

Renfrew County and District Health Unit

"Optimal health for all in Renfrew County and District"

CEO Report: November 2025

To: Board of Health
Date: November 25, 2025
From: Heather G Daly

Ministry Updates

The Ministry has issued a soft release of the working drafts of the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) and Protocols, with some components still under development. The formal release is scheduled for January 2, 2026. The current standards remain in effect until then. Updates to the Annual Service Plan (ASP) and Budget Submission will reflect the new standards, with 2026 serving as a transition year. Flexibility will be built into reporting requirements during this period.

Human Resources and Labour Relations Update

As of mid-November, RCDHU has approximately 74 employees plus 22 temporary staff filling various leaves and program pressures including the fall vaccination campaign. In 2025 we had two retirements.

Voluntary turnover (excluding retirements) is currently at 7%, which is notably below the Canadian all-industry average of 10.2%. This compares favorably with healthcare sector norms, where turnover often exceeds 15%, and reflects strong retention for RCDHU. Additional HR pressures include temporary leaves and internal transfers. Backfilling positions—particularly those requiring specialized skills such as Public Health Inspectors—remains a challenge.

We have received notice to bargain from both unions: the Ontario Nurses Association (ONA) and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU). Current contracts expire at the end of December 2025. We anticipate a smooth bargaining process, with meetings expected to commence in early 2026.

Risk Management & 2026 Corporate Operational Plan

October marked Cyber Security Awareness Month. All RCDHU staff were invited to participate in interactive online events, videos, and articles aimed at enhancing cybersecurity awareness. This initiative was sponsored by the Ontario Cyber Security Centre of Excellence (Cybersecurity.ca) and offered at no cost to broader public sector organizations.

In December, staff will attend onsite cybersecurity refresher training sessions focused on best practices and current threats. Staff awareness remains a critical defense against today's heightened cybersecurity risks.

The 2026 Risk Management Planning Working Group will begin meeting in December and continue through January. This group will conduct a comprehensive review of RCDHU's risk register, evaluating current and potential risks for 2026. Mitigation strategies will be reviewed and updated as needed. The top ten risk items will be aligned with Strategic Plan goals and summarized in the 2026 Corporate Operational Plan, which will be presented to the Board of Health in early 2026.

Partnerships

The Renfrew Area Administrators Group (RAAG) Finance Sub-Committee met quarterly throughout 2025 strengthening collaboration efforts. The group is currently negotiating the group's banking arrangements with the Bank of Montreal. Meetings have been held in the fall reviewing the renewal terms of the five-year agreement, which expires at year-end. Further updates will be provided to the Board in early 2026.

The Association of Ontario Public Health Business Administrators (AOPHBA) Conference was held in London from October 5–7. Two additional members from Corporate Services attended. The event covered various topics including leadership development, IT and cybersecurity, human resources, and leadership best practices.

Staff Development & Wellness

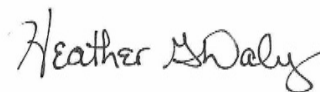
In December, RCDHU will host a leadership development workshop titled *Lead with And*, facilitated by Tim Arnold. Tim has previously presented at Public Health Business Administrators Conferences and the alPHa Spring Symposium in 2025. Leadership team members will attend this session as part of ongoing professional development efforts.

Also in December, Dr. Robyne Hanley-Dafoe—a renowned expert in resilience and workplace well-being—will lead an immersive, interactive half-day workshop for all RCDHU staff. The office will be closed in the morning for this event on December 11. Investing in a skilled workforce committed to service excellence is a key objective under Strategic Direction #3 from RCDHU's Strategic Plan.

Board Retreat

The Board Retreat was held on October 28 as a full-day event with a packed [agenda](#) covering a wide range of topics. Participant feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Every response indicated they strongly agreed with the retreat's value and rated the experience as excellent. This feedback reflects the success of the event and will help guide planning for a future retreat and other board training initiatives. Thank you to all participating board members for your input and engagement.

Respectfully submitted,



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