



Protecting Ottawa's Health

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) delivers programs and services that demonstrate an excellent return on the investment for people in Ottawa. In an era where there is a greater focus on providing better, more timely and patient-centered care, public health keeps people healthy and prevents the need for additional treatment services. This significantly reduces the demands placed on hospitals, primary care providers and emergency services. By preventing poor health outcomes, we can ultimately reduce downstream costs to the health care system, benefitting all taxpayers – this is the invisible power of public health.

Our health is shaped by much more than access to the health care system, including the conditions in which we live, learn, grow, and age. The services and programs provided by Ottawa Public Health are diverse and are carefully designed based on assessment of unique community needs to address the important health issues of our time. This means working with partners across sectors, such as the City's planning department, school boards and local health and social service agencies, to deliver on a mandate of health protection, health promotion and prevention.

Ottawa Public Health relies on a team of highly skilled professionals including public health nurses and physicians, dental hygienists, public health inspectors, dietitians, health promoters & communicators, and epidemiologists to ensure specific health needs of diverse populations are addressed. OPH also maintains capacity to respond to urgent issues that have direct impacts on community health, such as the mental health support provided following the 2019 OC Transpo bus crash, and protecting the community from health hazards during floods and the aftermath of a tornado that unexpectedly struck in 2018.

Ottawa's health needs are unique, diverse and ever-evolving. Ottawa Public Health remains prepared to adapt and respond to those needs and protect the community's health.

Public Health: A Return on Investment

Public health programming and policy work provide a broad return on investment for public money. Studies have consistently shown that increased investments in public health reduce mortality and illness, while also decreasing the financial burden on the health care system.



Every dollar invested in mental health and addictions saves \$30 in lost productivity and social costs.

1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental health problem or illness in any given year. Ottawa Public Health has developed “*have THAT talk*” videos and resources to help promote discussions on mental health.



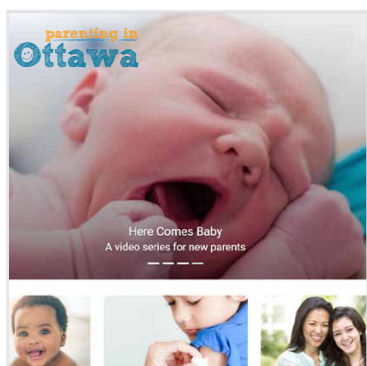
Every dollar invested in immunizing children saves \$16 in health care costs.

Immunizations support individual health, and the health of the population. In addition to school-based immunizations, Ottawa Public Health delivers childhood and catch-up immunizations to populations with barriers to primary care. This includes partnering with the Centretown Community Health Centre, and the YMCA to reach individuals with unstable housing and refugees.



Every dollar invested in tobacco prevention saves \$20 in future health care costs.

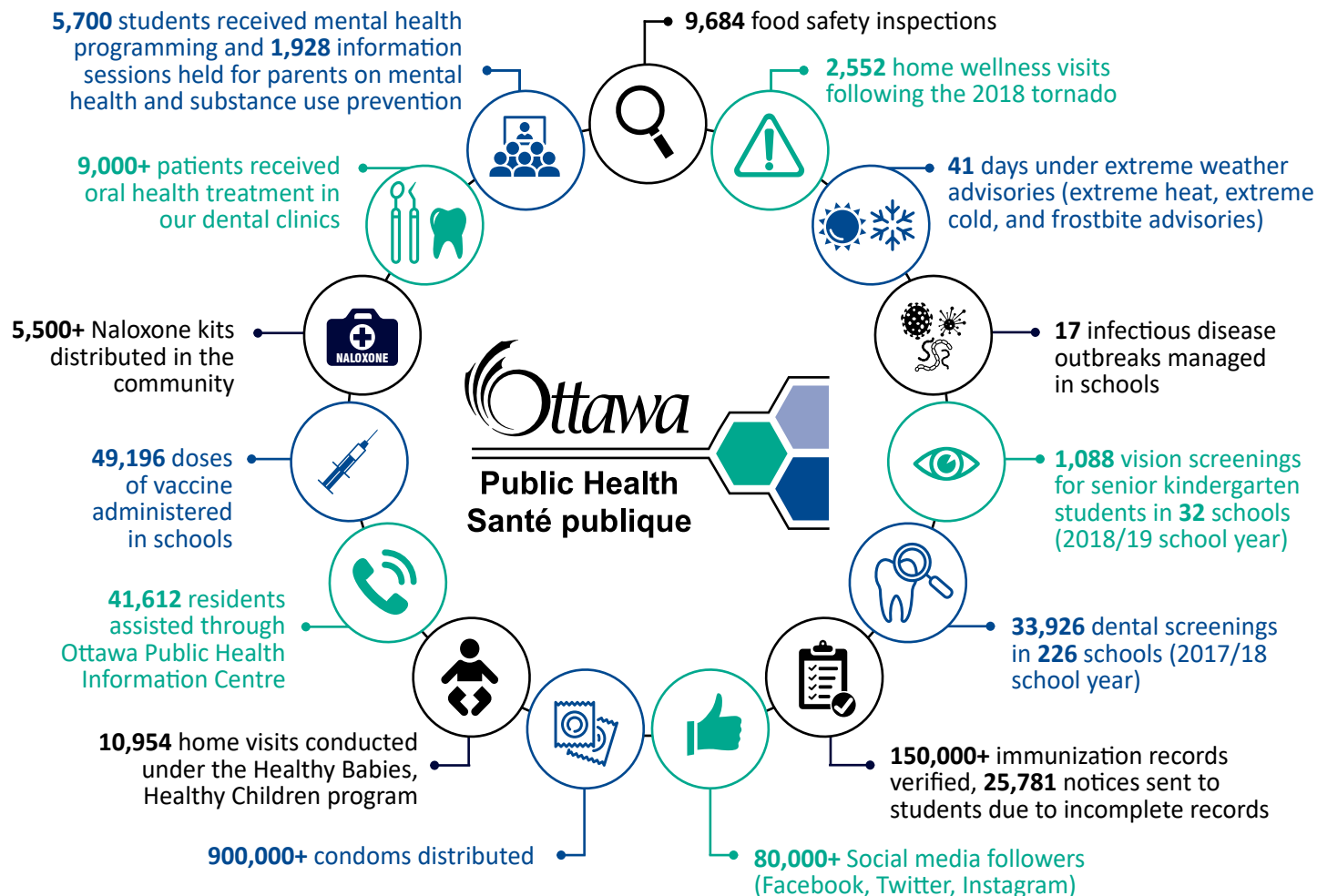
Ottawa has been a leader in smoke-free policies, including prevention and cessation. Since 2001, Ottawa has experienced a more than 7% decrease in smoking rates. This significant decline in use has been supported by the policies put in place to prevent tobacco use and protect the public from second hand smoke.



Every dollar invested in early childhood development saves \$9 in future spending on health, social, and justice services.

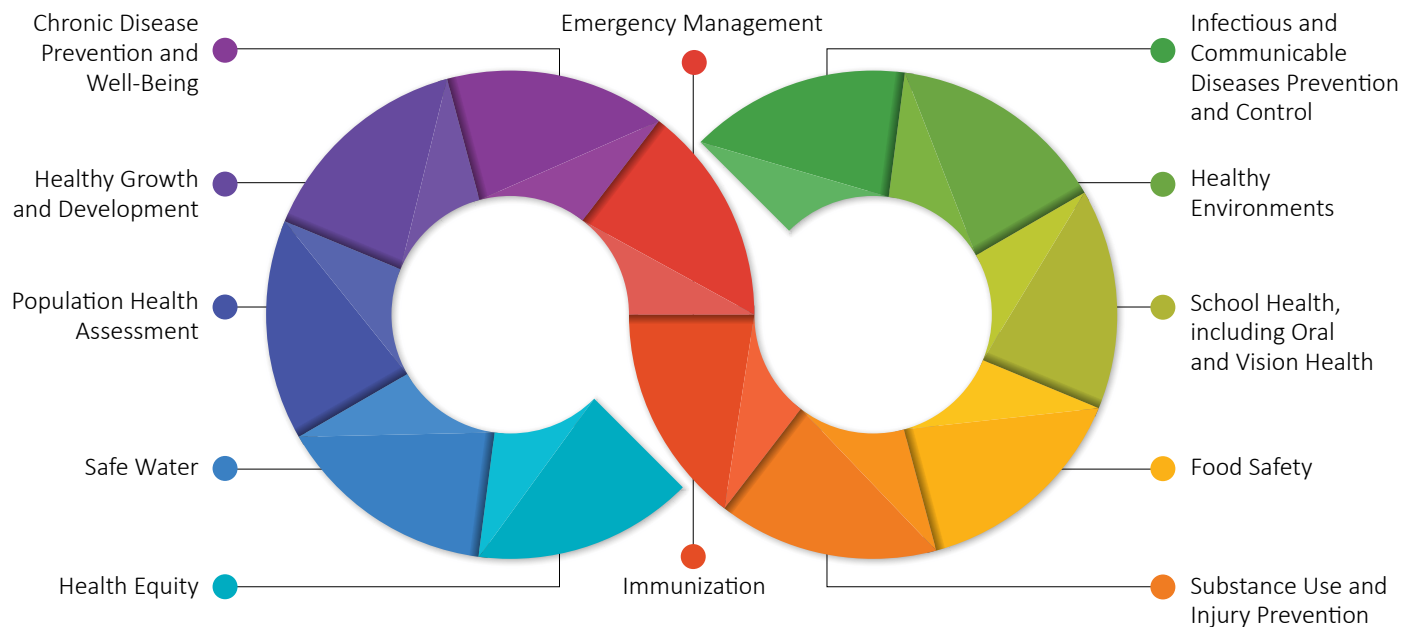
Ottawa Public Health’s **Healthy Babies, Healthy Children** program provides prenatal classes and home visits to support new parents in their journey through raising children. **Parenting in Ottawa** is a multi-platform initiative with a mission to share information, respond to parenting questions and create a safe place for parents to get together to chat about raising kids in Ottawa. With public health nurses on the other end, over **21,000** followers receive regular updates and responses to their parenting questions.

Ottawa Public Health: By the Numbers (2018)



Key Public Health Responsibilities:

(mandated by the Ontario Public Health Standards)





WHAT WE DO

HOW WE DO IT

Understanding population health

- Collect and analyze population-level data and share vital information with health care and community partners to inform the planning and delivery of health services.
- Identify emerging health issues through ongoing monitoring and surveillance of disease trends and risk factors.
- Identify and measure social determinants of health and health inequities and their impact on health outcomes and health service delivery.
- As a complementary function to the above, conduct analysis among priority groups such as youth, older adults and those with low socio-economic level, among others.

Community Engagement

- Manage a robust system of public health information and communication through traditional channels (e.g., telephone information line), as well as web-based and social media channels (e.g., OPH Twitter following among the largest in North America for a public health organization).
- Communicate urgent and routine health messages (in English and French) to a large network of health care providers in Ottawa.
- Maintain strong partnerships within the City of Ottawa administration through departments such as Community and Social Services and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services for health promotion initiatives.
- Build multiple partnerships with local health and social service providers such as Community Health Centres (CHCs), school boards and Youth Services Bureau (YSB) for planning and coordination of health services.

Emergency response and communicable disease control

- Maintain 24/7 availability to receive reports and respond to public health and other emergencies.
- Investigate and respond to outbreaks of communicable diseases to prevent community spread.
- Manage cases and contacts of reportable diseases of public health importance, such as invasive meningococcal disease and tuberculosis, HIV, Hepatitis C, and syphilis.
- Engage in response/mitigation of health hazards in the environment, including contaminants and biological agents in food, water, indoor/outdoor air, extreme weather and exposure to radiation including UV light and radon.
- Support infection prevention and control practices/policies of hospitals, long-term care homes and private clinics.



| WHAT WE DO | HOW WE DO IT |
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| Prevention of disease and injury | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate Ottawa's vaccine distribution program; which includes distribution, inventory management and monitoring of vaccine safety and quality. • Provide front-line immunization through school-based clinics and directly to under-served populations facing barriers to access. • Provide health promotion and clinical services for prevention and management of sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections. • Deliver programs and engage in partnership work targeting prevention of chronic diseases (e.g., smoking cessation services). • Deliver injury prevention programs across the lifespan to address falls and road/off-road safety, including bicycle helmet use. |
| Promoting mental health and wellness | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote mental health across the lifespan through programs focused on mental health awareness and stigma reduction, building resiliency and suicide prevention. • Provide harm reduction services for substance use including distribution of supplies (e.g., needles), supervised consumption services, and referrals to other health and social services. • Enable policy action through the municipality and with community partners to address the harms of substance use such as by-laws restricting smoking in public places. • Enable policy action through the municipality and with community partners to promote healthy eating and active living behaviours (e.g., neighbourhood design to encourage physical activity, restaurant menu labeling requirements). • Provide programs to support psychological health and safety in workplaces. • Provide programs to support independence of older adults to age-in-place in their communities. |
| Healthy growth and development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide early identification, screening and assessment for health risks in newborn children. • Provide home visits to families with infants and young children with intervention and service coordination through referral pathways to/from community services. • Direct public health nursing services for parents to support breastfeeding, healthy eating, physical activity, baby and toddler safety, growth, social and emotional development. • Provide oral health screening and clinical dental care for children. • Provide vision screening and referrals for children at risk of vision problems. • Act as a system of support to school boards and schools for implementation of health-related curricula and to address health needs in schools. • Support policy action through the municipality and with community partners to promote the healthy growth and development of children and youth. |

