

## Program Report: IPAC Hub

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**To:** Chair and Members of the Board of Health

**Meeting Date:** June 5, 2024

**Report No.** **BH.01.JUN0524.R24**, Pages: 8

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**Medical Officer of Health & CEO**

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## Recommendations

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It is recommended that the Board of Health receive this report for information.

## Key Points

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- Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) Hub services now include Dufferin County, which has been well received.
- The Ministry of Health has approved annualized funding for the IPAC Hub. The Ministry will be working individually with the IPAC Hubs to determine the funding amount for 2024.
- The IPAC Hub continues to evolve and offer services that meet the IPAC needs of long-term care homes, retirement homes, and other congregate living settings.
- Between April 2023 – March 2024 there were 778 IPAC Hub services offered.

## Background

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As part of Ontario's Keeping Ontarians Safe: Preparing for Future Waves of COVID-19 plan, funding was announced by the Ontario Government on September 30, 2020, to implement stronger IPAC support to congregate living settings through the establishment of IPAC hubs across the province. WDGPH was chosen as the local satellite IPAC Hub for Guelph-Wellington, which is one of three satellite sites under the Waterloo-Wellington IPAC Hub led by St. Mary's General Hospital in Kitchener. Dufferin County was initially a part of the William Osler IPAC Hub and not WDGPH.

In 2022 the Board of Health advocated for WDGPH to assume Dufferin as part of the WDGPH IPAC Hub catchment area which was successful.

After three successful years with the provincial IPAC Hubs, the need for IPAC support in Ontario remains high and IPAC Hubs continue to offer valuable services to congregate living settings. Therefore, the Ministry of Health has confirmed the program funding will become annualized. The ministry will be working with IPAC Hubs to determine funding allocations for 2024 and onward.

## **WDGPH Led IPAC Hub Model**

A dedicated IPAC Hub as part of the broader Infection Control (IC) Team created an ideal model to provide wrap-around support to facilities. The IPAC Hub enhances the work of the IC Team by standardized resources, tools, and processes to help build internal capacity and streamline support. The inspection and outbreaks branch of the IC team remains the main facility contact and is responsible for conducting IPAC assessments and managing facility outbreaks.

## **WDGPH Led IPAC Hub Activities in Wellington-Guelph**

### **IPAC Champion Program**

The IPAC Champion program is a 4-month capacity building program tailored to IPAC leads within long-term care and retirement homes. The program was devised to address gaps in IPAC practices identified by the Infection Control team during onsite inspections. Throughout the program, participants build the skills and knowledge to educate their staff on fundamental IPAC concepts utilizing innovative tools and resources developed by the IPAC Hub. A new IPAC topic is presented monthly using a modified 'Learn, See, and Do' pedagogical framework. Participants are first introduced to the topic through virtual learning and then shadow the IPAC Hub during onsite facility education, before providing their internal education session to staff.

The program is to build and optimize IPAC expertise by ensuring facility IPAC leads have the knowledge, tools, and experience to mitigate the impact of infectious disease outbreaks on our most vulnerable populations.

### **Education and Training Resources**

The IPAC Hub responds to gaps in practice and helps facilities translate existing resources and guidance into action, works to build IPAC capacity, and champions through a train-the-trainer approach, to ensure IPAC knowledge and skills are relayed down to front-line staff. The IPAC Hub helps bridge the gap between best practice information and actual implementation to put best practices into action tailored to the individualized needs of each facility. This information is relayed via educational videos, presentations, resources, guidance documents, and drop-in question sections. See Appendix A for a list of some resources and training created by the IPAC Hub.

## WDGPH Led IPAC Hub Advisory Committee and Partnerships

In April 2021, an Advisory Committee was established to bring local partners together to share information, promote collaboration, and provide input and guidance on the activities of the Guelph-Wellington Satellite IPAC Hub to enhance IPAC support for congregate living settings. This committee meets quarterly and continues to have representation from our local partners including the Registered Nurses Association of Ontario, the Ministry of Long-Term Care, the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services, the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority, and Ontario Health.

## Outbreak/Supportive On-Site Visits

The IPAC Hub provides virtual and on-site assistance to congregate living settings, whether they are currently experiencing an outbreak or proactively preparing to prevent future occurrences. The IPAC Hub-Team provides on-site facility visits, in-person feedback, educational sessions, and implementing corrective measures as needed. Furthermore, facility IPAC leads are supported by assisting in their internal audit process such as their internal hand hygiene audits.

## Discussion

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### IPAC Hub services in 2023

The last IPAC Hub one-time funding was allocated from April 2023 - March 2024. During this past year, 778 services were provided to congregate living settings. Of those services, 554 were to Guelph-Wellington facilities and 224 to Dufferin facilities. Services include:

- **Education/Training:** The champion program, on-site educational visits, training sessions, resource development, virtual and in-person information sessions.
- **Community of Practice:** Connecting congregate settings for peer support, and informational drop-in networking sessions.
- **Audits:** Onsite auditing, side-by-side audits with IPAC leads, joint site audits with the IC Team.
- **Mentorship:** Mentoring IPAC Champion Program, internal support for IC Team.
- **Outbreak Support:** On-site supportive visits, reviewing policies and procedures related to outbreak management.
- **IPAC Program Development:** Champion role development, supporting facility IPAC leads with their program development, and developing internal IPAC programs.
- **Other:** Sending informative memos, highlighting changes in guidance documents or practices to facilities, connecting with community partners, and information sharing.

The most impactful service provided was the IPAC program development support that empowered facility IPAC leads to bolster their capacity to improve frontline IPAC practices. See Appendix B for the complete breakdown of IPAC Hub services offered to congregate living facilities in the WDGPH catchment area between April 2023 – March 2024.

## Next Steps

With sustained annualized funding the WDGPB IPAC Hub remains committed to pioneering new projects and methodologies aimed at enhancing IPAC practices within congregate living settings. As the focus shifts from reactive outbreak management and support to proactive education and training initiatives, the IPAC Hub is dedicated to employing innovative and sustainable approaches to improve the health outcomes of residents in congregate living facilities. With the services listed above the IPAC hub is developing online e-learning modules focused on IPAC best practices.

## Health Equity Implications

Health equity is the condition where everyone can attain their full health potential and are not disadvantaged due to their social position or other socially determined circumstances.

- Congregate setting residents are disproportionately affected by respiratory viruses.
- There were 220 total outbreaks in 2023 (respiratory, enteric, and COVID-19)
- Many congregate settings continue to need IPAC support and education.
- Congregate settings pose a unique challenge to mitigate infection transmission.
- The IPAC Hub will continue to improve Congregate Setting IPAC outcomes.

## Conclusion

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WDGPB recognizes the need to protect residents and staff who live and work in congregate settings, RH, and LTCHs. There has been a significant impact from vaccination initiatives and IPAC education and support that confirms the need for an ongoing focus on these areas. Annualized funding will provide WDGPB with the stability to continue providing IPAC services to congregate living settings to build capacity to manage infection and prevention control programs effectively.

## Ontario Public Health Standards

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### Foundational Standards

- Population Health Assessment
- Health Equity
- Effective Public Health Practice
- Emergency Management

### Program Standards

- Chronic Disease Prevention and Well-Being
- Food Safety
- Healthy Environments

- Healthy Growth and Development
- Immunization
- Infectious and Communicable Diseases Prevention and Control
- Safe Water
- School Health
- Substance Use and Injury Prevention

## 2024-2028 WDGPH Strategic Goals

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More details about these strategic goals can be found in [WDGPH's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan](#).

- Improve health outcomes
- Focus on children's health
- Build strong partnerships
- Innovate our programs and services
- Lead the way toward a sustainable Public Health system

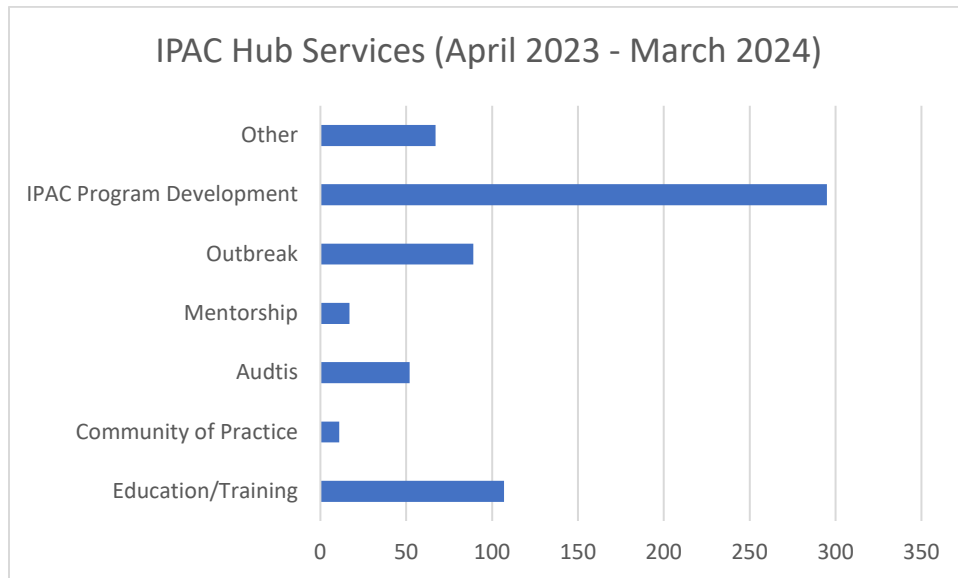
## Appendices

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### Appendix A

<b>At-a-Glance: IPAC Hub Resources and Trainings</b>		
Hand Hygiene and PPE Education, Training, Tip Sheets, and Activities	Outbreak preparedness planning package and outbreak management guide template	Auditing Facilitation Plan
IPAC Champion Training (onsite and online) and Toolkit	Environmental Cleaning Training, Resources, Tools and Fact sheets	COVID-19 Daily Checklist for IPAC measures, PPE, Supplies and Maintenance
Point of Care Risk Assessment (PCRA) Training, Facilitation Guide, Tip Sheets, Tools and Interactive Activities	How-to videos: PPE donning and doffing, how to complete line listing and lab requisition forms	Electronic Audit Tools

## Appendix B



## Appendix C

# Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph IPAC Hub

We provide IPAC expertise, collaborative assistance and just-in-time advice, guidance and direct support on IPAC practices.



### WHO WE ARE

The Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph IPAC Hub is a multidisciplinary team with a combined 30 plus years of IPAC experience and expertise. We have Certified Infection Control (CIC) professionals and are dedicated to working collaboratively with you to strengthen IPAC practices within your facility.

### WHO WE SERVE

The Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph IPAC Hub provides services and supports to long-term care, retirement homes and other congregate living settings in Wellington, Dufferin and Guelph.

### SERVICES PROVIDED

Our team works in collaboration with your facility to provide customized services and supports including:

- IPAC education and training (e.g., PPE, hand hygiene, environmental cleaning, etc.)
- Assessments and auditing of IPAC practices
- Implementation, support and strengthening of IPAC practices and programs
- Coaching/mentoring for IPAC leads and champions
- Outbreak management planning and support

Services and supports are tailored to each facility and can be provided onsite or virtually.

### CONNECT WITH US!

[wdgpublichealth.ca/IPAC\\_hub](http://wdgpublichealth.ca/IPAC_hub)

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