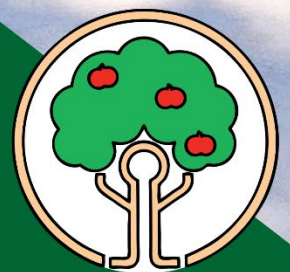


ANNUAL REPORT

2025

RENFREW COUNTY AND DISTRICT HEALTH UNIT

"Optimal Health for All in Renfrew County and District"



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Vision

Optimal health for all in Renfrew County and District.

Mission

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

Board of Health Members

Joanne King Chair	J. Michael du Manoir Member	Ethel LaValley Member
Troy Purcell Vice-Chair	James Brose Member	Jim Manion Member
Carolyn Watt Member	Jennifer Murphy Member	Peter Emon Member
Heather Saar Member	Neil Nicholson Member	

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.

Mìgwech



Welcome Message

The 2025 Annual Report for Renfrew County and District Health Unit (RCDHU) highlights the dedication, innovation, and collaboration that continue to strengthen public health across our region. Through the commitment of our staff and the support of our many partners, RCDHU responded to emerging health challenges while continuing to provide essential programs and services that prevent illness, reduce health inequities, and improve access to care.

In 2025, RCDHU responded to the region's first measles cases in more than three decades. Staff acted quickly through case and contact management, home visits, testing, vaccination, and extensive public communication. The successful response, which prevented further local spread of measles, demonstrates the importance of strong public health capacity and high immunization coverage in protecting our communities.

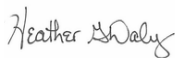
Addressing substance use-related harms also remained a significant priority. In April, RCDHU and its community partners released the Renfrew County and District Drug Strategy, establishing 25 priorities across prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and community safety. A new drug toxicity text alert system was also introduced to provide residents with timely information about emerging risks.

RCDHU continued to improve access to services throughout the region, particularly for residents in rural and underserved communities. Through our Outreach Team and 17 community distribution partners, more than 1,200 naloxone kits were provided, hundreds of residents received naloxone training, and access to harm reduction and sexual health services increased.

These efforts were part of a much broader range of public health work in 2025. From supporting healthy pregnancies and early childhood development, to delivering immunization, dental and health promotion programs, mitigating environmental health risks, and protecting residents from infectious diseases, our staff worked every day to meet the diverse and evolving needs of our communities.

The accomplishments reflected in this report would not be possible without the dedication of our staff, the leadership of our Board of Health, and the invaluable contributions of healthcare providers, municipalities, Indigenous partners, community organizations, and residents. We are grateful for the knowledge, resources, and commitment each partner brings to our shared work.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to strong partnerships, responsive and accessible services and high-quality public health programs that improve health and well-being throughout Renfrew County and District. Thank you for your ongoing partnership and for supporting our shared vision of optimal health for all.



Heather Daly

Chief Executive Officer



Joanne King

Chair, Board of Health



Dr. Jason Morgenstern

Medical Officer of Health



Infectious Diseases

Measles Response

In April, RCDHU confirmed the first measles case reported in the region since the early 1990s. A second case was subsequently identified. Both were linked to a wider outbreak that began in New Brunswick and spread to Ontario.

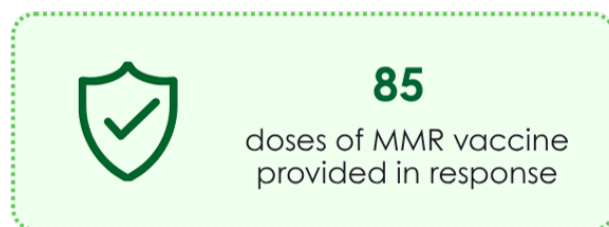
In response, RCDHU took immediate steps to prevent the illness from spreading in the community, including:

- Identifying and guiding people who were exposed
- Visiting cases and contacts in their homes
- Offering in-home testing
- Providing preventive immunization to people who were exposed
- Offering catch-up measles-mumps-rubella (MMR) vaccination to those who were not fully vaccinated

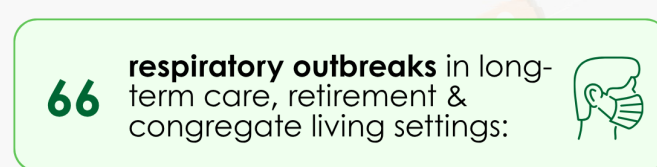
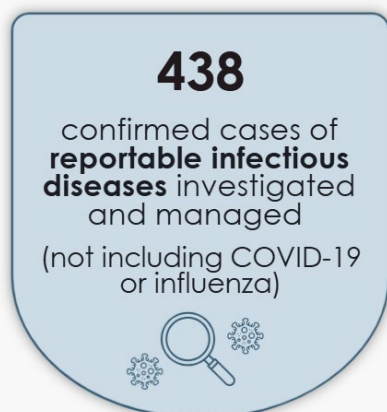
Staff worked to ensure the public was notified and informed throughout the response by issuing public messaging, media releases, exposure notifications, and promoting vaccination.

This successful response demonstrates RCDHU's ability to mobilize quickly, support affected individuals, and use effective public health measures to contain infectious diseases in our community.

No further transmission was identified from the first two cases. Later in the year, a third local case linked to the multi-jurisdictional outbreak was identified.



Reportable Diseases

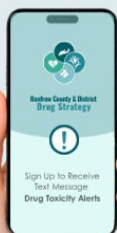


- **21%** COVID-19
- **29%** influenza
- **50%** other viruses



Reducing Substance Use Related Harms

RCDDDS introduced a new **text message alert system** to share drug toxicity warnings.



Renfrew County and District Drug Strategy

To reduce harms related to drug use in our communities, RCDHU and numerous local partners worked to coordinate efforts and develop the [Renfrew County and District Drug Strategy](#) (RCDDDS), released in April 2025.

The strategy identifies **25 priorities** for a coordinated response across the four pillars of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, and community safety.



Harm Reduction Services and Naloxone Distribution



914 naloxone kits distributed by RCDHU



330 kits distributed by partners



365 people trained to use naloxone kits

1,992

times that **harm reduction services** were accessed



3



new **organizations onboarded** to distribute harm reduction supplies, partnering with a total of **17 distributing organizations**

25

unique locations visited

102

outreach events



300

drug test strips distributed to identify fentanyl, xylazine, and benzodiazepines



Community Outreach

RCDHU's Outreach Team worked to bring public health services directly to people living in rural and remote areas of Renfrew County and District, and to others who may otherwise have difficulty accessing them. The team provided **harm reduction and sexual health supplies**, offered **sexual health testing**, and **connected clients** with other RCDHU programs and community supports.

Sexual Health Testing

RCDHU began offering sexual health testing in 2024. Use of these services **more than doubled** in 2025, reflecting increased awareness and uptake of convenient testing options in the community.

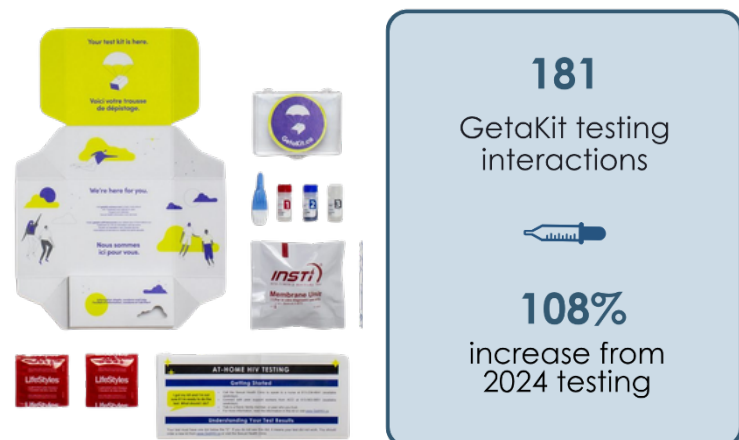


➤ GetaKit Program

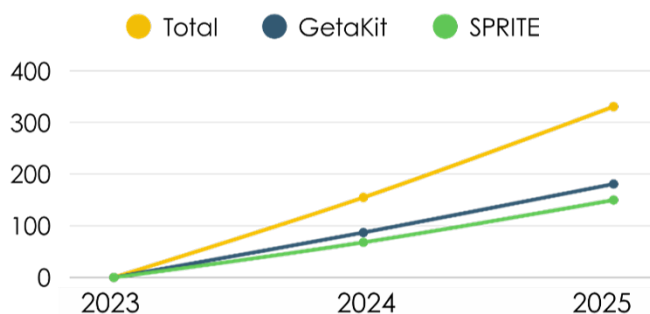
The GetaKit Program can be accessed online and provides **in-home testing** for sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections. Staff provide **education, counselling, and treatment** to those with positive tests.

➤ SPRITE Testing

SPRITE testing (Syphilis Point of Care Rapid Testing and Immediate Treatment Evaluation) provides testing for **syphilis, HIV, and Hepatitis C**, along with **rapid treatment** for syphilis.



Sexual Health Testing Interactions per Year



Environmental Health



6 ticks tested **positive** for Lyme disease

1 tick tested **positive** for Babesia

50 mosquito traps deployed

0 positive tests for West Nile virus

Tick and Mosquito Monitoring

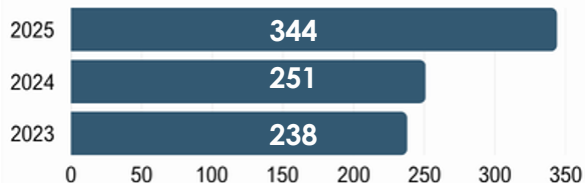
RCDHU monitored the local presence of deer ticks, which can transmit diseases. Staff completed annual tick dragging, confirming that the blacklegged tick **risk area had expanded** to include Westmeath and Chalk River. Testing confirmed ticks carrying bacteria that cause Lyme disease and the parasite that causes babesiosis, a disease that infects red blood cells.

Each year, RCDHU monitors West Nile virus using mosquito traps. Across **50 mosquito traps**, no mosquitoes tested positive for the virus.

Rabies Investigations

2025 saw a significant increase in rabies exposure investigations, with **344 potential exposure investigations**, including **87 bat-related incidents**. As a result, **67 people received preventive treatment** to protect against rabies.

Potential Rabies Exposure Investigations per Year



Protecting Our Communities



4,273 private drinking water samples submitted for testing



16% of private drinking water samples were identified as **unsafe to drink** due to bacteria



47 adverse water quality **incident investigations**, in small drinking water systems

1,676

food premises inspections



57

food safety complaints investigated



17

finances and orders issued



Family Health



337 families supported at Let's Grow clinics

552

immunizations given to children ages 0-18 months



623

postpartum support calls



1,399

home visits for HBHC program



Let's Grow Clinics

RCDHU offered **Let's Grow** clinics throughout the area, supporting children from birth through their transition to school with growth and development and routine immunizations.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children program

Through the **Healthy Babies Healthy Children** (HBHC) home-visiting program, the Healthy Families team—including public health nurses (PHNs), family home visitors, and social workers—worked together to help families build skills and confidence.

Following 830 births in RCD, PHNs completed **623 postpartum calls**, and the HBHC team made **1,399 in-home visits** to provide health information and supports.

Prenatal Education Program Launch

RCDHU, in partnership with the South East Health Unit, launched **Bump to Baby**, a new online prenatal program supporting families during pregnancy and early parenting. The program offers education and access to Public Health Nurse support as needed.

In 2025, there were **131 participants** in this prenatal education program.



Health Promotion

You're the Chef program

To promote healthy eating and practical cooking skills among youth, RCDHU trained and supported school educators to deliver the You're the Chef program.



Youth Vaping Prevention

To help prevent youth nicotine vaping, RCDHU delivered the **CATCH My Breath program** to grade 9 students in three local high schools, reaching approximately **140 students** across **six classes**.



140

student participants in CATCH My Breath program

Youth Substance Use Prevention

The **Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth program** supports families in building strong relationships, encouraging positive youth behaviour and preventing substance use.

RCDHU delivered this nine-week skills-building course for families with teens aged 12–16, with **five families** and six youth participating.

5

families participating in Strengthening Families for Parents and Youth program



Immunization

Fall Vaccines: COVID-19, Flu, RSV

2025 marked the first year that publicly-funded RSV vaccines were available to eligible individuals, including those 75 years of age and older, infants, and those at higher risk of experiencing severe illness.

In the fall, RCDHU ran mobile clinics to provide COVID-19, RSV, and flu vaccines in retirement homes, long-term care, and other group living settings, as well as mass community clinics across the region.

1,193

total **doses of RSV vaccine** given



7,442

doses of **seasonal respiratory vaccines** administered (COVID-19 & flu)



1,272

students supported in meeting ISPA requirements



1,009

catch-up doses of vaccines given to students through school and community clinics

3,542

doses of **Grade 7 vaccines** given at school clinics (Men-C-ACYW, HB and HPV)



School Immunization and Records Review

In 2025, for the first time since the pandemic, RCDHU resumed enforcement activities under the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA), focusing on students born in 2007 and 2017.

RCDHU worked with families and schools to review and update immunization records and provide vaccine clinics. Through these efforts, **1,272 students were supported** in meeting ISPA requirements.



DID YOU KNOW?



RCDHU inspected all **120 vaccine refrigerators** storing publicly funded vaccines in the region, ensuring proper temperature, handling, and storage practices to safeguard vaccine quality and effectiveness.



4,339 **routine vaccines** administered



189 **routine immunization clinics** provided throughout the region



Dental Health

Dental Screenings

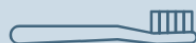
Dental Services staff visited each elementary school in RCD to provide **student dental screenings**. These screenings help identify dental concerns and connect eligible families to free dental treatment through the Healthy Smiles Ontario program (HSO).

In the summer, RCDHU also offered **community dental screening clinics** across Renfrew County and District, providing visual screenings and fluoride treatment for children, adults, and seniors.



4,557

students received school dental screenings



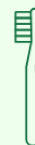
43

schools visited



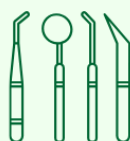
8

community clinics held



479

students identified in need of dental treatment



78

families enrolled in HSO program

118

clients screened at community clinics

Seniors Dental Services

RCDHU provides routine dental care to eligible seniors aged 65 and older, through the **Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP)**. Services are delivered at RCDHU dental clinics in Pembroke and Barry's Bay.

In 2025, RCDHU saw a notable increase in service delivery, providing **921 dental appointments**, an increase from 757 in 2024.

921

dental appointments provided

544

hygiene appointments

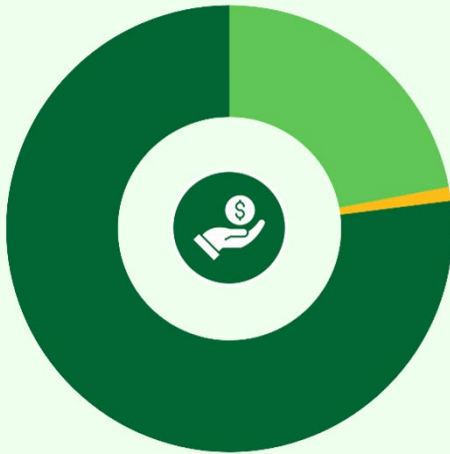


70

clients received dentures



2025 Funding Sources



Province of Ontario:
77%

Municipalities:
22%

Other:
1%

2025 Expenditures by Category

Wages & Benefits:
79%

Program Costs:
12%

Administration:
5%

Occupancy:
4%

