by the Omicron variant. The province increased public health safety regulations to slow the spread of the highly contagious variant, as provincial hospitalization rates were rapidly increasing. In RCD, as across the rest of Ontario, this wave resulted in the largest increase in COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths yet seen in the pandemic. To address this new wave, RCDHU staff continued their intense and persistent COVID-19 response efforts. As a result, many public health programs remained paused as staff were redeployed to emergency response and vaccination work, amidst expanding vaccine and booster dose eligibility.

By mid-year, changes in COVID-19 epidemiology allowed RCDHU to begin its transition into a pandemic recovery phase. Many of the regular public health programs and services that had been paused were resumed, while maintaining COVID-19 response efforts. 2022 brought new challenges and difficulties, but it also demonstrated our team's resiliency, dedication, and leadership in a time of continued crisis and hardship.

OUTBREAK MANAGEMENT

RCDHU's case and contact management team worked with hospitals, long-term care homes, retirement homes, congregate care, schools, and daycares to support outbreak management and navigate the changing provincial directives. In 2022, RCDHU worked with facilities to provide guidance during **120 COVID-19 outbreaks**. Staff continued to support facilities during non-COVID-19 respiratory outbreaks as well.

120

COVID-19
facility
outbreaks



7

IPAC
information
sessions



RCDHU offered leadership in infection prevention and control (IPAC) efforts. Partnering with neighbouring health units and the Champlain Regional IPAC hub, RCDHU supported the delivery of **7 education sessions** for IPAC professionals. RCDHU also participated in various IPAC meetings with hospitals, regional health units, and the Ministry of Long-Term Care to support the interpretation of changing IPAC recommendations.

COVID-19 OUTREACH

At the start of 2022, RCDHU public health inspectors continued to provide guidance and support to various business sectors navigating the evolving provincial regulations, offering guidance for screening requirements, masking, cleaning and disinfection, and safety plans.

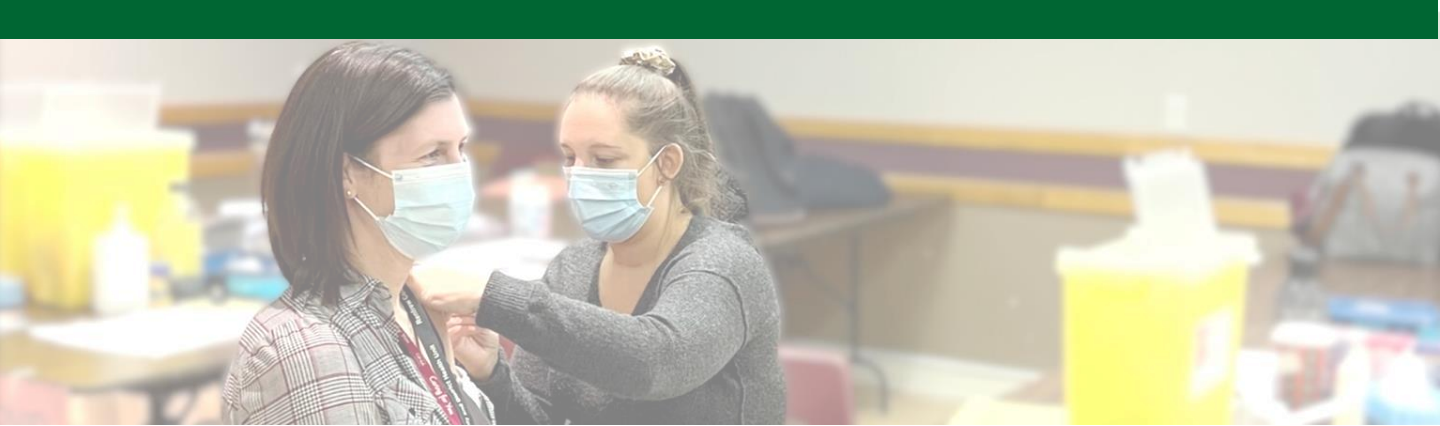
In April 2022, the Government of Ontario lifted all remaining COVID-19 regulations made under the provincial *Re-opening Ontario Act*. As regulations lifted, public health inspectors continued work to support local business sectors, providing safety guidance and best practices for safely reopening businesses and resuming operations.

COVID-19 VACCINE CAMPAIGN

Throughout 2022, RCDHU staff worked diligently to increase our communities' protection from COVID-19, offering vaccine services to all eligible residents. In 2022, RCDHU offered a total of **597 COVID-19 vaccine clinics**.

RCDHU's vaccination team used a comprehensive strategy to make vaccination accessible. Mass vaccination clinics were continued in collaboration with paramedics and school vaccination clinics were provided in partnership with school boards. RCDHU also continued to work alongside Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation to support vaccination of local residents. Finally, the team provided drive-through clinics, mobile clinics, and in-home vaccinations.





The evolution of COVID-19 vaccine programs continued throughout 2022. RCDHU increased efforts as vaccine eligibility expanded to include infants 6 months to 4 years of age, and as children 5-17 years of age became eligible to receive a booster dose. To offer more community-wide protection from COVID-19, RCDHU also provided Novavax vaccines to residents who were not able or willing to receive an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine.

In the fall of 2022, COVID-19 infection rates remained persistently high. In response, RCDHU launched a fall booster dose campaign, providing mass community clinics for both COVID-19 and influenza vaccination.

For individuals aged 12 years and older, new bivalent Omicron-containing COVID-19 vaccines were offered for the first time, providing stronger protection against this dominant strain. Between September and December, RCDHU provided **8,261 bivalent doses** to residents.

RCDHU played an integral role in providing community partners with support and training for the COVaxON vaccine distribution system. RCDHU also worked to manage COVID-19 vaccine inventory in RCD.

The continued success of the COVID-19 vaccine program would not have been possible without the support of numerous community partners, including local hospitals, primary care, pharmacy staff, paramedic services, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation, long-term care homes, retirement homes, schools, and volunteers. This tremendous collaboration resulted in the successful delivery of **75,032 total doses** of COVID-19 vaccine in 2022.



75,329

COVID-19 doses administered in RCD

597

COVID-19 vaccine clinics



8,261

bivalent doses administered



COMMUNICATIONS



2,600 social media posts



3.5 million views on social media



671,309 website clicks



22 media releases

As the pandemic carried into a new year, effective communication remained a priority. RCDHU's communications team kept residents and community partners informed with accurate public health information, recommendations, and guidance in a shifting information landscape. Efforts continued to promote COVID-19 vaccines and vaccine clinics. Staff worked to promote RCDHU's other public health services and programs, providing media releases, social media messaging, daily website updates, and public health resources.

SUPPORTING OUR SCHOOLS



At the start of 2022, the threat of the fifth wave of COVID-19 led the province to once again close schools for in-person learning. Working collaboratively with school boards and schools, RCDHU staff worked to protect students and school communities from the transmission of COVID-19, offering public health guidance and school vaccination. As the new school year began in the fall, RCDHU staff began re-entering schools to resume previously paused school programs.





Immunization for Children and Adolescents

Throughout 2022, staff worked to increase students' and community members' protection against vaccine-preventable diseases, offering catch-up clinics for children and adolescents who missed opportunities for routine vaccinations during the pandemic.

RCDHU delivered **22 community-based catch-up clinics** across RCD, offering both appointment-based and walk-in clinics. These clinics helped bring **1,703 students** up to date on vaccinations designated under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA)*.



22

community-based catch-up clinics



1,703

students brought up to date

102

school-based clinics



4,702

doses provided to students



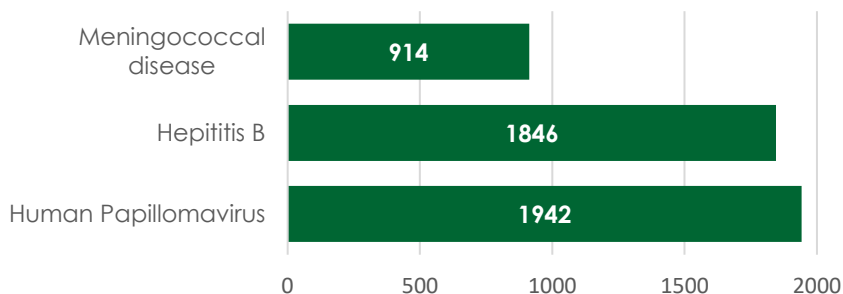
In schools, the grade 7 vaccination program was expanded to include students in grades 8, 9 and 12. To protect against Meningococcal disease, Hepatitis B and Human Papillomavirus, RCDHU provided a total of **102 school-based clinics** and administered **4,702 doses** of vaccine, a 42% increase compared to the average number of doses administered prior to the COVID-19 pandemic (2018-2019).





As a result of the work of the immunization team, a higher proportion of grade 7 students in the 2021-2022 school year were up to date with school-based vaccines compared to Ontario overall, with coverage rates in RCD **1.8 – 3.5 times higher** than rates in Ontario.

Number of doses of vaccine administered by RCDHU during school-based clinics, by disease type



Note: Vaccine schedules vary in dose number. Vaccination against Meningococcal disease requires one dose. Vaccination against Hepatitis B and Human Papillomavirus requires two doses, with rare exceptions.

School Vision Screening

The School Child Visual Health and Vision Screening program resumed for the 2022/2023 school year, offering vision screening for all senior kindergarten students at publicly funded elementary schools across RCD.

Between September and December, a total of **441 vision screenings** were provided, with **152 students referred** to an optometrist for a comprehensive eye exam (34% of students screened).



441

student vision screenings



152

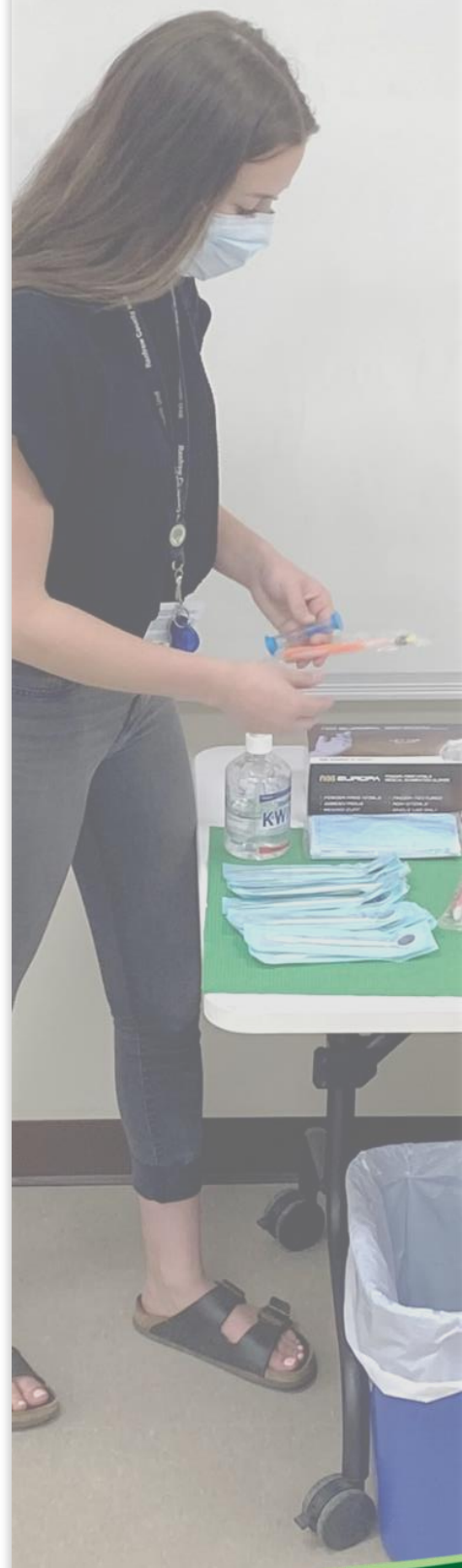
students referred to an optometrist



School Dental Screening

The School Oral Health Screening program resumed for all elementary schools. RCDHU expanded screening beyond kindergarten and grade 2, to include all students from junior kindergarten to grade 3, in an effort to reach those who had missed screening opportunities earlier in the pandemic. Between September and December, a total of **2,187 students** were screened.

Dental services staff offered the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) program to eligible families, which provides free preventative and emergency dental services for children and youth. The effects of the pandemic, as well as RCDHU's expanded screenings, resulted in an increase in the number of students eligible for emergency dental coverage. Between September and December, emergency and essential dental services coverage was offered to **291 students** following their in-school screening (13% of screened students), an increase from the previous screening year's rate of 5% in 2018.

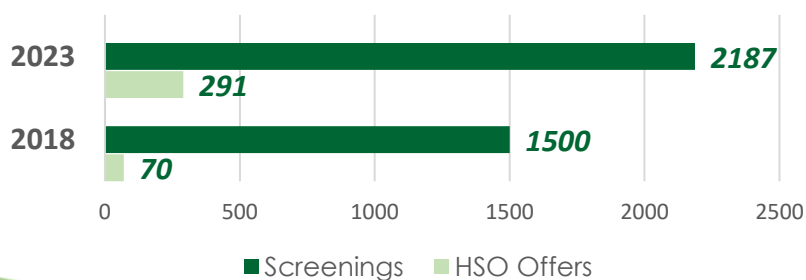


2,187 student dental screenings



291 students offered emergency services dental coverage

Number of RCDHU Dental Screenings and HSO Offers in 2023 and 2018



SUPPORTING FAMILIES



Throughout 2022, RCDHU's healthy families team navigated pandemic recovery, striving to meet the needs of persons and families preparing for and raising babies and young children, to support healthy growth and development in RCD.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children

RCDHU offered the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) home-visiting program. Public health nurses (PHNs), in collaboration with a home visitor and social worker team, followed a blended home visiting model to provide families with opportunities to meet their goals and achieve their full potential. In 2022, PHNs responded to **773 post-partum phone calls**, providing support and scheduling in-home visits as needed.

To meet the needs of new families and ensure continuation of care once discharged from the hospital, RCDHU continued its partnership with Pembroke Regional Hospital. Through the Hospital Liaison program, PHNs completed post-partum health screening with clients and offered a variety of post-partum health teaching. In 2022, RCDHU nurses provided approximately **360 in-hospital client visits**.



773 post-partum
phone calls



360 in-hospital
client visits

146

prenatal
education
participants



201

Parent Child
Wellness
Clinics



Healthy Growth and Development

RCDHU provided online prenatal education for expectant parents through the Growing a Healthy Baby program. In 2022, **146 expectant parents** participated in the program.

RCDHU also offered Parent Child Wellness Clinics (PCWCs), supporting families with children aged zero to transition to school. RCDHU provided a combined total of **201 PCWCs**, offering clinics in Pembroke, Renfrew and Arnprior. RCDHU nurses also continued to provide infant feeding supports to families.

Food Affordability

Each year RCDHU monitors local food affordability; however, due to the pandemic, monitoring was temporarily paused. In 2022, monitoring food availability was restarted. Staff surveyed the price of food items in local grocery stores to find the monthly cost of food in RCD, incorporating housing rental rates and different income scenarios to determine local affordability of food.

RCDHU's [Food Affordability in Renfrew County and District, 2022](#) report highlights local food insecurity rates, identifying approximately **1 in 6 households** in RCD are food insecure.



PROTECTING OUR COMMUNITIES

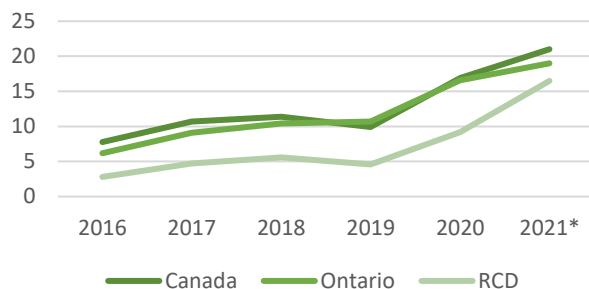
Reducing Harms Associated with Substance Use

In recent years, rising rates of opioid-related deaths have been seen locally in RCD, provincially, and nationally. Preliminary data for 2022 shows that rates of opioid-related deaths remained higher than rates seen before the COVID-19 pandemic.



RCDHU continued to provide access to sterile equipment and proper disposal methods to help reduce the risk of blood-borne infections due to substance use in the community. RCDHU's office relocation to Pembroke's downtown core increased the accessibility of harm reduction services, greatly increasing the number of clients accessing services. In 2022, harm reduction clients accessed services a total of **1,231 times**, compared to 757 times the previous year.

Annual opioid-related death rate per 100,000 residents, 2016-2021 ^{1,2}



**Data for 2021 should be considered preliminary and subject to change.*

Harm reduction staff promoted access to naloxone, a medication that can temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose and prevent opioid-related deaths, distributing **610 naloxone kits** to clients and community partners through the Ontario Naloxone Program. Throughout the pandemic, RCDHU maintained services and prioritized community partnerships to reduce the negative health and social consequences associated with substance use.

Ontario Seniors Dental Care

Throughout 2022, RCDHU saw a significant increase in the number of clients accessing the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP). A total of **909 seniors enrolled** in the program, compared to 287 enrolled the previous year. The dental services team supported low-income seniors to access dental treatment, facilitating **982 client visits to a dentist** and **493 dental hygiene appointments**. Additionally, **98 clients received new dentures**.



982 client visits to a dentist



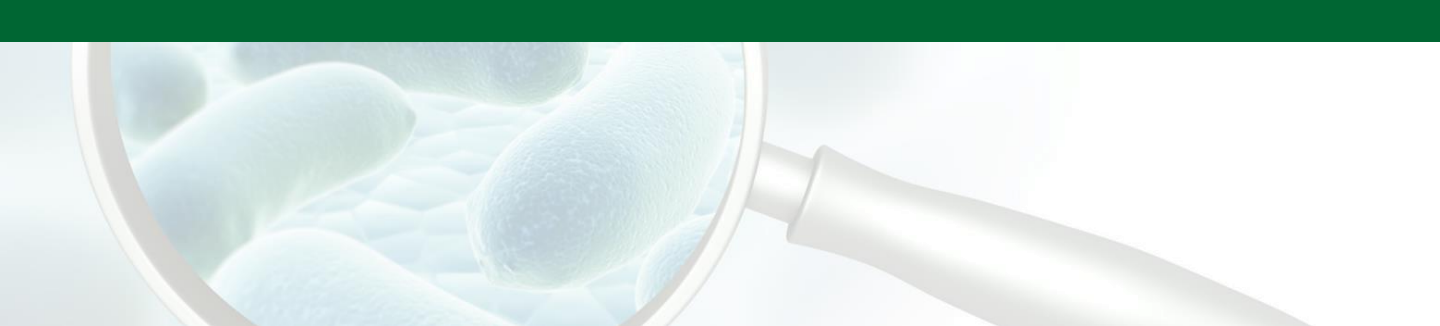
493 dental hygiene appointments provided



98 clients provided new dentures

1. Data source for Canada: Federal, provincial, and territorial Special Advisory Committee on the Epidemic of Opioid Overdoses. *Opioid- and Stimulant-related Harms in Canada*. Ottawa: Public Health Agency of Canada; June 2023.
2. Data source for Ontario and RCDHU: Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (Public Health Ontario). *Interactive Opioid Tool*. Toronto, ON: King's Printer for Ontario; 2023.





Reportable Infectious Diseases

Each year, RCDHU staff work to stop and slow the spread of infectious diseases in our communities. There are approximately 70 [diseases of public health significance](#) that must be reported to RCDHU. In 2022, there were **5,811 confirmed cases** of these diseases. RCDHU staff investigated and responded to these reports, preventing further illness through work that includes contact tracing, outbreak management, and addressing sources of spread.

The following table provides case numbers of diseases that were most commonly reported to RCDHU in 2022. This list is not exhaustive, as less commonly reported diseases are not included.

Disease Category	Diseases Commonly Reported to RCDHU in 2022	Number of Cases
Respiratory Diseases	COVID-19	5,427
	Influenza	83
Sexually Transmitted Infections and Blood-Borne Infections	Chlamydial Infections	172
	Hepatitis C	23
	Gonorrhea	17
Enteric, Food, and Water-Borne Diseases <i>(Spread primarily through contaminated food or water; often causing symptoms including nausea, vomiting, and/or diarrhea)</i>	Campylobacter Enteritis	14
	Giardiasis	13
Vector-Borne Diseases <i>(Spread by living things, usually mosquitoes or ticks, from animals to humans or between humans)</i>	Lyme Disease	16
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	Invasive Pneumococcal Disease	9

Note: Case counts include individuals from RCD, regardless of where infection may have been acquired. Case counts include only the confirmed classification for all diseases in the table, except for Lyme disease which includes both confirmed and probable cases.



HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS

Throughout 2022, public health inspectors (PHIs) investigated health hazards across RCDH, providing key public health programming around animal bites and scratches, food safety, safe drinking water, and Lyme disease prevention.

Rabies Investigations

In an effort to prevent the transmission of rabies to humans, public health inspectors investigate all animal bite and scratching incidents. In 2022, a total of **216 animal bite investigations** were conducted, with eight animal specimens tested for the rabies virus. RCDHU had no positive animal rabies cases in 2022.



216

animal bite investigations



970

food safety inspections



4,187

water samples processed

Food Safety Inspections

As RCDHU continued to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a renewed focus on food safety inspections. All public food establishments (any person or business supplying food to the public) are required to be inspected to minimize the risk of food-borne illness. In 2022, RCDHU staff conducted a total of **970 food safety inspections**, an increase from the previous year's 772 inspections. Of these, 17 inspections were based on complaints received from the public.

Safe Drinking Water

RCDHU worked to facilitate private drinking water testing for residents, testing for *E. coli* and total coliform bacteria. In 2022, a total of **4,187 water samples** were processed.

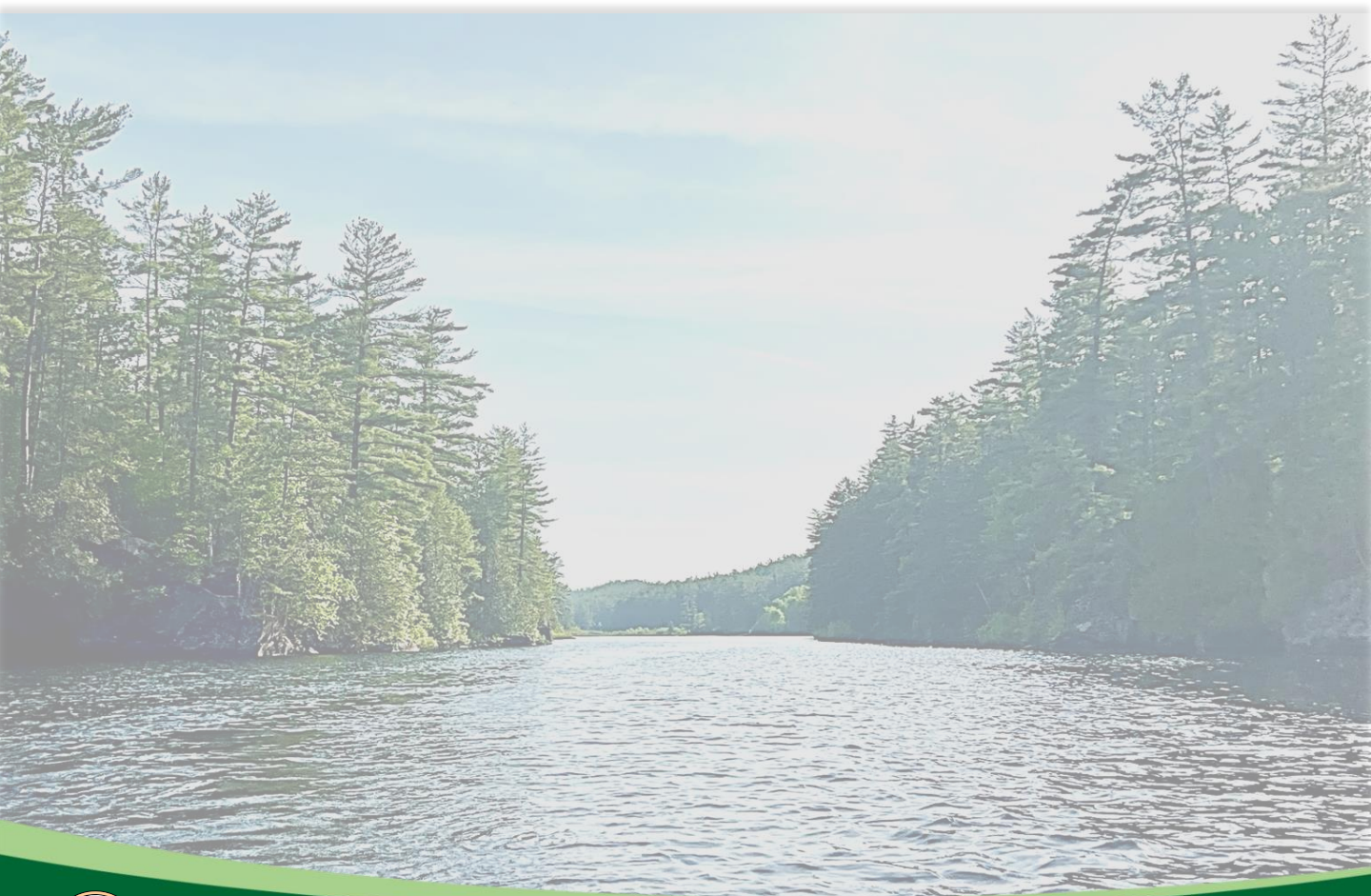


Lyme Disease and West Nile Virus

RCDHU staff monitored the presence of Lyme disease in the community, through passive and active surveillance. As active surveillance, RCDHU completed **tick dragging** activities in targeted areas around the southern portion of the county and along the Ottawa River. Tick dragging helps to identify the presence of deer ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*), which are capable of transmitting Lyme disease to people. If ticks are identified during the spring and fall drags, this indicates that ticks are active in the area. The area is then designated as a 'risk area'. Areas around Arnprior, Calabogie, and Cobden have been identified as risk areas in RCD.

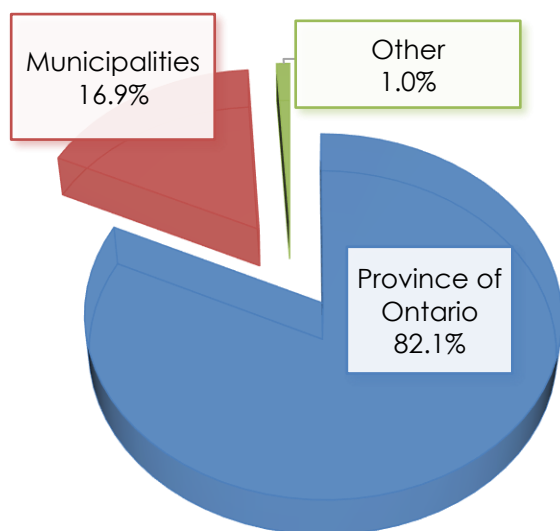
In terms of passive surveillance, RCDHU also collected ticks from the public for analysis. In 2022, a total of **48 ticks** were submitted, with 43 of those ticks identified as deer ticks.

RCDHU continued to monitor for West Nile virus in the mosquito population. In 2022, there were no positive mosquito pools detected and there were zero human cases of West Nile virus reported to RCDHU.



FINANCIAL REPORT 2022

FUNDING SOURCES



EXPENDITURES BY CATEGORY

