

2025: A Year-in-Review of Toronto Public Health

Date: March 16, 2026

To: Board of Health

From: Medical Officer of Health

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report provides highlights of Toronto Public Health's accomplishments and achievements in 2025.

The work of Toronto Public Health took place amidst evolving infectious disease threats including the largest measles outbreak in Ontario in over 25 years, rising cost of living, an ongoing drug toxicity crisis, extreme weather related to climate change, and the spread of health mis/disinformation. Despite these challenges, Toronto Public Health prioritized evidence-informed interventions, responded to health threats, and strengthened collaboration and partnerships with the community.

As TPH experiences ongoing growth in demand for and increased complexity of its services, TPH continues to find ways to innovate and modernize to meet the mandate of protecting the health of more than three million residents of Toronto.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

In January 2025, the Board of Health adopted HL21.4 2024: A Year-in-Review of Toronto Public Health. The report provided an overview of Toronto Public Health's main accomplishments and programs provided to residents during 2024.
<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.HL21.4>

COMMENTS

As the largest local public health unit in the largest municipality in Canada, Toronto Public Health (TPH) has been focused on protecting and promoting the health and well-being of Toronto residents since 1883. Public health is a critical component of Ontario's health care system, protecting people from health risks and preventing illness before it starts.

In 2025, the work of public health took place amidst evolving infectious disease threats, rising cost of living, an ongoing drug toxicity crisis, extreme weather related to climate change, and the spread of health mis-/disinformation. Despite these challenges, TPH prioritized evidence-informed interventions, responded to health threats, and strengthened collaboration and partnerships with the community. Together, these efforts promote health, reduce gaps between communities, strengthen emergency readiness, help people stay healthy, and build a safe place to live.

This report presents a snapshot of accomplishments in 2025 to highlight a range of everyday activities and special achievements. TPH's work is much broader than the highlights shared in this snapshot, and more fulsome reporting occurs through additional channels throughout the year. These additional channels include monthly Board of Health reports, the [Strategic Plan Dashboard](#) updates twice annually, and annual reports on the Our Health, Our City Strategy and the Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan.

Public health interventions in daily life

Toronto is home to more than three million people. Public health is part of everyday life in Toronto - even when you don't see it. When public health works well, the city's residents have access to healthy and safe environments where they live, work, play and study. Every day, TPH protects people from health risks and prevents illness before it starts through immunization, inspections, sexual health services, school health, food safety, healthy aging programs and more.

The last decade has seen accelerated population growth in large urban centres like Toronto.¹ The main source of population growth is international migration, and particularly an increase in non-permanent residents (i.e., those with refugee status or those on a work or study permit). Toronto's population is also aging, with the share of seniors aged 65 and over continuing to grow.² As Toronto's population grows, so does the demand for public health services and the complexity of client needs.

¹ Statistics Canada. [Canada's population estimates: Subprovincial areas, 2024](#)

² Toronto Public Health. [Toronto's Population Health Profile, 2023.](#)

In 2025, some of the highlights of TPH accomplishments include:

- Completed 1,224 investigations of vaccine preventable diseases (e.g., measles, mumps, pertussis), approximately double the pre-pandemic average of 611 (2015-2019), that helped reduce transmission risk and protect residents across the city. These investigations are increasingly complex as TPH has seen an increase in the number of clients experiencing homelessness, individuals without access to primary care, and newcomers navigating the health care system.
- Completed more than 27,336 food safety inspections and responded to 6,209 food safety complaints, ensuring residents can gather, celebrate, and enjoy their favourite foods safely.
- Supported more than 1,000 citywide events where food plays a central role, including farmers' markets, street festivals, and carnivals, by providing safe food handling education to help ensure residents can enjoy these events safely.
- Completed inspections at more than 2,000 businesses across the city that offer services such as tattoos, piercings, manicure/pedicure services, hair and aesthetic services, limiting risk of infection for residents. With more than 4,000 personal service settings across Toronto, a 20% increase since 2014, the sector's growth and the rise of complex, higher-risk procedures have significantly increased inspection demands. For instance, inspections of settings that offer skin-piercing aesthetic services (e.g., microneedling) now take an average of 55 minutes, up from under 30 minutes in 2023.
- Responded to 318 active tuberculosis (TB) cases, an increase of nearly 25 per cent in the last ten years, providing critical case management and prevention efforts that helped provide supports for people infected with TB, reduce transmission risk, and protect residents across the city.
- Managed the local impact of two province-wide shortages of rabies vaccines that required timely modified guidance to health professionals to ensure individuals with potential exposure to rabies were adequately protected. Shortages were compounded by a 28 per cent increase in the number of individuals that required assessment for potential rabies exposure.
- Provided school health services to more than 350,000 students across 815 publicly funded schools, with enhanced services for approximately 390 priority schools through a dedicated School Liaison Public Health Nurse during the 2024-2025 school year.
- Continued to advance the City of Toronto's vision and strategy for Student Nutrition Programs, expanding to 73 new school communities in 2025, the largest and most rapid program expansion since the inception of the program in 1998, with additional expansion planned for 2026 to the remaining school communities in Toronto.

- Handled 24,091 customer service calls from the public through TPH's main call centre, providing increased accessibility to information for residents and connecting them to services. The call centre also increased call answer speed by 50%.

Protecting residents from threats to their health

[Toronto's 2023 Population Health Profile](#) suggested that emerging infectious diseases, extreme weather, and increasing rates of chronic disease will continue to pose threats to the health of Toronto's population. TPH plays an important role in responding to ongoing and emerging population health concerns, by monitoring health trends, using evidence to guide decisions, and supporting policies that keep people safe.

In 2025, some highlights of TPH accomplishments include the following:

- Responded to the largest Ontario measles outbreak in more than 25 years with case and contact management, health promotion messaging, and vaccination through TPH programs and public education campaigns, helping limit transmission and protect residents. Efforts to respond and maintain vaccine coverage resulted in only 10 measles cases locally in Toronto (of the more than 2,000 cases provincially), with only two of these cases linked to the larger provincial outbreak.
- Continued the response to record-breaking heat events in the summer by increasing the number of cool spaces to more than 550 publicly available locations, monitoring heat related illness, and continuing to develop heat-vulnerability mapping to identify communities most at risk to ensure residents had access to respite during extreme heat.
- Monitored daily trends related to suspected overdose calls and issued a drug alert, notifying residents about potentially toxic drugs in circulation, including the introduction of medetomidine, a veterinary tranquilizer, into the supply.
- Supported the response for northern First Nations communities that were evacuated to Toronto due to wildfires, including on-site, culturally safe services, through collaboration with the Indigenous Health Team.
- Provided witness testimony to the Senate Standing Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology in support of Bill S202, which would require prescribed warning labels on alcoholic beverages about risks such as fatal cancers.
- Submitted recommendations to Health Canada's third legislative review of the *Tobacco and Vaping Products Act*, emphasizing enhanced enforcement and compliance, restrictions on online sales and advertising, retail availability, and equitable approaches developed in partnership with Indigenous communities.
- Responded to 475 media requests, serving as a trusted source of accurate, timely information to the public on topics such as respiratory illness, measles, extreme weather, and rabies - helping residents make informed decisions to keep themselves and their loved ones safe.

Advancing work through strategic partnerships

TPH collaborates with other City divisions, hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, and community partners to develop and implement public policy and programs that enhance the health of individuals, communities, and the entire city. Working within the continuum of health care and with community agencies helps ensure residents are more connected to services and care reaches those who need it most.

In 2025, some highlights of TPH achievements include the following:

- Increased access to breastfeeding services through expanded hours and the opening of two new breastfeeding clinics in partnership with Humber River Hospital and Ancestral Hands, increasing access to care and increasing parent knowledge and skills to support successful breastfeeding in equity-deserving communities.
- Expanded access to in-person support groups for pregnant people and new parents through the Perinatal Adjustment Program (PAP) in partnership with South Riverdale Community Health Centre and MATCH Midwives, focused on equity-deserving families.
- Participated in Homeless Connect Toronto, an annual event dedicated to supporting individuals experiencing homelessness. In just one day, the TPH Dental team provided dental screening for 56 clients, providing dental care for the first time in years to most of the clients.
- Worked with the Ontario Ministry of Health, Ontario Health, City divisions, and health and community partners to propose, establish, and execute funding for the Downtown Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hub to provide substance use care and housing.
- Worked with the Toronto Police Service to advance the Downtown Community Outreach Response and Engagement team pilot program.
- Coordinated with Sunnybrook Hospital, Toronto Emergency Management, City of Toronto's FIFA Secretariat, as well as other city divisions and partners to initiate the planning for the FIFA World Cup 2026™ in Toronto and mitigate any potential risks to public health.
- Relaunched "[Your Health Matters](#)," a partnership with the Toronto Public Library, offering people recommended resources on nutrition, sexual health, physical health and mental health, easily accessible to residents in their own local library. The collaboration is a focused collection of adult and teen books available at 19 branches across the city aimed at supporting physical and mental health, reinforcing TPH as a trusted source of health information.
- Provided evidence and advice to other City of Toronto divisions to support City Council decisions including further development towards a maximum indoor temperature by-law for rental units, coordination with SafeTO and the Toronto

Seniors' Strategy, options for safety barriers along Leaside Bridge to prevent risk of suicide, and updated evidence on the health impacts of noise.

- Established commitment from the Toronto District School Board and Toronto Catholic District School Board to renew the Toronto Healthy Schools Strategy partnership agreement and shared priorities to advance student health and well-being.

Modernizing the way public health works

As public health experiences ongoing growth in both demand for and complexity of services, TPH continues to find ways to innovate and modernize to meet its mandate and protect the health of the more than three million residents of Toronto.

In 2025, some highlights of TPH achievements include the following:

- Developed an online system for Toronto physicians, nurse practitioners and hospital pharmacists to order publicly funded medications for the treatment of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), reducing the administrative workload for staff who have seen an increase in both STI rates and medication orders in Toronto.
- Enhanced technology to manage an increase in TB cases without an increase in case managers, as well as establishing an Immigration Medical Surveillance Tool to streamline medical reporting for those entering Canada and required to complete an Immigration Medical Exam.
- Piloted an electronic consent portal that enables clients to consent to public health services such as vaccine clinics without having to use paper-based forms.
- Launched sociodemographic data collection in select breastfeeding clinics, recognizing the importance of this data in identifying inequities in service delivery and promoting equitable health outcomes.
- Transitioned the documentation of inspections in the TPH DineSafe Food Safety Program to Salesforce, replacing the previous outdated system, streamlining and improving inspections and investigations.

Looking ahead

TPH's programs, services, and policy directions strive to create the optimal conditions to achieve a healthy city for all, meet community public health needs, comply with the Ontario Public Health Standards, and contribute to a broader sustainable health system.

As the largest local public health agency in Canada, TPH is committed to advancing the health and well-being of all Torontonians.

Toronto Public Health Strategic Impact

The accomplishments noted in this report advance the following priorities of the Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028:

1. Strengthen health protection, disease prevention and emergency preparedness
2. Promote health and well-being across the lifespan
3. Promote the conditions to support positive mental health and reduce the harms of substance use
4. Advocate to advance health equity

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SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Letter from the Medical Officer of Health
Attachment 2: 2025 Snapshot