

ANNUAL REPORT





OFFICE OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

A WORD FROM DR. CHRIS MACKIE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH / CEO

To summarize the work done by a staff of more than 300 people over the course of one year is a challenge. From spa and food premises inspections to quiet visits with a young mother in her home; from meeting with decision makers to seek policy change to working with students and staff in elementary and secondary schools, staff at the Middlesex-London Health Unit cover a lot of ground and touch countless lives. What you have in front of you is an overview of some of the important work done by public health professionals in 2017. It is by no means an exhaustive review of all that was accomplished, but it does provide a broad sample of the work our staff does.

On the following pages you'll read about the work we do that encourages people across the County of Middlesex and the City of London to reach their potential. You'll learn about innovative programs that encourage children and young families to eat more fruits and vegetables, as well as the steps taken to link newborns who may have a hearing or vision loss to the services they need. There's also a section about the important work that has been done to address the growing opioid drug crisis that has held Ontario in its grip for the last few years with a look ahead to the work that will be done in this area in 2018. You'll also find a page that provides an outline of how public health programs at the Middlesex-London Health Unit are funded and how those funds are allocated.

Our Health Unit and its staff have also made it a priority to examine more closely the relationship we share with our local indigenous communities and in 2017 we examined more closely how we could play a role in the important process of reconciliation. That effort will continue in 2018.

As we look forward to the year ahead, we anticipate challenges and opportunities that lie before us, including the implementation of the new Ontario Public Health Standards. Through this, we will continue to work diligently to promote and protect the health of our community. I hope you find this Annual Report to be informative and that it provides some insight into the work of Public Health in London and Middlesex County.

Sincerely,

Dr. Christopher Mackie
Medical Officer of Health / Chief Executive Officer
Middlesex-London Health Unit





BOARD OF HEALTH



A WORD FROM MR. JESSE HELMER CHAIR MIDDLESEX-LONDON BOARD OF HEALTH

Most of us don't think about public health on a regular basis. While it usually occupies a space quietly in the background without much fanfare or attention, public health plays a more important role in people's lives than they realize.

As members of the Middlesex-London Board of Health, my colleagues and I provide the necessary oversight and accountability for the Health Unit's overall operation, ensuring that our obligations under the Ontario Public Health Standards are met and that our operations meet the requirements of the Health Protection and Promotion Act. Our Board is made up of five provincial appointees, three elected county representatives appointed by Middlesex County Council, two City of London councillors, and one non-elected City of London appointee. We meet monthly as a full Board, and several of us also meet as members of our two standing committees: finance and facilities and governance.

Over my years serving on the Board of Health I have been fortunate to learn great deal about Public Health and the dedicated people who deliver our services and programs throughout the Middlesex-London region. I hope that through this 2017 Annual Report, you will gain new knowledge about the efforts of our staff that have a direct impact on your life and the lives of your loved ones.

It has been, and continues to be, an honour and a pleasure to represent the residents of the City of London and Middlesex County as my colleagues and I help guide the direction of public health services in our communities. Working together, as you will read in the pages of this report, we accomplished a lot in 2017. I look forward to all that 2018 has in store.

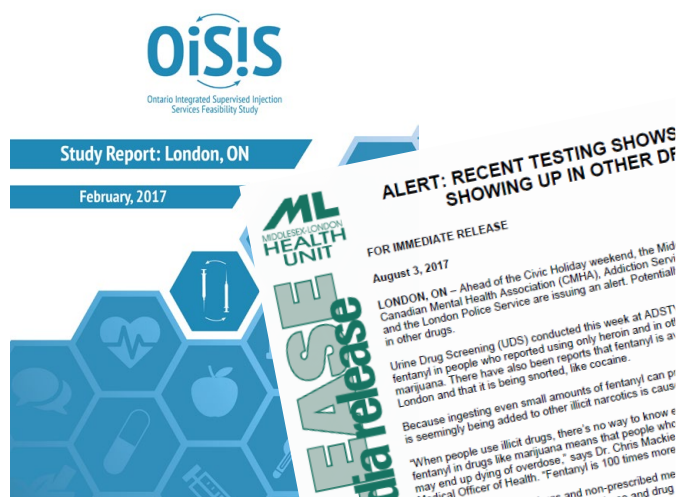
Sincerely,

Mr. Jesse Helmer
Chair, Middlesex-London Board of Health



OPIOID CRISIS RESPONSE, SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION FACILITIES PROCESS

For many, 2017 will be remembered as the year when awareness of opioid drugs and their misuse reached a new peak. Over the course of the year, the Middlesex-London Health Unit was very involved in helping shape London's response to the opioid crisis and has played a key role in the fight to prevent overdose-related deaths and injuries.



In February, the Health Unit took part in the public release of the Ontario HIV Treatment Network's *Supervised Injection Site Feasibility Study* at London's Central Library.

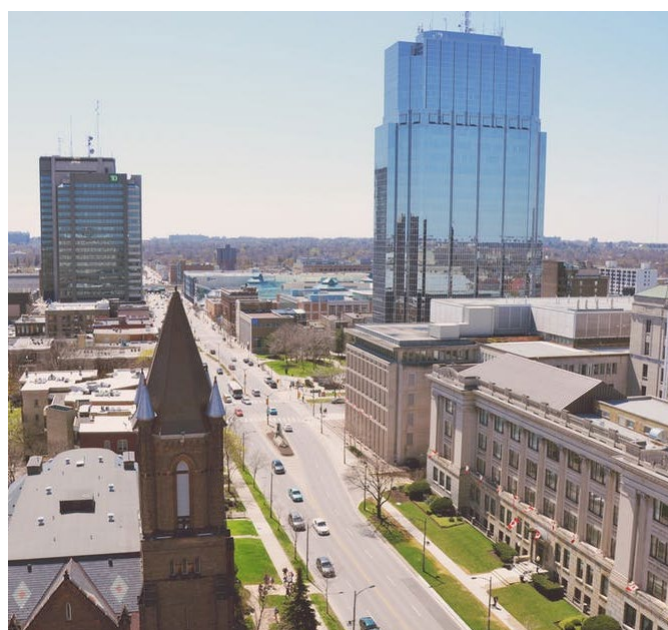
Through interviews conducted with people who inject drugs, the study provided evidence and support for the establishment of Supervised Consumption Facilities in London. Feedback received from people with lived experience indicated that 86% of injection drug users would likely use the services provided at a Supervised Consumption Facility if one were available. As part of the announcement, Associate Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Gayane Hovhannisyanyan presented local data collected by the Health



Unit detailing the growing rates of HIV, Hepatitis C, Endocarditis and invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS) related to injection drug use.

As part of the effort to develop a strategy to address the local HIV epidemic and related issues, the Health Unit implemented a street outreach program to establish links with people who would not otherwise access harm reduction services or care. The program is proving to be very effective, having already linked dozens of people who had fallen between the cracks, or who were previously unknown to public health, with services that ensure they are not spreading the virus.

As part of the local effort to address the use of opioid drugs in London, the Health Unit also received \$250,000 from Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in June to assist with a response.



OPIOID CRISIS RESPONSE, SUPERVISED CONSUMPTION FACILITIES PROCESS

(continued from previous page)

The funding has allowed the MLHU to develop initiatives including work towards creating permanent Supervised Consumption Services in London.

Not only were concerns about opioid drugs heightened in 2017, but in early August, fears that potentially lethal Fentanyl was being mixed with other drugs began to arise. When it was learned that Fentanyl was showing up in drug test samples from people who had claimed not to have taken Fentanyl, the Health Unit, the London Police Service, Canadian Mental Health Association and Addiction Services Thames Valley issued a media alert.

The release served as a dire warning for people who use drugs of the possibility that Fentanyl was being introduced into other illicit drugs, creating a potentially deadly situation. It also served to underscore just how complex London's drug crisis had become.

In response, the Health Unit activated its Incident Management System on September 11th to enhance the MLHU's response to the local drug crisis and to align dedicated resources with local needs.

As part of this work, the Health Unit worked diligently towards the next steps in the response to the local opioid crisis. The MLHU set out to engage the community through consultations about the potential of creating one or more permanent Supervised Consumption Facilities. A series of public consultation meetings were held over the month of November, eliciting conversations and gathering important feedback on the services, structure, goals and location of possible Supervised Consumption Facilities in London.



Opioids:
You can make a difference.

*Take part in discussions
about local harm
reduction services and
supervised consumption
facilities.*

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HEALTH UNIT
www.healthunit.com

An important part of enhancing the Health Unit's the opioid response was improving harm reduction services. This included an increase in the distribution of Naloxone kits from 168 kits in all of 2016, to just under 400 kits by the end of September. Working in partnership with Regional HIV/AIDS Connection, efforts to increase access to clean needles and other harm reduction equipment proved to be successful.

In early December, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced that it was enhancing its response to the opioid crisis by making Naloxone available to Ontario police services and fire departments. By working with the Federal Government, Ontario also obtained consent to allow Ontario to grant exemptions to the Criminal Code on an emergency basis with a goal of preventing overdose deaths. This would make it possible for communities who were already working towards the creation of permanent supervised consumption facilities to apply for permission to operate legal Temporary Overdose Prevention Sites (TOPS). While it continues to work towards a permanent response to London's opioid crisis, the Health Unit will work with its partners to apply for a TOPS in early 2018. It is anticipated that TOPS will have an impact in reducing the number of opioid-related overdose deaths and injuries.



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & INFECTIOUS DISEASE

FOOD SAFETY AND HEALTHY ENVIRONMENTS



Food Premises Inspections

Over the course of 2017, Public Health Inspectors working as members of the Food Safety and Healthy Environments Team conducted more than 3,400 food premises inspections in London and Middlesex County. The team also conducted inspections at 229 seasonal food premises, in addition to providing 281 follow-up inspections and 302 food premises licensing inspections.

As part of its enforcement activities, the team issued 15 tickets under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act*, served seven summons and issued six closure orders to food premises operators in the region.

Efforts were taken to consult with community partners and to increase awareness about a variety of health hazards. This was accomplished by holding community consultations which included presentations and group participation.

Inspections

The Middlesex-London Health Unit inspects a variety of businesses and facilities in Middlesex-London, such as pools and spas, tattoo and body piercing facilities and restaurants and businesses that sell food.



Pools and Spas

View the inspection reports from pool and spa facilities in Middlesex-London.



Tattoo and Body Piercing

View the inspection reports from tattoo and body piercing facilities in Middlesex-London.



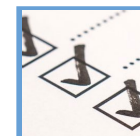
Food Premises

View the inspection reports from food premises in Middlesex-London.

2017 Food Safety and Healthy Environments Highlights



- 3,449 food premises inspections conducted
- 229 seasonal food premises inspections conducted
- 281 follow up inspections conducted
- 302 food premises licensing inspections completed
- 14 special events inspected
- 3,663 food handler training certificates issued by MLHU
- 15 Tickets, 7 Summons and 6 Closure Orders issued
- 72 Seasonal Farm Home inspections completed

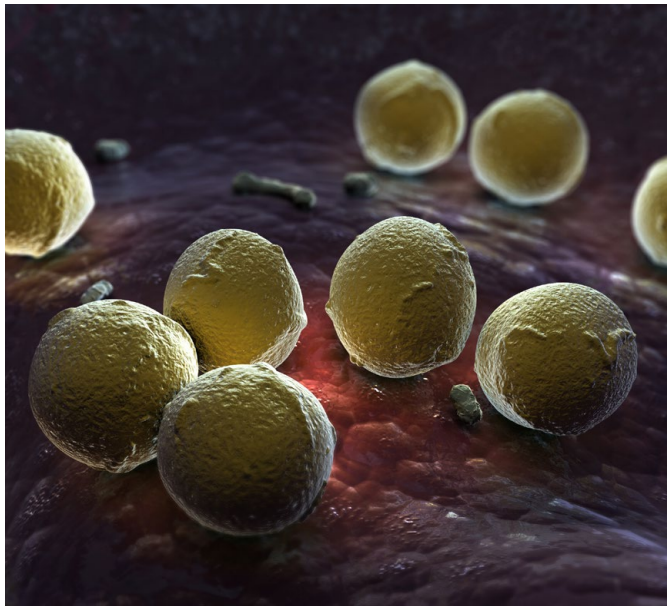


- 110 Group Home Inspections completed for provincial licensing
- 2,737 service requests risk assessed and responded to by the Food Safety & Healthy Environments team
- 13 responses to potential health hazards at homes identified as vulnerable occupancies, including additional health promotion work to help improve living conditions in these environments



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & INFECTIOUS DISEASE

INFECTIOUS DISEASE CONTROL (IDC)



As part of the Environmental Health and Infectious Diseases Division, the Infectious Diseases Control (IDC) Team, conducts inspections of childcare, long-term care and institutional settings, as well as personal service settings, to ensure proper and necessary infection prevention and control measures are being followed. The team also investigates the occurrence of cases of reportable diseases and disease outbreaks in London and Middlesex County. As part of its surveillance activities, the IDC Team monitors the impact of influenza on the region each year, including the number of laboratory-confirmed cases, hospitalizations, outbreaks and deaths related to the flu.

An example of the IDC Team's work occurred in late January of 2017, when the team issued an alert about a case of Meningococcal Disease linked to a drop-in group at the Jalna Library

branch of the London Public Library. Because of the need to follow-up with the families of other children who had been in the group, it was necessary to get the message out quickly. Within 40 minutes the message had been shared with local media and broadcast to the community, resulting in an influx of phone calls to the IDC Team, which were instrumental in assisting the investigation.

2017 IDC highlights and statistics

- Responded to **1,790** telephone calls from the public
- Conducted **1,263** inspections of personal service settings (hair salons, barber shops, tattoo and body art businesses, spas, manicure/pedicure businesses), long-term care homes, childcare centers, and before- and after-school programs



- Investigated **178** Outbreaks in long-term care homes, childcare centres and hospitals
- Influenza surveillance: **476** laboratory-confirmed cases, **39** outbreaks, **258** hospitalizations and **16** deaths.
- Provided two workshops for health professionals: TB workshop for Healthcare Professionals and an Infectious Disease Control workshop for the long-term care sector.





ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & INFECTIOUS DISEASE

VACCINE PREVENTABLE DISEASE (VPD)



In mid-2017, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced an amendment to the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* (ISPA) as part of *Immunization 2020*, a new five-year strategy intended to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency of Ontario's publicly-funded immunization system. As of September 1st, parents and guardians considering not immunizing their children for non-medical reasons would be required to participate in an education session delivered by the local public health unit in addition to submitting a valid affidavit.

The content of these education sessions has been standardized across the province to address key topics related to the benefits and risks of immunization, the *Immunization of School Pupils Act* and specific information about vaccine safety. This amendment to the provincial legislation is intended to strengthen the vaccine exemption process and help parents make informed decisions about their child's routine health care.

Members of the MLHU's Vaccine Preventable Disease (VPD) Team sent a variety of correspondence to students and their families during the 2016-2017 school year, including:

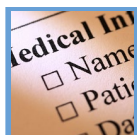
- **3,500** information letters
- **2,500** High School Questionnaires (Grades 10 to 12)
- **450** High School Suspension Letters (Grade 12 only)
- **7,900** Elementary School Questionnaires
- **2,650** Elementary School Suspension Letters (Grade 2 and Grade 8 only)

In 2017, a new online system called Immunization Connect Ontario, or ICON went live. ICON allows users to enter vaccine dates and/or download their immunization record card from any computer.

Other highlights and statistics:



- The provincial HPV vaccination program was modified in 2016 to provide the vaccine to both boys and girls starting in grade 7. In the fall of 2017, the HPV vaccine being given as part of the program was changed to a new one that offers protection against nine different HPV strains.
- Public Health Nurses with the VPD team completed 100% of cold chain inspections in 2017 visiting all healthcare provider offices, pharmacies, medical centres and clinics that administer publicly funded vaccine. During these visits, nurses inspect vaccine fridges to ensure vaccine storage handling guidelines are followed.



- 85% of 7-year-olds have received all immunizations required under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*
- 79% of 17-year-olds have received all immunizations required under the *Immunization of School Pupils Act*
- 60% of Grade 7 students immunized against hepatitis B
- 77% of Grade 7 students immunized against meningococcal disease
- 51% of Grade 7 students immunized against Human Papillomavirus (HPV)



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & INFECTIOUS DISEASE

SEXUAL HEALTH



Case Management and reportable disease follow-up

Sexual Health staff members were trained in Point of Care (POC) HIV testing and have been providing this testing on-site at shelters as well as other community organizations and agencies since July 2017. The Sexual Health Team provides case management, which includes follow-up of all reportable cases of sexually-transmitted and blood-borne infections. In 2017, there were 2,526 reportable disease follow-ups.

Get Tested event

The Sexual Health Promotion team was a big part of the third annual Get Tested event that returned to Western University on Valentines Day. In just over 12 hours, members of the team were able to screen 1,053 people for sexually-transmitted infections (STIs) in just over 12 hours, setting a new world record for the most STI tests done in a single day.



The team was also an integral part of the Middlesex-London Health Unit staff contingent at Pride 2017, which saw the largest turn out by staff since the health unit started participating in the annual event.

Outreach Team

Increasing rates of HIV, Hepatitis C, Invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS), and the declaration of a local public health emergency, prompted action that led to the creation of a new Outreach Team in 2017 comprised of a nurse and outreach workers. Through the Outreach Team's work in the downtown core, the Health Unit has been able to locate, engage, educate, and ultimately link people in need with care, treatment and programs that address basic needs.

The Clinic

The Sexually Transmitted Infection Clinic, also known as The Clinic, provides free, confidential testing, treatment and counselling to clients. The Clinic offers services on a walk-in basis that does not require a health card. Attendance at The Clinic has increased by 24% since 2013.



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH & INFECTIOUS DISEASE

SAFE WATER, RABIES AND VBD

Vector-Borne Disease Surveillance

From shortly after the snow melts until well into the fall, members of the Vector-Borne Disease team are always on the lookout for insects and bugs that can transmit illnesses to people. Through surveillance techniques that include dipping, trapping, dragging and the submission of ticks from members of the public, team members are on the front lines of the effort to combat West Nile Virus, Eastern Equine Encephalitis, Lyme Disease and even the potential arrival of Zika virus.

In 2017, the team exerted a significant effort in raising awareness about black-legged ticks and Lyme Disease encouraging residents who found a tick on a person to submit it to the Health Unit for testing and analysis. The team relied heavily on social media and on handouts distributed throughout the community to spread the word. The effort resulted in a record number of ticks submitted to the MLHU, more than 430 in all, a significant increase over the 128 ticks the Health Unit received in 2016.

In 2017, there were also six mosquito traps that yielded insects that tested positive for West Nile Virus; six of the traps were in London and one was in Delaware. While sentinel traps were also used in 2017 specifically to detect and identify mosquitos capable of carrying the Zika virus, no such mosquitos were found.



Safe Water Program

The safe water program has two streams: recreational water and drinking water. Using a training program developed at the MLHU, staff held seven *Pool and Spa Operator* training sessions in 2017, through which 77 participants were taught the finer points of safe and healthy operation of recreational water facilities. In addition to training operators, Public Health Inspectors also conduct visits to recreational water facilities in London and Middlesex County. In All, 824 facility inspections were conducted in 2017.

On the drinking water side, the *Enhanced Private Well Water* program received 335 phone calls in 2017 to notify Health Unit staff about adverse water test results, prompting Public Health Inspector visits to 17 well sites. In response to an identified need, MLHU staff also partnered with three other Southwest Region Health Units in 2017, to develop a new training manual for the owners and operators of Small Drinking Water Systems. In all safe water staff responded to and promptly followed up 147 reports of adverse water quality incidents across the Middlesex-London region.

Rabies Program

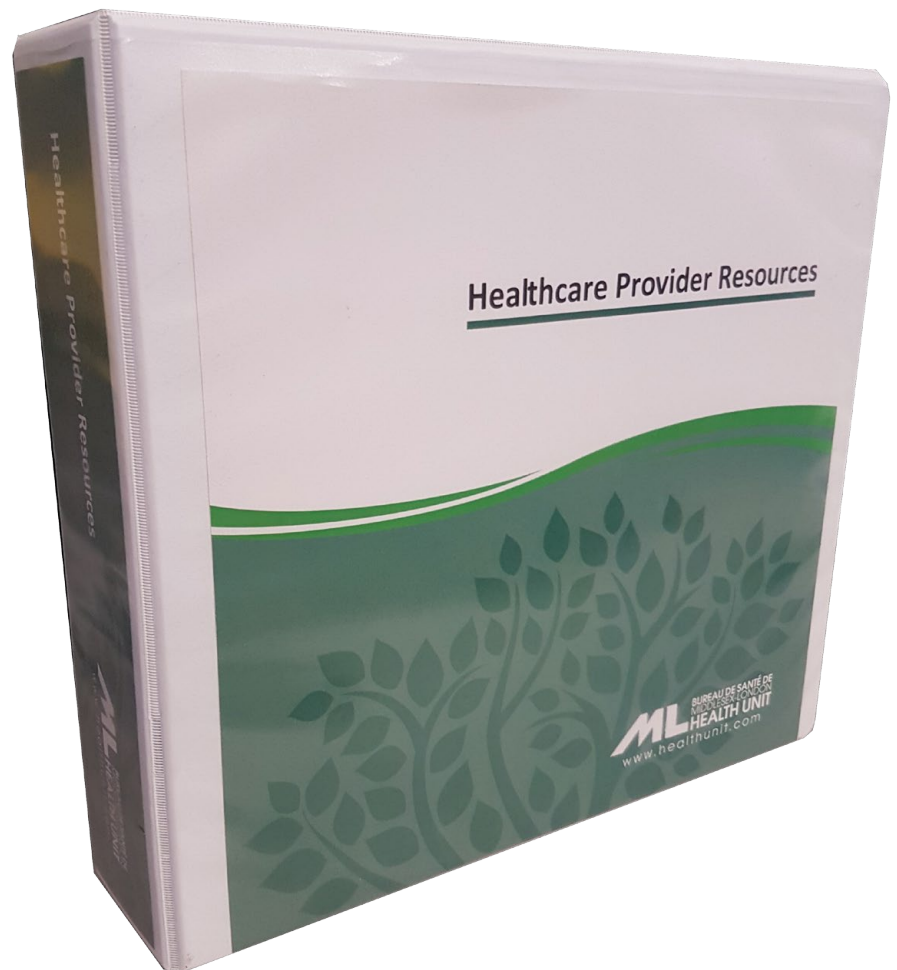
Staff working on the rabies file investigated 1,126 animal biting incidents in 2017; responding to each report within 24 hours. Of those, 109 clients received post-exposure prophylaxis treatment to prevent rabies.



HEALTHCARE PROVIDER OUTREACH PROGRAM

The Healthcare Provider Outreach program has been part of the MLHU's Communications Department for two years. Through this program, the Health Unit can engage local physicians, nurse practitioners and other health professionals, providing them with information about programs and services, as well as timely updates and alerts. The Healthcare Provider Outreach team also participates in hosting and organizing educational workshops.

As part of its work to solidify relationships with local practitioners and increase awareness of MLHU programs and services, the team creates an annual resource binder, which includes information about MLHU programs and services. The resource binders are assembled each spring and distributed to all healthcare practices in London and Middlesex County during annual in-person visits in the fall. In addition to the binders, a dozen electronic newsletters and four alerts were issued to more than 1,200 healthcare providers. The newsletters include important updates for provide healthcare providers as well as news about emerging public health issues and upcoming educational opportunities.



24,185 resources distributed as part of MLHU binders
1,209 receive each electronic newsletter
286 visits to Healthcare Provider offices

230 resource binders distributed
25 internal consultations
19 external consultations



HEALTHY START

REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

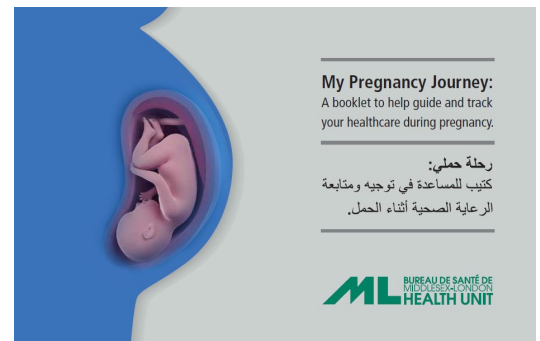
The Middlesex-London Health Unit provides a range of programs and services that support the healthy growth and development of newborns, children, parents and families before pregnancy, during pregnancy, after baby is born, and during the early years.

My Pregnancy Journey

The Prenatal Program launched the new *My Pregnancy Journey* resource in June of 2017, to support the very popular Prenatal Immigrant Program, or PIP, which supports pregnant women who are recent newcomers from other countries. *My Pregnancy Journey* is a bilingual booklet written in English and Arabic, designed to increase the level of understanding and care between mothers-to-be and their healthcare providers.

Raising Awareness of Online Resources

In addition, the Reproductive Health team also conducted an overhaul of the online prenatal registration process, making it much easier for families and support persons to access prenatal education through the website and in person. Over the course of the year, there were 2106 registrations for prenatal education sessions that were offered either online, in person, or both.



Aeroponic Grow Towers and the Healthy Harvests Veggies and Fruit Cooking Program

Through a collaboration with the Argyle Family Center, *Tower Gardens for Food Skills* and the *Smart Start For Babies* program, the *Healthy Harvests Veggies and Fruit Cooking Program* was formed. This free, monthly hands-on food preparation program is designed to increase food literacy (skills, knowledge and confidence about food preparation), access to, and consumption of, vegetables and fruit, as well as knowledge and skills to enhance preconception health. In addition, an aeroponic indoor Grow Tower was installed at the centre (as noted above), which was used to supplement educational and learning activities.



Prenatal Classes

4,334 views

Culturally-Appropriate Prenatal Program

The Health Unit also partnered with the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Center (SOAHAC) to develop a culturally appropriate prenatal program for Indigenous mothers and families. The program focuses on pregnancy and the early postpartum period, and provides health and cultural learning in collaboration with an elder, public health nurse, and dietician.



HEALTHY START

HOME VISITING



Healthy Babies Healthy Children

Home Visitors and Public Health Nurses who work with the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) program made 7,649 home visits in to more than 2,200 pregnant women and families with young children in 2017. In addition to home visits, the HBHC program also provides screening and assessment services, and links families who are experiencing challenges with community services and agencies that support children's growth and development.

In 2017, the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth (MCYS) released a new protocol for the HBHC program. The Middlesex-London Health Unit was one of the health units that provided feedback on the protocol, and will continue to be involved in the ongoing work to develop a new protocol reference document, to be completed in December of 2018.

Nurse Family Partnership

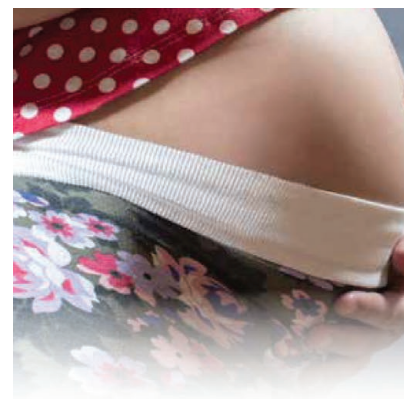
The Nurse-Family Partnership® (NFP) is an intensive and evidence-based home visiting program for young, low-income, first-time mothers. Made possible through funding from the Ontario Poverty Reduction Fund, Public Health Nurses started working with families in February of 2017, after completing a specialized education program adapted through the Canadian Nurse-Family Partnership Education pilot.

First started in the United States, the NFP program matches participants with a public health nurse who builds a partnership that starts before the child is born and carries through the first two years of the baby's life.

In December, 2017 a Community Advisory Board was formed with representation from 17 community agencies. The purpose of the committee is to advise and support the MLHU's implementation of the NFP; to create a shared vision among community stakeholders; and to identify joint strategies that support young first-time mothers experiencing complex challenges.

By the end of 2017, there had been 62 referrals and 44 women taking part in the program.

It is clear that the NFP program has tremendous potential to improve the lives of young mothers and their children. Evaluation of the pilot is currently ongoing with results anticipated in December 2018.



**A lot's
gonna
change**

You've got this!



HEALTHY START

EARLY YEARS

In addition to home visiting support, the Health Unit provided information and support to 6,256 postpartum families in 2017 through telephone support, *Infant Growth/Development and Breastfeeding Drop-ins* in the community, and breastfeeding appointments. In addition, 98 parenting classes and other presentations related to the early years were offered.

Community Collaboration

One of the Early Years team's key collaborations is the Community Early Years Partnership, which consists of 29 community agencies and 28 Healthcare Providers, who share a common goal of having a positive effect on the lives of families and young children in London and Middlesex County. Among the partners are the London Public Library, The London Regional Children's Museum, Strive, Childreach, OEYC/FCs (EarlyON), Vanier Children's Services, Merrymount, tykeTALK, the Thames Valley Children's Centre and the Child and Parent Resource Institute (CPRI).

Building Healthy Brains to Build a Healthy Future

The *Building Healthy Brains to Build a Healthy Future* campaign continued in 2017, focusing on mental health, including social and emotional well-being. Efforts were made to increase awareness of these issues among parents, caregivers and educators through a number of strategies. The team hosted a workshop in June that featured renowned child development and infant/child mental health experts Dr. Jean Clinton and Dr. Chaya Kulkarni.

A social media campaign and online contest designed to increase awareness of infant mental health encouraged parents and caregivers to visit the Health Unit's website. Once there, they would learn more about the importance of early childhood mental health, as well as how to nurture infant mental health and find support. Future plans to increase awareness of infant mental health include enhanced collaboration with Vanier Children's Services as well as local children's mental health experts.

World Breastfeeding Week

The Breastfeeding *Latch-On Challenge* took place September 28th at the South London Community Centre, where mothers and families who participated joined other groups across the country in kicking off National Breastfeeding Week.





HEALTHY START

INFANT HEARING, BLIND- LOW VISION, AND SPEECH & LANGUAGE SERVICES



Screening, Assessment and Intervention Program

In 2017, tykeTALK received 1,396 new referrals for speech and language services, almost half of which were made by parents using the online referral form found at www.tyketalk.com or by calling an intake telephone line. From referral, families waited five weeks or less to see a Speech and Language Pathologist. In all, staff provided services to 3,100 children ranging in age from birth to five years old at sites located throughout London and Middlesex County.

Of all babies born in our region in 2017, 98% (10,512) had their hearing screened in the hospital or community. Thirty-eight of those infants were identified with permanent hearing loss and provided with assistive technology and communicative development services by the time they were six months old.

Over the course of 2017, 28 children were newly-referred to the *Blind Low Vision Early Intervention Program*. Services were provided to 101 children ranging in age between birth and five years of age who had blindness or low vision.

The Infant Hearing and Blind Low Vision early intervention programs received \$250,000 in increased provincial funding which supported service delivery and increased access to interpreters for families who needed them. The funding was the first increase in over a decade for the programs.





HEALTHY LIVING

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND INJURY PREVENTION TEAM



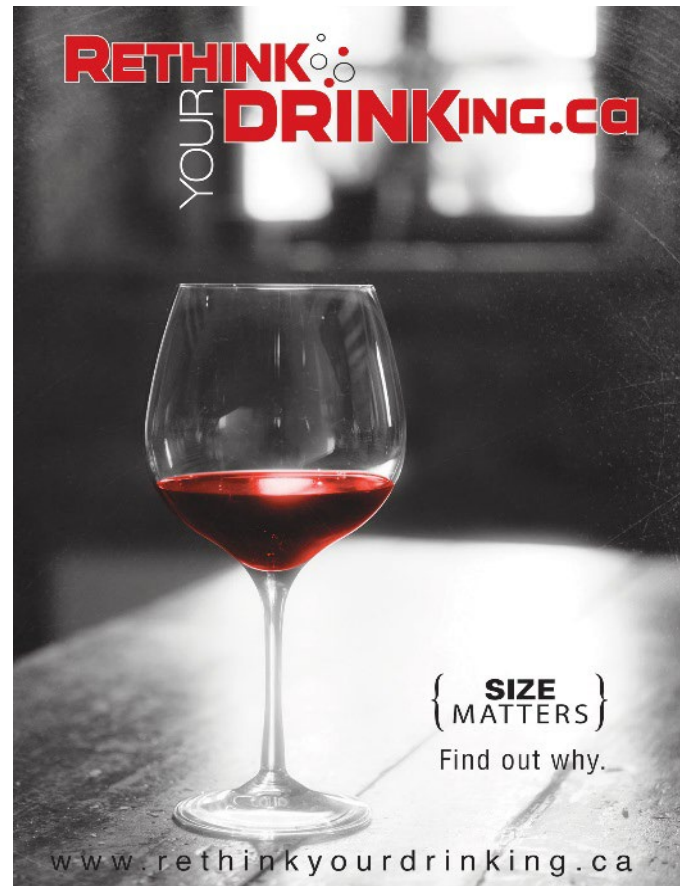
Some new tools were added in the fight against obesity in 2017. With the passing of the *Healthy Menu Choices Act* in January of 2017, it became necessary for restaurant chains in Ontario with more than 20 locations to display the number of calories contained in the food items they served. Awareness of sugar's contributions to increasing rates obesity, particularly through the consumption of sugar-sweetened beverages, also increased last year, and the Healthy Communities and Injury Prevention team was a big part of that effort.

Rethink Your Drinking

In partnership with 28 other health units across Ontario, the team continued its *Rethink Your Drinking* campaign through the end of March, with a message that when it comes to drinks that contain alcohol "Size Matters". The campaign sought to increase awareness about Canada's *Low Risk Alcohol Drinking Guidelines* while promoting standard alcohol drink sizes and moderate consumption. The campaign resulted in a 650% increase in online traffic to the www.rethinkyourdrinking.ca website

Active Transportation

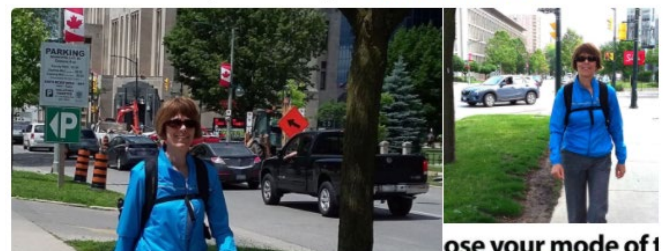
With the return of milder weather in the spring, the team brought back its Give Active Transportation a Go! campaign. The campaign encourages the use of human powered transportation, as well as public transit, as a way of getting to work, to school, or to play.



ML MLHealthUnit @MLHealthUnit

Follow

With a little planning, you can #WalkToWork just like #MLHU Nurse Bernie. If your trip is 5km or less, try walking! #GiveATaGO



Use your mode of t



HEALTHY LIVING

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND INJURY PREVENTION TEAM



Booster Seat Awareness

In September, as part of *National Passenger Safety Week*, the MLHU joined forces with local partners to increase awareness of, and the use of, child booster seats in passenger vehicles. A special event that brought together London Police, the OPP, Fire Department, Emergency Medical Services, London Health Sciences Centre, the Health Unit and local school boards was held at Rick Hansen Public School. The event aimed to remind parents about the importance of booster seats and the important role they play in preventing serious injuries and death in the event of a collision. The team has been actively sharing these messages because shockingly, roughly 70% of children who should use booster seats when travelling in cars, trucks and minivans, do not.



Tony the Streetwise Cat

After making his debut as part of an innovative safety video that taught children how to cross at traffic lights, Tony the Streetwise Cat stepped off the small screen this year and took part in several educational events hosted by the London and Middlesex Road Safety Committee and Active and Safe Routes to School.



Among his appearances across the community, Tony joined students at W. Sherwood Fox Public School to take part in an interactive education session about the new pedestrian crossings, or PXOs, that have been added to streets across the region. To further increase awareness and educate both pedestrians and drivers about the new PXOs, a pair of new videos featuring *Tony the Streetwise Cat* were launched near the end of 2017.

Pool Safety & Drowning Prevention

An important partnership for the Healthy Communities and Injury Prevention team is the one it shares with the Pool and Hot Tub Council of Canada. For the last several years, the Health Unit and the Pool and Hot Tub Council have mounted awareness campaigns about pool safety and drowning prevention. Drowning is the second leading cause of injury-related death for Canadian children. Between June and September, the campaign called on parents to keep young children within arms' reach when they were in the pool in order to prevent possible tragedies.

The campaign focused on residential pool owners, future pool owners, grandparents and young families. The campaign featured a multi-media approach to reach its audience, using radio advertising, transit shelter posters, billboards, advertising on London Transit Commission buses and social media platforms including Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.



HEALTHY LIVING

CHRONIC DISEASE AND TOBACCO CONTROL



The Health Unit Takes Action on Food and Beverage Marketing

There is greater understanding today about how commercial food and beverage marketing prevents children and youth from developing healthy habits that can extend into adulthood. For example, vending machines not only act as mini-billboards, but provide quick, easy access to energy-dense, nutrient-poor sugary drinks. Clever marketing ties athletic performance and sport role models to sport drinks, embedding the belief that water is inadequate to meet hydration needs.

According to the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada's 2017 Report on the Health of Canadians, parents do the best job they can to support their children in making healthy food choices, but the environment makes it challenging. The most accessible and heavily marketed choices are often energy-dense, nutrient-poor processed foods and sugary drinks.

In 2017, the Board of Health supported and endorsed the efforts of *The Stop Marketing to Kids Coalition* (Stop M2K) to restrict marketing food and beverages to children and youth under the age of 16. Founded by the Heart and Stroke Foundation and the Childhood Obesity Foundation, Stop M2K is calling for a comprehensive federal strategy that includes policies that support reduced access and consumption of sugar, especially in the form of sugary drinks.

Drink Water...Perform Better Pledge

The renewal of the City of London's beverage machine contract in early 2017 provided the Chronic Disease Prevention and Tobacco Control team with an opportunity for further advocacy related to sugary drinks. Team members conducted surveys and interviews at London and area recreation facilities to get a better understanding of the drink consumption habits of young athletes and their families. They used these interactions as a means of raising awareness that water is the best energy drink available and then spread the message to teams and sports associations through the creation of the *Drink Water...Perform Better Pledge*.

Through the *Pledge*, local sports teams, sport organizations, young athletes and guardians were encouraged to commit to choosing water as their fuel for healthy, active play. The Pledge, which was advertised across the London area, encouraged teams to commit to using water in place of nutrient-poor sugary sports drinks and caffeine-containing energy drinks. Parents, coaches and league leaders who signed up online to take the pledge were entered into a monthly draw for a chance to win \$250 to use





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for team incentives to reinforce their team pledge, such as healthy team snacks, reusable water bottles, additional training time, new jerseys or participation in team physical activities like bowling nights. The Pledge was a project of London's Healthy Kids Community Challenge and a community partnership between the Middlesex-London Health Unit, the City of London, London SportsXpress, London Sports Council and Brescia University College.

Over the course of six months, the Pledge was taken by members, parents and coaches of over 65 sports teams, reaching more than 650 young athletes in London and area.

"As a team trainer, I understand the importance that proper hydration plays in the performance of young athletes and that sport drinks provide unnecessary sugar to an athlete's diet. By providing water for our team's hydration needs, we can be confident that our players will be ready to compete." - London Junior Knights Trainer

"Water is the first choice for our family but it could be difficult to bring it up as the best choice to other teammates. Winning the prize brought the topic of water on the table where it may otherwise have not." - A Parent

Smoke-Free Housing

Tobacco Control staff were also involved in efforts to support the inclusion of smoke-free clauses in standard lease agreements under the Residential Tenancies Act. This included working closely with property management companies and landlords to increase the availability and enforceability of local smoke-free clauses within tenant and lease agreements.



Tobacco Enforcement Statistics:

- 902 inspections at workplaces and schools
- 214 inspections at restaurants, bars and outdoor special events



- 1,396 inspections at tobacco retailers
- 387 inspections at e-cigarette retailers
- 79 charges laid and 274 warnings issued

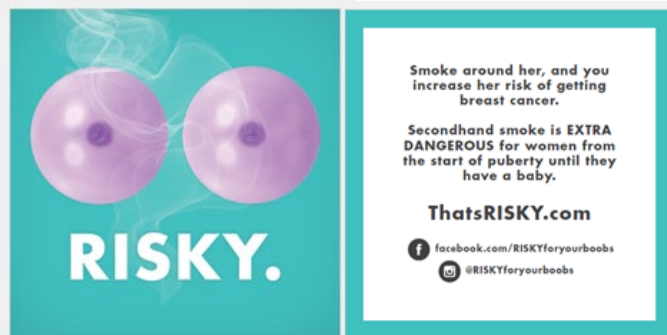


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Smoke Around Her? That's Risky!

In October of 2017, and in partnership with the Central East Tobacco Control Area Network, the Middlesex-London Health Unit took to online and social media channels to bring attention to the links between second-hand smoke exposure and breast cancer. Second-hand smoke is particularly dangerous for women from the start of puberty until they have a baby. The campaign encouraged young people to hangout in smoke-free areas, encouraged them to ask friends and family to not smoke around them, and called on friends and family that smoke to work towards quitting.



Smoke-Free Movies nights

The late-summer of 2017 saw the return of Smoke-Free Movie Nights to Strathroy and downtown London, where the Health Unit hosted screenings of the Disney animated hit Moana and The Lego Batman Movie.

Hundreds of families joined MLHU staff for an evening of fun that underscored that films aimed at a youth audience are much better without any depictions of tobacco use.

The London and Strathroy events, were two of the 23 Smoke-Free Movie events held

across Southwest TCAN, which sought to raise awareness and to advocate for movies showing depictions of smoking to be assigned a rating of 18A in Ontario. Some 7,400 people attended Smoke-Free Movies Nights in 2017 and



1,113 of them signed their name to a provincial smoke-free movies petition calling for changes to Ontario's movie ratings system. Youth from each health unit in the TCAN met with local MPPs to discuss the issue and to present the petition to them. By the end of the year, six local representatives had read the petition at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario.

Southwest Tobacco Control Area Network (SW TCAN) Highlights from 2017

There are seven Tobacco Control Area Networks in Ontario, which lead, support and coordinate tobacco control programming and services. The MLHU is the coordinating public health unit for the Southwest Tobacco Control Area Network (TCAN), which includes eight other public health units and community partners across Southwestern Ontario.



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Plain and Standardized Packaging for Tobacco Products

The issue of plain and standardized tobacco packaging was part of the last federal election campaign. In 2017, the Southwest TCAN worked diligently to maintain focus on the Issue and support the Government of Canada's commitment to the plan.



Once a new federal packaging policy is put in place, all marketing elements currently in use on tobacco packaging will be removed, including colour, logos, slogans and fonts. All that will be left, will be drab colour, a plain font and the health warning as the only message on the packaging. With plain and standardized packaging, the health warning becomes more clear and the products become more unappealing to young people, who have been directly targeted by tobacco company marketing tactics in the past.

Advocacy

In November, staff accompanied a group of teens from the MLHU's One Life One You youth advocacy team and other young representatives from across the region, to Ottawa for a demonstration on Parliament Hill in support of plain and standardized tobacco product packaging.

While there, they met with some local Members of Parliament, and sat in on Question Period to witness debate on the issue and show their support for the policy. After the demonstration two youth who were in attendance were invited to speak to the Standing Committee on Health to share their perspective on how plain and standardized packaging will benefit youth.

National Non-Smoking Week: *Smoke is Smoke*

As a theme for National Non-Smoking Week 2017, the Healthy Communities Injury Prevention, Chronic Disease Prevention Tobacco Control, and the SW Tobacco Control Area Network teams shared the message that Smoke is Smoke. A campaign followed that aimed to raise awareness that smoke is smoke and all smoke is harmful whether it comes from tobacco, cannabis (marijuana) or a hookah pipe. Among its goals the campaign sought to dispel myths and start a conversation about the harmful effects of smoke, regardless of its source.

Harvest Bucks

The Harvest Bucks vegetable and fruit voucher program continued in 2017. The program aims to increase local access to, and consumption of, vegetables and fruit while raising awareness about local farmers' markets and local producers. Harvest Bucks numbers continue to grow:





HEALTHY LIVING

YOUNG ADULT AND CHILD HEALTH



The Child Health and Young Adult Teams focus their efforts on improving the health and wellbeing of children and youth in elementary and secondary schools. Working with principals and teachers, Public Health Nurses develop action plans focusing on child- and youth-related health topics.

School-based Toolkits

In 2017, the teams launched eight school-based toolkits that highlight key health topics including fruit and vegetable consumption, school connectedness, sedentary behavior, and growth and development. Based on solid evidence, the toolkits align with the Ministry of Education's *Foundations for a Healthy School Framework*. New Health Wall posters themed to match the toolkits and intended to promote healthy schools, were also developed.

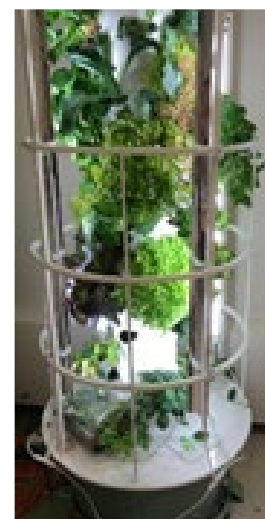


School Nursing

Over the course of the year, Public Health Nurses working in secondary schools met with students more than 2,500 times to offer support for health-related concerns, including physical wellbeing, sexual health, mental health and healthy relationships. As a result of some 1,200 of these visits, Public Health Nurses were able to refer students to appropriate community resources.

Increasing the consumption of water, fruits and vegetables

The teams joined forces with the Healthy Kids Community Challenge (HKCC) once again in 2017 to reduce the consumption of sugar sweetened beverages in favour of water as the clear choice of drinks. They also collaborated with the HKCC and several community organizations to promote the consumption of fruits and vegetables. As part of this project the Fruit and Veggies Superheroes were reintroduced, and social media was leveraged resulting in more than 700 tweets and Instagram posts. The teams were also involved in bringing aeroponic grow towers to a pair of local schools, as noted above.



Murray and Bird Return

Through the end of 2017, the Child Health team was busy developing the third Murray and Bird book. This time the story focuses Brid's efforts to get Murray up off the couch to embark on an adventure in the nearby woods with friends. Due to be released in 2018, the story highlights the importance physical activity, and builds on the success of the second Murray and Bird book, "Water Works", developed in 2016.



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ORAL HEALTH

As part of the Healthy Living division, the Oral Health team is focused on screening the teeth of elementary school-aged children across London and Middlesex County and assessing their need for dental care and linking those with the greatest need to service providers in the community through the Healthy Smiles Ontario program.

Another of the Oral Health Team's programs, the Fluoride Varnish Application Program expanded its services to eighteen new elementary schools and thirteen daycare settings in 2017. In total, 884 children received 2,090 fluoride varnish applications as part of the program last year. Overall 15,735 students in 131 elementary schools were screened, during the 2016-17 school year, of those 1,751 children were found to be needing urgent dental care.

In addition to school-based screening, the Oral Health Team also provided dental screening, as well as preventive and treatment services at the Middlesex-London Health Unit's 50 King Street Dental Clinic. Over the course of 2017, 415 children were screened at the downtown clinic to assess for urgent dental needs, while 385 kids received preventive services such as cleaning in addition to the application of dental sealants and fluoride varnish. This is in addition to the 1,047 children who received dental treatment services at the dental clinic through the Healthy Smiles Ontario program.

Oral Health staff also provided preventive services to 218 adults through the Smile Clean Program in 2017.





FINANCIALS

2017 Budget

EXPENDITURES 2017

Cost-Shared Programs:

Mandatory Programs	\$ 24,829,045
Vector-Borne Diseases	616,000
Small Drinking Water Systems	47,550
Total	25,492,595

100% Funded Programs

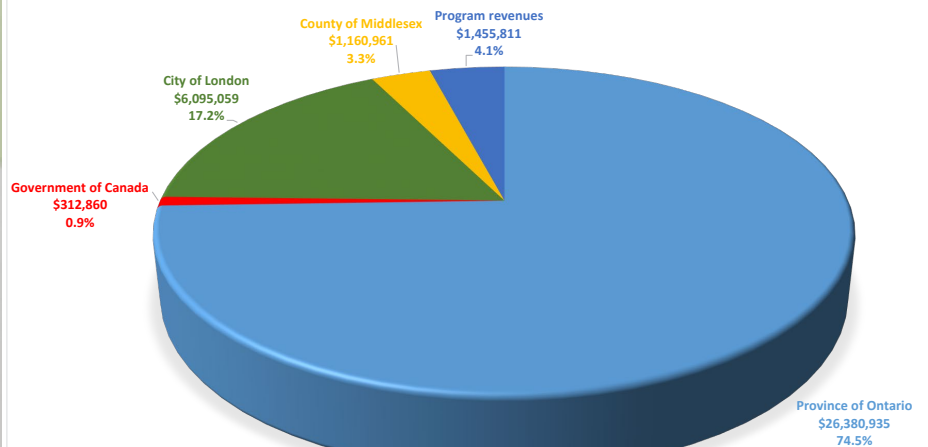
Infectious Diseases Prevention and Control	1,166,800
Needle Exchange	363,700
Public Health Nursing Initiatives	392,100
Healthy Babies Healthy Children	2,483,313
Smart Start for Babies	152,430
Enhanced Safe Water Initiative	35,700
Enhanced Food Safety Initiative	80,000
FoodNet	160,430
Panorama Implementation	129,700
Shared Library Services	106,526
Healthy Smiles Ontario	692,700
Dental Treatment Clinic	247,870
Smoke Free Ontario	1,078,800
tykeTALK	1,818,374
Infant Hearing and Screening Program	845,886
Blind Low Vision	158,702
Total	\$ 9,913,031

Total Public Health Program Expenditures	\$ 35,405,626
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REVENUES 2017

Sources of Funding:

Province of Ontario	\$ 26,380,935	74.5%
Government of Canada	312,860	0.9%
City of London	6,095,059	17.2%
County of Middlesex	1,160,961	3.3%
Program revenues	1,455,811	4.1%
Total Sources of Funding	\$ 35,405,626	



2017 ANNUAL REPORT



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