



**Northwestern
Health Unit**

www.nwhu.on.ca

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Northwestern Health Unit awarded Bronze certificate by Excellence Canada

The Northwestern Health Unit has been awarded Bronze certification by Excellence Canada.

The award was given for the work done by the health unit in areas like client service, on-going improvement, staff wellness and innovation. "We're very pleased that Excellence Canada has recognized our work to provide the best public health services that we can to the people who live in Northwestern Ontario," says Dr. Kit Young Hoon, Medical Officer of Health.

The award comes at the end of a busy year for the health unit.

In January 2015, the health unit began enforcing new provincial laws that ban smoking in outdoor spaces like playgrounds, sports fields, restaurant patios and some beaches. Since then the health unit has been working with local governments to make sure that no smoking signs are posted in these new locations and word gets out about the changes. In January 2016 they will begin enforcing new laws that prevent e-cigarette sales to youth and their use in public places or workplaces in Ontario.

In 2015 the health unit started an online discussion panel where the public can have input into healthy public policy ideas. Each panel meets for about one month and asks people in the community to discuss and make recommendations on a single topic. The first panel in March looked at healthy food in public spaces. An October panel was about helping people get active through community design.

In March and April 2015 the NWHU did a study on the oral health needs of vulnerable adults in our area. The results of the study show the need for more publicly-funded dental programs for these adults. The health unit has presented the results to many groups including both local and national decision makers.

The NWHU continues to support breastfeeding by working towards its Baby Friendly Initiative (BFI) designation. In May, reviewers from the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada came to Kenora to see the progress being made and to suggest next steps. Moving forward, the health unit will keep working with community partners to increase support for breastfeeding to give infants the best possible start in life.



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During 2015 the NWHU worked with harm reduction program clients to prevent overdoses through education and by dispensing Naloxone to trained individuals. Overdose prevention training was done at local health unit offices and through outreach services.

In November 2015, the NWHU welcomed over 200 families in Dryden & Fort Frances to the annual "Play Date." Families were able to join together in many fun activities and enjoy a healthy dinner.

As the year wraps up, the health unit asks people to make sure their immunizations are up-to-date. "We've seen diseases like measles in parts of Canada and the USA, and pertussis (whooping cough) locally," says Donna Stanley, Manager of Infectious Diseases. "It is essential to keep up with your immunizations to prevent more outbreaks." Talk to your doctor or your local health unit office for more information about immunizations.

You can find out more about the health unit on their website at www.nwhu.on.ca.

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Media contact:

Melanie Buffett, Manager of Communications
(807) 468-3147 ext. 3245
mbuffett@nwhu.on.ca