



Health and Wellness

Promotion of lifelong wellness, and equitable access to health and human services for everyone in our community is essential for the vitality of Niagara.

Happening Now

- Looking through the lenses of health equity and inclusion when planning is being emphasized, on many levels. Examples include local municipal Health Equity, Wellness, Age-Friendly and Social Determinants of Health initiatives; the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network Health Equity Priority Table; and Niagara Region signing onto the Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities.
- The Ontario Seniors Dental Care program is now available for seniors in Niagara who live in low income and do not have access to any other form of dental benefits.
- Mobile Integrated Health Care (MIH) is being delivered by Niagara Emergency Medical Services, to provide on-site urgent or nonurgent care. Research in 2018-2019 found that, compared to regular ambulance responses, MIH was associated with a decrease in the proportion of patients transported to the emergency department, and saved health care costs.
- The StreetWorks Harm Reduction program is providing safer injection and inhalation supplies to help individuals protect their health.
- The Youth Wellness Hub Niagara (YWHN) is one of ten Hubs in Ontario that recently received annualized provincial funding. YWHN is a partnership between the Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre; the John Howard Society in Welland; the Centre de santé communautaire in Welland; and Contact Niagara for Children's and Developmental Services. Through the Hub, all youth, ages 12 to 25, may access mental health and substance use supports; primary care services; housing, education, and employment supports; and a variety of wellness activities.



What's Emerging

- In 2020, the Niagara Ontario Health Team (NOHT-ESON) was approved by the province. The Team includes 45 partners that provide a wide array of services, including primary care, home care, emergency services, public health, social services, mental health and addictions, rehab and acute care. The partners are working together to create a coordinated approach to care. The intent is to make it easier for patients to access services; create seamless transitions between providers; and improve patients' overall experience and health outcomes.
- An estimated 20 per cent of children and youth in Ontario have a mental health disorder. In Niagara that translates into approximately 18,000 children and youth under the age of 18. Of those, Pathstone Mental Health annually provides services for approximately 6,000. A region-wide process is being developed, to identify and collect population child and youth mental health data, to provide clarity on the estimated 12,000 children and youth in Niagara who need mental health services and supports.
- The importance of residents learning about and paying attention to risks of infectious diseases is being emphasized.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is showing it is time to change the way health care providers engage with individuals, toward modalities such as smartphones, tablets, computers, digital medical equipment, patient portals and remote monitoring of clinical measurements.
- The health impacts of social isolation are being more widely acknowledged.
- Health professionals are observing environmental and climate change effects, such as air quality and temperature extremes.

Suggested Community Action Steps

- Acknowledge the human effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on workers, clients, organizations and systems in this Sector. Mental health challenges; long-term effects of patients not having regular health care appointments; and inability to provide school-age vaccines due to school closures are some examples.
- Encourage our community to continue to extend the sympathy, grace, generosity of spirit, kindness, support for others and care for neighbours demonstrated throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Optimize individuals' health care experiences and outcomes by transitioning toward proactively getting the right services to segments of the population that include individuals with shared needs.
- Prioritize advocating for system modernization through timely access to reliable, integrated health data to support focused decision-making.

Indicators

Measures for these indicators can be found at: www.livinginniagarareport.com

- Injury Rates in Niagara
- Prevention and Well-Being
- Lifestyle Indicators in Niagara
- Illness and Disease in Niagara
- Health Services in Niagara
- Population Health

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