

# 2016

# ANNUAL HURON COUNTY HEALTH UNIT REPORT

## Keeping Huron County healthy and safe: it's a group effort!

The mandate of public health is to prevent injury and disease, promote wellness and protect health. The Huron County Health Unit has dozens of programs, both clinical services and population-level work, to fulfill this mandate.

The Health Unit also has a range of highly skilled professionals, as well as committed and generous volunteers, working in many areas of public health to keep Huron County residents healthy and safe.

Professions represented at the Huron County Health Unit include:

- Administration Professional
- Community Food Advisor Volunteer Coordinator
- Communications Specialist
- Community Developer
- Dental Assistant
- Dental Hygienist
- Dietitian
- Epidemiologist
- Graphic Designer
- Parent Resource Visitor
- Physician
- Plumbing Inspector

- Program Evaluator
- Public Health Inspector
- Public Health Nurse
- Public Health Promoter

Our dedicated volunteers work through groups such as:

- Community Food Advisors
- Breastfeeding Peer Support Volunteers (MILKS)
- Teen Esteem Program
- Homeowners who volunteer their property for mosquito traps

The skills, efforts and talent of many go into protecting and promoting health in Huron County. The following is a snapshot of public health work carried out in 2016.

For more information, please visit [www.huronhealthunit.ca](http://www.huronhealthunit.ca) or call us at 519-482-3416 (1-877-837-6143).

## Environmental Health

Protecting people's health from food-borne illness, water-borne illness (drinking water and recreational water) and health hazards in the physical environment.

### Well water monitoring

Having access to a secure, reliable, potable water supply is fundamental to good health. Every year the Health Unit, through various media formats and outlets, encourages owners of non-regulated wells to sample their drinking water each season, and after a heavy rain, during the spring snowmelt and after work on the well has been conducted. There are five locations throughout the county where well owners can pick up and drop off water sample bottles. The samples are submitted to the Ontario Public Health Laboratory (OPHL) where bacterial analyses are conducted free of charge. The OPHL sends analysis results to the submitters of the samples.

Well owners are also encouraged to sign up with the Health Unit at [wellwater@huroncounty.ca](mailto:wellwater@huroncounty.ca) to receive email reminders to sample their water.

In 2016, 2,145 water samples from non-regulated wells were submitted to the OPHL. The results were reviewed by the Health Unit. When results showed the possible presence of illness-causing bacteria in the water submitters were contacted and provided with drinking water safety related information.

### #safefood2go social media contest



In the summer of 2016, the Health Unit ran a food safety contest on social media. The #safefood2go contest educated the public about safe food handling when barbequing and picnicking in the summer. Two prizes packages, containing a portable barbeque, cooler, beach umbrella and additional items, were given away. To enter the contest people had to provide a tip for keeping food safe when barbequing and picnicking. If the contestant added a photograph of a favourite Huron County picnic spot, they received an additional entry.

The contest had 1,500 official entries. Our food safety messages on Facebook reached 8,698 people. Our messages were liked by 274 people, commented upon 460 times and shared 153 times.

**1,975** beach water samples taken from 14 Huron County beaches.

**2,145** private drinking water sample results reviewed.

**78** reported enteric illnesses investigated and 13 reported enteric outbreaks investigated.

**424** plumbing and sewage systems applications issued.

**1,592** inspections of restaurants, public pools, day nurseries, personal service settings, etc.

**167** tobacco enforcement-related inspections and complaint investigations conducted at workplaces and public places.

**212** cases of human-animal contact investigated. Human rabies post-exposure prophylaxis (vaccine) was issued on 17 occasions.

## Infectious Diseases

Preventing disease and the spread of disease through immunizations, education and outbreak control measures.

### New online manual for child care centre staff [childcareinfectioncontrol.ca](http://childcareinfectioncontrol.ca)



An online manual for child care centre staff was launched in October. The website [www.childcareinfectioncontrol.ca](http://www.childcareinfectioncontrol.ca) contains information on infection control and prevention, immunization requirements, outbreak reporting and food safety.

### Infection Control Workshop October 2016

The Infectious Disease team once again invited staff from local long-term care facilities and retirement homes to the Health Unit's annual infection control workshop.

Workshop highlights included:

- An influenza update with Dr. Bryna Warshawsky, Public Health Ontario.
- A tuberculosis outbreak experience from an out-of-county long-term care facility
- Updates on routine practices, additional precautions, tools/resources and management of Antibiotic Resistant Organisms (AROs) with Francine Paquette, Public Health Ontario
- Outbreak management update by Health Unit staff

### Immunization records review

The Health Unit reviewed Huron County students' immunization records in accordance with the Immunization of School Pupils Act (ISPA) in early 2016. The review process included letters to parents requesting information when records were incomplete, high school immunization clinics, phone calls to parents and the issuing of suspension notices.

Huron County continues to have a high compliance rate for updated immunization records. For the 2015-2016 school year, for students born in 2008, the compliance rate for updated immunization records was 98.96%. For students born in 1999, the compliance rate for updated immunization records was 98.23%.

**2,407**

immunizations provided through our school-based immunization clinics.

**853**

immunizations provided through our weekly Clinton clinics.

**45,071**

doses of vaccine distributed to healthcare providers.

### “Immunize 101” event for local healthcare providers

The Infectious Disease team held an “Immunize 101” event in September for all healthcare providers who offer immunizations. The event was well attended with at least one representative from each Community Health Centre and Family Health Team in the county. We also revised the immunization information in the healthcare provider section of our website.

## Family Health

Helping Huron County residents be healthy before and during pregnancy, and preparing them for parenthood.

Helping parents have the healthiest newborns possible, and supporting all children in Huron County to reach their full potential in health and development.

### HCHU achieves “Baby-Friendly Initiative” (BFI) designation

In 2016, the Huron County Health Unit achieved the Baby-Friendly Initiative Designation from the Breastfeeding Committee of Canada. This designation identifies that the Health Unit has met a standard of practice around infant feeding that will increase the health and well-being of all children and families.

The Baby-Friendly Initiative is a global, evidence-based approach that protects, promotes and supports breastfeeding. It ensures that parents receive accurate information to enable them to make an informed decision about infant feeding practices.

Under the leadership of the Health Unit’s Family Health team, all staff worked together to achieve this designation. Receiving the BFI designation was a confirmation of the Health Unit’s dedication to provide families with the information and supports needed to succeed at breastfeeding their infants.

### Calling All Three Year Olds



In 2016, the Calling All Three Year Olds (CATYO) event took place in all 20 Huron County schools. CATYO is a school readiness initiative to help parents learn more about their child’s development, prepare their child for school and receive help for their child if needed. CATYO is a partnership between health units, school boards and early childhood programs and services providers in Huron and Perth counties.

Of the 487 children who were screened in 2016, 67 (13.7%) children were referred to a specific community service and 40 (8.2%) children were already linked to services.

**588** postpartum screens (95.9% of live births)

**548** phone contacts with postpartum mothers

**341** (58%) postpartum screens identified families in need of support

**2,240** people reached through the Facebook Q&A “Introduction to Solids”

**6,973** online “Giddy Up Let’s Grow” messages sent to families with children under 6 years

## Positive parenting survey

What do parents want to know more about? Who do they look to for information? How do they want to learn information? The Family Health team surveyed Huron county parents in the fall of 2016 to learn about the needs of parents and caregivers who have children 0-17 years of age.

There were 654 responses received, as parents provided information about what topics are of an interest to them, how they would like to receive information, and who they would like to receive parenting information from. The Health Unit will use this information to plan programming, collaborate with service providers, and support parents to promote optimal health and well-being for children and youth.

## Cross-county “Pick a Parenting Tip” contest

Parenting is wonderful and rewarding, but it can also be difficult when parents face challenging behaviour from young children. Research shows that it is important to use positive strategies in these situations.

To help local parents discover positive and proactive ways to deal with stressful situations with young children, the Huron County Health Unit, Ontario Early Years and Rural Response for Healthy Children partnered to sponsor the “Pick a Parenting Tip” contest in the spring of 2016.

The “Pick a Parenting Tip” contest awarded winners from the north, central and south of the county. Participating stores included: Canadian Tire in Exeter and Goderich, Watson’s Home Hardware in Goderich and Gorrie, Langford Lumber Home Building Centre in Clinton, McDonald Home Hardware Building Centre in Brussels, Sills Home Hardware in Seaforth, MacLean Home Hardware in Exeter, and Stainton’s Home Hardware in Wingham.

## Piloting the “Fourth R” mental health program

The Health Unit partnered with three Huron County schools, as well as Western University and the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health, as part of a pilot study for the Fourth R: Healthy Relationships Plus program. This program, intended for youth between the ages of 12 and 18, promotes healthy relationships and positive mental health.

## Offering oral health support

The Health Unit mailed out 114 notices offering preventive services at our dental clinics. Preventive services include scaling, polish, fluoride and oral hygiene instruction. We saw a total of 87 clients, 57 who were screened and 30 who received services.

The Health Unit’s registered dental hygienist and dental assistant spoke at seven parenting groups across Huron County. They discussed information on teething and care of first teeth with 39 moms and dads.

**14** out of 25 schools had active healthy school committees

**775** presentations, workshops or resources provided to local schools

**3,225** children had dental screening in 24 different schools

**249** teeth identified as having decay

**1,567** birth control sales provided at low cost and 517 provided at no cost

**33,000** (approximate) condoms provided at no cost

**776** drop in clients seen at Clinton and Wingham sexual health clinics

## Community Health

Preventing injury, chronic disease and substance misuse. Working with partners and communities to create supportive environments, education, policies and laws.

### P2P Destination: Prosperity

The Huron County Health Unit supports Huron's anti-poverty coalition, Poverty to Prosperity (P2P) through active leadership and participation in community development initiatives in some of Huron County's most underserved communities. P2P's Destination: Prosperity project works with women, families and groups to engage partners, improve services and enhance community well-being.

### Helping residents quit smoking

On average, it takes 30 attempts to quit smoking for good. For individuals who live in underserved areas or have barriers to accessing service elsewhere, the Health Unit provides free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (such as patches or gum) and 1:1 cessation counselling. In 2016 the Health Unit directly helped 58 clients make one or more quit attempts.

The Health Unit also supports residents' quit attempts by connecting people to other cessation services in the County. We also help healthcare and social service providers with their cessation services through the Huron County Community of Practice.

### Huron County Cycling Strategy

The Huron County Health Unit participated in a staff committee with the Huron County Planning Department and Roads Department to develop a County Wide Cycling Strategy. This happened throughout 2016 with input and direction from a community steering committee made up of cyclists, OPP, businesses, school boards and other interested community partners.

### Coalition for Huron Injury Prevention

The Health Unit is part of the Coalition for Huron Injury Prevention (CHIP), a community-based partnership working to prevent injuries and deaths on our roads. Like other mainly rural regions, Huron County has some of the highest rates of injury from traffic collisions in Ontario.

CHIP holds educational events across Huron County. In 2016, more than 700 students and adults were reached through community events that highlighted the dangers of distracted driving and driving high, with 90 youth taking a photo pledge to #SeeTheRoad.

**63,777** vehicles passed the CHIP electronic sign at different locations across Huron County.

**7,800** cigarette butts collected from Goderich and Grand Bend shorelines during beach cleanups.

**700+** students and adults learned more about the dangers of distracted/impaired driving.

**384** self-help Quit Kits supplied to healthcare and social service agencies.

**100** seniors attended CHIP Safe Driving for Seniors workshops.

**2,300** people participated in a Community Food Advisor cooking class, presentation or educational experience.

**22** Community Food Advisors worked to promote healthy eating and food safety.

## Healthy Kids Community Challenge

The Health Unit is part of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge, a community program where partners from different sectors such as public health, education, recreation and local business, work together to promote healthy behaviours and healthy activities for children. Huron County is one of 45 communities across Ontario chosen to be a part of this special provincial project.

In 2016, Healthy Kids Community Challenge Huron based its work on two provincially-set themes: “Run, Jump, Play. Every Day.” And “Water Does Wonders” In the second phase — Water Does Wonders — Huron County engaged more than 25,000 children in making the switch from sugary drinks to water. Healthy Kids Community Challenge Huron supported 34 different projects across the county during this theme.

## Emergency Preparedness

Enabling a consistent and effective response to public health emergencies and emergencies with public health impacts.

The Health Unit participates in county and municipal exercises to test plan components for given scenarios. We also serve as consultants to community and municipal partners for public health emergency planning and response.

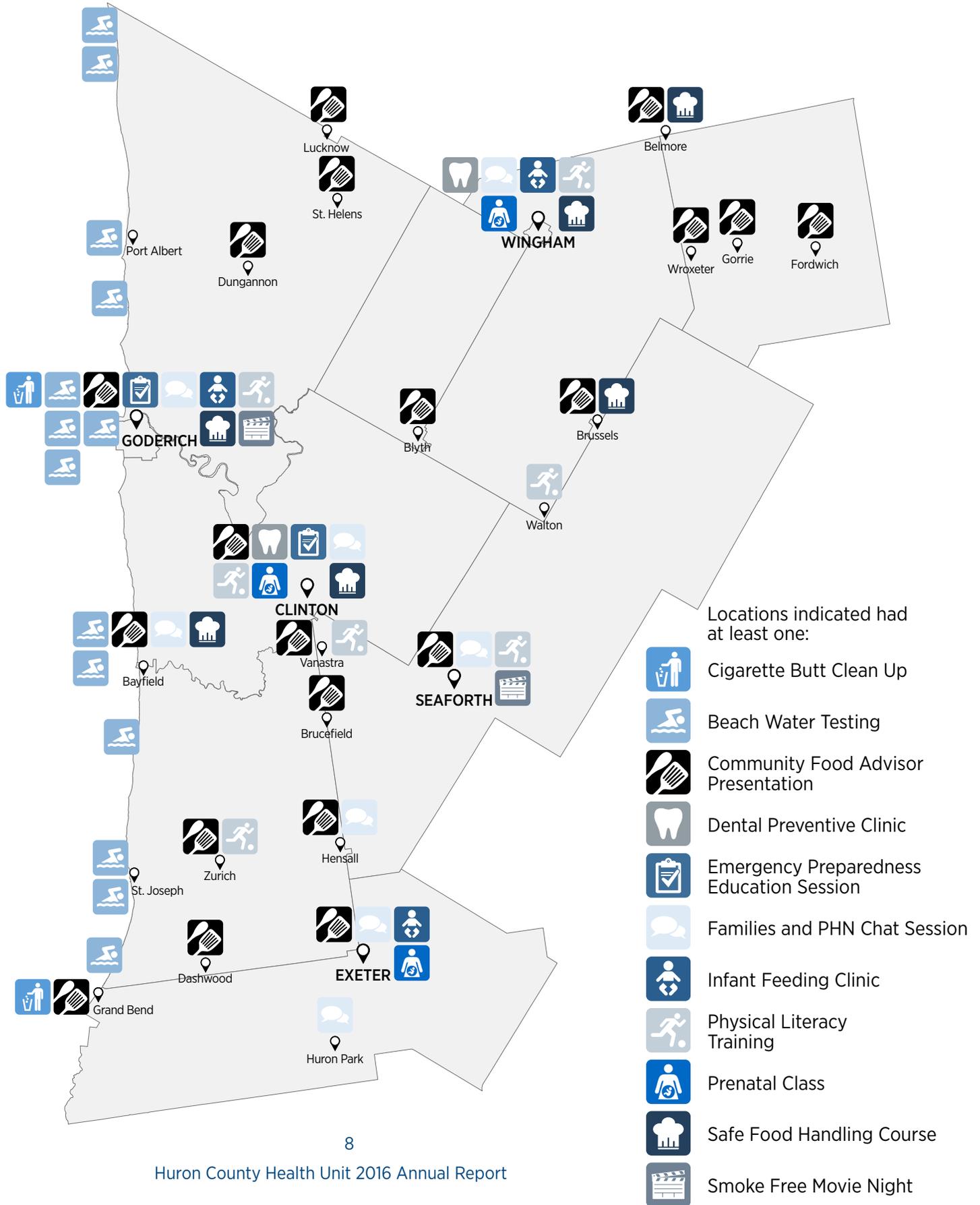
The Health Unit helps increase public awareness regarding emergency preparedness activities. This includes participating in planned emergency preparedness events, media alerts to notify residents of a public health concern or general public education about emergency preparedness.

Highlights of our 2016 response include:

- All Health Unit staff completed Public Health Ontario’s Emergency Preparedness online modules over the summer of 2016. This training is now also part of orientation for new staff.
- Co-facilitated Public Health Ontario’s IMS based workshop at the University of Western Ontario
- Delivered What’s My Risk? – a full day workshop for local Designated Officers, Emergency Service Workers and others
- Presentation to Conestoga College Environmental Health Program Students on Emergency Response and Public Health
- Co-wrote, presented and participated in the Huron County emergency exercise on pandemic influenza
- Co-facilitated IMS 200 Workshop Co-facilitation for Huron County Senior Staff
- Held an onsite Public Health Emergency Preparedness workshop. The workshop exercise focus was public health response during a Plowing Match incident.

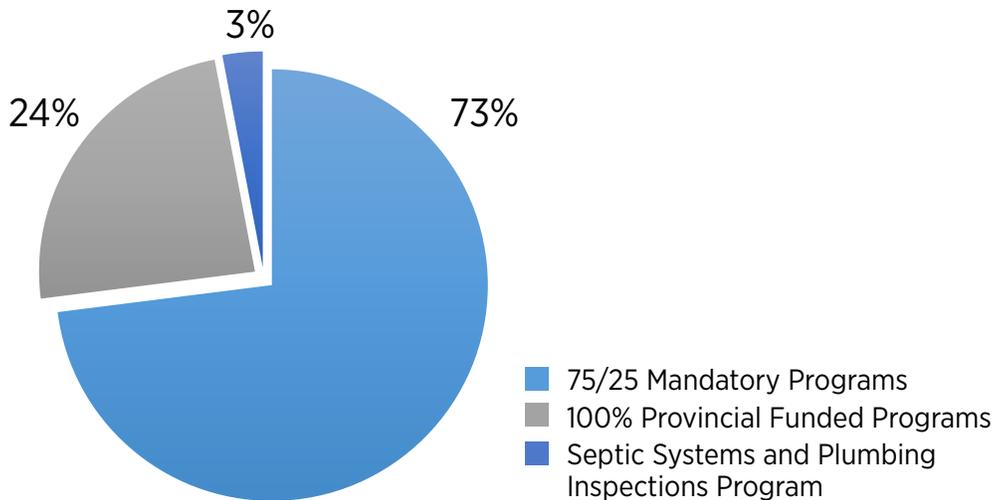
# Public Health across Huron County: 2016 Snapshot

Here are just some of our programs, classes, clinics and events held in Huron County in 2016.



# 2016 Budget: \$7,356,750

County of Huron funding, including Septic Systems and Plumbing Inspections: \$1,646,317



**75/25 Mandatory Programs:**  
(75% Provincial, 25% Municipal Funding)

- Chronic disease prevention
- Family health
- Infectious diseases
- Environmental health
- Emergency preparedness

**75/25 Non-mandatory Programs:**

- Vector borne diseases
- Small drinking water systems

**100% Provincial Funded Programs:**

- Infectious disease control
- Low income dental
- Smoke Free Ontario
- Safe water program
- Safe food handling
- Needle exchange program
- Chief Nursing Officer
- Infection Prevention and Control
- Nurses Initiative
- Public Health Nurse Initiative
- Panorama Funding
- Healthy Babies/Healthy Children



Huron County  
Health Unit

[huronhealthunit.ca](http://huronhealthunit.ca)