



## Health Protection Report to the Board of Health

Tuesday, November 25, 2025

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### **Emergency Response**

Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) recently hosted a tabletop exercise to strengthen preparedness for respiratory illness surges. The session engaged over 20 health and municipal organizations to identify response gaps and enhance inter-agency collaboration.

To support evidence-based decision-making during air quality events, such as wildfire smoke, RCDHU has acquired real-time PM2.5 air quality monitors, which will be installed across the region in the coming months. This initiative improves surveillance, informs public health responses, and enables timely planning for vulnerable populations.

### **Healthy Environments**

#### *Vector-borne Disease Control*

Fall tick dragging was conducted at three sites where ticks were found in the Spring, with ticks detected at all locations for the second time this year. These findings confirm an expanded risk area within Renfrew County and District, including Westmeath and Chalk River. Public Health Ontario will update the provincial risk map in 2026 to reflect these changes.

As of November 10, RCDHU has received 32 ticks from residents for identification and testing. Of the 28 analyzed, 24 were *Ixodes scapularis* (deer ticks), two *Ixodes cookei* (groundhog ticks), and two *Dermacentor variabilis* (dog ticks). Fifteen ticks underwent further testing, with five confirmed positive for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the causative agent of Lyme disease.

#### *Food Safety*

RCDHU public health inspectors continue to deliver the provincially recognized Safe Food Handler course at no cost to participants. So far in 2025, ten courses were offered across the County, certifying 312 individuals.

As of November 10, RCDHU has received 13 food safety complaints from the public. All complaints were investigated within 24 hours as required. None resulted in a confirmed foodborne illness outbreak.

### **Immunization**

#### *Online Booking System*

On October 1, RCDHU launched an online booking system for immunization clinics, allowing clients to book, cancel, and receive confirmations and reminders by email or text message. The system currently supports COVID-19, flu, and RSV appointments, with plans to expand to other services. In its first month, 730 appointments were booked online.

### *COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccination*

As of November 6, RCDHU administered 2,184 COVID-19 doses and 1,990 influenza doses through community clinics and mobile services. It also distributed 14,125 influenza doses and 1,547 COVID-19 doses to health care partners. Pharmacies remain a key channel, providing 62% of COVID-19 doses (vs. 29% by RCDHU and 8% by other partners) and over 3,500 influenza doses this season. COVID-19 and flu vaccines will continue to be available at RCDHU clinics through mid-December, as well as at pharmacies and most health care providers.

### *Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Adult Vaccination*

Between October 1 and November 6, RCDHU administered 636 adult RSV doses through community clinics and mobile services and distributed 2,880 doses to health care providers. RSV vaccine remains available at RCDHU community clinics for eligible adults.

### *Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) Infant and High-Risk Children*

Between October 1 and November 6, RCDHU and Pembroke Regional Hospital administered 72 infant RSV doses to eligible infants and high-risk children and distributed 323 doses to health care providers. Appointment-based community clinics will continue throughout the RSV season.

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