

WDG Board of Health

Highlights

Board of Health Members

Nancy Sullivan

Chair
City of Guelph

Allen Taylor

Vice-Chair
County of Dufferin

Dennis Lever

Secretary – Treasurer
Warden, County of Wellington
Mayor, Township of Puslinch

Dr. Nicola Mercer

Ex-Officio Member
Medical Officer of Health & CEO,
WDG Public Health

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City of Guelph

William Baxter

County of Wellington

Christine Billings

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George Bridge

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Mayor, Town of Minto

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Mayor, City of Guelph

Guy Gardhouse

Councillor, County of Dufferin
Mayor, Township of East Garafraxa

June Hofland

Councillor, City of Guelph

Lambert Otten

County of Wellington

Nancy MacDonald,

County of Wellington

Ken McGhee

Councillor, County of Dufferin
Deputy Mayor, Town of Mono

Keith Perron

City of Guelph

Chris White

Councillor, County of Wellington
Mayor, Township of Guelph-Eramosa

Public Health is governed by a Board of Health consisting of provincially appointed local municipal councillors, mayors and community members and is mandated to support the well-being of individuals and communities.

Dr. Nicola Mercer, Medical Officer of Health, updated the Board on:

Wee Talk: Wee Talk is a preschool speech and language program delivered in partnership with Public Health, St. Joseph's Health Care and Groves Memorial Community Hospital. Speech and language disorders affect approximately 5-10% of children ages 0-6. Communication disorders in children are often misdiagnosed as learning disabilities or behavioural problems. 35% of children referred to Public Health for screening and assessing communication difficulties require speech therapy services. Parents are critical to the success of any speech therapy service and currently, parents must attend an in-person orientation before services can commence. In September 2018, an interactive online parent orientation will reduce wait times between referral and direct therapy, as parents will be able to complete the online program rather than wait for an in-person session. A full report is available here: <https://bit.ly/2qhFvTp> or at wdgpublichealth.ca.

Oral Health: Children and youth at risk of poor oral health receive timely and effective detection and identification through Public Health's Oral Health programs staffed by dental hygienists and dental assistants. Children and youth from low-income families have improved access to oral health care through preventative dental clinics at Public Health offices, as well as the five portable clinics which are held in rural areas to reach priority populations which may face transportation barriers. In 2017, oral health screening was provided for 11,905 children in their schools where 237 children were identified with urgent dental needs and 1000 with non-urgent needs. Another 1,699 children were seen at a Public Health preventative dental clinic where 579 children were identified as having urgent dental needs. Once identified, Public Health can help families get the treatment needed through Health Smiles Ontario. In the fall of 2018, Public Health will expand its free dental program by having a dentist on site in its Guelph offices to assist children directly. A full report is available here: <https://bit.ly/2H8BZVg> or at wdgpublichealth.ca.

Lyme Disease: Public Health has seen an increase in tick submissions, as well as an increase in the rate of Lyme disease, which corresponds to increases seen provincially. This may be due in part to increased awareness of ticks and Lyme disease among the public. However, it is known that the population and geographic range of blacklegged ticks is growing in Ontario, and is expected to continue to grow with this region's favorable habitat for ticks. Public Health's tick and Lyme disease program will focus on surveillance, as well as public communication and education. A full report is available here: <https://bit.ly/2HI0KJJ> or at wdgpublichealth.ca.