

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



Northwestern
Health Unit

www.nwhu.on.ca



Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) acknowledges that we are on the treaty lands and traditional homeland of the Anishinaabe and Métis nations.

We pay tribute to their legacy and the legacy of all Indigenous Peoples of Canada whose enduring presence is felt to this day. NWHU is committed to the Principles of Reconciliation and the Calls to Action outlined by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.

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Mission

Improve the quality and length of life in our communities: healthy lifestyles, longer lives, lived well.

Vision

We are recognized as a valued and integral partner in health.

Values

Respect

We treat all people with respect and dignity, and value diversity and inclusiveness.

Integrity

We act with honesty and adhere to the highest ethical principles as an organization and as public health professionals. We are accountable for our actions and embrace transparency to empower public scrutiny.

Equity

We recognize that some people or groups do not have the same opportunities as others for health and success because of systemic discrimination. We actively work to change these policies, practices and structures, internally and in society, to achieve equality of opportunity for all.



Message from the Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

As we reflect on 2022, we are reminded of how far we've come and the optimism the year gave us for the future. The year was a turning point in the COVID-19 pandemic and allowed some normalcy to return to our lives and our programming. Although a large part of the year was dedicated to COVID-19 booster doses and the roll-out of the pediatric vaccine, the changes in testing and case and contact management allowed our staff more time to restart and re-engage in their regular work.

Throughout the year, our staff continued to amaze us with their dedication and resiliency. As the pandemic response changed in 2022, it brought opportunities for staff to begin some regular work, while still being ready to redeploy at a moment's notice. This is a challenging way to work, and our staff adapted remarkably well. As the year progressed, we were able to restart many of our in-person classes, services, and events that were paused during the pandemic. We have enjoyed seeing clients, partners, and staff back in our offices.

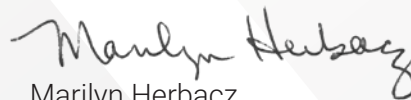
In 2022 we underwent a strategic planning process which resulted in the approval of a new strategic plan that will move us forward in 2023-2026. The timing was ideal as we could incorporate community needs that arose throughout the pandemic into our future work. The input received from our Board of Health, partners, stakeholders, the public, and our staff guided us in determining our direction for the next four years.

As a result of the municipal election, we were sad to see some of our board members moving on, however, we welcome our new board members as we move into a new chapter of programming and service delivery.

Moving forward, we are optimistic for the health of our region. Over the past two years, we witnessed the impact hard work and collaboration can have on the population and will be applying what we've learned to positively affect the health of our region.



Dr. Kit Young Hoon
Medical Officer of Health



Marilyn Herbacz
Chief Executive Officer

Message from the Chair, Board of Health



As we report on 2022, the Board of Health is proud of the work and achievements of Northwestern Health Unit staff throughout the year. This past year saw staff transition from pandemic mode back to working on the goals of public health related to health protection, disease prevention and health promotion.

Last year was also a transition year for the Board of Northwestern Health Unit with municipal elections taking place in October. We say good-bye and thank you to five out-going Board members: Sharon Smith, Shayne MacKinnon, Jerry O'Leary, Jim Belluz, and Sally Burns. And we welcome new Board members, and the passion and energy they will bring for public health in our region.

NWHU is a unique region in Ontario – a vast area and a relatively small population which is widely dispersed throughout 19 municipalities, rural areas and over 40 First Nations. NWHU staff cover a lot of territory as they deliver the programs and services of 'local' Public Health to our population. It is the uniqueness of the region that underlies the importance of 'local' public health delivered, administered, and governed by 'local' staff and a 'local' Board.

The work in 2022 included the development of our new 4-year Strategic Plan which will guide and frame our work moving forward in 2023 and beyond.

Doug Lawrance,
Chair, Board of Health

2022 Board of Health Members

The following individuals served as Board of Health members from January to October 2022. Some members of the Board of Health changed in November 2022 after the municipal elections.

Wendy Brunetta	Town of Fort Frances
Trudy Sachowski	Ear Falls, Red Lake
Nicole Brown	Provincial
Sharon Smith	City of Kenora
Jerry O'Leary	City of Kenora / Township of Sioux Narrows-Nestor Falls
Sally Burns	Township of Atikokan
Doug Lawrance	Municipality of Sioux Lookout, Ignace and Pickle Lake
Shayne MacKinnon	City of Dryden / Township of Machin
Jim Belluz	Alberton, Dawson, Chapple, Morley, La Vallee, Rainy River, Emo, Lake of the Woods

What is public health

Public health aims to prevent disease, prolong life, and promote the health and well-being of communities through organized efforts and informed choices of communities, organizations, and the public. It focuses on promoting health and preventing diseases and injuries among populations, rather than treating individuals. Public health involves applying a broad range of disciplines such as epidemiology, biostatistics, environmental health, social and behavioural sciences, health policy and management, and others, to identify and address health challenges at a population level. Public health is critical for improving the overall health and quality of life of populations and reducing health disparities between different groups.

Investing in public health has a significant return on investment in Canada. According to a report by the Canadian Public Health Association, for every dollar

invested in public health, there is an estimated return of \$14 saved in costs to health and economic sectors. This is because public health interventions help prevent illnesses and injuries, reducing health care costs and boosting economic productivity. For example, by investing in programs to reduce smoking rates, there is a decrease in the number of people who develop lung cancer or other smoking-related illnesses, resulting in lower health care costs and increased productivity due to fewer sick days. Additionally, investing in public health infrastructure and services helps to identify and respond to public health emergencies quickly, reducing the impact of outbreaks and pandemics on the economy.

This report provides examples of the important public health work that NWHU does to help improve the health and wellbeing of northwestern Ontario residents.

About us

Northwestern Health Unit (NWHU) is the most westerly of Ontario's 34 public health units, serving part of the Kenora district and the entire Rainy River district. Our catchment area stretches across 173,828 square kilometres, about one-fifth of the province of Ontario. This area includes 19 municipalities; 39 First Nations communities; and two unincorporated/unorganized territories, which include Kenora Unorganized and Rainy River Unorganized. Using a distributed services model, we have offices in 12 municipalities that work to provide services across the region.

Did you know?

The catchment area covered by Northwestern Health Unit is larger than Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island - **combined**.



Our strategic plan

The Board of Health began planning for the development of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan in the fall of 2021 based on following principles:

- Stakeholder engagement – The strategic plan will be based on input from our stakeholders, including the people we serve, our partners, funders, and staff.
- NWHU programs and priorities will be based on the mandate of public health, evidence-informed practice, partnership and collaboration, and capacity.
- Flexibility – As NWHU and society at large emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, our strategic plan must enable us to respond to a changing environment.

Development of the strategic plan was supported by external consultants LBCG – Consulting for Impact and guided by a sub-committee of the Board of Health and the Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

Between February and April 2022, all Board of Health members, agency staff, community partners, and members of the public had the chance to provide input into the strategic plan through online surveys, focus groups, and key informant interviews. Over 1,100 responses were received through the online survey, with a completion rate of 61.7%.

The input collected was then synthesized and used to identify priorities and strategic directions to include in the strategic plan. NWHU’s mission, vision, and values were validated, the guiding principles updated, and goals and objectives developed for each of the strategic directions. The Board of Health approved the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan at its October 2022 meeting.

2023-2026 STRATEGY MAP



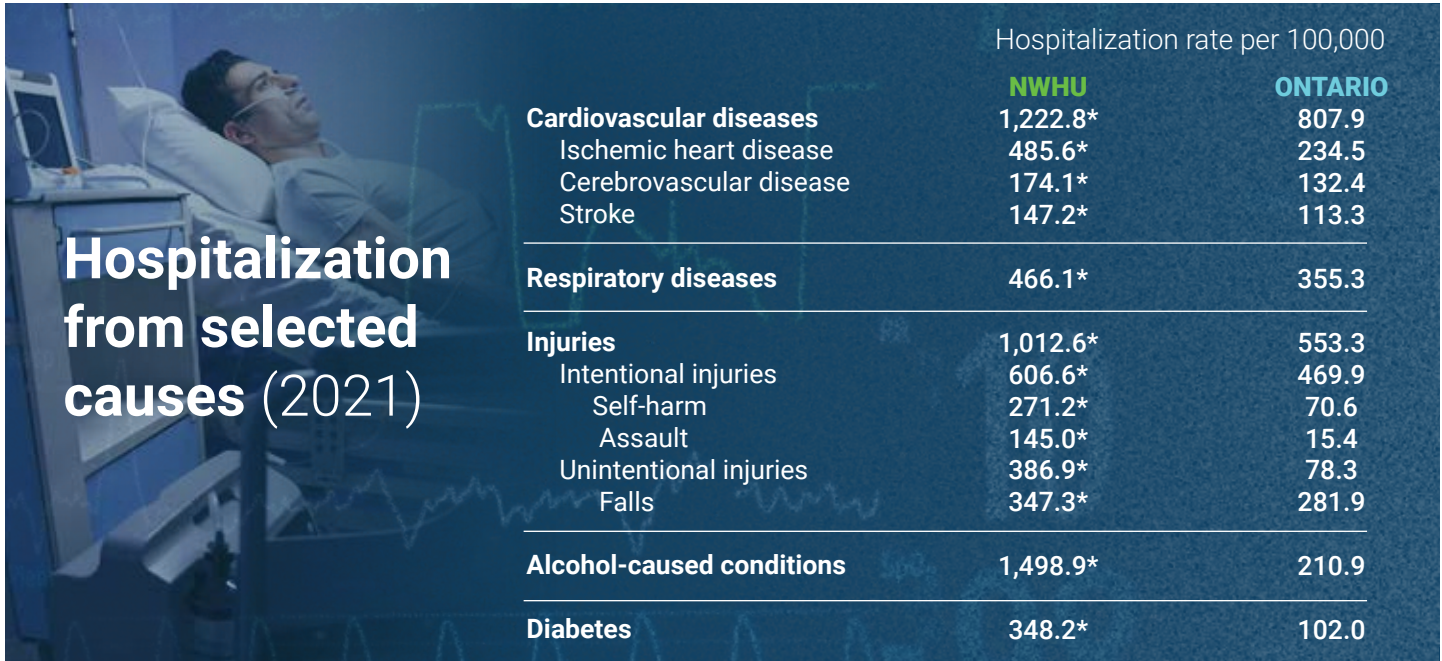
GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Evidence-informed Practice
- Focus for Impact
- Listening to the Community
- Partnership and Collaboration
- Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation
- Accessibility

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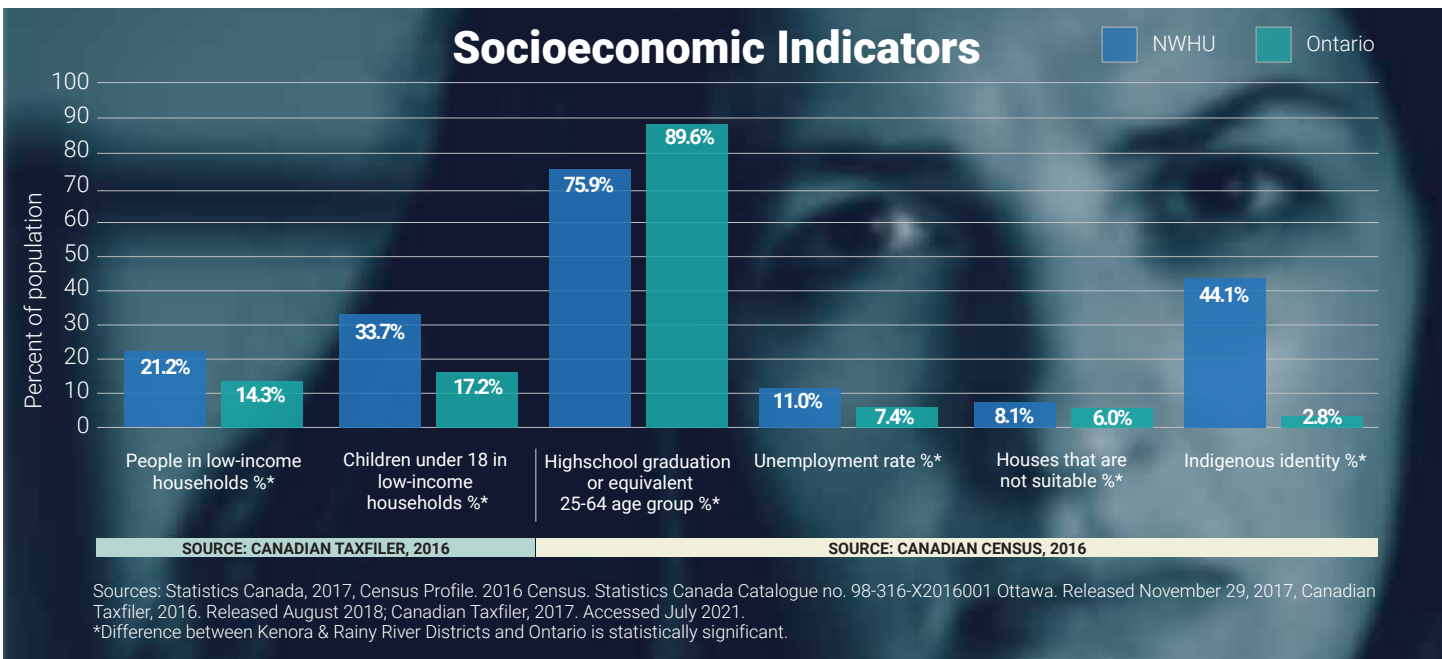
	POPULATION HEALTH	PROGRAMS & SERVICES	AGENCY DEVELOPMENT
Strategies	Improve population health outcomes, particularly for those who experience the greatest barriers to health.	Focus our collaborations and relationships with community partners to optimize impact and efficiency.	Develop creative and innovative approaches to support staff and strengthen agency resiliency, responsiveness, and capacity.
Goals	Advance priorities on mental health promotion, wellness and addictions.	Contribute population health and equity lenses to the development of health systems in the region.	Continually strive to be an Employer of Choice within our region.
What We'll Do	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Renew the NWHU Mental Health Promotion & Wellness Strategy with input from local stakeholders. •Improve child and youth mental health and wellness. •Support the development and implementation of comprehensive harm reduction programming. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Partner with Indigenous public health systems/services. •Leverage NWHU participation in the Ontario Health Teams to advance population health priorities. •Become an information source for partners regarding population health information. •Engage & educate the community on public health issues and the role of NWHU. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop a Human Resources Strategy to support recruitment, retention and a healthy workplace. •Increase staff competencies in cultural humility, anti-racism, trauma-informed practices. •Strengthen internal communications. •Embrace technology that supports effective, efficient, equitable and accessible programs. •Integrate NWHU programs and increase cross-team collaboration to improve effectiveness and responsiveness to community needs. •Explore strategies to include diverse voices to help inform Board of Health deliberations.

Local public health statistics



The social determinants of health refer to the conditions in which people live, work, and play that impact their health and well-being. This includes things such as income, education, employment, social support, and access to health care. These factors can have a significant impact on health outcomes, with individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds being more likely to experience poorer health outcomes than those from higher socio-economic

backgrounds. For instance, they may have limited access to nutritious food, safe housing, and health care, leading to an increased risk of chronic diseases such as diabetes and heart disease. Addressing social determinants of health is crucial for improving health outcomes and reducing health disparities. This can be achieved by implementing policies and programs that promote equitable access to supports, to promote better health for all.



The economic value of public health

A recent analysis of the world's industrialized countries with universal health care shows every \$1 invested in public health interventions brings an approximate return of \$14 saved in costs to health and economic sectors*. The Canadian Public Health Association who authored the study admitted it is difficult to quantify return on investment because disease and injury prevention and health promotion activities rarely have a direct path to identifiable impacts, and because those impacts cannot be measured on short-term timelines. In 2021, the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada suggested public health "is the outbreak that did not happen, the traumatic injury that did not occur, and the drug poisoning that was avoided."

The Power of Every Dollar Invested

16

Every \$1 spent on immunizing children with the measles-mumps-rubella vaccine saves \$16 in health care costs.

26

Every \$1 invested in fluoridated drinking water saves \$26 in dental care.

58

Every \$1 invested in child car seats saves \$58 in avoided medical costs.

22

Every \$1 invested in tobacco prevention programs saves \$22 in societal costs.

6

Every \$1 spent on early childhood education and care saves up to \$6 in future social spending.

External funding helps support the health of our communities

NWHU regularly seeks additional funding to complement the core funding we receive from the Ministry of Health and our municipal funders. This funding allows us to provide programs, partner with others, and offer services that contribute to the well-being of our residents and contribute to the local economy. In 2022, we received funding for projects that totalled \$1.2 million. NWHU is very grateful for these additional funds and the impactful work that has been possible because of them.

Nutrition on Weekends

Nutrition on Weekends (NOW) increases availability of nutritious food to school-aged children and youth, in tandem with schools and community partners. Bags of nutritious, non-perishable food are sent home discreetly on Fridays in students' backpacks. Funding was used exclusively to purchase food with community partners and schools providing in-kind support to run the program. Our funders for this program in 2022 include various grants, donations, and our main Kenora-region funder, the Kenora District Services Board.

Student Nutrition Programs

With funding received from Breakfast Club of Canada, Grocery Foundation and Egg Farmers of Ontario, we supplement the Student Nutrition Program (SNP) annual funding we receive from Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services. All of these supplemental funds were used for nutritious food and beverages served in school-based meal or snack programs, and/or kitchen equipment to support SNP programs. Programs are universal and offered to all students, regardless of socioeconomic background.

Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Project

NWHU applied for Moffat funding on behalf of the FASD partners of the Rainy River District. The funds received allowed the committee to host a BreakFASD in recognition of FASD Day at the Fort Frances High School, have a display at a local community health fair, as well as produce and display 2 billboards in prominent locations in the community.

Green Door Project

For the second year, Green Shield Canada provided us with funding which allowed for free dental care for eligible low-income adults aged 18-64. Through this program, 103 clients from 16 different communities received services through a mixed model of care which includes dentists, denturists, and NWHU clinics.

Fort Frances Community Garden

Funds obtained from the Moffat Foundation were used to expand the Fort Frances community garden's raised bed program, to support a weekly kid's garden club, and to improve access to water for garden users.

Canadian Tire Jump Start

Jumpstart funding was used to support two new recreation programs. Children were introduced to the sport of curling in a 5-week after-school program. A swim program was also introduced at a local school with the funding being used to assist families experiencing financial barriers to participate.

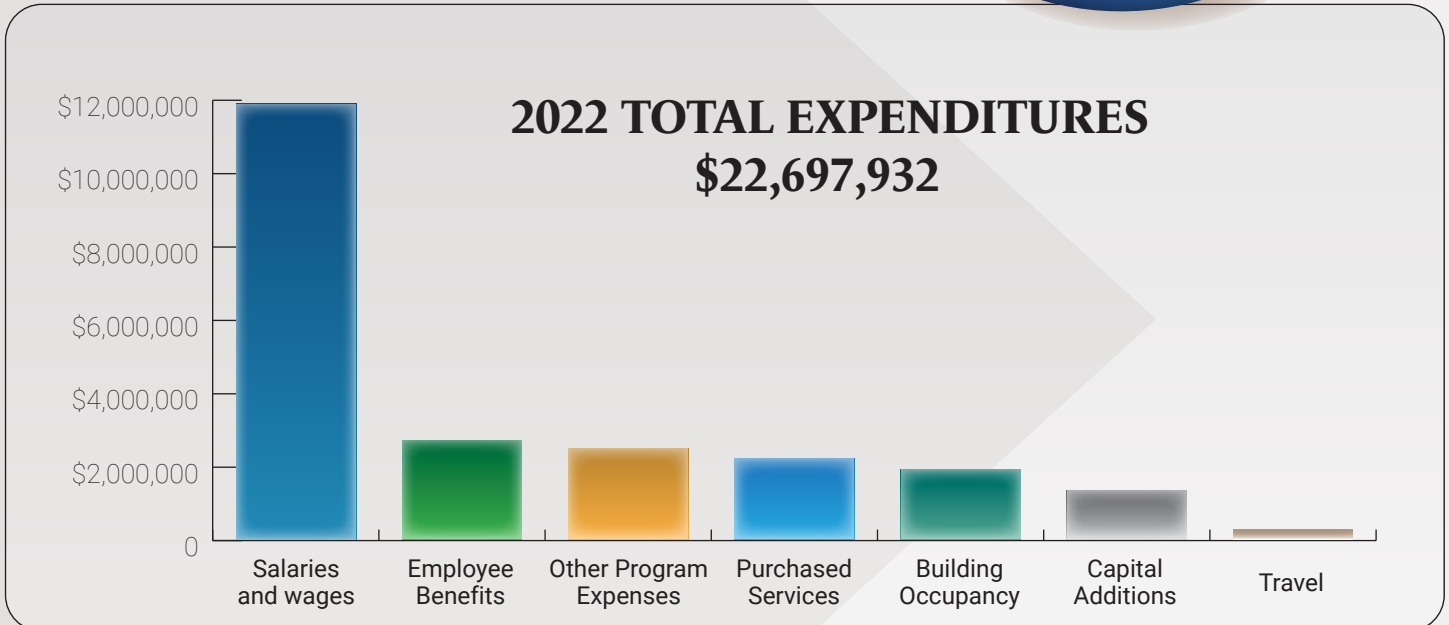
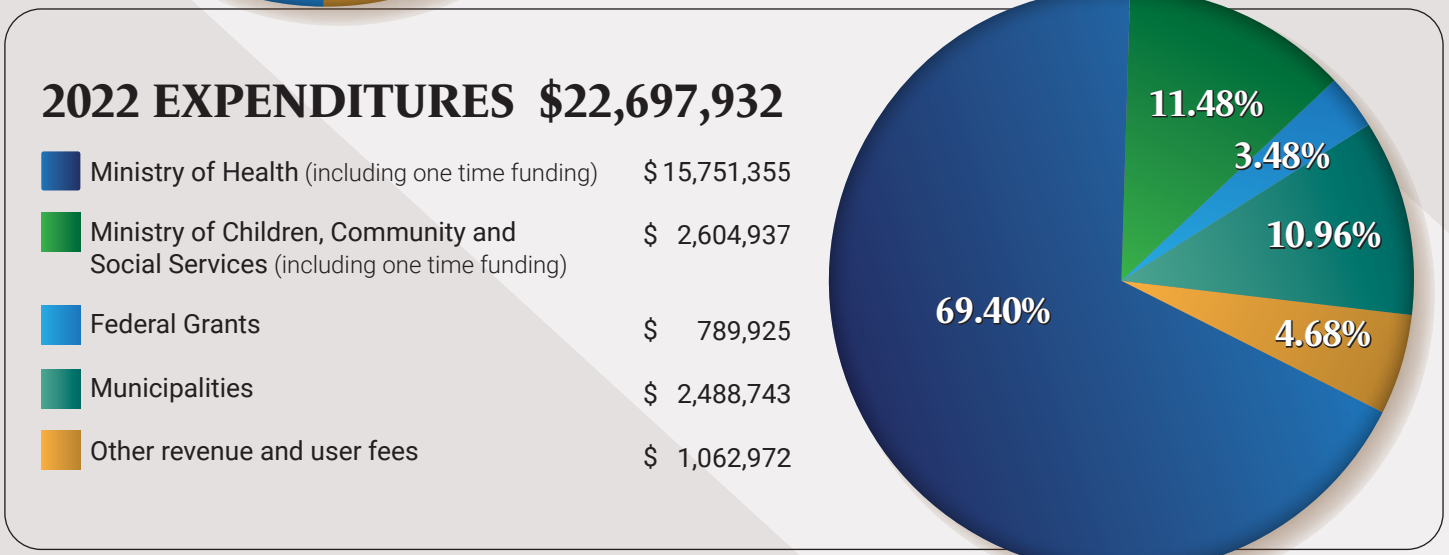
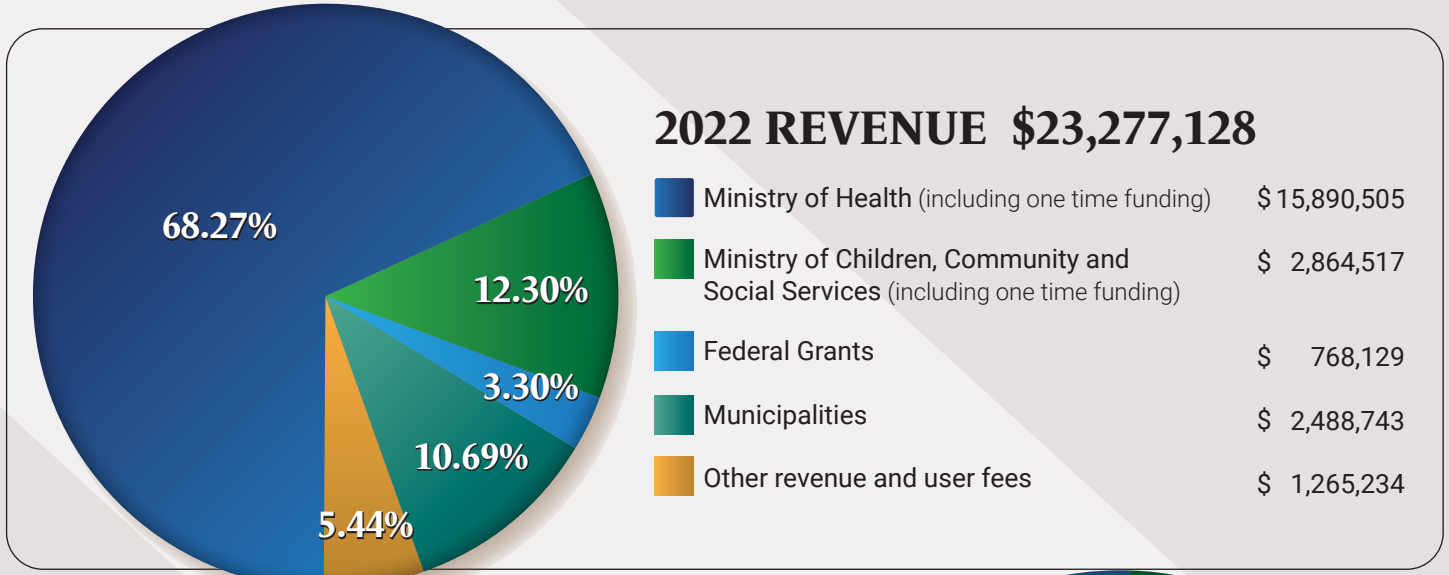
Climate change

NWHU was the lead for a multi-year collaborative climate change project funded by Health Canada's HealthADAPT Program that included all seven of the northern Ontario public health units. The project allowed NWHU and the other northern health units to increase our understanding of the potential health impacts of climate change in northern Ontario and our capacity to respond to climate change and health issues in the future.

Community Youth Wellness PreVenture Program

The Chronic Disease Prevention team was granted funding in 2022 from the Public Health Agency of Canada to implement the Community Youth Wellness PreVenture Program. The goal of the two-year project is to improve mental health outcomes and successful education transitions for Indigenous students and those identified to be at-risk. We are partnering with two school boards, child and family services agencies, and Indigenous health care organizations to deliver a culturally adapted model of the program which focuses on strengths and uses personality targeted interventions to promote positive mental health and delay substance use.

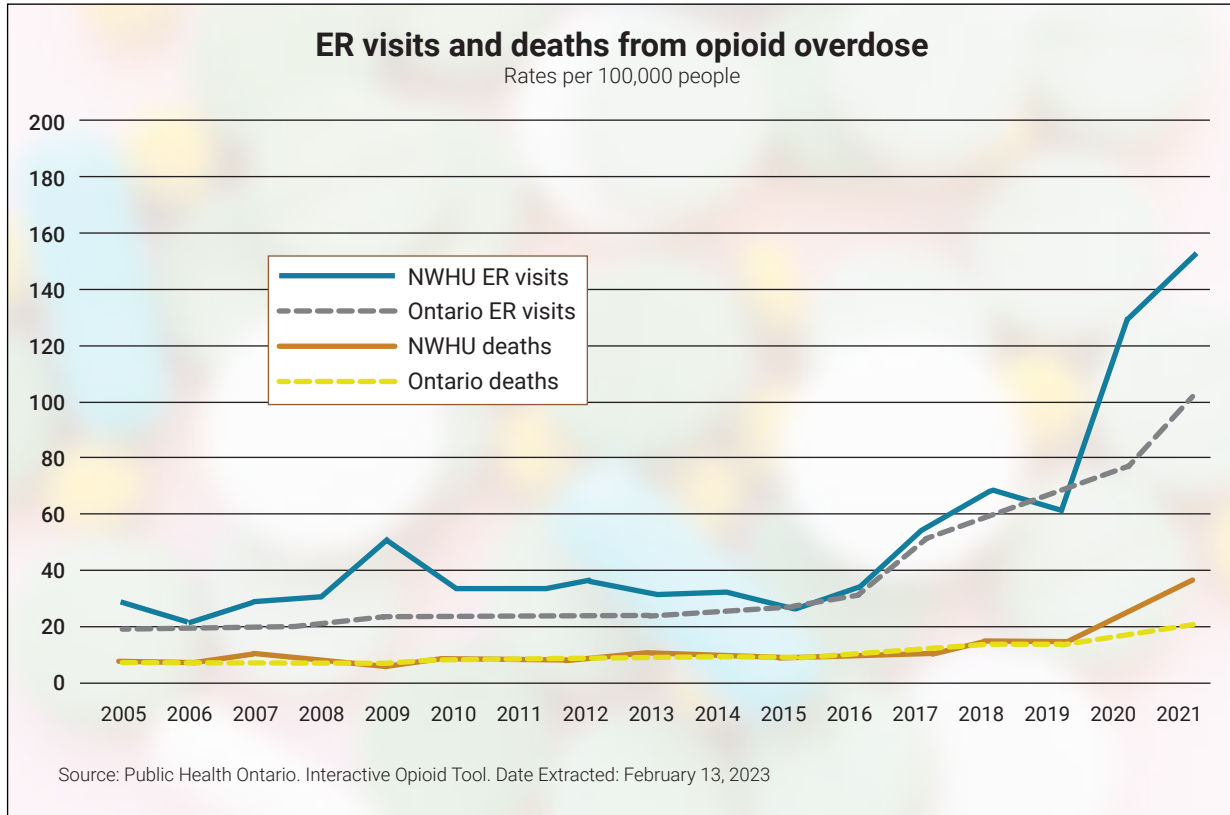
Financial summary



Opioid crisis in northwestern Ontario

The opioid crisis in northern Ontario, like in many other parts of the country, is a significant public health concern. The crisis has brought to light the devastating effects substance use is having on individuals, families, and communities.

In 2020, the number of opioid-related deaths in Ontario and in the NWHU region reached an all-time high.



In this graph, note that deaths may have occurred from the use of a single opioid, or from the use of more than one opioid in combination with other medications, drugs, alcohol, etc.

The number of deaths from opioid overdoses held steady between 2005 and 2017 at between one and six deaths per year. There has been a generally increasing trend since 2018, with 2020 and 2021 seeing large increases. Since 2017 in the NWHU region, the number of opioid overdose-related deaths increased by a staggering 433%.

Provincially, opioid overdose death rates have been increasing since 2015, with more pronounced increases seen since 2019. Provincial rates were comparable with NWHU rates until 2020; however, in 2021, the NWHU rate was more than twice as high as Ontario's provincial rate.

2,816

In 2022 **2,816** naloxone kits were distributed. Naloxone can reverse an opioid overdose and NWHU offers kits and training to partners and the public.



Speech, Hearing and Vision

NWHU is the lead agency for the Ontario Infant Hearing Program in the Kenora Rainy River District. Our staff screen most babies born in our catchment area for hearing loss as it can cause delays in speech and language development.

The team also offers speech and language assessments and interventions for children from birth until the time they enter senior kindergarten. Early identification and intervention help ensure that children can enter school ready to learn.

Partnering with other Early Years service providers is a key component of the program. We work with other providers across our region to help promote speech and language development as well as increase early identification of communication disorders.

In 2022 we were excited to once again attend community events such as Teddy Bear Picnics, Fun with Santa, Family Fun Fair, parent sessions at the library and EarlyON centres.

Although virtual services remain for some families, 2022 saw the resumption of in-person speech and language services for the majority of our clients.

Our staff began to return to daycares, Head Start Programs, nursery schools, EarlyON centres and other community settings once again. The next year already promises more opportunities to re-connect, strengthen and perhaps grow new partnerships across the district!



In an interactive experience promoting early literacy, staff and kids take part acting out the book 'One Dog Canoe'.

Family Health

The Family Health team aims to place families and their children on a path for life-long success by offering services that promote safe and supportive environments.

The team offers support in the following topic areas:

- Breastfeeding
- Growth and development
- Healthy pregnancies
- Healthy sexuality
- Mental health promotion
- Oral health
- Preconception health
- Pregnancy counselling
- Preparation for parenting
- Positive parenting
- Visual health

Kendall House Young Mom's Program partnership

The Kendall House Young Mom's Program is delivered by Women's Shelter, Saakaate House in Kenora.

When the Kendall House Young Mom's Program first opened in May 2022, NWHU began regular visits to get to know the staff and residents. These visits have continued, and we now provide Parenting Partner/Public Health Nurse support and resources on child health, growth and development, nutrition, maternal mental health, vaccinations, and more. Many of the residents have also been welcomed into our Healthy Babies Healthy Children home visiting program to help each family set their own specific goals.

We're excited for the upcoming year as we continue to collaborate with the Kendall House. We will be focusing on growing our partnership through programming and individualized resident support.



NWHU is proud to work with the Kendall House Young Moms Program which offers a safe, stable, affordable program that includes housing for young mothers and their child(ren). The program offers an opportunity to live free of violence and substance abuse.

Dental Health programs and partnerships thriving

The Dental Health team offers a wide range of dental services to eligible people of all ages. In addition, our team provides dental screening in elementary schools to identify children with oral health concerns.

Staff also provide dental preventive and treatment services to eligible clients through our mobile dental offices and community clinics. Our two mobile dental offices are fully equipped dental facilities on wheels that allow us to offer services in communities with limited access to dental care. In addition, we have fixed community dental clinics in Ignace, Pickle Lake, and Dryden.

Mary Berglund Community Health Centre Hub

In January 2022, a partnership was formed between Mary Berglund Community Health Centre Hub and NWHU to establish a part-time dental hygienist position. This position resulted in increased awareness and utilization of oral health services and programs and increased the number of clients seen at the newly upgraded dental clinic in Ignace. The partnership allowed many local residents to access dental care and free dental hygiene services and provided a strong local presence that continues to benefit the community.

Kenora District Services Board (KDSB)

In May 2022, NWHU opened its new dental clinic at the EarlyON Child and Family Centre in Dryden with a 'floss-cutting' ceremony. This partnership between KDSB and NWHU is an ideal fit for coordinating client services and making referrals as both organizations serve similar populations. Becoming more of a 'one stop shop' for community members, the new clinic aims to increase access to care for eligible Dryden area residents.



The dental clinic opening at the EarlyON Child & Family Centre in Dryden was kicked off with a ceremonial floss cutting.

School Dental Services

School dental screening resumed in March 2022 after two years of not being in the schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff were able to provide 2,917 dental screenings and assessments in 27 schools, despite limited staff capacity and the inability to access some communities due to spring flooding and road washouts.



In August 2022, our second mobile dental office hit the road. This was made possible through funding from the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program (OSDCP).

By the numbers

406

The Healthy Smiles Ontario program helped 406 local children to access preventive and/or dental treatment services through various health unit clinics.

728

Through the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program, 131 seniors (aged 65+) in our region were able to receive 728 dental procedures, including dentures.

150

Indigenous Services Canada and NWHU celebrated a 17-year partnership to help reduce oral health disparities and improve oral health outcomes in ten First Nations communities that were eligible for the Children's Oral Health Initiative. In 2022, 150 children were treated and 147 fluoride varnishes were completed.



Health Protection

The Environmental Health team ensures the environments we enter are safe for our health. This includes the inspection of various settings, responding to complaints of health hazards in public spaces, promoting sun safety, and advocating for healthy municipal spaces.

The team inspects restaurants, grocery stores, tattoo parlours, hair and nail salons, and pools throughout the northwest to ensure they are following the provincial requirements to keep patrons safe. The inspection disclosures performed by our public health inspectors can be found on our ChooseWise website.

Outbreak Management

In 2022, NWHU was notified of 83 outbreaks in facilities like long term care homes, hospitals, or congregate living settings. Of those 83 outbreaks, 72 were COVID-19 and 11 were non-COVID-19 outbreaks. Our Infectious Disease and Environmental Health teams responded to each outbreak by having multiple meetings with the facility and partners. Public health's role during such outbreaks is to assist in reducing the spread of infection. We provide guidance and recommendations to the setting on prevention and control measures, provide testing recommendations, and monitor trends and epidemiological data throughout the outbreak.

The vast increase in outbreaks that the Infectious Disease and Environmental Health teams supported in 2022 provided opportunities to strengthen relationships, both internally and externally and build infection control knowledge and capacity.

▲ 730%

Our region experienced a 730% increase in total outbreaks compared to pre-COVID years.

COVID-19 Vaccination Efforts

COVID-19 vaccine clinics continued throughout 2022. Vaccines were provided at multiple venues, including mass immunization clinics, health care provider offices, pharmacies, and outreach clinics.

Our mass immunization clinics were available through most of 2022 and wrapped up in November. Late in the year, we began offering smaller-scale in-office clinics to ensure those who were due for a vaccine had access to get one.

In 2022, across the catchment area, 123,752 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine were administered. This includes doses given at health unit clinics, long term care homes, hospitals, in northern communities, and many others.

Infectious Disease Control

Case and Contact Management

As the pandemic changed, so did our COVID-19 case and contact management work. In late 2021 and into 2022, many people had some immunity from the virus either through exposure or vaccination, which meant calling every case and contact was not our only prevention tool nor was it an effective use of resources. We then focused on working to improve infection control measures with settings that provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities.

At all stages of the pandemic, case and contact management work included collecting and reporting information about risk factors for infection and severity of illness. Risk factor data collected was used at provincial, national, and global levels to determine which measures were most helpful and guided decisions about disease control measures such as the removal of lock-downs, travel restrictions, and masking requirements.

Outside of the pandemic, public health's infectious disease work always has an on-going local, provincial, national, and global impact, but the number of cases is generally smaller. Our work meshes with other organizations to influence things like funding of new vaccines for prevention, containing diseases brought in from other countries, and food recalls. Our work may not be visible, but it protects those in northwestern Ontario, all the time.

IPAC Hubs

As part of the province's plan, Keeping Ontarians Safe, local networks of Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Hubs were developed to support IPAC practices in community-based congregate living settings. NWHU established an IPAC Hub for our region, with 42 partner agencies representing long-term care homes, supportive housing settings, assisted living settings, youth residential settings, and shelters and warming centres.

In 2022, NWHU hosted 12 IPAC Hub Community of Practice meetings to give partners an opportunity to share IPAC information, generate new IPAC knowledge and practices, and create a network among professionals in similar settings. The IPAC Hub also hosted five topic-specific ad-hoc meetings, two drop in Q&A sessions, and 11 Regional IPAC Hub Table meetings with other northern health units, Public Health Ontario, and Ontario Health to support each to implement this new project.

The NWHU IPAC Hub offered training and education on foundational topics such as hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, point of care risk assessments, outbreak response, PPE donning and doffing, and strategies to support front line staff. The IPAC Hub also offered agencies supportive in-person visits, IPAC assessments, supported outbreak response, provide best practice recommendations to strengthen and enhance current IPAC practices and policies and procedures, and was a central point of contact for general questions.

Grants to help local organizations with infection prevention and control

The IPAC Hub recognized the work of local congregate living settings as they continued to respond to the unique challenges faced in developing foundational IPAC best practices in addition to COVID-19 recovery.

We offered an IPAC Hub grant to support congregate living organizational-led projects that were not only COVID-19 focused, but also projects that would have legacy moving out of the pandemic by supporting foundational IPAC best practices.

37

We received 37 applications and were able to support 17 submissions, totaling \$63,000.

Sexual Health & Harm Reduction

The Sexual Health program offers free, confidential sexual health counselling, support and services while providing services like provision of an emergency contraception pill, birth control information and contraception options, Pap tests, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections, and LGBT2SQ+ supports and services. Our harm reduction services are designed to reduce the harms associated with drug use and other high-risk activities. Some of our services include outreach to vulnerable populations, needle distribution programs, safe needle disposal programs, and opioid overdose prevention.

Outreach network for vulnerable population in Dryden

Dryden staff worked with the Community Table program to offer vaccines, testing, counselling, new harm reduction supplies, and practical supports to vulnerable people in the community. By partnering with this existing initiative, staff were able to increase access to our services for many people who do not visit our office regularly. In 2022, we immunized 40 people ranging from age 9 to 60 years old with COVID-19, pneumonia, flu, Hep B and/or tetanus vaccines through this outreach.

Furthermore, in partnership with the Dryden Native Friendship Centre and the Waasegiizhig Nanaandawe'iyewigamig Health Access Centre, our staff spent one day per week beginning in June 2022 doing outreach work. This partnership allowed a public health nurse to provide care for 98 individuals. The team looks forward to continuing to grow this community-focused outreach position!

Hepatitis C treatment access

By working with Dryden Regional Health Centre and Elevate NWO, we were able to bridge some gaps in care for Hepatitis C treatment in Dryden. NWHU can now take samples for Hepatitis C and deliver it to the lab for testing, reducing the barrier of clients having to get to the lab after an appointment with us.



NWHU can now offer virtual Hepatitis C treatment through Elevate NWO out of Thunder bay via the use of video-conferencing.

Chronic Disease Prevention

The Chronic Disease Prevention team aims to reduce the burden of chronic disease, and prevent injuries and substance misuse. The team focuses their programming and activities around equity, diabetes

prevention, mental health promotion, nutrition, physical activity, injury prevention and substance use prevention. Local staff work with partners to offer programs based on local needs, interest, and capacity.

Eating Disorders Ontario - Prevention Partnership

NWHU is one of five pilot sites in Ontario working with the Eating Disorders Ontario - Prevention at the University Health Network. The project builds local capacity for the delivery of prevention measures and early intervention of eating disorders.

In April, 30 NWHU staff participated in provincial training on the role of adult influencers in building resiliency in youth in a weight-obsessed world. NWHU registered dietitians are leading a regional shift in the approach to food and nutrition messaging to promote life-long positive relationships with food and body image.

Providing neutral food exposures, messages, and experiences promotes healthier eating and a positive relationship with food. This improved approach is culturally sensitive, developmentally appropriate, protects against eating disorders/disordered eating, and promotes overall health and wellbeing.

Expansion of Community Pathways Program in secondary schools

The Community Pathways Partnership is a community-based framework that uses culturally competent student support navigators to coordinate health and social services for Indigenous secondary students. They also help to ensure basic needs are met for at-risk students, including those who are transitioning from other communities or who have moved from northern communities to attend secondary schools, often without their families.

In addition to providing enhanced support to students, the program aims to expand the focus of community health and social service systems to include the social determinants of health.

In 2022, NWHU hired two additional student support navigators to work in Sioux North High School and Fort Frances High School adding to our existing Navigators in Beaver Brae Secondary School and Dryden High School.

2022 Communications Statistics

192,349

page views on NWHU website

41

media releases

1,300

posts on Facebook

47,956

unique visitors to the site

10,027

followers on Facebook, up 5%

VACCINE

booking page was the most visited



200,000

Facebook accounts reached

