



PATHWAY TO HEALTH

2012 ANNUAL REPORT



For more than 125 years, Ottawa Public Health has provided public health programs and services to individuals and communities, while advocating for public policies that make Ottawa and its residents healthier. Protecting and promoting health and preventing disease is embedded in all that we do.

VISION

Ottawa is a community where people are healthy, safe and actively engaged in their well-being.

MISSION

In partnership with the people and communities of Ottawa, Ottawa Public Health improves and advocates for health and well-being through prevention, promotion and protection.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- A Enhance partnerships
- B Address emerging community health needs
- C Improve quality of life for Ottawa's residents
- D Respond to demographic changes
- E Improve community understanding of the value of public health
- F Develop a more sustainable resource base

"Our Strategic Priorities are community-focused. They were established by the Board of Health as guidelines to help bolster Ottawa Public Health's presence in the community, to fulfill our provincial obligations and to position the organization to meet the challenges of today, as well as tomorrow."

Dr. Isra Levy, Medical Officer of Health

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The Evolution Of Public Health

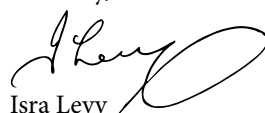
Public Health is often cited as working at its best when invisible to the workings of daily life; a service presumed and expected to do its job well, without flourish or fuss. Over the years I have perceived a subtle change in expectations, though. Public health has evolved into a vision, sector, profession and service that is embraced and increasingly relied on by the community. People have legitimate concerns about their health. They want and need to know more. They need and deserve tangible, credible public health programs and services that will improve the health and well-being of the population as a whole.

At Ottawa Public Health (OPH), we are fortunate to be governed by a Board of Health that takes our local community health needs to heart. This is reflected not only in the composition of the board – a mix of elected representatives and public members – but also in its 2011-2014 Strategic Priorities. Our Strategic Priorities are community-focused. They were established by the Board of Health as guidelines to help bolster OPH's presence in the community, to fulfill our provincial obligations and to position the organization to meet the challenges of today, as well as tomorrow.

OPH as an organization has evolved over the years too. The more traditional role of our staff as caregivers has evolved, spurred by the community's increased interest and passion for public health and preventive interventions. OPH staff are now among the most trusted providers of health information in our city; they are educators and cutting-edge policy makers, they are the strongest advocates for their clients and seasoned collaborators and communicators. They are leaders.

I am fortunate to work with professionals who strive, every day, to make a difference in the lives of Ottawa residents. Our programs and services improve and evolve because of their dedication. The Ottawa Public Health 2012 Annual Report showcases our commitment to service excellence, continuous quality improvement and our ability to deliver on the objectives of the 2011-2014 Strategic Priorities.

Sincerely,



Isra Levy
Medical Officer of Health,
Ottawa Public Health

2011-2014 Strategic Priorities

In accordance with the *Ontario Public Health Organizational Standards*, boards of health in Ontario are expected to establish strategic plans that respond to emerging public health trends and issues. The Ottawa Board of Health developed its *strategic priorities* by analyzing health issues, trends, opportunities and threats. The Board also reviewed provincial health priorities and the *City of Ottawa Strategic Plan*, specifically to address the "Healthy and Caring Communities Priority", which targets equity and inclusion for an aging and diverse population.



Looking Back, Moving Forward

As we enter the latter half of the Ottawa Board of Health's first term, I would like to take the opportunity to highlight accomplishments achieved and efforts championed by the Board and its members. These achievements highlight how the Board continues to make public engagement a key component of its mandate, and demonstrate how OPH and the Board are working together to meet the needs of the community and fulfill the 2011-2014 Board of Health Strategic Priorities. 2012 saw the renewal of Ottawa's Smoke-Free Public Spaces programs and regulations, demonstrating our City's continued leadership on this critical file, as well as the introduction of a multiyear and multifaceted initiative to promote and support healthy eating and active living amongst our residents.

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY LEADERS

Several public health and community leaders were recognized in 2012 for improving the health of Ottawa residents. For their work to improve access to healthy food, the Ottawa Board of Health presented Healthy Eating, Active Living Champion Awards to: Dr. Elizabeth Kristjansson and Dr. Mike Sawada, Ottawa Neighborhood Study; Peter Tilley, Ottawa Food Bank; Moe Garahan, Just Food; and Rosemary Tayler, Nanny Goat Hill Good Food Market.

For promoting and creating smoke-free environments in Ottawa, Smoke-Free Champions Awards recognized the contributions of: Pippa Beck, Non-Smokers' Rights Association; Ray Sullivan, Centretown Citizens Ottawa Corporation; John Doran, Domicile Developments; Joan Mason, New Edinburgh Community Alliance Park; Richard Grainer, New Edinburgh Community Member; Queensway-Carleton Hospital; The Royal Ottawa Hospital; Phil Waserman, Restaurant Owner and Smoke-Free Advocate; Dr. Andrew Pipe, Chief of the Division of Prevention and Rehabilitation at the University of Ottawa Heart Institute; John Brooman, Executive Director of the Tim Hortons Ottawa Dragon Boat Festival; Catherine O'Grady, Executive Director of the International Children's Festival and the Ottawa Jazz Festival; The Ottawa Council on Smoking and Health; Richard Hayter, Director of Community Relations at the Building and Construction Trades Council; Jane Dennis, Soccer Tournament Coordinator

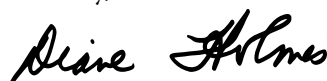
for the Ottawa Royals Soccer Club; and Barbara Delorme, Smoking Cessation Facilitator, Accessible Chances for Everyone to Stop Smoking.

LEADING PUBLIC FORUMS AND EVENTS

In 2012, the Board and OPH hosted the first ever Meet, Eat and Learn forum in Ottawa. The forum brought together community leaders at the forefront of improving Ottawa residents' access to healthy foods: The Ottawa Food Bank, Good Food Markets and the Ottawa Neighbourhood Study. Seventy-five people attended the half day session, at which Board of Health Member Marguerite Keeley provided the keynote address. The first ever Seniors Caregiver Forum also took place in 2012, with Board Member Gisèle Richer – a strong advocate of care for seniors – speaking at the event. Throughout 2012, all Board members participated in various public events, highlighting OPH services and programs, and engaging the residents of our communities in public health issues.

The Strategic Priorities focus our efforts and propel us forward into 2013. I am proud of what we have realized to date and look forward to a fulfilling and rewarding next two years.

Sincerely,



Councillor Diane Holmes
Chair, Ottawa Board of Health



Enhance Partnerships

GOOD FOOD MARKETS

To bring healthy food closer to where people live, OPH launched Good Food Markets in partnership with local Community Health and Resources Centres, the Ottawa Good Food Box, the Social Planning Council of Ottawa, Anti-Poverty Initiative of the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres, and the City of Ottawa Community and Social Services Department. These markets were made available in four high-priority neighbourhoods and offered food choices tailored to the neighbourhood's preferences, with a focus on healthy produce. Approximately 1,000 residents attended the markets, with 68 per cent of those surveyed reporting that they shopped at the market because it was close to home. The Good Food Markets initiative is part of the OPH [Healthy Eating, Active Living Strategy](#).

INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION CLINICS AT LOCAL HOSPITALS

Every year, OPH aims to maximize influenza vaccine coverage in the Ottawa population, following [national](#) and [provincial](#) guidelines. Health care workers, because they are capable of transmitting the flu to those at high-risk influenza complications, are a high priority target group for influenza immunization. During the 2012-2013 influenza season, OPH strengthened partnerships with three acute care hospitals in Ottawa as well as the Bruyère Continuing Care and The Royal to conduct clinics for hospital staff, their families and visitors. Information from our partners indicates that influenza clinics that offer the vaccine to hospital staff along with their family members and visitors have greater immunization uptake than clinics that focus solely on staff. This initiative is part of an [ongoing effort](#) to continue to improve influenza immunization rates among Ottawa residents and bring together innovative partnerships.

At the time of publication, OPH had distributed over 375,000 vaccine doses to primary care providers, hospitals, institutions and pharmacists, and vaccinated more than 23,000 individuals through 39 OPH-run clinics.

GET MOVING OTTAWA! OTTAWA HEALTH DAY 2012

To mark the second annual [Ottawa Health Day](#), OPH promoted active living by encouraging residents, communities, schools and workplaces to “get moving”. Throughout Ottawa Health Day, OPH encouraged all Ottawa residents to participate in any type of physical activity, such as walking, dancing, running and cycling. Residents were also asked to register their activity at ottawa.ca/health: a great way for people to rally together and be proud of their active living accomplishments. On Ottawa Health Day, Ottawa residents logged a total of 111,900 minutes. The idea for Ottawa Health Day was first brought forward by Sarah Horton, a Grade 10 student from Orléans, to Councillor Bob Monette. This day would not have been possible without her vision.



Address Emerging Community Health Needs

SAFETALK AND HEALTHY TRANSITIONS

Twelve per cent of surveyed Ottawa students considered attempting suicide in the past year. To help make Ottawa suicide-safer, OPH and the Ottawa Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association provided 11 *safeTALK* training sessions for youth and parents in 2012, giving them the ability to intervene with someone who has thoughts of suicide. One hundred per cent of the youth and parents who attended the sessions reported that they would recommend the training to others.

OPH has also implemented Healthy Transitions: a universal program designed to promote mental health in young adolescents. The goals of the program are achieved by increasing knowledge and skills among youth that are important for mental health as well as promoting environments at home and school that support healthy adolescent development, and strengthening links between schools and community agencies. A total of 4,505 students, 219 teachers and 217 parents received the program in 2012.

safeTALK training and Healthy Transitions are components of OPH's three-year mental health promotion and suicide prevention strategy for children and youth.

SALMONELLA OUTBREAK & TARGETED FOOD HANDLER TRAINING

In March 2012, OPH investigated a food borne illness outbreak of salmonellosis that included 85 cases, and caused 26 emergency room visits and six hospitalizations. In collaborating with other agencies, OPH controlled, contained, investigated and managed the outbreak in order to avert a much larger public health crisis.

During the outbreak, which was linked to beef product contaminated with Salmonella bacteria, OPH staff provided [safe food handler training](#) to food premises operators involved in the outbreak. Safe food handler training is an important component of OPH's [Food Safety Program](#) and a key approach to manage and mitigate potential health risks. In August 2012, OPH further built upon the success of its safe food handler training program by launching a complementary program of targeted training; one that requires food premises – which have exceeded a threshold of critical inspection infractions in the previous 12 months – to participate in training. OPH continues to promote voluntary training for all food handlers.

NEW SEXUAL HEALTH SATELLITE CLINICS

Some areas of Ottawa have a demonstrated need for sexual health clinical services, because of the combination of a large youth population and a high number of sexually-transmitted infection (STI) cases. These are mainly neighbourhoods located outside the city core and far from OPH's main sexual health clinic in downtown Ottawa. To meet the needs of these communities, OPH opened [new sexual health satellite clinics](#) in Kanata, Ottawa West, Barrhaven and Orléans. These clinics served more than 1,700 clients in 2012. Services offered include: free counselling, condoms and resource materials, STI testing, and affordable contraception.



Improve the Quality of Life for Ottawa Residents

RENEWED STRATEGY FOR A SMOKE-FREE OTTAWA

For more than 10 years, OPH has made significant strides to curb smoking-related illnesses among Ottawa residents; OPH was the first public health unit in Ontario to successfully spearhead smoke-free regulations in all indoor public spaces. Yet despite progress, smoking-related illnesses continue to bear a human and economic toll in Ottawa. Every year, nearly 1,000 smokers and non-smokers in Ottawa die prematurely of tobacco-related illness. And tobacco-related hospitalization costs alone are nearly \$40 million per year.

To protect children and non-smokers from second-hand smoke and to reduce tobacco use, in 2012, the Ottawa Board of Health and City Council approved OPH's [Renewed Strategy for a Smoke-Free Ottawa](#). Notably, Ottawa's smoke-free regulations were expanded to prohibit smoking in outdoor public places: 1,200 City parks and sports fields, four beaches, 1,109 municipal properties, the ByWard and Parkdale Markets, and 600 bar and restaurant patios. The regulations are complemented by improved programming to help people quit smoking and

outreach to community partners, such as post-secondary campuses and festivals, to help them advance smoke-free policies. To help [business owners](#) and [event organizers](#) adapt to the new regulations, OPH staff provide educational resources and training upon request.

ADOPT A HELMET

Over the past year, OPH has worked with several community partners on the [Adopt a Helmet](#) social media campaign to promote that a properly fitted helmet reduces brain injury. The campaign makes use of a fun and creative "[mockumentary](#)" to encourage youth to wear a helmet: reaching 5,705 people through [YouTube](#) and 3,140 individuals through an [interactive blog](#) in 2012. The campaign also engaged 75 youth in an interactive contest as well as 28 local retailers in a series of helmet promotion days. In September, the campaign was presented with the Brain Injury Prevention Award by the Brain Injury Association of Canada. In Ottawa, 5,700 children and youth are treated at emergency departments and 400 are hospitalized for head injuries every year.



Respond to Demographic Changes

SUPPORT TO CAREGIVERS OF SENIORS

In June 2012, OPH hosted a forum for hundreds of family members, friends and neighbours who take care of Ottawa's seniors. OPH recognizes the important role of caregivers in the community and addresses some of the challenges that these individuals face. Nationally, 24 per cent of caregivers are also seniors, which can create an added challenge. It is estimated that in Canada, informal caregivers, such as family members, friends and neighbours, provide 72 per cent of the care that seniors receive at home. Current health and social policy focuses on encouraging seniors to live independently in the community for as long as possible; this is consistent with the wishes of the vast majority of seniors. But as people age and their risk of developing chronic illnesses increases, it becomes vitally important to support caregivers. In addition to the forum, OPH offers [free education sessions to caregivers](#) that enable information and resources to be shared and encourage positive coping strategies. A wide range of topics are covered, including family relationships, the normal aging process, legal concerns, community resources, preventing falls and the importance of self care. In 2012, 123,378 seniors lived in Ottawa, and this number is expected to increase to 254,077 by the year 2031. OPH is expanding the range of programs and service for seniors in Ottawa to include more walking programming and falls prevention.

BABY EXPRESS

[Baby Express drop-ins](#) – which provide assessment, support, referral and information for new parents on the feeding and care for their babies – are now offering more comprehensive support to Ottawa families. This was accomplished by expanding the age of children served to one year and integrating some existing drop-in services with breastfeeding drop-ins. Between 2009 and 2010, approximately 94 per cent of mothers in Ottawa initiated breastfeeding. However, the number of mothers who are exclusively breastfeeding declines as time progresses. The first six weeks after birth are crucial to establish successful breastfeeding and mothers without support are more likely to stop breastfeeding. This initiative was part of the 2012 [renewal of the Healthy Babies, Healthy Children Program](#).



Improve Community Understanding of the Value of Public Health

MOBILE WORKFORCE

OPH is leveraging technology to extend services and make better connections with clients by participating in the City of Ottawa's [Service Ottawa](#) Mobile Workforce Project. Currently 62 field-based OPH staff – public health inspectors and public health nurses in the School Health program – have been deployed. A mobile workforce enables front-line workers to perform their tasks in the field, leaving more time to engage and serve clients. It is anticipated that the mobile workforce will generate annual productivity savings that will be reinvested into programs and services that address community health needs.

OPH AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Improved web technology and the use of various social media, such as [facebook](#), [twitter](#) and OPH's [blog](#) have enhanced the community's understanding of the value of public health, and in turn, OPH's understanding of what is important to Ottawa residents. 2012 saw OPH use social media to engage parents on how they would like to receive parenting information, gain a better understanding of Ottawa residents' use of tattoo parlours, spas and other personal service establishments, and advertise the various OPH services in the community, such as influenza immunization clinics and Baby Express Drop-Ins. By the end of 2012, @ottawahealth and @ottawasanté had over 10,800 followers, and this growth continues to this day.



Develop a More Sustainable Resource Base

VOLUNTEERS

In 2012, there were over 230 volunteers who improved the quality of life of Ottawa residents by helping OPH deliver vital programs and services. Collectively, these volunteers worked almost 10,000 hours. Some volunteers, such as community food advisors, work with local food banks to provide hands-on, practical healthy cooking tips and demonstrations. Other volunteers coordinate walking groups throughout the city, lead senior strength exercise classes, provide telephone support to breastfeeding mothers, and promote healthy eating and living through interactive theatre. In 2012, OPH volunteers engaged more than 8,000 Ottawa residents, in addition to spreading public health messages to their families, their neighbours and their networks.

ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Saving costs related to influenza

An economic appraisal of [Ontario's Universal Influenza Immunization Program](#) estimated that the program reduced influenza cases by 61 per cent and mortality by 28 per cent. The study indicated that preventing these cases resulted in saving Ontario's health system about \$7.8 million for each flu season. Every year, OPH participates in the Ontario Universal Influenza Immunization program, administers the flu vaccine through its public clinics and provides primary care providers, hospitals, institutions and pharmacists with vaccine for their clients.

Active transportation prevents costs due to chronic illnesses

The median economic benefit of active transportation initiatives is 5:1. That is, for every dollar spent on interventions to change transportation infrastructure or policy, five dollars are saved in health-related impacts, such as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer. Furthermore, a European study estimated the benefit in personal health costs to a person switching from driving to an active form of transportation for a one-way 5km commute to be approximately \$1,600 annually, with additional savings due to decreased air pollution. This is an important consideration given that the straight line average distance for trips originating in downtown Ottawa is 5.9km. OPH promotes active transportation through its [Healthy Eating, Active Living Strategy](#).

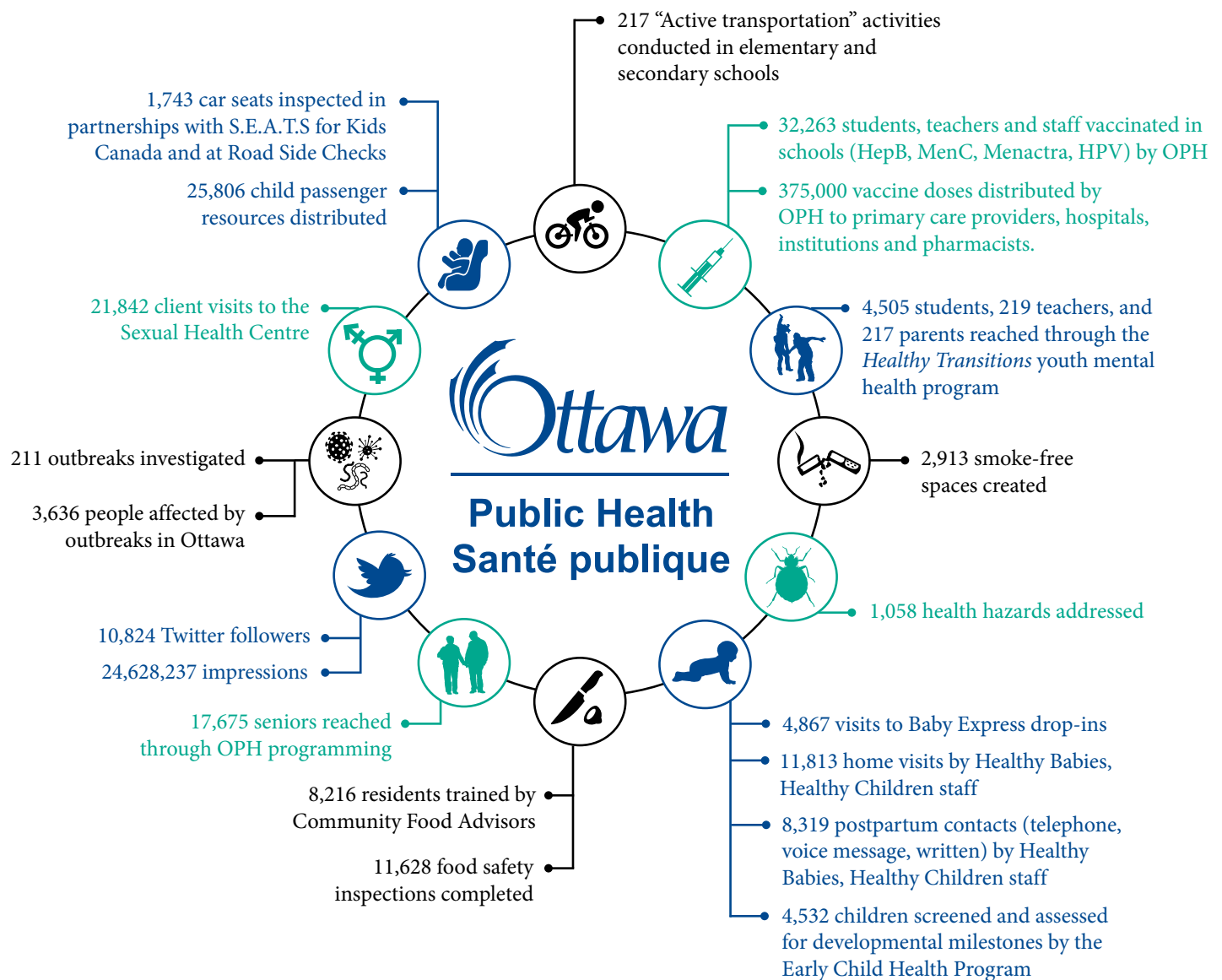
Investment in oral health reaps rewards

Regular visits to a dental professional are cost-effective: every \$1 invested in this measure yields approximately \$38 of savings in unnecessary dental treatment for families and the health care system. People with good oral health are able to eat better, have fewer days of missed work, less lost income and may have greater self-confidence, which results in better overall health. The [OPH Dental Health Program](#) screened more than 50,000 individuals in schools and community settings and served over 20,000 clients at its clinics in 2012.



Ottawa Public Health By The Numbers

Every day, OPH is in the community, working with individuals, families and groups to help them be healthy, safe and actively find their pathway to health. Here are some examples of what we have accomplished with our partners in 2012.

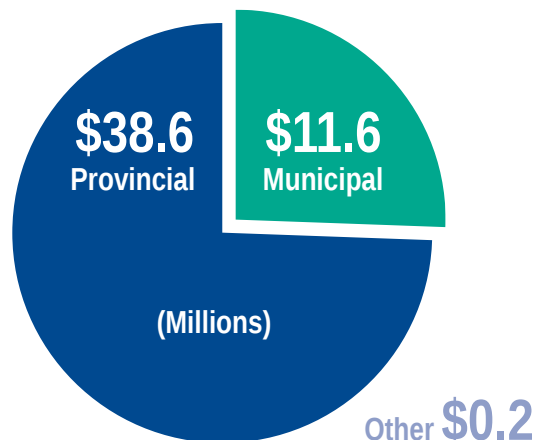


Thank You to Our Generous Funders

OPH 2012 SOURCES OF FUNDING

Sources of funding

	\$ in thousands
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	20,341
Ministry of Health Promotion and Sport	13,726
Ministry of Child and Youth Services	4,570
City of Ottawa	11,570
Government of Canada	60
Fees & Services	167
Total	50,434



Thank You to Our Committed Partners

OPH is indebted to the generosity of our partners, whose support is crucial to the delivery of our programs and services. Sometimes the support from our partners is as straightforward as a roundtable discussion to brainstorm ideas for programs. At other times it's as complex as mounting an inter-agency response to an outbreak. Our partners enrich and enhance the work of OPH. Thank you.

