

## Program/Service Information Report

# Sexual Health Program 2023

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To: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

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Prepared By: Camille Loucks, RN, MScN, PHC-NP  
Manager, Clinical Services

Approved By: Rita Isley, RN, MPH  
Director of Community Health and Chief Nursing Officer

Submitted By: Dr. Nicola J. Mercer, MD, MBA, MPH, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health & CEO

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## Key Points

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The Clinical Services Sexual Health Program at Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) in compliance with the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS), provides care that prevents, and controls sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs) and promotes healthy sexuality and safer sexual practices for priority populations, cases and contacts.

## Program Requirements

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### Compliance with OPHS and Accountability Indicators:

In compliance

Not in compliance. If not in compliance, provide additional information about the variance and how it will be addressed.

# Highlights

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The Sexual Health program at WDGPH delivers programs that address the following standards:

- Immunization
- Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control
- Substance Use and Injury Prevention

## Immunization

The goal of this standard is to reduce or eliminate the burden of vaccine preventable diseases through immunization. Specifically, in the Sexual Health program, the focus is to promote and provide provincially funded immunization programs and services to high risk populations. Vaccines in this category include hepatitis A, hepatitis B, human papilloma virus (HPV) and Imvamune. Each vaccine has specific risk factors that allow eligibility for the vaccine to be publicly funded.

## Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control

The goal of this standard is to reduce the burden of communicable diseases and other infectious diseases of public health significance. Specifically for the Sexual Health program, the focus is on sexually transmitted infections (STI) including chlamydia, gonorrhea, human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), syphilis and any other identified STI as appropriate.

## Substance Use and Injury Prevention

The goal of this standard is to reduce the burden of preventable injuries and substance use. WDGPH utilizes a harm reduction approach when interacting with their client in the Sexual Health program. This approach aligns with this standard and its goal to reduce the injuries associated with substance use and works towards improving the health outcomes of individuals who use substances.

## Sexual Health Program

To meet the requirements of the three standards listed above, specific to sexual health, WDGPH provides symptomatic and asymptomatic testing for STIs to clients across the community that allows for anonymity and discretion. This practice encourages more

individuals who are concerned about their sexual health to engage in screening and testing thereby reducing the spread of disease in the community.

This program then provides case management for all positive cases of gonorrhea, chlamydia, and syphilis in the WDG region, whether or not they had their testing with WDGPH. Case management involves:

- communicating the positive results if needed,
- confirming proper treatment for the specific STI,
- educating the client on safe sexual practices, and
- ensuring that all contacts of the case also receive appropriate treatment.

The expected outcome of case management is to manage cases, contacts, to minimize the public health risk.

As part of all WDGPH services, while clients are being seen in the Sexual Health program, they will have their risks assessed for vaccine preventable diseases and if they qualify, the client will be offered these vaccines. Additionally, clients who qualify for these vaccines can as to the clinic solely to access the vaccine(s) free of charge. It is important to note that care providers across the community can also access these publicly funded vaccines to administer to their own clients without sending them to public health.

In general the priority populations who attend the Sexual Health program include:

- individuals who do not have access to a primary care provider,
- individuals who do not have an OHIP Card, and
- individuals who identify challenges in seeking care in mainstream healthcare settings.

Clinics currently run in all three WDGPH office and some specific community clinics. The community clinics are designed to provide high risk populations access to care in a setting that reduces vulnerability and increases the client's feeling of safety and comfort to address their needs.

In 2023, WDGPH will also include family planning and pregnancy counselling as part of the Sexual Health program. This will include access to contraception, for specific populations who cannot afford this medication and do not have appropriate insurance coverage.

As well as providing care in clinics, WDGPH actively participates in sexual health outreach programs throughout the WDG region. In 2022, WDGPH attended University of Guelph Homecoming, Orangeville Pride, Fierce on the Farm, and Night of Red. While attending these events, WDGPH focused on promoting and educating clients on healthy sexuality and safer sexual practices.

## Related Reports

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BH.01.SEP0821.C04 – Clinical Services January 2021 to June 2021

## References

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1. [Publicly Funded Immunization Schedules for Ontario June 2022 \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/gov/publicly-funded-immunization-schedules-for-ontario-june-2022)
2. [Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services and Accountability \(gov.on.ca\)](https://www.ontario.ca/gov/ontario-public-health-standards-requirements-for-programs-services-and-accountability)