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# The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

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From: Commissioner & Medical Officer of Health  
Report: #2025-INFO-80  
Date: October 24, 2025

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**Subject:**

Program Reports

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**Recommendation:**

Receive for information

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**Report:**

**1. Purpose**

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

**2. Highlights**

2.1 DRHD reports for July – September 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, Healthy Families 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 – Administration, 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 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 Directions and Pathways 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.
- H3. Integrate and co-ordinate service delivery for positive life outcomes, including investment in poverty prevention, housing solutions, and homelessness supports.
- 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.
- E5. Respect the natural environment, including greenspaces, waterways, and agricultural lands.

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 Foundations 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 July – September 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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

## ABBREVIATIONS

- AP – Automatic Prohibition
- AQHI – Air Quality Health Index
- AQW – Air Quality Warning
- CCC – Child Care Centres
- CLS – Congregate Living Settings
- DHCL – Durham Health Connection Line
- DoPHS – Diseases of Public Health Significance
- DPZ – Detailed Planning Zone
- DRHD – Durham Region Health Department
- DRPS – Durham Regional Police Service
- DRSSD – Durham Region Social Services Department
- ECCC – Environment and Climate Change Canada
- HBHC – Healthy Babies Healthy Children
- HCP – Healthcare Providers
- HOC – Health Operations Center
- HPD – Health Protection Division
- HPE – Health Policy & Equity
- HPPA – [Health Protection and Promotion Act](#)
- HSO – Healthy Smiles Ontario
- ICD – Infant & Child Development
- IMS – Incident Management System
- IPAC – Infection Prevention & Control
- KI – Potassium Iodide
- LH – Lakeridge Health
- LTCH – Long-Term Care Homes
- MOH – Ontario Ministry of Health
- MUD – Multi-Unit Dwellings

## 2025 Q3 Program Reports – DRHD

- OEAR – Ontario Early Adversity and Resilience
- OHD – Oral Health Division
- OPG – Ontario Power Generation
- OPHS – [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability](#)
- OSDCP – Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program
- PCOP – Primary Care Outreach Program
- PEP – Post-exposure Prophylaxis
- PHI – Public Health Inspectors
- PHN – Public Health Nurses
- PHO – Public Health Ontario
- PHU – Public Health Units
- PSS – Personal Service Settings
- RDPS – Region of Durham Paramedic Services
- RH – Retirement Homes
- SAQS – Special Air Quality Statement
- SFOA – [Smoke Free Ontario Act, 2017](#)
- TEM – Toronto Emergency Management
- TEO – Tobacco Enforcement Officers
- WNV – West Nile Virus



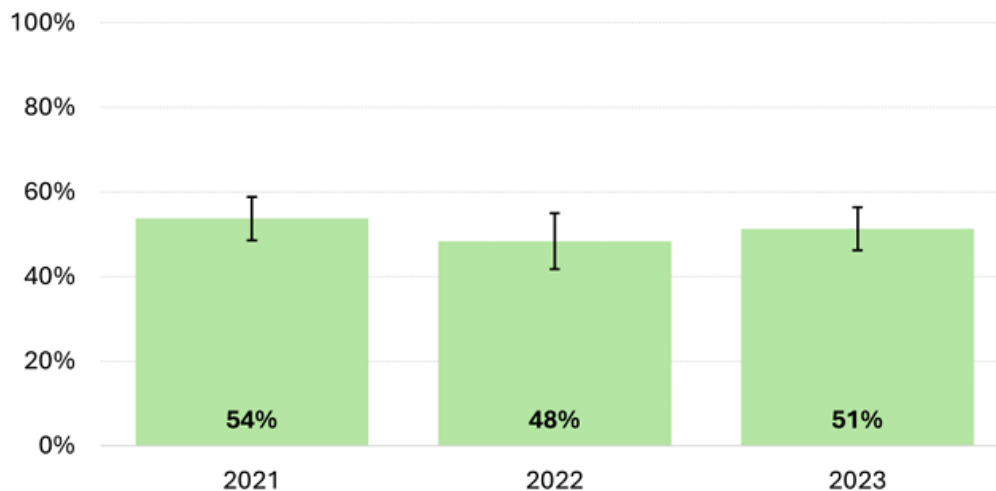
# Health Analytics, Research & Policy

Report for July – September 2025

## Health Analytics Information Products

The most recent [flu shot vaccination rate](#) estimates were released in August, and are available on the [durham.ca/HealthStats](http://durham.ca/HealthStats) webpage. Overall, **half** of Durham Region adults reported getting a flu shot in the past respiratory season. This has remained stable over the past three years.

### Proportion of adults who reported getting a flu shot, Durham Region, 2021-2023



### Key Statistics:

- Women were more likely to report getting a flu shot (57 per cent) than men (43 per cent).
- Adults 65 years and older were more likely to report getting a flu shot (71 per cent) than younger residents, ages 45 to 64 (45 per cent), 25 to 44 (27 per cent\*) and 18 to 24 (32 per cent\*).

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- Oshawa residents were more likely to report getting a flu shot (71 per cent) than Ajax (42 per cent\*), Whitby (49 per cent), Clarington (48 per cent) and North Durham (42 per cent\*) residents.
- There were no differences between income groups.
- Data note: numbers marked with an asterix (\*) should be interpreted with caution due to high sampling variability.

## 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.

The HPE 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 services for children and families was presented by DRSSD staff on August 19. The presentation covered developmental and behavioural supports and the childcare fee subsidy. The session was attended by **112** staff members across DRHD and DRSSD. Virtual learning sessions have been well attended and continue to be planned throughout the year.

The HPE team distributed a FAX About called “Health Equity Series – Improve Health Through Financial Empowerment #5” on August 27. This resource promoted Mobile ID and Benefits Access Hub events for fall 2025. The FAX About was distributed by email and fax to local health care professionals.

HPE team members attended the following community events to promote the Mobile ID and Benefits Access Hub events and health equity topics (e.g., Canada Learning Bond and Living with Low Income):

- The Pickering Library Summer Reading Club FUNtastic Fair on July 5. Staff engaged with over **150** parents and children.
- United Way and their partners’ Operation Backpack event on August 11. Staff added print resources to backpacks that promote DRHD services.
- Durham Community Health Centre’s Cram a Backpack from a Cruiser event on August 21. A total of **336** backpacks were distributed and the event provided an opportunity for staff to engage with over **100** people, providing financial empowerment information.
- Community Development Council Durham’s Settlement Workers in Schools back-to-school event called ‘Welcome and Information for Newcomers’ on August 26. Approximately **15** newcomer families attended the event.
- A Ready Set Grow event at Family Fun Day in Lakeview Park, Oshawa, on September 12. A total of **1,112** individuals registered to attend the outdoor gathering and staff engaged with approximately **50 to 70** families.

2025 Q3 Program Reports – DRHD

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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



**Report for July – September 2025**

## **Emergency Management**

DRHD, in collaboration with Durham Emergency Management, continues to plan with other departments for OPG's nuclear exercise ExUCom 2025, which is planned for October 22 and 23. DRHD's objectives for the exercise include testing the capabilities of the HOC, enabling HOC members to practice their roles and responsibilities in the IMS, and assessing interoperability and communications with other Regional departments and organizations, as well as external communications with partners. In early September, all HOC members completed their training. The training focused on IMS roles, forms, addressing previous after-action items, and DRHD's Emergency Master Plan.

## **Potassium Iodide Tablets**

DRHD launched its third and final KI distribution campaign for 2025 on September 15. This campaign includes targeted social media posts aimed at increasing public awareness and preparedness. In addition, DRHD partnered with Masjid Usman (Pickering Islamic Centre) to display a KI banner bug for a two-week period. This collaboration is part of an ongoing effort to ensure KI preparedness information reaches diverse communities across Durham Region.

DRHD collaborated with OPG and TEM to make minor refinements to the Frequently Asked Questions section on the Prepare to Be Safe webpage. As part of this initiative, OPG has refreshed the campaign artwork with a subtle colour contrast, incorporating recommendations from both DRHD and TEM to ensure the messaging is clear and accessible. The new resource is scheduled to launch before the end of 2025.

The updated materials will be introduced as part of the January 2026 KI campaign and in advance of the 2026 OPG KI Pill Replacement Project. DRHD commenced preliminary discussions with OPG and TEM in anticipation of next year's KI tablet replacement initiative. This effort is being undertaken to prepare for the 2027 expiration of KI tablets that were distributed to community members and institutions within the

DPZ. The DPZ encompasses a 10-kilometre radius surrounding Durham's two nuclear generating stations.

DRHD continues to pre-distribute KI tablets to institutions (LTCH, hospitals, schools, CCC, and youth detention centres) and first responders located within the DPZ. Anyone living or working within 50 km of Pickering or Darlington nuclear generating stations can order their free supply of KI tablets from [KI Pills – Prepare To Be Safe](#)

## Food Safety

Staff has been working diligently on completing food safety inspections, as mandated by the [Food Safety Protocol, 2019](#). From July 1 to September 30, staff completed **626** high-risk inspections, **612** moderate-risk inspections, and **203** low-risk inspections. Staff also completed **290** re-inspections and **66** inspections/re-inspections which were generated by a complaint. The team completed **100 per cent** of required high-risk inspections in this round and is on track for completing all required inspections by the end of the year.

Food Safety staff members also processed **156** special event and farmers' market vendor applications and **105** special event and farmers' market co-ordinator applications. Using DRHD's risk assessment tool and updated special event procedure, staff has inspected **25** special events and farmer's markets that were deemed higher risk. Durham Region had a successful special event/farmer's market season, and events continue to occur until the end of the year. HPD staff developed and released a special event safety vlog to support local special event vendors and coordinators at the end of August. As of the end of September, the vlog received approximately **21,000** views. Food safety continued to be a hot topic for DHCL, accounting for over one-third of the **1,778** calls received by the DHCL team.

DRHD's Food Safety Committee developed a colouring/activity book for children aged four to 12 that debuted the new "Food Safety Heroes". This activity book was popular at **three** of Durham Region's largest fall fairs, and over **750** copies were distributed.

## Healthy Environments

### Air Quality Health Index Social Media Campaign & Adverse Air Quality Alerts

HPD launched an AQHI social media campaign during the summer months to increase awareness of the tool, encourage residents to check their local AQHI forecasts when planning outdoor activities, and sign up for air quality alerts to ensure they are aware of local conditions to prepare for upcoming poor air quality events. The social media campaign also aims to educate residents on the health impacts of poor air quality and how to mitigate risks from exposure.

In collaboration with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation, and Parks and ECCC, HPD issued adverse air quality alerts to inform community partners and the public to the

risks posed by poor air quality and wildfire smoke. This information helps community service agencies to better prepare for the upcoming poor air quality and take appropriate action to protect those in their care. Health messaging is also amplified during extreme heat events, when air quality can deteriorate, and risks can increase.

This calendar year is on track to be Canada's second worst wildfire season, which contributed to poor air quality across the country. In June and July, **three** SAQs and **one** AQW was issued. One AQW event coincided with an extended heat event, which compounded the health risks. Social media messaging was amplified during this event, to remind residents of the dangers of poor air quality on their health, especially when compounded with the effects of extreme heat. This is an increase compared to 2024, where there was only **one** SAQS event, and 2023 where there were only **two** SAQS events. A SAQS is issued when the AQHI is forecast to reach the high-risk category or an AQHI of seven or greater. An AQW is issued when the AQHI is forecast to reach, or has reached, the very high-risk category or an AQHI of 10 or more, due to wildfire smoke.

## Climate Change & Health

As part of the mandate under the OPHS to conduct health vulnerability assessments related to climate change, DRHD has released the fifth report in its ongoing series, 'Climate Change and Health in Durham Region'. The latest report, [Assessing the Impact of Poor Air Quality](#), examines how climate change is expected to increase residents' exposure to poor air quality through intensified traffic-related air pollution, extended pollen seasons, stagnant air trapping pollutants, and an elevated risk of wildfire smoke exposure. The report was promoted through a news release, social media, relevant listservs, and a presentation to the Durham Region Health & Social Services Committee.

In July, DRHD delivered a presentation on solar ultraviolet radiation and vector-borne disease vulnerability assessments to the Town of Brock's Council. Following the presentation, Council directed its Deputy Chief Administrative Officer to ensure that all Regional communications on climate and health are shared with Brock residents. The next vulnerability assessment is focused on extreme weather and is scheduled for release this winter.

DRHD continues to promote its 'Heat Hacks for Staying Cool' resource, distributing **100** copies at fall fairs and installing a poster-sized version at Housing Durham properties. DRHD also met with the Town of Whitby to discuss key health related actions in its Climate Emergency Response Plan and provided guidance on cooling kits for community members without housing and/or air conditioning. Additionally, DRHD engaged the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority to scope and draft a proposal for completing a heat-health vulnerability map for Durham Region.

## Health Hazard Investigations and Inquiries

Between July and September, HPD responded to **231** complaint investigations and inquiries. Top sources of complaints included pest and sanitation, indoor air quality, and property standard issue inquiries.

## Heat Warning & Information System

HPD, in collaboration with ECCC, provides heat warning notification to community partners and the public from May 15 to September 30. When heat warning criteria are met, HPD will issue social media posts and provide webpage updates to remind the public of ways to stay cool and safe during the hot weather.

For the 2025 summer season, Durham Region experienced and notified the public regarding **five** heat warning events, **four** of which were periods of extended hot weather and resulted in extended heat warnings. This is an increase compared to the 2024 season, where there were **four** heat warning events, and only **one** resulted in an extended heat warning.

A heat warning is issued when the weather is forecasted to reach temperatures of 31°C or greater or a humidex of 40 or greater for two consecutive days. It is upgraded to an extended heat warning if these conditions are further forecasted to persist for three or more consecutive days. Notification of a heat warning triggers community partners to mobilize response plans once criteria are met. Currently, HPD maintains a list of **535** individuals, local businesses, institutions, community groups, and municipalities.

## Municipal By-law Coordination

On September 23, municipal by-law managers from across the region convened for their biannual meeting, focused on enhancing inter-agency coordination and mutual support. Key topics included plumbing and sewage, information sharing, licensing, new business notification, and change of use for properties.

The session featured a robust quality assurance discussion, allowing managers to share enforcement strategies and operational insights, with emphasis on timely response and cross-departmental collaboration. Emerging issues and topics for the future were also discussed at the meeting. These meetings continue to foster consistency across the region and improved service delivery.

## Part 8 Ontario *Building Code* (Sewage Systems)

From July 1 to September 30, HPD conducted the following activities related to Part 8 of the Ontario *Building Code*:

- Received **58** building permit applications for sewage systems, processed **10** building addition applications, and reviewed **16** planning applications. PHI

investigated **four** complaints related to private sewage systems. No Orders to Comply were issued.

- Conducted **307** inspections related to sewage system building permits and installations. HPD staff also attended pre-consultation meetings in each municipality regarding planning applications. Staff also attended or provided comments for **11** pre-consultation meetings and responded to questions from the public and sewage system installers regarding sewage systems and planning applications.
- Completed inspections for Lake Simcoe Maintenance Inspection Program, including **105** in Brock, **71** in Scugog, and **19** in Uxbridge. **Three** remaining properties have refused to allow inspections and HPD staff will be issuing an Order to Comply to the property owners.

## Safe Water

### Beach Monitoring

As per the [Operational Approaches for Recreational Water Guideline, 2018](#), HPD collects bacteriological water samples from public beaches to determine if they are safe for swimming. HPD monitors and samples **14** local beaches on a weekly basis.

Weekly water quality results get posted on [Check&Go Durham](#), which provides real-time updates, visual indicators of swim safety, and explanations for advisories or closures due to elevated *E. coli* levels, blue-green algae, or other environmental hazards.

During the 2025 season, **47** beach postings were issued due to unsafe *E. coli* levels and **three** complaints were investigated related to beach conditions. The program has concluded for the 2025 season.

### Drinking Water

From July to September, HPD staff monitored and responded to water quality issues across regulated drinking water systems in Ontario. During this period, HPD received a total of **60** Adverse Water Quality Incident reports. In response to water quality concerns, **seven** Boil Water Advisories, Drinking Water Advisories, or Boil Water Orders were issued. These advisories are precautionary public health measures typically triggered by microbial contamination, equipment failure, or other hazards. **Three** advisories were rescinded following corrective actions and confirmation of water safety.

HPD staff also updated the public webpage, [Private Wells - Region of Durham](#) in response to the growing concerns for blue-green algae and its impacts on beaches and private drinking water supplies for homes located near surface water sources.

### Recreational Water

Between July and September, HPD focused on meeting all prescribed recreational water inspection targets as outlined by the [Recreational Water Protocol, 2019](#). During

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this time, PHI conducted **242** routine facility inspections, responded to **seven** complaint investigations, and issued **13** HPPA section 13 Orders in response to the identification of a health hazard.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Anthony Di Pietro  
Director, Health Protection Division



# Healthy Families

Report for July – September 2025

## Durham Health Connection Line

DHCL provides the community access to public health information. 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 July to September, DHCL responded to **3,212** inquiries.

## Healthy Babies Healthy Children

The HBHC program is a voluntary home visiting program to support families from the prenatal period up until school entry. PHN and family visitors work in partnership with at-risk families to provide supportive interventions, identify and address goals that promote optimal child development and positive parenting.

Between July to September, there were **1,597** live births reported among Durham Region residents. Of these families **921** were screened in the prenatal or postpartum period. In addition, **44** children were screened between six weeks and four years of age. During this period, local residents submitted **117** self-referrals through [durham.ca](http://durham.ca) to the HBHC program.

To enhance awareness and access to screening for residents, DRHD staff did the following activities:

- Through collaboration with the Immunization program, PHN visited **218** HCP to provide information about the HBHC program, patient resources and the referral process.
- Delivered community presentations on the HBHC program and referral process to **two** community agencies with a total of **74** participants.
- Continued a social media campaign, posting **24** messages across **two** platforms generating an overall reach of **20,169** people and **29,083** views.

- Provided **27** site visits to hospitals to provide staff and patients with education about the HBHC program and HBHC screening in hospitals.

## Healthy Families

### Early Adversity & Resilience

Early adversity refers to stressful or potentially traumatic events that happen before an individual turns 18 that trigger an intense or prolonged stress response. Adverse childhood events include abuse (physical, sexual, emotional), neglect (physical or emotional), and household dysfunction (e.g., exposure to mental illness, parental separation or divorce, intimate partner violence, alcohol or substance use, or the incarceration of a household member). More recently, this term has been broadened to also include stress and trauma stemming from broader social and structural inequities such as racism and poverty.

National data from the 2018 [Survey of Safety in Public and Private Spaces](#) found that about 60 percent of Canadians had experienced some form of maltreatment before the age of 15. These experiences can disrupt brain development, alter stress response systems, and contribute to long-term health consequences, including chronic disease, mental illness, and substance use. Preventing and mitigating early adversity, while building resilience, is a powerful upstream public health strategy that reduces inequities and promotes lifelong well-being.

Over the past year, DRHD has played a key role in advancing provincial and local efforts to address early adversity and build resilience including:

- Co-authored the OEAR Framework with colleagues from other PHU. This framework provides evidence-based strategies to guide public health and community partners in preventing early adversity and strengthening resilience.
- Presented the OEAR Framework at provincial and national forums including The Ontario Public Health Convention and Expanding Horizons: The Infant and Early Mental Health Promotion Conference, with upcoming presentations planned for The Canadian Children and Youth Conference as well as PHO Rounds.
- Co-sponsored an [alPHa resolution](#) along with Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit and Peterborough Public Health, recommending that the OEAR Framework be referenced in the upcoming OPHS. The motion passed and a letter was sent to the Chief Medical Officer of Health.
- Continued with the Building Connections communication campaign which was launched in May 2025, with the Adverse Childhood Experiences and Resilience Community of Practice. The campaign featured **five** social media videos that shared strategies for parents to strengthen children's resilience. This campaign achieved engagement rates as high as **10 per cent**, reflecting strong performance. Overall, there was a total of **36,844** impressions, **1,853** video views, and **502** total reactions across social media platforms.

Looking ahead, DRHD will focus on embedding early adversity and resilience into everyday practice, policy, and program planning, while continuing to strengthen partnerships, develop resources, and contribute to provincial initiatives. By co-leading this work provincially and advancing it locally, DRHD is building the foundation for healthier communities in Durham, ensuring that prevention, resilience-building, and equity remain at the core of public health practice.

## Infant & Child Development

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

ICD partners 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 occupation therapy consultation services may include:

- Home visits to provide modeling, resources, and parent coaching.
- 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 July to September, the ICD program offered service to approximately **377** children and provided approximately **916** 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 July – September 2025

## Healthy Living

### Second-Hand Smoke & Vapour in Multi-Unit Dwellings

According to PHO's report titled [Exposure to Tobacco Smoke, Vape Aerosol and Cannabis Smoke Among Adults in Ontario](#), in 2023, **25 per cent** of residents in MUD reported tobacco smoke entering their home from neighbouring units or outside their building.

The Region of Durham operates many MUD through Housing Durham, all of which have implemented smoke and vape-free policies. In addition, the SFOA prohibits smoking tobacco, cannabis, and vaping of any substance in the indoor common areas of MUD including foyers, elevators and stairwells. Although smoke and vape-free policies are in place, concerns remain with regards to exposure to second-hand smoke and vapour for tenants. DRHD received **23** complaints from residents of MUD related to exposure to second-hand smoke and vapour from January to September.

To raise awareness about the dangers of second-hand smoke and vapour and to provide quit/cessation support to tenants within MUD, DRHD collaborated with DRSSD to:

- Attend **one** Housing Durham meeting for tenants on June 16 to provide health education, cessation supports and policy information.
- Develop health messaging for tenants to raise awareness about the effects of second-hand smoke/vapour and cessation supports available. Information was displayed on **three** digital message boards within Housing Durham properties from June to August.

DRHD will continue to collaborate with DRSSD to provide cessation information and raise awareness of the dangers of second-hand smoke and vapour in support of smoke and vape-free MUD at an upcoming National Housing Day Event.

## Youth Tobacco & Vaping Prevention

According to recent data from the [2023 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth](#), there has been a significant decline in youth vaping. Among Canadians aged 12 to 17, **7.2 per cent** reported vaping in the past 30 days, which has decreased from **13.2 per cent** in 2019. Despite this progress, vaping remains a health concern for youth in Ontario, with **11 per cent** of Grade 7 to 12 students reporting use within the last 30 days, as indicated in the results from the [2023 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey](#).

During the 2024/2025 school year, **38** elementary and secondary schools in Durham identified that tobacco-free living and vaping was a priority health topic. To provide support for school communities, PHN had **194** interactions about the prevention of vaping and tobacco use and health-related risks. These school-based interactions included student-led activities, peer to peer engagement, and collaboration with educators and parents to reinforce key messages and provide students with credible and supportive health information.

In addition, PHN collaborated with **six** school health teams during the 2024/2025 school year to implement strategies to address tobacco and vaping using a comprehensive school health approach which includes components to address the social and physical environment, links to the curriculum, healthy school policy and partnerships within the school community.

## Oral Health

For July to September, 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 **907** unique clients. The Dental Clinic provided services to **210** HSO clients and **694** OSDCP clients through **1,635** appointments.

**Dental Benefits Claims:** OHD processed **694** dental benefit claims, amounting to **\$124,738** in fees paid. These efforts facilitate the smooth provision of dental care and ensure financial support for those in need.

**Dental Estimates:** OHD received **361** estimates and entered **461** that were eligible to be processed for approval.

**Denture Lab:** Denturists delivered **117** services in the denture lab.

**Oral Health Education and Promotion:** Staff provided dental screening to **171** children and oral health education to **128** children.

These accomplishments exemplify OHD's enduring commitment to enhancing oral health outcomes through a comprehensive and strategic approach. Central to this

mission is the provision of direct clinical care to eligible populations via provincially funded programs such as HSO and OSDCP. In parallel, OHD advances oral health promotion through targeted educational initiatives, strategic partnerships, and sustained community engagement. By optimizing resources and cultivating innovative collaborations, DRHD consistently delivers impactful programs that contribute meaningfully to the oral and overall health of the communities it serves.

## ***Smoke-Free Ontario Act, 2017***

TEO are required to complete inspections and complaint investigations as mandated by the OPHS. TEO conduct inspections at all tobacco and vapour product retailers including display and promotion inspections, and youth access test shops where students under the age of 19 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. TEO have completed the **first** of two rounds of youth access inspections at tobacco retailers.

Two or more tobacco-related convictions may lead to an AP, issued by the MOH, prohibiting the vendor from selling tobacco products for a minimum of six months. Currently, there are **three** establishments in Durham Region that are under an AP (two facilities are under a six-month AP and one is under a 12-month AP).

TEO respond to all complaints received regarding smoking or vaping in enclosed workplaces and other prohibited areas included in the SFOA and Durham Region [Smoking and Vaping By-law](#). These areas include MUD, schools, hospitals, outdoor recreation playground areas, hookah lounges, and more.

From July 1 to September 30, TEO conducted **223** youth access test shop inspections for vapour products and **13** display and promotion inspections at vapour product retailers. TEO continue to observe non-compliance as stores sell products with high levels of nicotine and flavours. Convenience stores are only permitted to sell tobacco, mint, and menthol vapour products. TEO issued **nine** warning letters, and **17** charges for vapour-related offences.

In August, a large vapour product seizure occurred at a store in Oshawa. During the investigation, **934** vapour products were removed due to high nicotine levels and/or flavours. During the investigation, nicotine pouches were observed, and a referral to Health Canada for follow-up was made. The facility has since been charged under the SFOA for offering to sell improperly packaged vapour products.

TEO conducted **338** youth access test shop inspections for tobacco products and **20** compliance inspections for display and promotion for tobacco retailers. In total, **12** warning letters and **six** charges were issued for tobacco-related offences.

TEO conducted **54** inspections in enclosed workplaces and other prohibited areas.

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TEO continue to respond to complaints regarding students vaping on school property. In September, **four** complaints were investigated.

Specialty vape stores and tobacconist stores continue to operate in Durham Region. As of September 30, there were **71** registered specialty vape stores (which is an increase of two since June 30) and **four** tobacconist stores.

The Durham Region 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, **three** restaurants in Durham Region continue to operate in non-compliance with the by-law by permitting hookah smoking indoors. Previously there were four facilities in non-compliance, however, one facility no longer permits hookah smoking in their establishment due to an outstanding prohibition order placed on the owner/operator. TEO continue to attend these facilities regularly to enforce both the by-law and the SFOA. Additional charges continue to be issued to the corporations/owners and directors of these establishments to gain compliance. At this time, court outcomes include fines and probation orders issued to the directors of the facilities.

DRHD submitted a letter to Health Canada to advocate for additional enforcement tools under the [Tobacco and Vaping Products Act](#). This letter was in response to a legislative review of the Act pertaining to enforcement. Some items discussed include the banning of flavoured vapour products, banning of high concentration vapour products from entering Canada, new enforcement tools (e.g., orders to comply, higher fines and penalties, and APs for vapour sales to minors) and restricting the online sale of vapour products. These are all issues DRHD has observed during investigations at vapour retailers within Durham Region.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Anthony Di Pietro  
Director, Health Protection Division

Original signed by

Maryam Pezeshki  
Director, Oral Health Division

Original signed by

Kavine Thangaraj  
Director, Population Health Division  
Chief Nursing Officer



# Infectious Diseases

Report for July – September 2025

## Infectious Diseases Prevention & Control

### Child Care Centres

Between July and September, **252** compliance inspections were completed in CCC for both environment and food safety. This included **83** IPAC inspections and **169** kitchen inspections.

The fall/winter 2025 edition of the Wee Care newsletter will be distributed in November. It will include information on the proper use of disinfectants, guidance on managing extreme cold weather conditions and new licensing requirements outlined in PHO's IPAC checklist for CCC.

### 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 July and September, **304** DoPHS were reported to HPD. These include in descending order: Lyme disease (**123**), campylobacter enteritis (**43**), salmonella (**35**), cyclosporiasis (**17**), giardiasis (**15**), influenza A (**11**), carbapenemase-producing enterobacteriaceae (**10**), shigellosis (**nine**), WNV (**eight**), legionellosis (**six**), cryptosporidiosis (**five**), amebiasis (**four**), anaplasmosis (**four**), verotoxin producing *E. coli* including hemolytic uremic syndrome (**four**), yersiniosis (**four**), hepatitis A (**two**), Powassan virus (**two**), influenza B (**one**) and paratyphoid fever (**one**).

Comparing the second and third quarter of the year, several diseases showed notable increases in reported cases, largely driven by seasonal and environmental factors such as waterborne illnesses like giardiasis, which saw an 86 per cent increase, and cryptosporidiosis, which saw a 67 per cent increase, due to increased recreational water use. Foodborne diseases spiked, such as campylobacter enteritis (126 per cent increase) and cyclosporiasis (325 per cent increase), which is likely linked to summer barbecues and consumption of fresh produce. Additionally, mosquito-borne illnesses

like WNV saw a 300 percent increase, as mosquito populations peaked in late summer. These trends reflect typical seasonal patterns and underscore the importance of targeted public health interventions during high-risk periods.

Lyme disease cases increase by 413 per cent with **24** cases in the second quarter of 2025 compared to **123** cases in the third quarter. This is an expected increase due to seasonal tick activity in the summer months. Powassan virus was added to the DoPHS in 2023, and DRHD received its first case in July where it may have been locally acquired.

## Infection Prevention & Control Lapses

From July to September, there were **five** IPAC lapse investigations in healthcare facilities (**one** posted), **one** in a group home, and **10** in PSS (**six** posted). This is similar to last year at this time. Most confirmed lapses have been due to reprocessing issues. Referrals were made the Royal College of Dental Surgeons of Ontario and College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. **One** HPPA section 13 Order was issued to a dentist.

## Infection Prevention & Control Education Day

On September 16, 2025, DRHD successfully hosted its first IPAC Education Day for CLS, including group homes, shelters, transitional housing, and correctional institutions. Held virtually, the event welcomed **65** participants from local CLS including some community partners. Presentations were delivered by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, PHO, and various divisions within DRHD, covering topics such as outbreak management, antimicrobial resistant organisms, food safety, pest and mould control, and the Community Paramedicine Program.

A post-event survey was distributed to attendees, and the feedback received is overwhelmingly positive. Based on this success, DRHD plans to continue hosting the CLS IPAC Education Day annually to support ongoing learning and collaboration across these settings.

From July to September, staff continued work to prepare for the annual IPAC Education Day for LTCH and RH that will be held before the end of this year. With over **180** attendees registered (150 in-person and 30 virtual), the event will feature expert speakers from PHO, the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, the Ministry of Long-Term Care, the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority, and other key partners.

## Infection Prevention & Control Newsletter

DRHD released the summer edition of the quarterly IPAC newsletter, featuring informative articles on measles, travel safety, bat exposure, and rabies prevention. The content was well-received and aimed at supporting awareness and prevention efforts across local CLS.

DRHD is currently finalizing the fall edition, which will be released early in the fourth quarter or this year. This will be DRHD's final IPAC newsletter of the year and will continue to provide timely and relevant updates and resources for partners and community partners.

## Outbreak Summary

Outbreaks are investigated in accordance with the OPHS.

Between July and September, **55** outbreak investigations were conducted. There were **40** respiratory outbreak investigations (**28** LTCH, **seven** RH, **three** hospitals and **two** CLS). The agents that were identified in most outbreaks included rhinovirus (**25 per cent**), and COVID-19 (**23 per cent**).

There were **15** enteric outbreak investigations (**10** CCC, **four** LTCH, **one** RH). All the enteric outbreaks had no agent identified.

Outbreaks remained steady comparing the second and third quarters of this year, but when comparing the third quarter in 2024 to the same period in 2025, there was a **323 per cent** increase in outbreaks. Some contributing factors may be increased travel and more gatherings occurring in the summer months.

## Personal Service Settings

Between July and September, **241** compliance inspections and **68** re-inspections were conducted in PSS. Common infractions included the use of work and contact surfaces that were not smooth, non-absorbent, or easily cleanable; improper preparation or use of disinfectants; failure to maintain required records; inadequate cleaning and disinfection of reusable items and equipment; and failure to notify DRHD prior to operating or adding new services.

PSS continue to emerge in a variety of environments, including industrial units, entire floors of office buildings, and increasingly in home-based locations. These settings are introducing a growing number of novel devices and services, which often require increased staff resources for education, oversight, and enforcement.

DRHD issued **14** charges for repeat violations of the PSS regulation. Additionally, **four** HPPA section 13 Orders were issued, including service suspensions and closures due to non-compliance, such as operating without hot water necessary for proper handwashing and tool reprocessing.

The fall/winter 2025 edition of the Beyond Glam newsletter will be distributed in October. This issue will feature key information for PSS, including guidance on operating home-based businesses, managing power outages, guidance for halo head spa services, proper use of bleach-based disinfectants, and updated timelines for notifying DRHD about special events.

DRHD also prepared for the Tattoo Expo, another significant special event scheduled for December 12 to 14. Durham Region will host the final stop of the Expo's Ontario circuit, with the event being held at Sikorski Hall in Oshawa. Last year, the Expo was held in Pickering and featured over 60 PSS vendors offering tattoos and piercings. In anticipation of this year's event, DRHD has begun preparations to ensure all regulatory requirements will be met.

## **Rabies Prevention & Control**

From July to September, DRHD investigated **572** animal bite reports, which is an increase from the 522 reports investigated for the same period in 2024. In addition, **110** Durham Region residents were provided with anti-rabies treatment, which is an increase from 77 reported during this period last year. This increase has led to a provincial supply shortage of PEP, which made managing Durham Region's local supply a challenge during the summer months. The provincial supply shortage continues but is expected to be back to normal levels by October. The shortage is a result of higher demand globally for PEP.

DRHD submitted **25** animals for testing and **two** were positive for rabies. Last year during this period, DRHD submitted 20 with four positive bats.

DRHD issued **one** obstruction charge to an individual at the end of September after repeated attempts to get information with regards to the animal owner. Obstruction charges are rare as most people are compliant with PHI. Last year for this period, there were two charges to animal owners for failing to immunize their pets.

## **Syphilis**

Sexually transmitted infections have resurged across Ontario and Canada in the years following the COVID-19 pandemic. Syphilis is of particular concern, having drawn provincial and national attention due to sharp increases in reported cases and the re-emergence of congenital syphilis.

In Durham Region, rates of infectious syphilis cases have risen over the past decade following the provincial trend. Over 50 per cent of syphilis cases are asymptomatic and detected only through routine testing. If left untreated, syphilis can cause serious health risks including complications during pregnancy. The re-emergence of congenital syphilis highlights the need for timely prenatal care, early screening, and effective treatment.

DRHD has undertaken extensive collaboration with local social services and community partners to support and reach pregnant individuals who are at-risk or diagnosed with syphilis. This collaboration has included timely testing, treatment, referrals to high-risk prenatal care, outreach and follow-up efforts, use of translation and transportation supports, and, when necessary, cross-jurisdictional partnerships to protect maternal-fetal health and prevent lost to follow-up cases. DRHD also works closely with infectious diseases and pediatric specialists in hospital and community settings to coordinate treatment and ongoing follow up for babies affected by congenital syphilis.

Building capacity with local HCP is another key strategy to address the rising rates of syphilis. On July 3, **two** DRHD staff members provided an in-service on syphilis assessment, testing and treatment at a health clinic located at Durham College and Ontario Tech University. **Five** HCP attended the presentation, all of whom strongly agreed the presentation was beneficial and relevant to their practice.

## Vaccine Storage & Handling

DRHD manages the vaccine storage and handling for all publicly funded vaccine, which includes completing annual vaccine fridge inspections. Between July to September, PHN inspected **431** vaccine fridges for a total of **503** vaccine fridge inspections completed this year. PHN ensured all sites upheld MOH vaccine storage and handling requirements. Cold chain incident and waste reduction strategies were shared with HCP to reduce wastage of publicly funded vaccine. PHN worked with HCP to determine the best inventory levels to maintain based on storage capacity and patient needs. Staff also provided health education to HCP, including a review of the publicly funded immunization schedule to support accurate and timely vaccine delivery, ensuring individuals remain up to date and protected against vaccine-preventable diseases.

## Vector-Borne Diseases

The WNV prevention and control program began its seasonal activities in May and finished at the end of September. The program included weekly surveillance of potential breeding sites for WNV vector mosquitoes which yielded **5,767** site visits resulting in **451** larvicide treatments. The first of four rounds of scheduled regional roadside catch basin larviciding was completed on June 12, and the fourth round was completed on August 14, with a total of **263,444** roadside catch basin treatments administered. In addition, **81** private back yard catch basins and **413** catch basins on Regionally-owned properties were treated. Staff investigated **12** complaints of stagnant water on private property, and **11** treatments were required. This is lower than last year during this timeframe with 37 complaints and 14 treatments. The adult mosquito trapping activity has resulted in a total of **28,912** mosquitoes being captured, **5,218** mosquitoes (591 pools of mosquitoes) being tested and **28** positive mosquito trap sites being identified throughout Durham Region, including Ajax, Clarington, Oshawa, Pickering, Uxbridge and Whitby. So far this year, there have been **zero** human cases of WNV reported to DRHD compared to **11** cases at this time last year.

DRHD continues to promote [eTick.ca](https://www.eTick.ca), which is a free online service where the public can submit photographs of a tick they find, and professionals will identify it. Durham Region residents can have ticks identified by submitting a photo to the website.

To date this year, a total of **165** probable or confirmed human tick-borne diseases have been reported by Durham Region residents (**158** Lyme disease, **five** anaplasmosis cases and **two** Powassan virus cases). This is an increase compared to this time last year with 103 Lyme disease cases only.

## 2025 Q3 Program Reports – DRHD

Communication was distributed to local partners throughout the season, including regular media releases, a variety of social media messaging on various platforms, and a weekly report of local WNV mosquito testing, which was posted on [West Nile Virus - Region of Durham](#).

DRHD's new GIS database and mobile application made data entry for staff easier and more efficient. Moving into the off-season, staff will continue to enhance the application to include additional features that will strengthen data collection capabilities and support more robust vector control strategies.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Chief Nursing Officer

Original signed by

Anthony Di Pietro  
Director, Health Protection Division



Report for July – September 2025

## Administration

RDPS continues to strengthen administrative capacity to meet operational demands. From July to September, **43** full-time, **one** part-time and **three** temporary staff members were hired, with a scheduled start date of October 5.

Onboarding of staff is underway which supports continuity, workload management, and service delivery across departments.

## Community Paramedicine

The Community Paramedicine program continues to support remote patient monitoring in the community to catch an exacerbation before it happens. From July to September, the program achieved the following:

- Conducted **one** wellness and vaccination event in a high-priority neighbourhood, in partnership with Housing Durham and other DRHD divisions.
- Completed a strategic planning exercise with Durham Region's Strategic Initiatives Division to shape the future direction of Community Paramedicine in Durham Region.
- Submitted a collaborative proposal to support Indigenous health. Partners include the Durham Community Health Centre, Durham Ontario Health Team, LH, Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, North Durham Family Health Team, and local primary care physicians.
- Was awarded \$30,000 from Health Excellence Canada, following a proposal submission to support social prescribing initiatives.
- Hosted the Simcoe Community Paramedicine program and LH medical students for paramedic ride-outs.
- Delivered skin tear education to City of Kawartha Lakes Community Paramedic Program.
- Engaged in strategic planning and mapping for vaccinating both rostered and homebound clients.

The PCOP completed the following activities:

- Continued to hold regular mobile clinics in Ajax and Beaverton.
- Increased PCOP paramedic service hours from **10** to **12** hours per day in September to enhance medical care delivery and documentation accuracy.
- Participated in bi-weekly Choice and Dignity in Dying or ‘CANDID’ Rounds which focus on integrated palliative care discussions for the unsheltered community alongside primary care, palliative care, and Mission United Medical.
- Participated in weekly Addiction Rounds, which focus on ongoing virtual case discussions to support clients managing substance withdrawal.

## Logistics

RDPS completed the following logistics activities:

- Worked on upfitting **two** of five command vehicles that RDPS received. The vehicles are hybrid and will replace existing gas ones. The remaining three vehicles will be upfitted subsequently.
- Commissioned **two** ambulances which will replace existing vehicles.
- Provided feedback on the design of the new Whitby South base.

## Operations

RDPS completed the following operational activities:

- Embedded **two** full-time Superintendents into the Central Ambulance Communications Centre, enhancing operational oversight and support.
- Created **three** new Commander positions to strengthen leadership capacity and operational efficiency.
- Attended the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs Conference, where **three** paramedics were honored for 20 years of Exemplary Service.
- Engaged Uxbridge Cottage Hospital to participate in the Fit2Sit program, aimed at reducing offload times and improving patient flow.
- RDPS is working closely with LH Bowmanville to assess and mitigate the impact of ongoing construction on emergency response operations.

## Emergency Management & Special Teams

RDPS completed the following activities focused on emergency management and special teams:

- Participated in Regional planning meetings for emergency management exercises.
- Assisted intern and external partners with tabletop and live training events.

## 2025 Q3 Program Reports – DRHD

- Developed new response documents to guide paramedics during major emergency incidents.
- Renewed agreement with DRPS for tactical paramedic support.
- Established a new agreement with Royal Canadian Mounted Police to provide tactical paramedic services.
- Created a Public Support Unit consisting of 12 staff members to support DRPS during large public events.
- Added and trained three new tactical paramedics.
- Integrated tactical paramedics into the DRPS communications centre to ensure rapid deployment.

## Quality & Development

RDPS completed the following quality and development activities:

- Completed ambulance call evaluation reviews.
- Developed educational content for the Fall 2025 Central East session.
- Attended **34** community outreach events.
- Rostered **119** clients with home and community care for the Palliative Treat and Refer program.
- Participated in the London Health Sciences Centre PRIME Trial.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Chief/Director