

Report on
**the Health Status of the
Residents of Ontario**



Report on the Health Status of the Residents of Ontario

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PHRED Partners

Toronto Public Health
Region of Hamilton-Wentworth Social and Public Health
Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox and Addington Health Unit
Middlesex- London Health Unit
Region of Ottawa-Carleton Health Department
Sudbury and District Health Unit

Production Team

Ian Johnson, Chair
Fred Goettler
Anna Goral
Alanna Leffley
Bernie Lueske
Hyewon Lee-Han
Jill Mallon

Val Mann
Doug Manuel
Vic Sahai
Ruth Sanderson
Sue Schultz
Charles Yim
Greg Zaniewski

Provincial Health Status Report

Advisory Committee

Ian Johnson, Chair

Colin D’Cunha, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Vivek Goel, University of Toronto

Denise Hébert, Ottawa-Carleton Health Department

Hyewon Lee-Han, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Alanna Leffley, Middlesex-London Health Unit

Val Mann, Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox and Addington Health Unit

Carol Paul, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Louise Picard, Sudbury and District Health Unit

Mary-Anne Pietrusiak, Durham Regional Health Unit

Vic Sahai, Northern Health Intelligence Partnership

Patrick Seliske, Waterloo Regional Community Health Department

Julie Stratton, Perth District Health Unit

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- **Dr. David Mowat**, Director, Health Surveillance Transition, Health Canada
- **Dr. Robin Badgley**, Professor Emeritus, Department of Public Health Sciences, University of Toronto
- **Dr. Graham Pollett**, Medical Officer of Health, Middlesex-London Health Unit
- **Brenda Guarda**, President, Association of Public Health Epidemiologists (APHEO), Epidemiologist Simcoe County District Health Unit
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Table of Contents

Preface	9
1. Highlights and Implications for Prevention	11
Challenges to Achieving Health and Well-Being	11
The Aging Population	12
Diversity Within Ontario	12
Implications for Prevention	13
Conclusion	14
2. Methodology	15
Selection and Definition of Indicators	15
Sources of Data	15
Overall Limitations	16
Choice of Comparisons	16
Calculations of rates	17
3. Population of Ontario	21
Ontario as a Whole	21
Immigration	23
Ethnicity and Language	24
Regional Variation	26
4. Environment and Health	31
Social Environment and Health	31
Income	32
Education	32
Unemployment	33
Social Support	33
Regional Variation of Social Environment and Health	33
Physical Environment and Health	35
Air Quality	35
Drinking Water	36
Soil Contamination	37
Other Risk Sources	37
Regional Variation of Physical Environment and Health	38
5. Mortality and Morbidity	41
Overall Mortality	42
Life Expectancy	43

Leading Causes of Death	43
Premature Death	44
Regional Variation of Mortality and Life Expectancy	44
Overall Hospital Separations	45
Regional Variation of Hospital Separations.....	47
6. Chronic Disease.....	53
Selected Chronic Diseases.....	54
Ischemic Heart Disease	55
Stroke.....	56
Lung Cancer	57
Chronic Lung Disease	58
Breast Cancer.....	58
Prostate Cancer	59
Colorectal Cancer	60
Other Selected Preventable Cancers.....	61
Regional Variation for Selected Chronic Diseases	62
Screening for Cancer	64
Breast Cancer Screening.....	64
Screening with a Mammogram.....	64
Screening by a Clinical Breast Exam	65
Cervical Cancer Screening	65
7. Injury Prevention	81
Injury Related Deaths and Hospitalizations	81
Motor Vehicle Injuries	83
Risk Factors for Motor Vehicle Injuries	84
Pedestrians Traffic Related Injuries	86
Bicycling Injuries	87
Motor Driven Snow Vehicle Injuries	87
Injuries while Boating	87
Drowning and Near Drowning	87
Falls	88
Injuries Associated with Fires	88
Suffocation.....	88
Regional Variation of Unintentional Injuries.....	89
Violence and Criminal Activities.....	90
Trends in Crime Statistics (1988 to 1996).....	90
Violent Crimes	90
Assaults.....	91
8. Work and Health	95
Work in Ontario	96

Workforce in Ontario	96
Consequences of Work-related Injury and Disease	97
Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) Annual Report	97
Work-Related Injuries Reported in Ontario Health Survey 1996/97.....	98
Dealing with Work Impacts on Health	99
9. Behaviour and Health	105
Smoking	106
Smoking Among Persons Aged 12 and Over	106
Smoking Among Teenagers	106
Type of Smoker	107
Proportion Living in Smoke-free Homes	108
Regional Variation of Smoking	108
Alcohol	109
Current Drinkers	109
High Volume Drinkers	109
Occasions of Heavy Drinking.....	110
Drinking and Driving	111
Regional Variation of Drinking	111
Physical Activity	112
Frequency of Physical Activity	112
Intensity of Physical Activity (PAI).....	112
Body Mass Index	113
Regional Variation of Physical Activity and Body Mass Index	113
10. Family Health	117
Sexual Health.....	118
Regional Variation of Sexual Health	119
Reproductive Health	120
Live Births	120
Fertility Rates	120
Stillbirths	122
Abortion Rates	123
Known Pregnancy Rates.....	123
Low Birth Weight	123
Regional Variation	124
Child Health.....	125
Infant and Perinatal Mortality Rates.....	125
Regional Variation in Infant and Perinatal Mortality	127
Child Mortality (Aged 1 to 9 years)	127
Regional Variation of Child Mortality (Aged 1 to 9 years)	127
Dental Health	129
Child Poverty	130

Seniors' Health (Aged 65+)	130
Population and Dependency Ratio	130
Living Arrangements, Poverty and Social Participation	131
Regional Variation in Selected Conditions for Seniors (Aged 65+).....	132
Mortality and Morbidity Among Seniors	132
All Cause Mortality and Morbidity	132
Selected Causes of Mortality and Morbidity	133
Regional Variation for Mortality and Morbidity Among Seniors.....	135
Influenza Vaccine Coverage	136
Activity Limitation Among Seniors	136
11. Mental Health	141
Selected Mental Disorders	142
Suicide	142
Schizophrenia	143
Affective Psychoses	143
Neurotic Disorders	144
Senile and Pre-senile Psychoses	144
Hospital Separation Rates for Depression	145
Regional Variation for Selected Mental Disorders	146
Prevalence of Selected Conditions	148
Mental Distress	148
Depression	149
Use of Mood Altering Drugs	149
Regional Variation for Mental Distress, Depression and Use of Mood Altering Drugs ...	149
Use of Mental Health Services	150
Positive Measures of Health	151
Social Support	151
Regional Variation for Use of Mental Health Services, Positive Measures of Health and Social Support	151
12. Infectious Diseases	155
Mortality from Selected Infectious Diseases	156
Vaccine Preventable Diseases	156
Immunization Coverage	159
Regional Variation	160
Sexually Transmitted Diseases	160
Regional Variation of Sexually Transmitted Diseases	164
Tuberculosis (TB)	165
Rabies	166
Enteric Illness	166
Regional Variation of Enteric Illness	169
Emerging Infections	169

13. Self- Reported Health of Health Services Utilization	175
Self-Reported Health Status	176
Self-Reported Health Status in Ontario	176
Self-Reported Health Status and Socioeconomic Status	176
Regional Variation of Self-Reported Health Status	177
Disability	178
Prevalence of Disability	178
Causes of Disability	179
Regional Variation in Disability	180
Use of Health Services	181
Family Doctor/General Practitioner Consultations	181
Dental Consultations	182
Emergency Services Utilization	183
Use of Medications	184
Regional Variation of Use of Health Services	185
14. The Health Status of the Francophone Population in Ontario.....	187
Demographic Profile.....	189
Population Growth and Distribution	189
Immigration and Minority Groups	190
Age Structure	190
Social Environment	190
Education	190
Literacy	192
Labour Force Activity.....	193
Income	193
Incidence of Low Income	194
Family Structure	194
General Health Status	195
Self-Rated Health	195
Activity Limitation	195
Activities of Daily Living.....	196
Chronic Disease and Injury	196
Mental Health	196
Behaviour and Health	197
Smoking	197
Alcohol Consumption.....	198
Health Weights.....	199
Physical Activity	199
Sexual Health.....	200
Consequences of Health Problems	201
Conclusions	203

Preface

The purpose of the *Report on the Health Status of the Residents of Ontario* is to support the planning of public health programs for Ontario. In 1998, the Public Health Research, Education and Development Program initiated the development of this report.

The 1997 Ontario Ministry of Health publication, *Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines*¹ serves as the main framework for the organization of the topics and the analysis of health indicators. Chapters on Mental Health and Work and Health were added to the report. The Family Health chapter was supplemented with a seniors health section. These additions broaden the scope and analysis of Ontario's health.

Health status reports paint an imperfect picture of a population's health, since the definition of health is difficult, if not impossible, to make operational. Indicators must be used and invariably, these do not capture all the important components. In many situations, there are multiple indicators for one aspect of health and very few for another. As an example, many indicators are used for disease but very few for well-being. Finally, gaps in information exist, since some data sources are either not available or incomplete.

In the scientific environment, it is customary to report data and then discuss the limitations so as to avoid over interpretation. This philosophy has been adopted for this Report. Readers need to understand the Report's limitations. First, there were technical difficulties in creating the indicators. Time was devoted to overcoming the technical obstacles and every effort was made to calculate the indicators accurately and consistently, following the protocol of the report of the Public Health Indicator's Working Group.² Second, there were time limitations for the analysis. Hence, some indicator interpretations are less detailed.

The content of chapters 3 to 14 follows a consistent presentation style. At the beginning of each chapter, you will find the Key Findings. The remainder of the chapter provides details on the relevant indicators with little discussion. Key definitions are found in the Glossary of Terms located at the end of each chapter, with the exceptions of Chapters 12 and 13. Graphs and smaller tables are contained within the text, and large tables are appended at the end of each chapter. The Table of Contents details the text headings but does not list the tables and graphs.

References

1. Ontario Ministry of Health (1997) *Mandatory Health Programs and Service Guidelines*.
2. Public Health Indicators Working Group. <http://cehip.org/apheo/>

