

2020 ANNUAL REPORT



HASTINGS PRINCE EDWARD
Public Health



From the Board of Health Chair and the Medical Officer of Health

The year 2020 is one that will hold a place in the pages of history, as the entire world faced a new and deadly virus and the unprecedented challenges that came with it.

Throughout 2020, the team at Hastings Prince Edward Public Health (HPEPH) has worked tirelessly to prevent harm from COVID-19 by identifying cases, slowing the spread, and keeping our community as safe as possible. All this has been done while continuing to provide critical public health services that keep the community healthy and safe.

HPEPH has been at the forefront of the local response to COVID-19 – from the repatriation of Canadians, through various stages of reopening and closures, to the planning for vaccine rollout. In 2020, the importance of having local public health expertise that is able and available to monitor local needs, and quickly adapt to achieve the best possible results for our community, has never been more evident.

In 2020 our staff worked tirelessly, demonstrating their commitment to the safety and well-being of our community during the pandemic. We are proud of their dedication and professionalism.



Dr. Piotr Oglaza



Jo-Anne Albert



Jo-Anne Albert

Chair, Hastings Prince Edward Board of Health
Mayor, Municipality of Tweed, County of Hastings



Dr. Piotr Oglaza

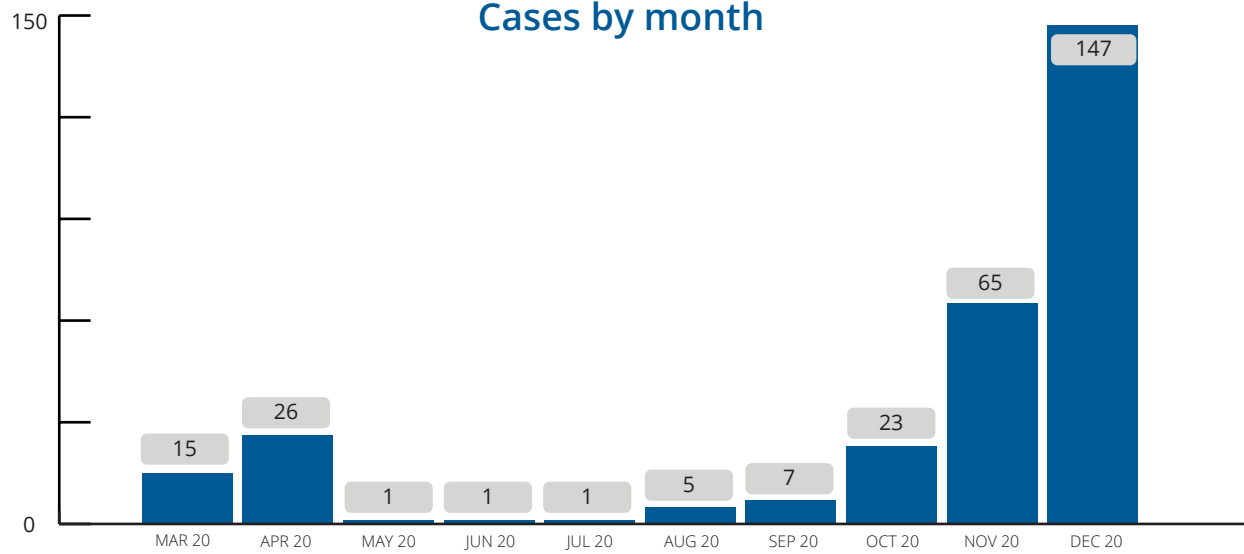
MD, CPHI(C), CCFP, MPH, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health & CEO
Hastings Prince Edward Public Health

- Early in 2020, we launched a new and improved website to enhance interaction with clients, partners, and the public. The new site has been invaluable during the pandemic, ensuring members of our community have easy and convenient access to the public health information they need. The website's average number of weekly users has seen a steady increase since its launch, with 5,000 users in the first quarter of 2020 to 22,000 average weekly users in the last quarter of 2020.
- In response to federal plans to receive repatriated Canadians from Hubei Province, China and several cruise ships at CFB Trenton, we provided support to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to ensure appropriate infection control procedures were in place for the safe repatriation of approximately 1,000 Canadian citizens. We supported extensive screening and implementation of public health precautions and preventive measures to avoid potential exposure to COVID-19 for the travellers, staff, and volunteers.

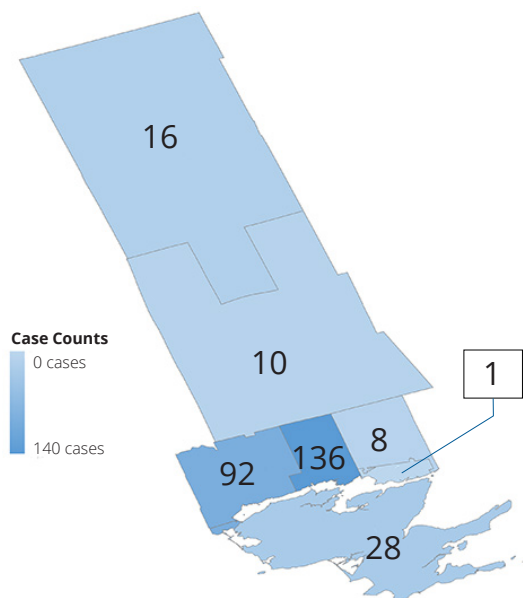


2020 COVID-19 Case Overview

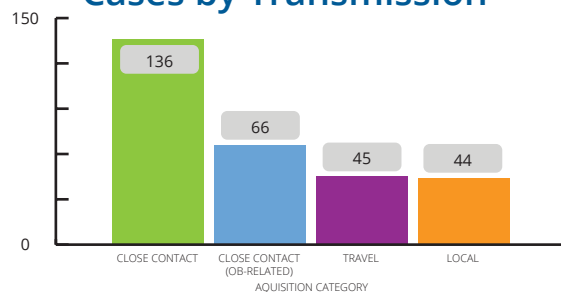
Cases by month



Cases by Geography



Cases by Transmission



Cases by Intervention

- 5.5% Hospitalized
- 1.2% on Ventilator
- 2.4% with ICU stay

Special Groups

- 12 Health Care Workers
- 12 LTC or RH Residents

- In the very early days of the COVID-19 pandemic, prior to the initiation of our local COVID-19 Community Access Centres (CACs) and readily available testing supplies, our staff actively engaged with local health care providers to ensure testing was provided to high risk individuals. With limited swabbing supplies across the province, we worked to collect the necessary supplies to provide prioritized COVID-19 testing at the HPEPH office site in order to identify and isolate cases and contacts. We provided testing from March 18 to April 24 while a CAC was established in Belleville, and we continued to provide transition support for several weeks while the CAC became fully operational.

- When case numbers were low in Hastings and Prince Edward Counties, our case and contact management team provided case management assistance to neighbouring health units that were managing a large volume of cases, including Peel Public Health, Toronto Public Health, Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit, and Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. This not only provided invaluable support to ensure cases and contacts were notified and isolated as early as possible, but also gave our case and contact team the opportunity to maintain case management skills to optimize efficiency when local case counts increased.



- In order to respond to the significant volume of community questions and concerns about COVID-19, an information phone line was established at HPEPH. In 2020, the information line responded to more than 11,000 calls from the public about COVID-19. We also created a number of new web pages and online web inquiry forms to provide information about the virus. There has been a significant increase in visits to our website and social media channels by members of the community seeking accurate information.
- Our staff carried out a table top mass vaccination exercise to prepare for anticipated COVID-19 mass vaccination clinics. The half-day exercise gave our team the opportunity to walk through all the elements of a mass immunization clinic and to establish clear preparedness objectives and the steps needed to achieve those objectives efficiently and effectively.
- In order to provide the public with information about local COVID-19 cases and testing in a timely and efficient manner, we launched a new reporting dashboard on our website that allows frequent and accessible reporting of local data. Typically, the dashboard is updated daily with the number of local lab-confirmed cases, hospitalizations, and related deaths. In addition, the dashboard provides general information about the number of cases identified across the region, outbreaks, and cases associated with specific groups such as long-term care home residents and health care workers. The dashboard is continuously refined and expanded to include evolving data.
- To support the reopening and/or safe operation of local businesses and establishments, our staff have held training sessions, conducted inspections, responded to inquiries, and worked to ensure our community is complying with the public health measures that have helped keep our case counts low.
- Dr. Alexa Caturay, who assumed the role of Acting Medical Officer of Health from June 5 to August 31, 2020, led the development of a comprehensive plan to prepare for the Second Wave of COVID-19. The plan required the redeployment of many staff early in September so they could be trained in case and contact management in preparation for an anticipated increase in COVID-19 cases.

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- We worked with school partners to support the safe reopening of schools in September 2020. We provided guidance and support and carried out infection prevention and control (IPAC) inspections for area schools to ensure a safe environment for both staff and students.
- With the support of funding from the provincial government, we launched the Healthy Schools Program which is made up of an interdisciplinary team of public health nurses and health promoters. Through this program, each family of schools in the HPEPH region is assigned a public health nurse and health promoter to be their key liaison with public health. Due to COVID-19, the initial focus of this program has been on IPAC; surveillance, screening and testing; outbreak management; and case and contact management.
- While many staff at HPEPH were reassigned to support the pandemic response in 2020, others continued to work behind the scenes to maintain delivery of the many public health programs and services the community relies on to stay healthy and safe. Through creative and innovative alternate delivery models, many of our regular services were able to continue – including, supporting new parents, providing harm reduction supplies, offering sexually transmitted infection testing, ensuring the safety of commercial settings, enabling testing of well water, providing access to smoking cessation support, seniors dental care, and more.



Financial Statements

Financial statements for 2020 are reviewed annually by the Board of Health and are available at hpePublicHealth.ca.

Board of Health Members

CHAIR

Jo-Anne Albert
Mayor, Municipality of Tweed,
County of Hastings

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County of Prince Edward

Andreas Bolik
County of Prince Edward

Terry Cassidy
City of Quinte West

Sean Kelly
City of Belleville

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City of Quinte West

Jan O'Neill
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Municipality of Marmora
and Lake,
County of Hastings

Bill Sandison
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Public Health

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