



ORAL HEALTH

WE DO THAT, TOO!



SEXUAL HEALTH

WE DO THAT, TOO!



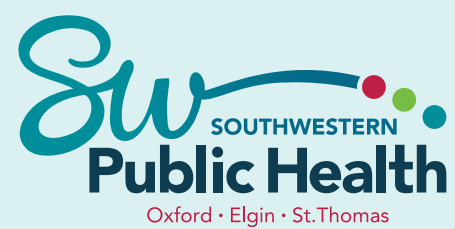
HEALTHY CHILDREN

WE DO THAT, TOO!



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

WE DO THAT, TOO!



WE DO THAT, TOO!

Annual Report 2022

OUR VISION

Healthy people in vibrant communities.

OUR MISSION

Leading the way in protecting and promoting the health of all people in our communities, resulting in better health.

OUR VALUES

- Evidence
- Collaboration
- Accountability
- Quality
- Equity
- Forward-thinking

Community leadership

The Southwestern Public Health Board of Health is comprised of municipal appointees and provincially appointed Order in Council positions.

The Board is accountable to the Ontario Ministry of Health and the communities of Oxford County, Elgin County and the City of St. Thomas to ensure we deliver quality, responsive programs, and services under the Ontario Public Health Standards as regulated by the Ontario Health Protection and Promotion Act.



Lori Baldwin-Sands



Ted Comiskey



Grant Jones



Tom Marks



Larry Martin
Board Chair



David Mayberry



Stephen Molnar



Joe Preston
Vice Chair



Lee Rowden
Order in Council



David Warden
Order in Council



Cynthia St. John
Chief Executive
Officer



Dr. Ninh Tran
Medical Officer
of Health

Message from the Board of Health



As my time with the Board of Health of Southwestern Public Health comes to an end, I reflect on the extraordinary experience of chairing the Board of Health through a pandemic.

Southwestern Public Health was a new and relatively small organization in March 2020 when the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus a pandemic. Quickly, staff struck their first IMS (Incident Management System) structure and immediately began the work of strengthening existing connections and building new ones with municipalities, health system partners, the business community, media, and others. These connections have proven vital to our ability to respond capably to the pandemic and I am confident that these

strengthened relationships will bolster public health work well into the future.

I am very proud of the speed and adaptability of the staff response to the always evolving landscape of Covid-19. Their timely and clear communication, mobile service model, emphasis on collaboration and focus on those most vulnerable to severe illness were admirable and appreciated broadly.

But of course, work at the Board level was not exclusive to the pandemic response. In 2022 we:

- Recruited a new Medical Officer of Health following the retirement of Dr. Joyce Lock
- Reviewed a report authored by the Foundational Standards team about the Indirect Health Impacts of Covid-19 and discussed how it would and should impact future service delivery
- Approved funding related to commissioning a space needs assessment for Southwestern Public Health's Oxford County operations
- Spent significant time learning about the local opioid crisis, how it is impacted by the pandemic response, our needle syringe program, and neighbouring consumption and treatment services

It has been a privilege working with Cynthia St. John, Dr. Joyce Lock, Dr. Ninh Tran, and my fellow Board of Health members. Their unwavering commitment to clients, partners and community has been an inspiration. I know that the critical work of public health is in good hands under the leadership of Mayor Joe Preston, incoming Chair. Mayor Preston has served throughout the pandemic and his experience leaves him well positioned to guide the Board in its role supporting pandemic recovery in 2023 and beyond.

Thank you to everyone who has supported me in this endeavour; it has been a great pleasure. I'll sign off by echoing the sentiments of our CEO by saying, "the work of public health is complex, it is performed by passionate professionals committed to making a difference, and it is never, never boring."

Sincerely,

Larry Martin
Chair

Message from the CEO



We are living in remarkable times. While there was no less emphasis on Covid-19 in 2021 than there was in 2020, we did begin the new year with optimism due to the arrival of the Covid-19 vaccines. The international scientific community, supported by governments and private business, worked at an extraordinary pace to bring a safe and effective vaccine to the world.

As in 2020 and 2021, it is imperative that I start this message with my gratitude for all those professionals across our organization and the Southwestern Public Health region who continue the pandemic work with professionalism and resolve - even while it feels like much of the world has moved on.

Despite the Covid-19 response looking different in 2022, significant energy was invested in managing outbreaks within congregate living settings and hospitals, administering 411,000 + Covid-19 vaccines, and offering reliable data to the thousands who visited our dashboard each day. For yet another year, I witnessed an unwavering commitment to mitigating the risks associated with the Covid-19 pandemic – especially for our community's most vulnerable.

As the situation with Covid-19 stabilized, many of our staff turned their attention back to the health promotion, prevention and protection work that was paused during the acute phase of the pandemic. What we learned is that our community has fundamentally changed since 2020; no person or organization is untouched by the prolonged pandemic response. We are only starting to scratch the surface of our understanding of the unintended consequences of the past three years, the health impacts, how all of this will shape public health's future service offerings.

The theme of this Annual Report is, "we do that, too" and it is a tribute to the many aspects of public health work that have waited in the shadows over the past few years. It is a tribute to the work of our public health inspectors in the community, parent resource workers in individual homes, public health nurses forging relationships with educators and school communities, and so much more. Vaccination and infection prevention and control are two core services of local public health but we are very excited to re-introduce ourselves to partner organizations and individuals across the region we serve. In addition to catching up on everything from missed inspections to routine vaccinations, we are setting our sights on climate change and health, the opioid crisis, mental health and belonging in 2024.

I hope you enjoy this Report and its messages from our outgoing Board of Health Chair, Larry Martin, and our new Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Ninh Tran. We've summarized our income and our expenditures on page 6 and the steps our programs are taking to restart their work serving the community and achieving our vision of healthy people in vibrant communities.

Thank you for your shared commitment to communities that protect and promote exceptional health for everyone.

With gratitude,

Cynthia St. John,
CEO

Message from the Medical Officer of Health



2022 was a memorable year for me both professionally and personally as I embarked on a new journey as Medical Officer of Health for Southwestern Public Health. I am grateful for the strong community leadership of my predecessor, Dr. Joyce Lock, particularly her work during two very difficult years of the pandemic. To date, I have enjoyed a warm welcome by the communities of Oxford County, Elgin County, and the City of St. Thomas, and it's been a great pleasure working with our amazing staff, leadership team and CEO, a supportive Board of Health, and great partners and residents.

2022 was the third year of the pandemic and defined by the Omicron strain, which completely changed the Covid landscape.

The year started with one massive push for both immunizations and public health control measures to dampen the impact on the health care system. This was followed by a substantial transition to "living with Covid-19," and the long-awaited return of many of our critical public health programs that were on hold. The year ended with expanded access to anti-viral therapy, and the introduction of the "bivalent" Covid-19 vaccine – a vaccine product that included not only the original strain, but the omicron strain as well – offering better protection than the historically available monovalent product.

The pandemic response carried into the fall as we experienced quite a challenging respiratory season with significant levels of Covid-19, influenza, and RSV season on top of other circulating infectious diseases. This is a particularly challenging situation when a population is behind in their routine vaccinations due to the pandemic. I anticipate high levels of respiratory illness to continue into the early part of 2023 when the cold and flu season finally slows and ends.

None of the pandemic related work would have been possible without our remarkable and dedicated public health staff, and our steadfast Board of Health, municipal leaders and emergency response partners, regional hospitals and community health centres, primary care providers, area pharmacies, local businesses, and area school boards.

As we approach 2023, I look forward to focusing on other critical public health issues, including the opioid crisis, climate change, and other health system initiatives. In the first half of 2023, SWPH will conduct a feasibility study for Consumption and Treatment Services to address the opioid crisis and then report back to the Board of Health and community on our findings. I look forward to further collaboration and partnership with the Elgin and Oxford Ontario Health Teams (OHT), and municipal, health care and education partners to restart paused initiatives and strategize new ones that will best address and respond to the unique needs of our local communities.

Sincerely,

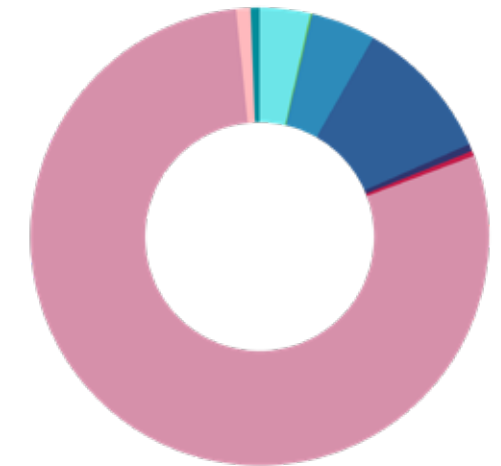
Ninh Tran
Medical Officer of Health

Southwestern Public Health financial picture, year ending December 31, 2022

Revenue

City of St. Thomas	\$922,650.00	
Clinics	\$28,916.00	
County of Elgin	\$1,187,287.00	
County of Oxford	\$2,628,966.00	
Interest	\$128,942.00	
Other fees & recoveries	\$95,779.00	
Province of Ontario	\$20,516,291.00	
PHAC	\$262,765.00	
Student Nutrition	\$165,597.00	

Total Revenue \$25,937,193.00




Expense

Cost shared general programs and services	\$14,934,278.00	
Covid -19	\$5,698,705.00	
100% Ministry funded programs	\$921,194.00	
Other programs & one time expenditures	\$4,432,310.00	

Total Expenses \$25,986,487.00



 The School Nutrition and Learning Program is a funded partner of United Way Oxford.

For our full 2022 Audited Financial Statements, visit our [website](#).

So much of public health's routine work was put on hold during the bulk of the pandemic, as there were simply not enough employees to manage the complexity and volume of the Covid-19 response while offering our regular scope of services. This pause in service delivery was difficult for a passionate staff team committed to serving the community, and difficult for community members who depended on the services we deliver. Kudos to the staff who spent 2022 overseeing a backlog of work, while developing new ways of serving a community much changed since March 2020.

In 2022 we turned our attention to:

Human Resources

... ramping up our health and wellness supports for a team that navigated a lot of organized chaos as they lead the community throughout a pandemic not seen in a generation. We know that often their own health and well-being took a backseat during this time. We also turned our attention to strengthening our onboarding and recruitment processes by taking a deep dive into our software systems to ensure we were maximizing their capabilities.



Health Information Management

... re-imagining the classification schedule and how its design can compliment our work. We also increased our skills in Laserfiche and Laserfiche Forms to retain important records and automate work processes. We automated 39 processes in 2022, which is a 56% increase in the number of automated forms processes created in 2021.

Oral Health

... screening 4862 students in local schools, seeing 1073 local children through our Healthy Smiles Ontario clinics, and providing 336 seniors with a new patient exam through the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program.



Foundational Standards

... helping the organization plan programs and services to reflect the evolving needs of the residents of Oxford County, Elgin County, and the City of St. Thomas.



Emergency Management

... emergency preparedness. Using the lessons learned from the Covid-19 pandemic response and some new resources from Public Health Ontario, we started updating our policies, procedures, and plans to ensure we're ready to respond to - and recovery from - the next emergency.



Healthy Schools

... supporting students to form healthy relationships through programming such as Healthy Relationships Plus Program, Wellness Initiatives, and Curriculum Supports. In partnership with TVDSB and LDCSB, the Healthy Schools team supported students to understand, build and practice their skills relating to dealing with youth stress, exploring power imbalances in relationships, understanding the impact of substance use and how to help friends, knowing the early warning signs of dating violence, and taking responsibility for emotions.



Healthy Growth & Development

... connecting with families through home visits, targeted interventions, education and advocacy in collaboration with community partners to achieve optimal family health for those most vulnerable in our community.

Vaccine Preventable Disease

... reviewing thousands of elementary and secondary school student vaccination records and issuing notices to parents about the need to update their vaccination records or book appointments to get up-to-date. The maintenance of up-to-date immunization records is required for students in Ontario is legislated in the Immunization for Pupils Act. Our team also visited 100 health care provider offices and pharmacies to ensure they met criteria for storing publicly funded vaccines. This activity supports adherence to best practice requirements for health care providers storing and handling publicly funded vaccine to protect vaccine safety and efficacy.



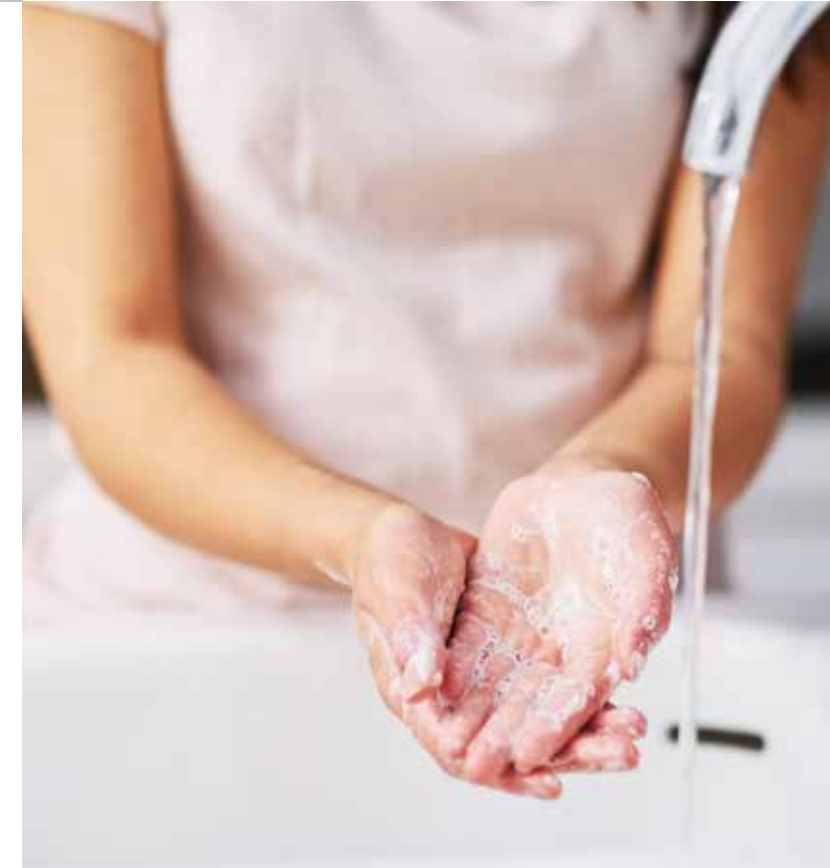
Sexual Health

In 2022, we turned our attention back to our roots in harm reduction, STI and pregnancy prevention, STI case and contact management, clinical services, and community outreach and partnerships. We were able to focus on community naloxone training and harm reduction supports in the community. We continued to work with our community partners by offering services and education through outreach and consultations.



Covid-19 Vaccination

... our focus remained on vaccinating those who had not yet been vaccinated (such as infants and young children) and those who needed further vaccine to prevent them from new strains of the virus (introduction of the bivalent vaccine). In total, Southwestern Public supported a grand total of 411, 291 doses of Covid-19 vaccine in 2022.



Infectious Diseases

... outbreak investigations in long-term care homes, retirement homes and congregate living settings such as group homes and shelters. Staff in these settings were invited to participate in a virtual workshop series in the fall to prepare them for the winter respiratory season. Covid-19 continued to dominate the infectious disease work of infection prevention and control. Surveillance and investigation of other communicable diseases and infections increased as restrictions eased and travel resumed.

Chronic Disease & Injury Prevention

... to supporting our residents to quit smoking and re-connected with our community partners around important issues such as poverty, food security, and substance use.



WE DO THAT, TOO!

Environmental Health

... prioritizing the inspection of facilities that had not been visited as frequently during the heightened months of the pandemic. The rabies program experienced a 10% increase in animal exposure reports requiring investigation. There were also notable increases in the number of people wishing to run food-related businesses out of their homes requiring application of the Food Premises Regulation and an increase in the number of special events taking place in our jurisdiction. Finally, our team had the opportunity to share the Walnut Manor investigation experience at the National CIPHI Conference, the APSHIO conference, and to the Ontario Fire Marshall.

St. Thomas Site
1230 Talbot St.
St. Thomas, ON
N5P 1G9

Woodstock Site
410 Buller St.
Woodstock, ON
N4S 4N2

1-800-922-0096
swpublichealth.ca

