

## Program/Service Information Report

### Clinical Services Annual Review

January 2024 to December 2024

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**To:** Board of Health

**Meeting Date:** February 5, 2025

**Report No.:** BH.01.FEB0525.C02

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## Key Points

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- Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) rate for Hepatitis C (Hep C) in remained relatively unchanged in 2024 and remains well below the provincial rate.
- WDGPH has an unchanged number of cases of Gonorrhea (GC)
- WDGPH had an increase in all types of Syphilis cases in 2024.
- WDGPH attained 100% compliance to treatment for all active Tuberculosis (TB) cases in 2024.
- WDGPH successfully managed three community exposures to TB.
- WDGPH began a partnership with GetAKit (GAC) in November 2024, an in home sexual transmitted infections (STI) testing platform.

## 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

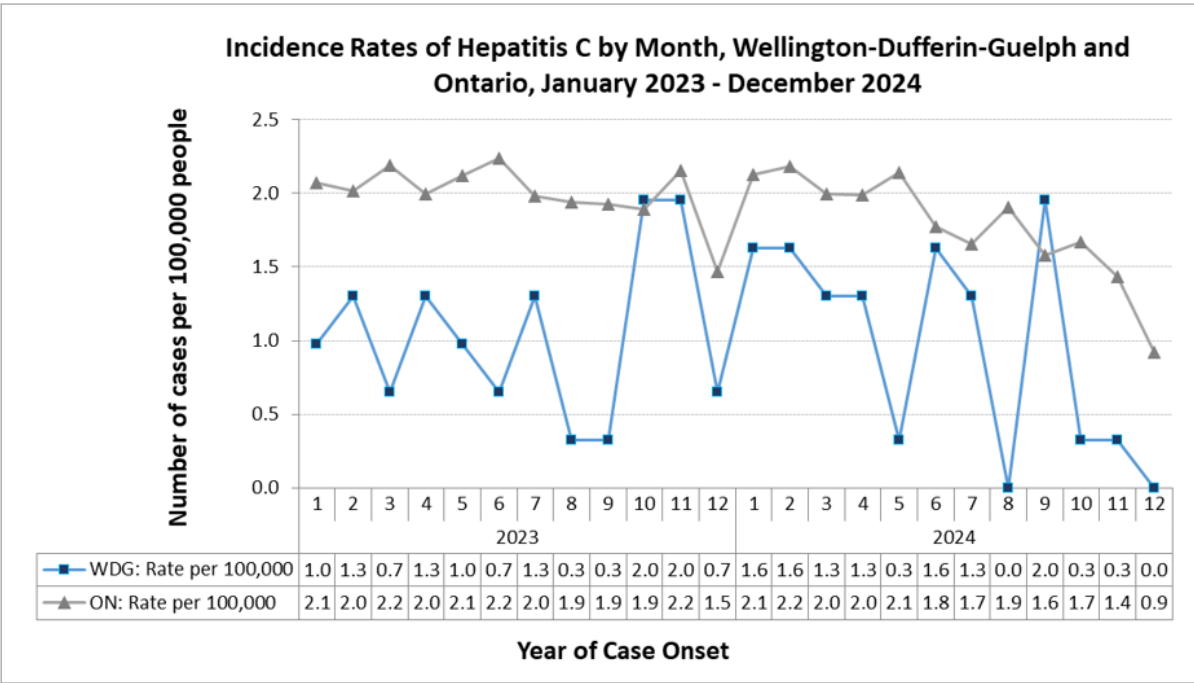
## Incidence Hepatitis C (Hep C)

Hep C is a blood borne infectious disease which causes inflammation of the liver. Hep C is reported to public health units to ensure appropriate follow up and management and to prevent escalation of disease.<sup>1</sup>

Annual number of cases:

- WDG total number of cases (2023): 38
- WDG total number of cases (2024): 36

### Hepatitis C:



The total number of cases of Hep C in WDGPH decreased slightly this year to 36 but was well below the provincial rate for the majority of 2024. Hep C continues to be part of the routine screening for most individuals attending WDGPH sexual health clinics.

WDGPH participated in annual Hepatitis Awareness Day community events across WDGPH region to promote awareness of all types of Hepatitis.

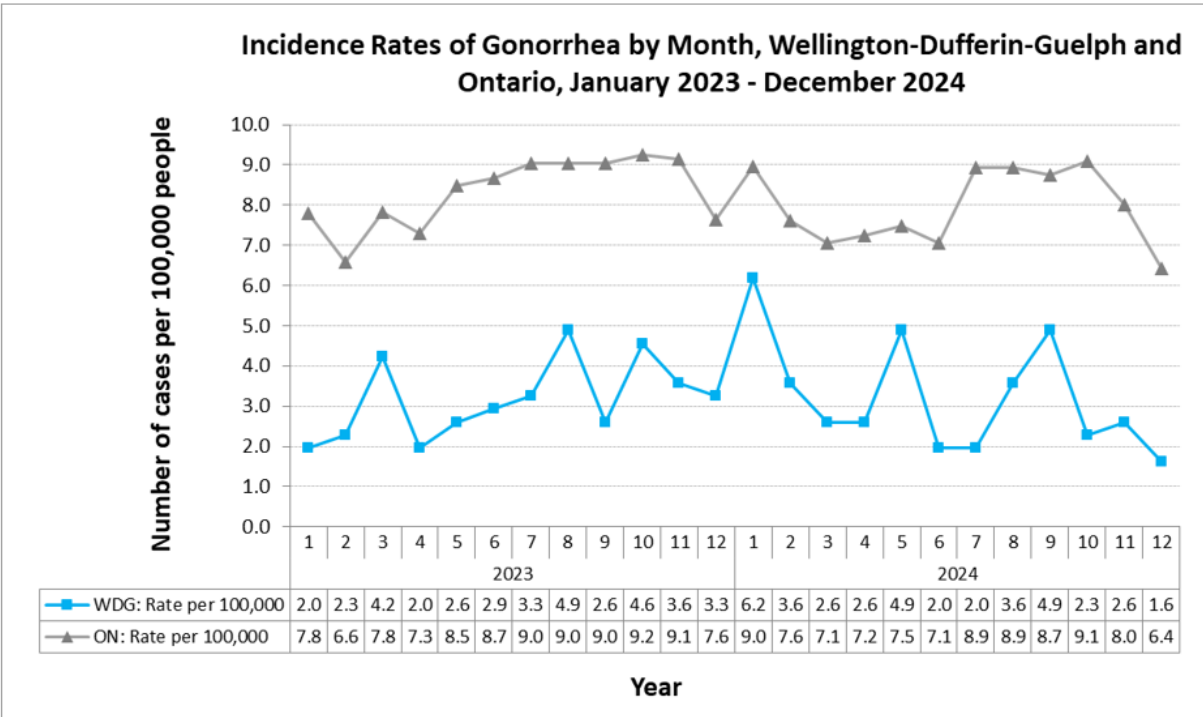
Incidence of Gonorrhea (GC)

Gonorrhea is an infection caused by the bacterium *Neisseria gonorrhoeae*. This bacterium is spread through vaginal, anal or oral sex. Infected females are often asymptomatic, whereas infected males often experience painful urination or discharge from the penis. GC can progress to pelvic infection or cause infertility.<sup>2</sup> GC is reported to public health units to ensure appropriate follow up and management and to prevent escalation of disease.

Annual number of cases:

- WDG total number of cases (2023): 117
- WDG total number of cases (2024): 119

Gonorrhea:



The total number of GC cases were relatively unchanged in WDG during 2024 at 119 cases and was consistently well below the provincial average through the year. WDGPH sexual health clinics continue to provide prompt access to sexual health services, including screening for GC, to individuals throughout the region.

## Incidence of Syphilis

Syphilis is a sexually transmitted infectious disease reported to public health units to ensure appropriate follow up and management and to prevent escalation of disease. Syphilis rates across Ontario have been rising since 2016.<sup>3</sup> Gay and bisexual men and men who have sex with men remain at highest risk of syphilis infections.<sup>3</sup> However, there has been an increase in syphilis infections in heterosexual women.<sup>3</sup> Multiple factors are contributing to this increase and include the following:

- health-care disparity among some populations,
- introduction of highly effective HIV treatment as well as pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention which may result in a decrease in condom use,
- easier access to sex via online dating portals, and
- rising rates of use of drugs while having sex<sup>3</sup>

Syphilis is categorized three ways for this report:

**Infectious Syphilis:** a syphilis infection in the early stage. Infected individuals can spread the disease to other individuals.

**Non-Infectious or Latent Syphilis:** an individual who is still infected with syphilis but cannot spread the disease to another individual. In this stage the disease can impact other systems of the body.

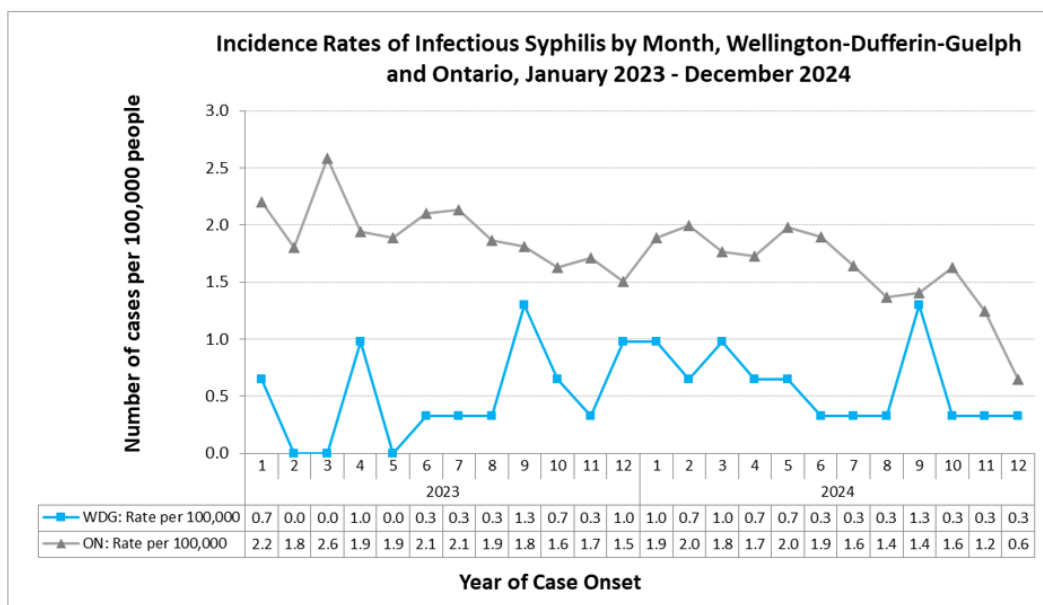
**Congenital Syphilis:** a disease that occurs when a mother with syphilis passes the infection on to her baby during pregnancy.

### Syphilis (Infectious)

Annual number of cases:

- WDG total number of cases (2023): 18
- WDG total number of cases (2024): 22

## Syphilis (infectious):



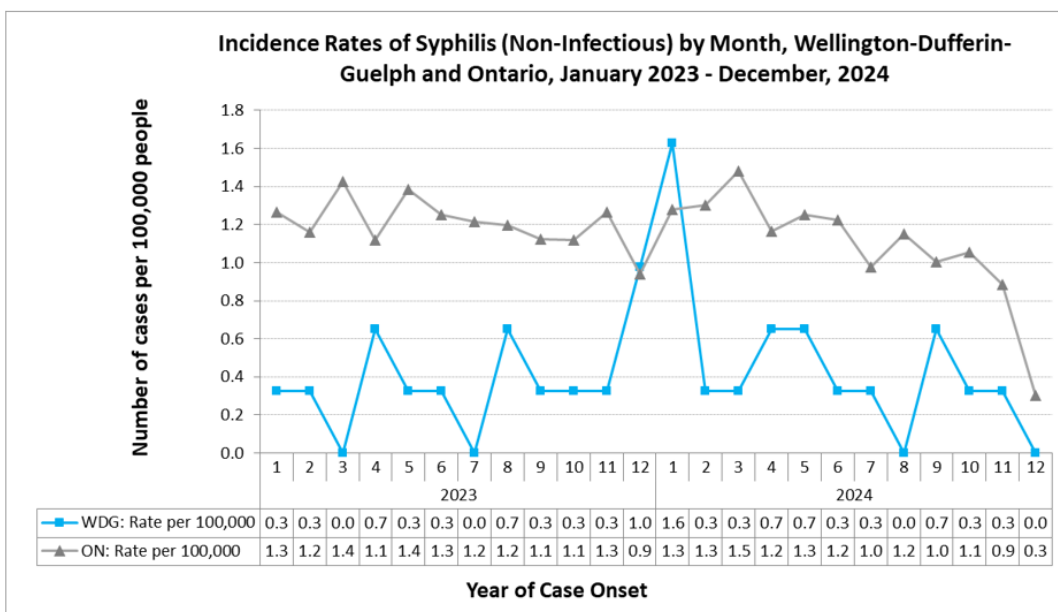
The total number of cases of infectious Syphilis in the WDG region rose slightly in 2024 but the rate remains well below the provincial rate. WDGPH sexual health clinics continue to promote screening for Syphilis for all at risk clients.

## Syphilis (Non-Infectious/Latent)

Annual number of cases:

- WDG total number of cases (2023): 14
- WDG total number of cases (2024): 17

## Syphilis (Non-Infectious/Latent):



The total number of non-infectious syphilis cases in the WDGPB region also increased slightly in 2024. WDGPB sexual health clinics promote screening for Syphilis for all at risk clients

### Syphilis (Congenital)

The provincial case rate for congenital syphilis was 24 in 2024. There were two investigations for congenital syphilis in WDG in 2024 but no confirmed cases. There have been no lab-confirmed cases of congenital syphilis in the WDG region for over two years.

### Tuberculosis (TB)

TB is an infectious disease reported to public health units to ensure appropriate follow up and management and to prevent escalation of disease.<sup>4</sup> TB is caused by a type of bacteria called a bacillus. TB bacilli can infect any part of the body but is most commonly found in the respiratory system.

TB is categorized in 2 ways for this report:

**Infectious or Active TB:** a TB infection that is active and can be spread from the infected individual to other individuals.

**Non-Infectious or Latent TB:** an individual who has been exposed to the TB bacillus but cannot spread the disease to others.

WDGPB is responsible for monitoring the percentage of active TB infections that completed treatment.

- The WDGPB TB program had 100% compliance for treatment of active infections in 2024.
- WDGPB had 7 active infections of TB that started treatment in 2023 and completed treatment in 2024.
- WDGPB had 6 active infections in 2024 that started treatment and completed treatment in 2024.
- WDGPB currently has 8 active infections that started treatment in 2024 who will complete their treatment in 2025.

WDGPH also manages latent TB infections (LTBI) throughout the WDGPH region. Not all LTBI require treatment. WDGPH focuses on treating LTBI in those clients who are at highest risk.

- The WDGPH TB program had 89% compliance for LTBI in 2024.
- WDGPH started 73 LTBI clients on treatment and 65 of them completed treatment.
- WDGPH had 20 LTBI clients that started treatment in 2023 and completed treatment in 2024.
- WDGPH had 32 LTBI clients in 2024 that started treatment and completed treatment in 2024.
- WDGPH currently has 13 LTBI clients that started treatment in 2024 who will complete their treatment in 2025.

The WDGPH TB program also conducted three community TB exposure investigations in 2024. Two of the investigations were conducted in elementary schools and one in a health care facility. In all instances, the TB case was identified and treated, and the contacts were identified and tested to confirm conversion to TB. There was a total of three conversions for all three TB exposure investigations.

### [GetAKit](#)

WDGPH began partnering with the GetAKit (GAK) program on November 25, 2024. GAK offers free and accessible HIV and STI testing services to residents across the WDGPH region. This initiative, developed in collaboration with Ottawa Public Health and the University of Ottawa, aims to make sexual health testing simple, private and accessible.

GAK provides the following:

- Laboratory-based testing for STI, including chlamydia, GC, syphilis, and hep C, with requisitions supported by a physician for clients over the age of 17.
- Free, at-home HIV self-testing kits delivered directly to your door for clients over the age of 16.
- Recommendations for preventive services like vaccinations, HIV prevention strategies, and contraception.

The platform operates through a clinician-developed algorithm that recommends appropriate tests and preventive services based on self-assessment and public health guidelines.

By removing barriers that can be present in traditional healthcare settings, GAK empowers individuals to take control of their sexual health, promoting timely testing, diagnosis, and treatment.

Since the launch WDGPH has provided care to a total of 28 clients through the GAK program.

## Related Reports

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Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health. (2024). *Clinical Services Annual Review*. [wdgpublichealth.sharepoint.com/sites/thecore/AgencyDocuments/Forms/AllItems.aspx?csf=1&web=1&e=K2anuXhttp%3A%2F%2F&FolderCTID=0x0120008A68F3B57C87624A91473083E431F4DC&id=%2Fsites%2Fthecore%2FAgencyDocuments%2FBoard of Health Reports%2F2024 Board of Health Reports%2F2024-02-07-BOH-Clinical Services Update%2Epdf&viewid=520e8af3-f97b-428a-81b6-a1bdb5d7cf27&parent=%2Fsites%2Fthecore%2FAgencyDocuments%2FBoard of Health Reports%2F2024 Board of Health Reports](https://wdgpublichealth.sharepoint.com/sites/thecore/AgencyDocuments/Forms/AllItems.aspx?csf=1&web=1&e=K2anuXhttp%3A%2F%2F&FolderCTID=0x0120008A68F3B57C87624A91473083E431F4DC&id=%2Fsites%2Fthecore%2FAgencyDocuments%2FBoard%20of%20Health%20Reports%2F2024%20Board%20of%20Health%20Reports%2F2024-02-07-BOH-Clinical%20Services%20Update%20Epdf&viewid=520e8af3-f97b-428a-81b6-a1bdb5d7cf27&parent=%2Fsites%2Fthecore%2FAgencyDocuments%2FBoard%20of%20Health%20Reports%2F2024%20Board%20of%20Health%20Reports)

## References

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1. Government of Canada. Hepatitis C: Symptoms and treatment page [Internet]. Available from: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/hepatitis-c.html>
2. Public Health Ontario. Gonorrhea Information Page [Internet]. Toronto: Government of Ontario; [cited 17 February 2022]. Available from: <https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectiousdiseases/sexually-transmitted-infections/gonorrhea>
3. Saeed, H. (2024, February 25). FAQ: Why are syphilis cases on the rise in Canada? *The Conversation*. <https://theconversation.com/faq-why-are-syphilis-cases-on-the-rise-in-canada-223716>
4. WDGPH BOH Report: BH.01.MAR0624.R08 [Trends in Tuberculosis\(TB\)](#).

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