

Program/Service Information Report

Client and Community Support

April – September 2025

To: Board of Health

Meeting Date: November 5, 2025

Report No.: BH.01.NOV0525.C12

Key Points

- Client and Community Support (CCS) is a multidisciplinary team focused on ensuring seamless navigation of internal and external services through multiple communication channels.
- From April to September 2025, they engaged with the community over 13,000 times, averaging 2224 monthly interactions through multiple channels.
- Three new initiatives for the team include:
 - Launching a direct line for healthcare providers
 - Transferring triage for the Healthy Babies Healthy Children service to CCS
 - Re-instating the *Sight for Success* vision health program

Program Requirements

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.

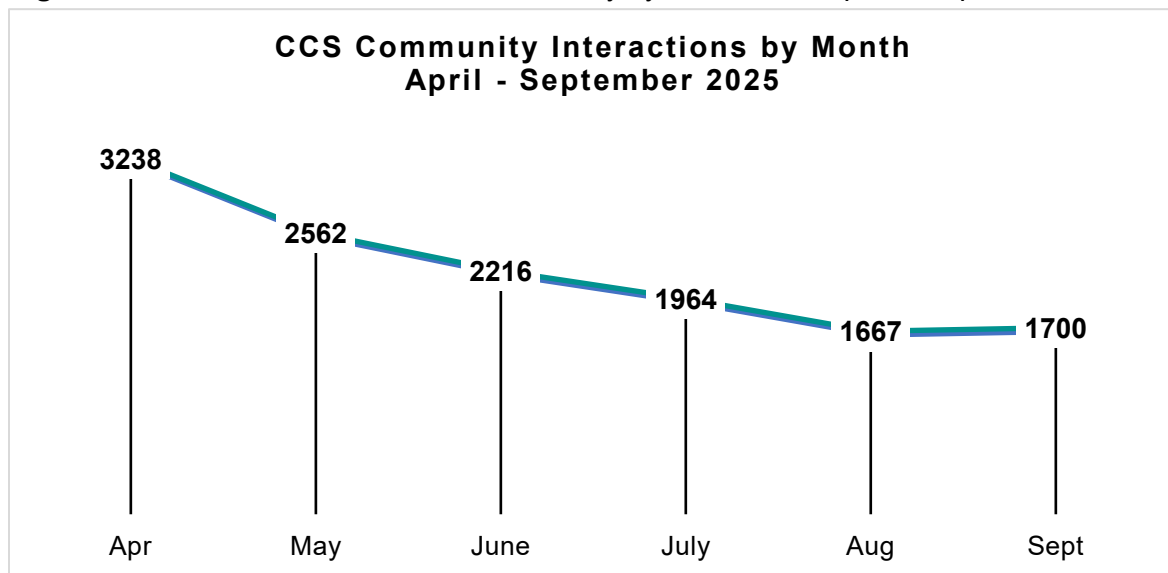
Highlights

Service Navigation & Community Demand

Client and Community Support (CCS) is a multidisciplinary team focused on ensuring seamless navigation of internal public health services and external community resources. The team is comprised of receptionists and public health nurses that engage with the community through

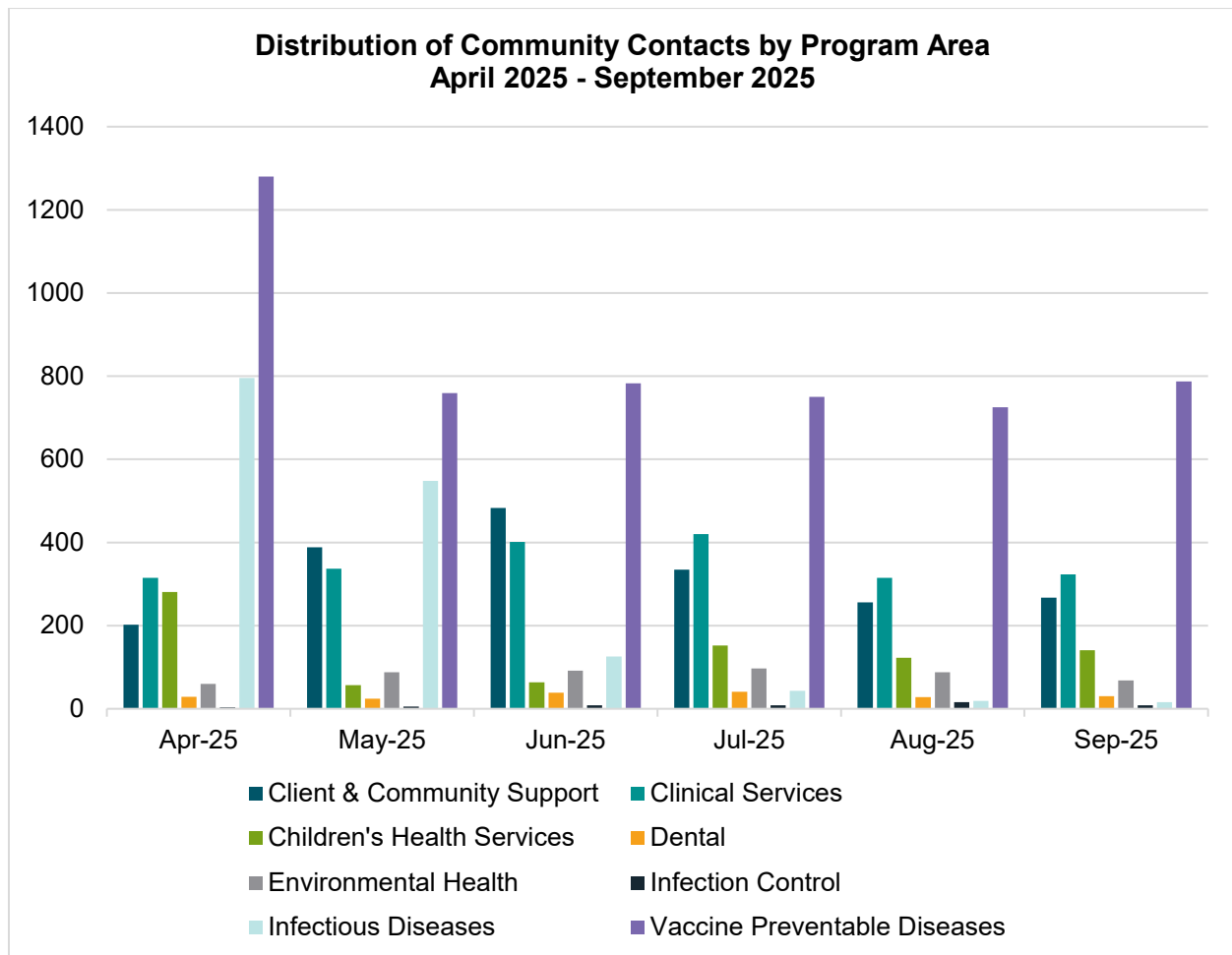
various communication channels including by telephone, in-person visits, email, fax and chatbot. These interactions facilitate the delivery of evidence-based health information that encourage clients to make informed decisions about their health and well-being. Between April and September 2025, the CCS Team managed over 13,000 interactions across all public health program areas, averaging 2224 monthly interactions (Figure 1).

Figure 1: CCS interactions with the community by month from April to September 2025.



As the first point of contact for the community, CCS can identify client needs and provide timely health education, appointment booking, internal transfers or community navigation. Looking specifically at calls placed to the Health Line, client inquiries are commonly about vaccine-preventable diseases, service navigation or clinical services (Figure 2). Call volume and common inquiries are dynamic, often aligning with the seasons of public health and significant community events. For example, in April and May inquiries related to Infectious Diseases rose as a provincial outbreak of measles occurred.

Figure 2: Distribution of community contacts by program area from April to September 2025.



Leveraging Artificial Intelligence (AI)

The CCS Team aims to live answer calls year-round, though high call volume can result in voicemails being left. CCS collaborated with the Data and Analytics Team to leverage an artificial intelligence (AI) tool for quicker processing of voicemails. The AI tool transcribes the voicemails CCS receives, pulls out key information (e.g., client name, phone number, etc.) and provides a summary of the caller's inquiry. The subject line of the voicemail is also coded to match pre-defined topics staff use to prioritize and triage call backs. This launch makes it easier for the CCS team to manage, prioritize and respond to client inquiries in times of higher demand.

Another AI tool available to the public for timely support remains Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health's (WDGPH) chatbot. The chatbot uses generative AI technology to understand and answer complex opened-ended questions by using information from WDGPH's website and

reputable sources the CCS team has provided in the chatbot's knowledge base. On average each month there are 220 opened conversations and 160 instances where clients engaged in back-and-forth conversation with the chatbot. The automated resolution rate is a parameter used to monitor the chatbot's performance and represents the percentage of conversations the chatbot can automatically resolve in a way that is accurate and relevant. The automated resolution rate remains consistently high at an average of 86%. The chatbot expands public health's reach allowing community members to receive answers to questions in real-time and outside of regular business hours, as over half of the conversations occur on weekends and after hours. Public health staff continue to provide guidance and coaching to improve the format and precision of the chatbot's responses.

Direct Phone Line for Healthcare Providers

CCS monitors the types of populations seeking public health support. Most clients reaching out are either general public (62%) or parents and caregivers (31%). A growing group seeking public health support is healthcare providers. WDGPH recognizes the need to collaborate and provide timely support for partners operating in the same shared healthcare system. As a result, a direct line for healthcare providers was launched in October 2025. The direct line is assessable via a direct extension and is live answered by designated CCS staff. The purpose of the line is to provide timely service for questions from healthcare providers regarding public health programs, client inquiries or service delivery. WDGPH will continue to promote the direct line and share the extension with healthcare providers through various channels.

Focus on Children's Health

In July 2025 triage for the [Healthy Babies Healthy Children \(HBHC\)](#) home visiting program transferred from the Children's Health Services Team to the Client and Community Support Team. HBHC is a free and voluntary parenting support service that provides home visits to pregnant individuals and parents/caregivers with young children. People can be referred to the program in various ways (e.g., by hospital after giving birth, by healthcare provider or agency, by self-referral, etc.). All referrals WDGPH receives are followed up with a call from CCS nurses within 48 hours to check-in on the family, complete assessments, provide initial resources and guidance, and offer a home visit with a public health nurse. During post-partum calls CCS can identify health concerns, mental health needs or parenting challenges early, enabling timely referrals to programs like HBHC and other community supports. Transitioning the triage role has expanded the CCS team's expertise in parenting support while giving the Children's Health Services team more capacity for in-person family support.

In addition to providing direct support to families, the CCS team participates in community planning tables for children in the early years. Collaboratives like the Dufferin Coalition for Kids (DuCK) and Growing Great Generation (GGG) are essential for fostering healthy child

development and building strong, connected communities. Bringing a population health lens, Public Health's participation and leadership at these tables helps identify community needs, align priorities and develop coordinated strategies to support families during the critical early years. These tables also create opportunities for sharing learning across sectors. In 2025, DuCK hosted its 3rd annual "Stronger Together – Connecting, Collaborating and Creating Solutions for Early Years" event on October 1, bringing together service providers to explore creative approaches to supporting families. Similarly, Growing Great Generations held its 1st annual "Improving Service Navigation" event on May 13, designed to enhance collaboration and interprofessional practice across agencies to better support families in navigating local services. Through collaboration, data sharing, and advocacy, public health supports informed decision-making, builds community capacity, and ensures that early years initiatives are responsive to the diverse needs of families.

To inform planning for early years initiatives, WDGPB launched a Parenting Insights Survey in 2024 to learn about the experiences and needs of families with children aged 0-6 across the region. After a final round of promotion, the survey concluded in August 2025 and received a total of 1,273 responses. The data is being analyzed, and preliminary results provide valuable insights about popular parenting topics parents seek support for and preferred methods to receive the information. A summary report will be shared in early 2026 with the Board of Health and partners of the early years planning tables as we translate these insights into community action.

Re-instating Sight for Success Vision Health Program

WDGPB is pleased to announce the reinstatement of the *Sight for Success* program in anticipation of updates to the Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS) Vision Protocol. The *Sight for Success* program provides a financial subsidy of up to \$160 toward prescription eyewear for eligible students in Grades 1–12 who have completed an OHIP-covered eye examination and meet established financial criteria. The program is delivered in collaboration with more than 20 local optometrists and outreach activities are underway to engage school boards and community partners, emphasizing streamlined enrollment through the WDGPB website. By reducing financial barriers and enhancing awareness of OHIP-covered eye exams, *Sight for Success* aims to improve visual health outcomes and promote academic achievement. This initiative reinforces WDGPB's commitment to advancing equitable access to vision care for school-aged children and youth across the region.

Related Reports

BH.01.JUN425.R17 – Client and Community Support

(https://wdgpublichealth.ca/sites/default/files/bh.01.jun0425.r17_-_ccs.pdf)

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