

Board of Health Briefing Note

To: Chair and Members of the Board of Health
Date: April 6, 2022
Topic: Inaugural Canadian Public Health Week
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It is recommended that the Board of Health receive this briefing note on Canadian Public Health Week for information.

Background

April 4th, 2022 marks the beginning of the first Canadian Public Health Week (CPHW). The purpose of this campaign is to bring together communities across Canada to celebrate and recognize the contributions of public health and its workforce. It is also a time to highlight issues that are vital to improving the health of Canadians.



Public health is the invisible guardian of our health. The COVID-19 pandemic has made public health more visible and its efforts more appreciated.

“The pandemic has underscored the importance of public health’s role in preventing disease, promoting healthy behaviours, and working upstream across sectors to address the drivers of poor health. It has demonstrated how public health can protect the sustainability of the healthcare system by preventing people from getting sick and hospitals from becoming overwhelmed. It has also demonstrated that when we work to improve the living conditions and well-being of those most at risk, we are collectively safer and healthier.”¹

Timiskaming Health Unit and Public Health Week

As we look toward pandemic recovery, many public health leaders have identified that there is a unique opportunity to build a stronger, more resilient and responsive public health system that can best support the health and well-being of our population. However, before discussing opportunities to transform public health, a shared understanding is required of the true scope of public health, and how it touches people’s lives every day.

Timiskaming Health Unit has long been working to keep people healthy and prevent injury, illness, and premature death, and contribute to health equity. To achieve this requires a well-trained, interdisciplinary public health workforce who take on multiple functions – as leaders, convenors, coordinators, motivators, and supporters – to identify and address complex challenges and threats to the health of our populations.

¹ Public Health Agency of Canada. The Chief Public Health Officer of Canada’s Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2021: A Vision to Transform Canada’s Public Health System. Government of Canada; 2021.

The people in the communities we serve are better off because of the local knowledge and context-specific services provided by their local public health agency, which is of course supported by a larger system that generates and shares knowledge, promotes policy and makes it possible for us to do our work. [#LocalPublicHealthMatters](#)

Over the past two years Ontario's local public health workforce has been at the forefront of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic response. The pandemic has placed unprecedented pressures on local public health and throughout, THU staff have demonstrated incredible resiliency and commitment to serving our communities. However, this has required various staff to adjust to unfamiliar work, many readjustments, relentless intensity and long hours of work. This combined with the uncertainty everyone has experienced in the pandemic, has impacted our workforce. Investing in the well-being of our local public health staff is critical.

Thus, Timiskaming Health Unit will take this Canadian Public Health Week opportunity to raise awareness of the full scope of local public health work and support staff connection, recognition and celebration. Throughout the week, daily internal emails and external Facebook post will be shared to shine a light on diverse THU professionals who work to improve and protect our health and well-being and to achieve [THU's vision](#) of *Healthy communities where everyone can thrive*. An overview of the local campaign objectives and activities are listed below.

Campaign Objectives

- Profile THU staff and the work that they do
- Acknowledge and celebrate THU staff
- Support staff connection and cohesion

Campaign Activities

- Bilingual social media campaign profiling THU staff
- Internal daily email profiling THU staff
- Staff lunch and getting to know you activity
- Encouragement to join CPHA Canadian PHW Webinar series (see [appendix](#) for webinar details)
- Agency wide virtual coffee break

All THU staff will be profiled and recognized. A sample of internal emails and social media posts can be found in [Appendix A](#). In addition, our last wrap up social media post will acknowledge the contributions of THU's Board of Health and our community partners. The success of local public health depends on partnership and collaboration and health in all policies. We encourage all staff and Board members to participate in our local campaign for the inaugural Canadian Public Health Week and like and share our posts.

Appendix A

Sample of Daily Email/Facebook Profiling THU Staff

THU staff email: Support Staff

At THU, Support Staff play a fundamental role in the successful delivery of programs and services. They work tirelessly whether that be at the reception desk or behind the scenes responding to thousands of calls, ordering vaccines for Health Care providers, entering health data, booking client's appointments, editing documents, event planning, designing unique and creative products tailored to specific audiences such as posters, social media posts, etc.

During the pandemic, they quickly adjusted their regular routines to add other activities that were essential to THU's pandemic response, some examples include:

- Organizing records and keeping track of clients who were sent for COVID-19 testing
- Collecting and organizing contacts' information to perform contact tracing
- Keeping track of # of cases and outbreaks
- Updating vaccine records
- Booking and staffing vaccine clinics
- Created easy to understand graphics on public health restrictions
- Implemented social media campaigns informed on population needs
- Designed posters for vaccine clinics



Facebook Post: Epidemiologist & Analyst

Epidemiologists and Analysts at THU work together to ensure local public health strategies, programs and services are effective and responsive to the needs and emerging issues in our communities. They conduct data gathering and analysis to assess the health of our population, perform research and support program planning, monitoring, and continuous improvement all while applying a health equity lens.

Janet, Jocelyn, Walter, Meera, Celine, Shakil and Adrienne wish you a happy Canadian Public Health Week in Timiskaming!

Facebook Post: Health Promoters & Registered Dietitians

April 4 – 8 is **Canadian Public Health Week**, and we are shining a spotlight on dedicated THU staff who work to improve and protect our health and well-being and to achieve THU's vision of Healthy communities where *everyone* can thrive.

Health Promotion is an important part of Public Health. Our team of Public Health Promoters work in many areas to help improve the health and well-being of Timiskaming! Our work focuses on physical activity, healthy eating, healthy aging, tobacco prevention, substance use, road safety, injury prevention, mental health promotion and healthy sexuality. We collaborate w/community partners to promote healthy families, schools, workplaces, and communities.

Rim & Ally are THU's Registered Dietitians. They work on promoting healthy eating in a variety of places, from childcare, schools, to recreational settings. They design programs and collaborate with partners. Their main goal is to create supportive food environments that make the healthy choice the easy choice.

Happy Canadian Public Health Week in Timiskaming! Why does #PublicHealthMatter to you?



Facebook Post

As the first Canadian Public Health Week (CPHW) ends, we hope you enjoyed our daily posts about THU staff and the work that they do.

For our last CPHW2022 post, we would like to recognize Rachelle Côté, Executive Assistant and Denise Forget, Payroll/Payable Clerk who contribute their invaluable skills to essential operations every day at THU, as well Directors Randy Winters, Kerry Schubert-Mackey and Program Managers Ryan Peters, Amanda Mongeon, Erin Cowan (maternity leave), Jennifer Cardinal, Kassandra Plante and Kim Beaudoin and our Acting Medical Officer of Health and CEO, Dr. Glenn Corneil.

Importantly, we'd also like to recognize THU Board of Health members for their commitment to local public health and thank YOU, our residents, local organizations, municipalities and Indigenous leaders and communities. The success of local public health depends very much on your support, involvement and action.

#LocalPublicHealthMatters

Appendix B

Canadian Public Health Week 2022 | Public Health Matters Webinar Series

Public health is the invisible guardian of our health. The COVID-19 pandemic has made public health more visible and its efforts more appreciated. Canadian Public Health Week is a time to recognize the contributions of public health and highlight issues that are important to improving our health and well-being.

Canadian Public Health Week will feature a series of free webinars focusing on the following topics:

Monday 4 April

- A Vision to Transform Canada's Public Health System *with Dr. Theresa Tam*

Tuesday 5 April

- Our Planet, Our Health, Our Public Health Responsibility

Wednesday 6 April

- The impact of COVID-19 on public health: Comparing experiences & sharing recommendations for the future
- Advocacy for income as a social determinant of health: Lessons learned from the Basic Income and Decent Work movements

Thursday 7 April

- An entire day of programming by the [Association pour la santé publique du Québec](#). In Quebec, the week runs from 4-10 April and is known as *La semaine de la santé durable : Les Québécois.es au cœur de l'économie*.

Canadian Public Health Week is presented by Canada's public health associations.