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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health
Report: #2025-INFO-31
Date: April 25, 2025

Subject:

Program Reports

Recommendation:

Receive for information

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update on Durham Region Health Department (DRHD) programs and services for the period January – March 2025.

2. Highlights

- 2.1 DRHD reports for January – March 2025 include the following key highlights:

- a. Health Analytics, Research & Policy – Health Analytics Information Products and Health Policy & Equity updates;
- b. Health Protection – Emergency Management, Food Safety, Healthy Environments, Part 8 Ontario *Building Code* (Sewage Systems), and Safe Water updates;
- c. Healthy Families – Durham Health Connection Line, Healthy Babies Healthy Children, and Infant & Child Development updates;
- d. Healthy Living – Healthy Living, Oral Health, and *Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017* updates;
- e. Infectious Diseases – Infectious Diseases Prevention & Control updates; and

- f. Paramedic Services – Community Paramedicine, Logistics, Operations, and Quality & Development updates.
- 2.2 Boards of health are required to “superintend, provide or ensure the provision of the health programs and services required by the [Health Protection and Promotion] Act and the regulations to the persons who reside in the health unit served by the board” (section 4, clause a, HPPA). In addition, medical officers of health are required to “[report] directly to the board of health on issues relating to public health concerns and to public health programs and services under this or any other Act” (sub-section 67.(1), HPPA). Accordingly, Program Reports are a component of DRHD’s ‘Accountability Framework’, which also may include other reports, Health Information Updates, Health Plans, Quality Enhancement Plans, Durham Health Check-Ups, business plans and budgets; provincial performance indicators and targets, monitoring, compliance audits and assessments; RDPS certification; and accreditation by Accreditation Canada.

3. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 3.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following Strategic Direction(s) and Pathway(s) in Durham Region’s 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:
- a. Healthy People, Caring Communities
- H1. Implement preventive strategies to support community health, including food security.
 - H2. Collaborate with partners to respond to complex social issues that improve community safety and well-being, including mental health and addictions.
 - H4. Support the development of healthy children and youth, including access to affordable and quality child care.
 - H5. Provide services for seniors and work with community partners to support aging in place.
 - H7. Prepare for and respond to local health emergencies in partnership with the community.
- b. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action
- E3. Prepare for and respond to severe weather impacts.
- c. Strong Relationships
- S3. Collaborate across local area municipalities, with agencies, non-profits, and community partners to deliver co-ordinated and efficient services.
 - S5. Ensure accountable and transparent decision-making to serve community needs, while responsibly managing available resources.

3.2 This report aligns with/addresses the following Foundation(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

- a. People: Making the Region of Durham a great place to work, attracting, and retaining talent.
- b. Processes: Continuously improving processes to ensure we are responsive to community needs.
- c. Technology: Keeping pace with technological change to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Program Reports are provided to update Regional Council (DRHD's board of health) on public health programs and activities as a component of DRHD's Accountability Framework.

5. Attachment

Program Reports for the period January – March 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

R.J. Kyle, BSc, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC, FACPM
Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health

ABBREVIATIONS

- ACP – Advanced Care Paramedic
- BoH – Boards of Health
- CAMH – Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- CCC – Child Care Centres
- CFOC – Christian Faith Outreach Centre
- CPE – Carbapenemase-producing Enterobacteriaceae
- DHCL – Durham Health Connection Line
- DoPHS – Diseases of Public Health Significance
- DPZ – Detailed Planning Zone
- DRHD – Durham Region Health Department
- DRSSD – Durham Region Social Services Department
- FV – Family Visitors
- HSSC – Health & Social Services Committee
- HCP – Healthcare Providers
- HOC – Health Operations Centre
- HPD – Health Protection Division
- ICD – Infant & Child Development
- IPAC – Infection Prevention & Control
- KI – Potassium Iodide
- LD – Lyme Disease
- LTCH – Long-Term Care Homes
- MOH – Ontario Ministry of Health
- MSIFN – Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation

2025 Q1 Program Reports – DRHD

- NGS – Nuclear Generating Stations
- NRT – Nicotine Replacement Therapy
- OBC – Ontario *Building Code*
- OHD – Oral Health Division
- OPHS – *Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability*
- PCIS – Parent Child Interaction Scale
- PCP – Primary Care Paramedic
- PHI – Public Health Inspectors
- PHN – Public Health Nurses
- PHU – Pubic Health Units
- PIPE – Partners in Parenting Education
- PSS – Personal Service Settings
- RDPS – Region of Durham Paramedic Services
- RH – Retirement Homes
- SDWS – Small Drinking Water Systems
- SFOA – *Smoke Free Ontario Act, 2017*
- TB – Tuberculosis
- TEO – Tobacco Enforcement Officers



Health Analytics, Research & Policy

Report for January – March 2025

Health Analytics Information Products

A new summary report titled [Dental Insurance in Durham Region](#) was released in January. This report focuses on dental insurance coverage among Durham Region adults. The report presents data collected through the Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System, which is an ongoing public health telephone survey of Durham Region adults.

Key trends noted in the report show that **70 per cent** of Durham Region adults reported having dental insurance in 2023, with employer-paid plans being the most common type. Adults with lower incomes compared to adults with middle and higher incomes and seniors aged 65 years and older were less likely to have dental insurance, demonstrating the need for dental care programs for these groups.

Infectious Diseases Infographic

The infectious diseases infographic on [Enteric Diseases in Durham Region](#) was updated in March with the most recent data. Enteric diseases are illnesses that affect the stomach and intestines. Infographics summarize disease trends and case characteristics, highlight common symptoms and risk factors, emphasize treatment best practices and are often used as a quick summary resource for HCP and other community partners. Case counts of infectious enteric diseases were lower between 2020 and 2022 than previous years but returned to pre-pandemic levels in 2023 and 2024.

Health Policy & Equity

Health equity work supports DRHD staff by building capacity across all programs to apply a health equity lens to programs and approaches, establishing internal and external collaborative partnerships to advance health equity initiatives, supporting priority populations in cross-program initiatives, and developing departmental policies and processes intended to advance health equity.

2025 Q1 Program Reports – DRHD

The Health Policy & Equity team works with DRSSD to plan and host virtual learning sessions throughout the year to build staff capacity and improve access for staff to resources that address the social determinants of health. A virtual learning session on the topic of tax filing resources was hosted on February 12. The Canada Revenue Agency presented on the importance of tax filing, key benefits and credits, updates for the 2025 tax year and where to find free tax help in Durham Region. The session was attended by **75** staff members across DRHD and DRSSD. Virtual learning sessions have been well attended and continue to be planned throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

R.J. Kyle, BSc, MD, MHSc, CCFP, FRCPC, FACPM
Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health



Health Protection

Report for January – March 2025

Emergency Management

On January 23, Fosterbrooke LTCH residents in Newcastle were evacuated to Diane Hamre Recreation Complex because of flooding due to a burst pipe. DRHD supported DRSSD and the LTCH residents in completing daily IPAC and food safety inspections of the evacuation center until the residents were moved back by January 27.

In February, DRHD conducted a highly engaging and collaborative tabletop training exercise. The exercise was designed to be informative and fun and aimed to build participants' capacity and readiness to respond to future events. PHI and PHN worked through challenging scenarios requiring critical thinking and teamwork to navigate effective responses. The exercise simulated the opening of an evacuation centre due to severe weather, including significant rainfall, record-high water levels, and localized flooding. This tested DRHD's preparedness and response strategies for emergencies, highlighting the importance of communication and coordination among team members.

DRHD, in collaboration with Durham Emergency Management, started initial planning with other Regional departments for Ontario Power Generation's nuclear exercise ExUCom 2025, which is planned for October 22 and 23, 2025. DRHD's objectives for the exercise include testing the capabilities of the HOC, enabling HOC members to practise their roles and responsibilities in the Incident Management System, and assessing interoperability and communications with other departments, as well as external communications with partners.

The revised [Emergency Management Guideline, 2024](#), requires that BoH conduct an exercise annually if there has been no lived experience in the last twelve months. Exercises provide training and learning opportunities for BoH staff and foster a culture of continuous organizational self-improvement, as well as opportunities to test assumptions and identify areas for improvement.

Potassium Iodide Tablet Program

DRHD launched its first 2025 KI campaign in January. The focus of the campaign was KI promotion through social media and banner displays that were placed at local libraries, community centers, and township offices.

In January, HPD presented KI awareness and details of the distribution program to the Community Advisory Councils in Pickering and Darlington. Both presentations were well received, with excellent engagement from both councils. On February 7, staff presented to the Durham Nuclear Health Committee about the KI tablet distribution program. Additionally, HPD set up a display booth promoting KI at the Community Development Council Durham Family Fun Day event on March 12. This event provided a valuable opportunity to connect with new residents of Durham Region.

Anyone living or working within 50 km of Pickering or Darlington NGS can order their free supply of KI tablets from preparetobesafe.ca. DRHD continues to pre-distribute KI tablets to institutions (LTCH, hospitals, schools, CCC, and youth detention centers) and first responders located within the DPZ (formerly known as the primary zone). The DPZ is a 10 km radius around each of the two NGS in Pickering and Darlington.

Lastly, HPD worked on the May KI campaign that will align with Emergency Preparedness Week. The May campaign is the largest of HPD's three annual campaigns and includes advertisements through various platforms.

Food Safety

HPD staff diligently conducted food safety inspections, as mandated by the [Food Safety Protocol, 2019](#). From January to March, staff completed **576** high-risk inspections, **668** moderate-risk inspections, and **354** low-risk inspections. Additionally, **230** re-inspections were carried out, along with **51** inspections/re-inspections prompted by complaints. HPD is on track for 100 per cent completion of required inspections in the subsequent round for all high-risk and moderate-risk premises.

In preparation for the 2025 special event/farmers' market season in Durham Region, HPD processed **101** special event and farmers' market vendor applications, and **235** special event and farmers' market coordinator applications. Using HPD's risk assessment tool and updated special event procedure, staff inspected **two** special events and farmers' markets deemed higher risk. Food safety continues to be a significant topic for DHCL calls, accounting for over one-third of the **1,548** calls received by the DHCL team.

Work is currently underway to create a vlog on special event best practices, including application tips and the essential components for a successful event. Updates will be disseminated across multiple social media platforms and DRHD's website, in anticipation of the summer event rush.

Healthy Environments

Climate Change and Health

As part of DRHD's mandate under the OPHS to conduct health vulnerability assessments related to climate change, DRHD released its third report in a special series entitled Climate Change and Health in Durham Region, available on durham.ca. The third report, [Assessing the Impact of Solar Ultraviolet Radiation](#), explores the current and future health impacts of solar ultraviolet radiation with a special focus on health equity and prioritizing those who may be worst affected and least protected. The report was promoted through a news release, social media, relevant listservs and a presentation to Regional Council's HSSC. DRHD was invited to present the report to the Committee of the Whole in April. In addition, DRHD presented the report to the Township of Brock's Council.

The vulnerability assessment on vector-borne disease is under final review and is expected to be released in June. The next vulnerability assessment will be on air quality, and the data collection for this report is complete.

DRHD continues to strengthen its relationship with MSIFN. As part of this collaboration, DRHD formalized an agreement to advance joint work on climate and health vulnerability assessments. MSIFN provided valuable feedback on the vector-borne disease assessment which will be incorporated into the final draft.

HPD staff provided a comprehensive review and feedback on the City of Pickering's draft Community Climate Adaptation Plan, along with a letter of support for the initiative. HPD also reviewed and provided input on the Town of Ajax's Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Program, ensuring alignment with broader regional sustainability objectives.

DRHD remains committed to transparent and impactful communication and collaboration with municipal partners.

Cold Warning & Information System

HPD concluded its cold warning notification to community partners and the public, which operated from November 15 to March 31.

This season, a total of **22** separate cold weather alerts were issued. A cold weather warning is declared when the temperature is expected to reach -15°C or less, and/or the windchill is expected to meet -20 or less, and/or an extreme winter weather event (i.e., ice storm) is forecasted.

As cold weather alert criteria are most often met overnight, HPD targets its response to community partners who provide vital services to at-risk populations by notifying them directly via email of the upcoming cold weather event. Notification of a cold weather event triggers community partners to mobilize cold response plans once criteria are

met. Currently, HPD maintains a list of over **520** individuals, institutions, community service agencies, and local businesses.

When cold alert criteria are met during the day, HPD will also issue social media posts and provide webpage updates to remind the public of ways to stay warm and safe during cold weather. Durham's cold warning notification system meets the requirements of the [Healthy Environments and Climate Change Guideline, 2018](#) under the OPHS.

Part 8 Ontario *Building Code* (Sewage Systems)

From January to March 2025, HPD conducted the following activities related to Part 8 of the OBC:

- Received **48** building permit applications for sewage systems, processed **nine** building addition applications, and reviewed **17** planning applications.
- Investigated **two** complaints related to private sewage systems and issued **zero** Orders to Comply.
- Conducted **72** inspections related to sewage system building permits and installations.
- Attended **nine** pre-consultation meetings across Durham Region's municipalities regarding planning applications. Staff also responded to questions from the public and sewage system installers regarding sewage systems and planning applications.
- Extended the contracts with Uxbridge and Brock Townships for the Lake Simcoe Maintenance Inspection Program until the end of 2025.

Additionally, DRHD revised the OBC user fee schedule which included an increase to all fees and the addition of five new fees. New fees were added to better reflect the services DRHD provides and to better align with other agencies across Ontario. This decision was informed by an environmental scan of 13 other agencies. HPD issued notices in the media and a public meeting was held during the HSSC meeting to ensure DRHD was compliant with the OBC requirements. The new fee updates were approved by Regional Council on March 26, 2025, and became effective April 1, 2025.

Safe Water

Drinking Water

In 2024, HPD completed requests from the MOH through the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario related to SDWS. In late March 2025, HPD was notified that a special report was released on the [Safety of Non-Municipal Drinking Water](#). HPD will review this document to ensure that DRHD is compliant with all the new recommendations or that plans will be put in place to ensure compliance and to improve HPD's program where needed.

In accordance with [O. Reg. 319/08: Small Drinking Water Systems](#), SDWS are inspected based on a MOH risk assessment tool. Moderate and low risk systems are inspected at least once every four years, and high-risk systems are inspected every two years. Inspectors look for required water sampling and testing frequency, water treatment equipment and maintenance, operational checks, record keeping, physical well inspections and environmental examinations that may impact water quality, as well as operator knowledge and required training needed to operate SDWS safely.

Recreational Water

Between January and March, HPD focused on meeting all prescribed recreational water inspection targets as outlined by the [Recreational Water Protocol, 2019](#). During this time, PHI conducted **104** routine facility inspections, responded to **six** complaint investigations, and issued **nine** Section **13** Orders under the *Health Protection and Promotion Act* in response to the identification of a health hazard.

Following the recent amendments to [R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 565: Public Pools](#), all new requirements have been integrated into the HPD inspection system (Hedgehog 5) and are being enforced by PHI. HPD developed and distributed tailored communications and resources to support recreational water owners and operators to meet these new requirements.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Anthony Di Pietro
Director, Health Protection Division



Healthy Families

Report for January – March 2025

Durham Health Connection Line

DHCL provides access to public health information to the community. PHN provide assessment, health education, counselling, and referrals to community services for residents or those looking for local services. Inquiries are addressed on the telephone or through email. From January to March, DHCL responded to **4,165** inquiries.

Healthy Babies Healthy Children

The Healthy Babies Healthy Children program supports families with children from pre-natal to school age who have been identified with risk to help strengthen caregiver attachment and promote the child's growth and development. PHN assess the child-caregiver relationship using an evidence-based PCIS which examines a teaching or feeding experience between caregiver and child. PHN use the results of the assessment to plan interventions for families to increase their understanding of how their child communicates and how they as caregivers can respond to support their development in positive ways. FV then use PIPE activities to help reinforce this understanding. PIPE is an interactive and relationship-based curriculum that focuses on topics such as communication, parent-child attachment, and relationship building using play. Using PIPE activities, FV provide information and concepts on a parenting skill, model the activity, coach parents as they conduct the activity, and offer feedback and positive reinforcement.

Between January and March, PHN completed **489** individual visits where **112** PCISs were completed. FV completed **438** individual visits where **171** PIPE activities were implemented.

Infant & Child Development

The ICD program is a voluntary service that partners with families to promote the healthy growth and development of children from birth to school entry who have a developmental concern. Durham residents can self-refer to the program or be referred

2025 Q1 Program Reports – DRHD

by a service provider. ICD consultants partner with families to plan developmental goals and establish ways to achieve these goals within the child's routines using a family-centered, strengths-based approach. Early intervention and occupational therapy consultation services may include:

- Home visits to provide modelling, parent coaching, and resource sharing.
- Formal and informal developmental assessments.
- Service coordination to connect families to community programs and services.
- Guidance with transition to early learning and care and/or kindergarten.

Between January and March, the ICD program offered service to **413** children and provided **913** appointments to support modeling, parent coaching, and family education.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Kavine Thangaraj
Director, Population Health Division
Chief Nursing Officer



Healthy Living

Report for January – March 2025

Healthy Living

National Non-Smoking Week 2025

National Non-Smoking Week occurred from January 19 to 25. This year, the theme was “Don’t Quit Quitting.” Every year, the event raises awareness about the dangers of smoking and promotes cessation efforts. For the 2025 National Non-Smoking Week, DRHD shared messages on social media, reminding people that every quit attempt will bring them closer to success. DRHD also launched **three** social media posts to address youth vaping. These posts reached **56,923** individuals and got **873** engagements. Additionally, a cannabis-related post for Weedless Wednesday on January 22 reached **24,578** people, resulting in **450** interactions.

DRHD continues to offer resources to help individuals quit smoking and vaping, available at durham.ca/tobaccoandvaping. These resources include quit strategies, withdrawal management, and details on community support.

Post-Secondary Campus Support

On January 22, DRHD participated in Durham College’s Bell Let’s Talk Day event as part of Student Wellness Week. PHN provided a range of mental health and substance use resources and engaged with approximately **240** students through interactive activities, fostering meaningful conversations.

STOP on the Net 2024/25 Campaign

DRHD collaborates with CAMH to offer a free online smoking cessation program, “STOP on the Net” for adults aged 19 and older. Participants who register to quit smoking receive complimentary NRT patches and gum/lozenges, which are mailed to their address. DRHD received a \$1,000 grant from CAMH to support a social media campaign running from December 2024 to January 2025. The campaign reached **7,592**

people on Facebook and **675** people on Instagram. To date, there are **1,225** local residents enrolled in the STOP on the Net program.

Oral Health

For January to March 2025, OHD noted the following achievements, demonstrating a commitment to improving oral health outcomes and delivering exceptional services to the community.

Comprehensive Dental Services: OHD served over **1,060** unique clients. The Dental Clinic provided services to **270** Healthy Smiles Ontario clients and **952** Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program clients through **1,664** appointments. Dental care services in Durham Region's **four** LTCH is on hold at this time, but OHD anticipates that services will resume later in 2025.

Dental Benefits Claims: OHD processed **1,014** dental benefit claims, amounting to **\$214, 565.85** in fees paid. These efforts facilitate the smooth provision of dental care and ensure financial support for those in need.

Dental Care Needs: Of the **9,600** students screened at school, OHD identified **636** children with urgent dental needs and **933** children with non-urgent dental needs.

Dental Estimates: OHD received **564** estimates and entered **279** that were eligible to be processed for approval.

Denture Lab: Denturists delivered **424** services in the denture lab.

Oral Health Education and Promotion: Staff provided dental screening to **82** children and oral health education to over **4,000** children.

These accomplishments reflect OHD's dedication to improving oral health outcomes and its commitment to education and collaboration. By leveraging resources effectively, DRHD continues to make a positive impact on the oral health of residents.

Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017

TEO are conducting the required inspections and investigations for 2025 as mandated by the OPHS. TEO are required to conduct inspections at all tobacco and vapour product retailers. Their inspections include display and promotion inspections, as well as youth access test shops conducted by students under the age of 19 who attempt to purchase tobacco or vapour products. If a vendor sells tobacco or vapour products to a minor, the operator and owner of the store may be charged with selling or supplying tobacco or vapour products to a person who is under 19 years old. Two or more tobacco-related convictions may lead to an Automatic Prohibition, issued by the MOH, prohibiting the vendor from selling tobacco products for a minimum of six months. TEO also completed the required secondary school inspections and all display and promotion inspections for all tobacco and vapour product retailers.

2025 Q1 Program Reports – DRHD

TEO respond to all complaints received with respect to smoking/vaping in all enclosed workplaces and other prohibited areas that are included in the SFOA and the [Durham Region Smoking and Vaping By-law](#). These areas include multi-unit dwellings, schools, hospitals, outdoor recreation playground areas, hookah lounges, etc.

From January 1 to March 31, TEO did the following activities:

- Conducted **110** youth access test shop inspections for vapour products and **234** display and promotion inspections at vapour product retailers.
- Observed non-compliance with stores selling products with high levels of nicotine and flavours and issued **three** warning letters but issued **zero** charges for vapour related offences.
- Conducted **346** youth access test shop inspections for tobacco products and **244** compliance inspections for display and promotion for tobacco retailers. TEO issued **six** warning letters and **two** charges for tobacco-related offences.
- Conducted **29** inspections in enclosed workplaces and other prohibited areas and issued **one** warning letter for tobacco-related offences.
- Responded to complaints regarding students vaping on school property by investigating **20** complaints, issuing **13** warning letters, and serving **one** charge to a student vaping on school property.

Specialty vape stores and tobacconist stores continue to operate in Durham Region. As of March 31, there are **69** registered specialty vape stores and **four** tobacconist stores.

The Smoking and Vaping By-law has been in effect since June 24, 2019, and TEO continue to enforce the By-law within prohibited facilities. Currently there are **four** local restaurants that continue to be non-compliant with the By-law by permitting hookah smoking indoors. TEO are attending these facilities monthly to enforce the Smoking and Vaping By-law and the SFOA as there is often tobacco mixed with shisha and smoked in waterpipes. Charges have been issued to the owners and operators of these establishments.

DRHD was successful in obtaining significant fines at a premises that continues to be non-compliant with the SFOA by selling flavoured vapour products and selling vapour products to youth. The operator was trying to get around DRHD's enforcement efforts by using social media and code words to sell the products, hiding products and selling afterhours. The courts issued a probation order to the operator which requires them to complete **150** hours of community service and fines totalling \$95,000 to the Director and \$39,000 to the Corporation.

TEO have been trained to enforce the *Tobacco Tax Act* as part of the Tobacco Inspection Partnership which is a joint enforcement initiative between the MOH and the Ministry of Finance to create efficiencies across the province. TEO will be designated to enforce the Act and will be able to conduct plain view seizures of unmarked cigarettes during routine inspections and issue Part 1 tickets to premises that are not in compliance.

2025 Q1 Program Reports – DRHD

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Infectious Diseases

Report for January – March 2025

Infectious Diseases Prevention & Control

Child Care Centres

Between January and March, **155** inspections were completed in CCC. The Child Care Wee Care Spring/Summer newsletter will be sent to operators in mid-April with a focus on power outages, most common infractions observed during a CCC inspection, outdoor safety and play areas/activities and information on measles.

Diseases of Public Health Significance

In accordance with the OPHS and [O. Reg. 135/18: Designation of Diseases](#), HPD is responsible for the management of cases and contacts of DoPHS.

Between January and March, **1,453** DoPHS were reported to HPD. These include in descending order: influenza A (**1,209**), influenza B (**149**), salmonella (**34**), CPE (**13**), campylobacter (**11**), LD (**11**), giardiasis (**nine**), legionellosis (**five**), cryptosporidiosis (**four**), amebiasis (**two**), hepatitis A (**two**), influenza A and B (**two**), food poisonings all causes (**one**), and paratyphoid fever (**one**).

From October to December 2024, there were **294** DoPHS reported, representing an increase of **394 per cent**. The most significant rise was in influenza cases, which showed an increase of **660 per cent**, from **159** cases reported in that time.

DRHD had **two** hepatitis A contacts that required investigation and vaccine distribution.

Infection Prevention & Control Education and Lapses

From January to March, there were **six** IPAC lapse investigations in health care facilities (**two** currently posted), **two** in congregate living facilities, and **six** in PSS (**four** currently posted). Most lapses have been due to reprocessing issues. Referrals were made to the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario.

Outbreak Summary

Outbreaks are investigated in accordance with the OPHS. Between January and March, **182** outbreak investigations were conducted; **62** non-covid respiratory outbreaks (**37** LTCH, **11** hospitals, **nine** RH, and **five** group homes) and **35** COVID-19 respiratory outbreaks (**13** RH, **11** LTCH, **nine** hospitals, **two** congregate living settings). Some confirmed causative agents identified included: coronavirus (non-COVID-19), enterovirus, influenza A, metapneumovirus, parainfluenza, respiratory syncytial virus, rhinovirus, and rotavirus.

Outbreaks increased **52 per cent** from the previous quarter with **120** outbreaks between October and December 2024.

There were **85** enteric outbreak investigations (**56** CCC, **12** LTCH, **12** RH, **three** group homes, **one** hospital), and **one** suspected foodborne illness outbreak. There were **two** outbreaks where the causative agents were identified (**one** norovirus and **one** clostridium difficile), however most of the enteric outbreaks did not have an agent isolated.

The spring edition of the [IPAC Hub Spotlight E-Newsletter](#) was published on DRHD's [Health Care Professionals webpage](#) and disseminated by email to community partners. This newsletter included articles on roles and responsibilities of the PHU and the IPAC hubs, emergency preparedness, choosing the right disinfectant, and information on vancomycin resistant enterococcus.

Personal Service Settings

Between January and March, **197** inspections were completed in PSS. Common infractions include improper cleaning and disinfection of reusable items and/or equipment, not having smooth, non-absorbent and easy to clean work and contact surfaces, and single use items not discarded after use. New devices and services being offered in PSS continue to evolve and involve more staff resources. DRHD issued **eight** charges for repeat violations of [O. Reg. 136/18: Personal Service Settings](#) and issued **13** orders.

Beyond Glam Spring/Summer Newsletter was sent to PSS operators at the end of March. The newsletter focused on guidelines for special events, common issues identified during PSS inspections, information on disinfection versus sterilization and medical directives related to regulated health professionals.

Rabies Prevention & Control

From January to March, DRHD investigated **307** animal bite reports which is a small decrease from **329** reports investigated for the same period in 2024. **Thirty-seven** local residents were provided with anti-rabies treatment, an increase from **26** during this period last year.

2025 Q1 Program Reports – DRHD

DRHD submitted **five** animals involved in a human exposure for testing and none were positive for rabies.

DRHD issued **five** charges to animal owners for failing to immunize their pets against rabies, pursuant to [R.R.O. 1990, Reg. 567: Rabies Immunization](#). This is up from **three** charges last year.

DRHD will be relaunching the Rabies Interagency Seminar where relevant Ontario ministries, local municipal animal agencies, and the vaccine manufacturer will present information related to rabies prevention and control. It is an excellent opportunity for PHI to receive updates and network with partners.

Vector-Borne Diseases

The West Nile virus prevention and control program is ramping up activities for the 2025 season. DRHD's plan this year continues to include adult mosquito surveillance, larvae surveillance with larviciding of all catch basins, and surface water sites and all reported stagnant water sites throughout the region.

New this season, residents can submit an online request at durham.ca to have larvicide administered to private property catch basins. The new online process replaces the forms that were previously mailed out.

DRHD is working with Corporate Services – Information Technology to create a new GIS database with an app to capture mosquito and larvae surveillance data with an expected launch in May. This will replace the original Microsoft Access database that has been in existence for over 20 years. The new database will allow for enhanced data collection and navigation and will enable multiple overlays to show different levels of information. The app will be more user-friendly as staff will be able to access it from their smartphones.

Tick dragging at selected locations throughout Durham Region is scheduled for May and September/October. This is intended to identify LD as well as any of the **three** new tickborne diseases that have been added to the list of DoPHS (anaplasmosis, babesiosis, Powassan virus). May is also LD Awareness month. The advertising campaign will include a news release, social media posts, radio spots and the launch of a new video on tick-borne diseases posted on durham.ca. The campaign will continue throughout the year as ticks are an issue spring through fall and prevention methods are the only way to avoid tickborne diseases.

World Tuberculosis Day

DRHD recognized World TB Day on March 24 by promoting awareness about TB. TB is a disease which is preventable and curable, however it remains an epidemic in much of the world. Recognizing World TB Day provides an opportunity to highlight DRHD's services in supporting the treatment of TB infections and preventing the development of active TB cases locally.

2025 Q1 Program Reports – DRHD

On World TB Day, DRHD sent a “FAX about...” to local HCP promoting the 2025 World TB Day Theme, “*Yes! We Can End TB: Commit, Invest, Deliver!*”. The “FAX about...” also contained helpful information including:

- The number of cases of TB infection in Durham Region for 2024.
- Information on a new tool to assist HCP in making informed recommendations about TB preventive therapy.
- Where to access publicly funded TB medications at designated pharmacies in the region.

A coordinated set of World TB Day messages were also posted on DRHD’s social media platforms. Official World TB Day hashtags and graphics were used while promoting the availability of treatment for eligible groups of people.

DRHD continues to manage all active TB cases and contacts, TB infection cases, and clients undergoing TB immigration medical surveillance. From January to March, DRHD managed **six** cases of active TB, **15** TB contacts, **147** cases of TB infection, and **60** clients undergoing TB immigration medical surveillance.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Kavine Thangaraj
Director, Population Health Division
Chief Nursing Officer

Original signed by

Anthony Di Pietro
Director, Health Protection Division



Report for January – March 2025

Community Paramedicine

The Community Paramedicine program continues to support remote patient monitoring in the community to catch an exacerbation before it happens. The program has **100** patients rostered with chronic diseases. From January to March, the program achieved the following:

- **Two** community paramedics received spirometry training to perform in a patient's home six to eight weeks after an exacerbation.
- Extended LTC+ diagnostic testing until March 31, 2026, bringing diagnostic testing to **seven** LTCH in Durham Region.
- Finalized the conversion of a bus into a mobile clinic, creating a mobile space for private assessments and treatments. The bus will bring primary care to high priority neighbourhoods.

The Primary Care Outreach Program completed the following activities:

- Provided unsheltered clients transportation to necessary appointments.
- Worked collaboratively with outreach teams to increase support at the CFOC Ajax HUB.
- Held mobile clinics at CFOC and Beaverton Heights for medical consults and offered Suboxone withdrawal management.

Logistics

RDPS Logistics completed the following activities:

- Ordered **five** new hybrid command vehicles (Ford Explorers) to supplement the command fleet. The expected delivery and upfitting timelines are April 2025 and Fall 2025, respectively.
- Commissioned **two** ambulances to replace existing vehicles. RDPS expects to commission more vehicles in the next three months as Demers continues to deliver new vehicles on a staggered schedule.

2025 Q1 Program Reports – DRHD

- Continued with the cyclical replacement of older Stryker power loads and stretchers.
- Hired **two** Logistics staff who are currently being trained and certified.

Additionally, the new Seaton Paramedic Station is expected to have substantial completion by April or May 2025.

Operations

RDPS completed the following activities:

- Hired an Acting Superintendent.
- Implemented the Hotel Sierra notification system to inform paramedics on scene of a potential health and safety concern.
- Revamped the deployment plan which aims to optimize and improve resource allocation with implementation expected in May.
- Held several information sessions regarding the upcoming Medical Priority Dispatch System roll-out. The sessions involved key partners, including local police and fire departments.
- Worked collaboratively with Uxbridge Fire Department and Oak Valley Health to relocate the Uxbridge Paramedic Station to the Uxbridge Fire Hall.

Quality & Development

RDPS staff performed the following quality and development activities:

- Completed **560** Ambulance Call Evaluation reviews.
- Coordinated and assisted the Central East Prehospital Care Program in providing education to **eight** PCPs for PCP Autonomous IV certification.
- Trained instructors to facilitate Autonomous IV certification training to enable in-house education.
- Developed educational content for the Fall 2025 Central East Session.
- Attended **19** community outreach events.
- Recruited **five** full-time ACPs, **one** part-time ACP and **41** part-time PCPs positions.
- Planned and developed onboarding and orientation education for new hires.
- Monitored field placement for **43** PCP students from **eight** neighbouring community colleges.
- Rostered over **140** clients with home and community care for the Palliative Treat and Refer program.
- Participated in the London Health Sciences Center PRIME Trial.
- Had staff attend education events including the Durham Regional Police Service Countering Hate, Violence and Terrorism Conference and the Tema Foundation Ontario Education Day.
- Participated on various committees with internal and external partners.

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Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Troy Cheseboro
Chief/Director