

North Bay Parry Sound District
Health Unit



Bureau de santé
du district de North Bay-Parry Sound



Strategic Plan

2024-2027

Land Acknowledgement



The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) operates on the traditional territory of Dokis First Nation, Henvey Inlet First Nation, Magnetawan First Nation, Nipissing First Nation, Shawanaga First Nation, and Wasauksing First Nation. It also includes the unceded traditional territory of the Algonquin people. These lands are also home to peoples from other Indigenous communities, including First Nations, Inuit and Métis, from across Canada and around the world. These lands and waters have been under Indigenous stewardship since time immemorial. The Health Unit is also situated on land covered by the Robinson Huron Treaty and the Williams Treaties.

Historically, Indigenous voices have been largely excluded from informing the direction of public health. As our organization moves forward with strategic planning in efforts to better serve our communities, we recognize the need to engage with and learn from Indigenous partners and communities, rooted in the principles of respect, trust, self-determination, and commitment. Through this work, we seek to use a lens of two-eyed seeing, meaning we aim to understand, respect, and apply both western and Indigenous practices and ways of knowing.

Public health has a responsibility to address poor health and inequities, with a mandate to address the social determinants of health. These determinants, such as education, food security, housing, safe water, and health care, are not distributed equitably among all populations, and many Indigenous peoples have suffered as a result. Additionally, it is important to acknowledge that the structures of colonialism and racism all influence and intertwine with the far-reaching causes of poor health and inequities that Indigenous peoples disproportionately experience.

In collaboration with Indigenous partners and communities, the Health Unit strives to challenge colonial practices and systems that perpetuate these inequities. We aim to uphold our commitment and responsibility to treaty rights working toward the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada: Calls to Action* and the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

A Message from the Medical Officer of Health

On behalf of the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) and the many community members, organizations, and staff that contributed to this project, I am pleased to share our 2024-2027 Strategic Plan. This plan, along with the Ontario Public Health Standards, will serve as our compass as the Health Unit navigates the next four years.

The “deep dive” we took in defining and refining our ideals and the way we work led to the enhancement of our vision, mission, and values. Through fulsome consultation in the community and within the Health Unit and deeply thoughtful integration of the feedback received, we identified three strategic priorities, reflecting the needs highlighted during the consultation.

To best deliver services to the public, the Health Unit must ensure our staff have the training, experience, and support to grow and thrive as individuals and public health practitioners. **Organizational Well-being** has been identified as the first priority.

Health Equity is foundational to public health practice. Within this second priority, the Health Unit articulates our areas of focus to address the social determinants of health.

The Health Unit cannot accomplish its mission without external support and collaboration. Addressing **Communication, Connection, Collaboration** as the third priority will enhance how the Health Unit interacts with the public and community partners.

With these priorities as a guide, the Health Unit will work towards our vision of a healthy community for all.

Sincerely,

Carol Zimbalatti,
MD, CCFP, MPH



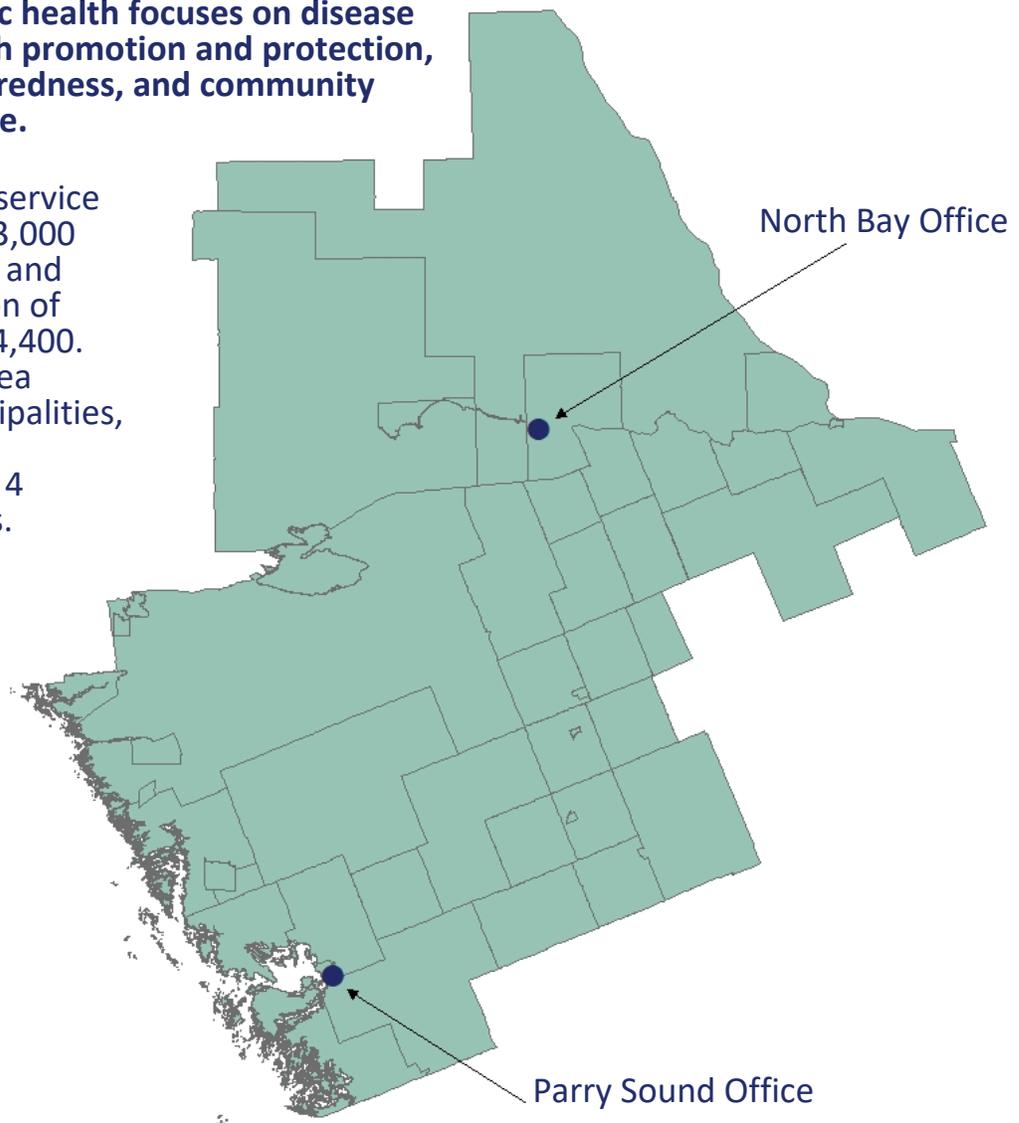
Who We Are

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) is a public health organization governed by the Health Unit's Board of Health.

With its head office in North Bay and a branch office in Parry Sound, the Health Unit employs over 175 staff members who deliver provincially legislated public health programs and services in accordance with the *Ontario Public Health Standards*.

The work of public health focuses on disease prevention, health promotion and protection, emergency preparedness, and community health surveillance.

The Health Unit's service area spans over 23,000 square kilometers and serves a population of approximately 134,400. This catchment area includes 31 municipalities, 6 First Nations communities, and 4 unorganized areas.



How We Developed Our New Strategic Plan



We crafted this evidence-informed blueprint to guide and prioritize programs and services to address public health needs in the communities we serve. We developed the plan through four phases:

Vision & Commitment

We took stock of our past and current efforts to meet needs and began a process to explore and articulate our guiding vision, mission, and values.

Understanding

We conducted an internal and external consultation and received input from 847 clients and residents, staff and management, Board of Health members, and community partners.

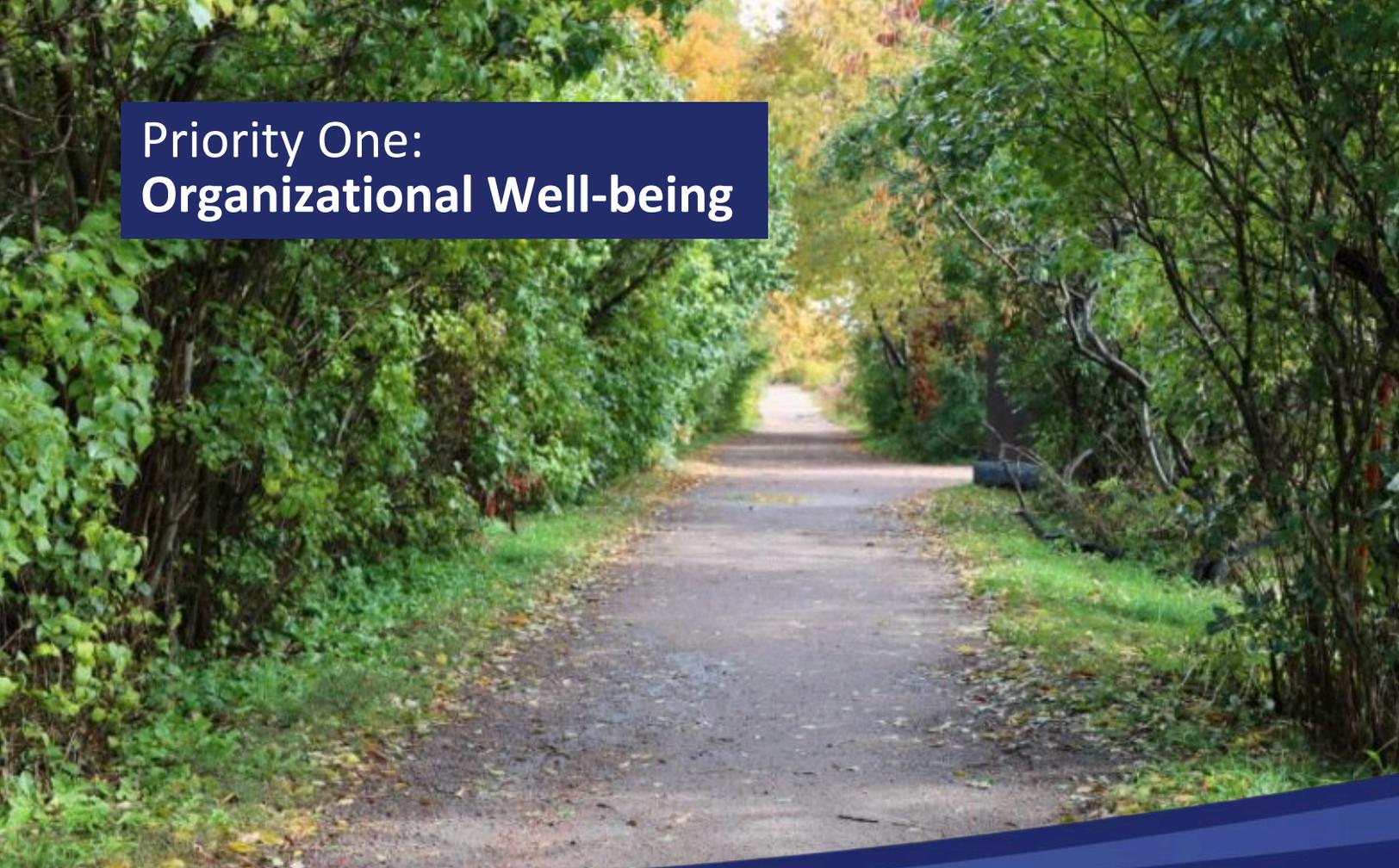
Direction

We developed draft priorities, goals, and strategies to align efforts, cultivate partnerships, and allocate resources to address public health needs.

Strategy

We finalized the crafting, presentation, and launch of our plan and will operationalize and monitor it through an accountability and reporting framework.

VISION	A healthy community for all.
MISSION	To foster healthy communities through partnership, preparedness, prevention, promotion, and protection.
VALUES	<p>Accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We serve responsibly with honesty and transparency. <p>Adaptability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We respond flexibly to emerging trends and circumstances. <p>Collaboration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We increase capacity and connection through partnership. <p>Equity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We act justly and fairly, respecting unique needs. <p>Empathy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are compassionate and understanding.
PRIORITIES	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational Well-being 2. Health Equity 3. Communication, Connection, Collaboration



Priority One: Organizational Well-being

Goal: To enhance engagement, learning, wellness, and development in our culture.

Strategies:

1. Establish pathways alongside employees for their growth and development.
2. Foster leadership through improved performance management and succession planning.
3. Nurture a psychologically healthy and safe workplace.
4. Strengthen communication, understanding, and cohesion within teams and between programs.

Rationale: Many staff members expressed few opportunities to develop and advocated for greater autonomy in their roles. They also indicated many missed opportunities for collaboration between programs. By addressing these concerns, we will foster growth and development for people and programs, fostering a more cohesive and supportive organizational environment.

We want to support and value employees, promote mental health, and lead by example. By investing in our workforce, we position ourselves to meet future challenges with a robust, engaged, and capable team.



Priority Two: Health Equity

Goal: To catalyze community attention and allocation of Health Unit resources to address social determinants of health.

Strategies:

1. Strengthen organizational and public understanding of discrimination, racism, and racial equity as public health issues.
2. Foster Mino-Bimaadiziwin (the good life) with Indigenous partners, communities, and individuals.
3. Advance initiatives to address mental health, substance use prevention, and harm reduction.
4. Cultivate our role within systems-level efforts to reduce poverty and homelessness.

Rationale: Consultation feedback revealed a lack of understanding of Indigenous needs and culturally safe practices, and a need to bridge gaps in services. Racism and discrimination were seen as barriers in accessing services at the Health Unit and within the wider community, particularly among Indigenous populations.

In addition, addressing substance use was broadly identified as an area of community need. Poverty and mental health were repeatedly mentioned as issues currently affecting Health Unit clients and area populations. By addressing the social determinants of health, we will prioritize support for communities, environments, and populations with highest needs.

Priority Three: Communication, Connection, Collaboration



Goal: To bolster external relationships to enhance public health outcomes.

Strategies:

1. Ground actions and relationships in our vision, mission, and values.
2. Raise awareness about the needs addressed by the Health Unit.
3. Develop relationships with community partners to collectively advance shared goals.

Rationale: The vision, mission, and values of the Health Unit are the foundation of what we do and what we hope to achieve. They guide the actions of every staff member in their daily work.

Our consultation revealed the need for the Health Unit to more effectively and frequently communicate what we do and increase awareness of public health issues. Collaboration and increased connection will generate solutions to issues that broadly affect the communities we serve.



Gratitude

This strategic plan was informed by the voices of 847 individuals – staff and management, Board of Health members, clients, those living in the Health Unit district, and community partners. The time you took to share your ideas, views, and perspectives through online surveys, focus groups, and interviews is truly appreciated. You helped shape this strategic plan and for that we are grateful.

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