

Program/Service Information Report

Clinical Services

January to June 2021

To:	Board of Health
Meeting Date:	September 8, 2021
Report No.:	BH.01.SEP0821.C04
Prepared By:	Rosalyn LaRoche, Manager, Clinical Services
Approved By:	Rita Isley Director, Community Wellness and CNO
Submitted By:	Dr. Nicola J. Mercer, MD, MBA, MPH, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health & CEO

Key Points

- Clinical Service appointments have been put on hold since 2020.
- The Clinical Services intake line has continued providing support.
- Staff have been able to support a few on-site visits for high-risk vaccines or client STI treatments.
- January to May 2021 year-to-date cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs)/ blood-borne infections (BBIs) have generally been trending similar to the same time frame as last year. However, chlamydia is trending a bit lower which could be due to reduced testing under COVID-19 restrictions.
- Adverse events following immunization (AEFI) are significantly higher this year mainly due to vaccination against COVID-19.
- Community partners have been supportive in providing vaccination and testing services while Clinical Services staff have been redeployed to respond to COVID-19.
- Plans are in place to reinstate limited immunization and sexual health services in the fall of 2021.

Program Requirements

Compliance with OPHS and Accountability Indicators:

In compliance

Not in compliance. Clinical Services staff were redeployed from conducting routine work to other COVID-19 related tasks.

Highlights

COVID-19 has been the focus of WDGPH since early 2020. The staff assigned to the Clinical Services portfolio have been re-deployed to support the COVID-19 response, with most staff in this portfolio supporting the COVID-19 vaccination clinics.

During this time frame, minimal Clinical Services staff have provided:

- Support on the program intake line which addresses general vaccine questions from health care providers, specific client questions for the testing and treatment of STIs/BBIs, support for harm reduction/naloxone supply distribution.
- Minimal vaccination for high-risk clients or to finish off a vaccine series (e.g. Shingrix).
- Minimal STI treatment for syphilis or gonorrhea, and case management follow-up.
- Follow-up on AEFI reports.
- Partner support for the distribution of naloxone and harm reduction supplies.

All formal Sexual Health and Immunizations clinics were cancelled in 2020 to respond to COVID-19.

From January to June 2021, WDGPH has received 273 AEFI reports, with all but seven a result of a COVID-19 vaccination. Average number of AEFI reports pre-COVID-19 was less than 24 per year. A small team of staff have been assigned to support the investigation and follow-up to these incidents.

Reportable STIs and BBIs have been trending the same year-to-date, except for chlamydia. This could be related to reduced sexual activity during the pandemic or reduced testing of asymptomatic cases. It is anticipated that once regular testing practices resume across the health care sector that these numbers may increase.

Sexually Transmitted and Blood-Borne Pathogens – May Year to Date Numbers:

Disease	May 31, 2021	May 31, 2020
Chlamydia	228	312
Gonorrhea	42	40
Hepatitis B ('confirmed' or 'carrier')	8	11
Hepatitis C ('confirmed' or 'carrier')	23	25
HIV/AIDS ('confirmed' or 'carrier')	0	--
Syphilis, primary, secondary, early latent	--	--
Syphilis, late latent, neurosyphilis	--	--
Syphilis, unspecified	--	--

-- numbers too small to share

During the time of COVID-19 response, community partners have supported the services historically provided by the Clinical Services team. Examples of this support are:

- HIV/AIDS Resources and Community Health (ARCH) has increased their capacity to provide STI testing and treatment and continues to support the distribution of both harm reduction supplies and naloxone.
- Sanguen Health Care and ARCH continue to support reduced Community Van services in the City of Guelph.
- Local primary care providers support the testing and treatment of STIs and all immunizations, including Grade 7/8 student immunizations which have historically only been provided by WDGPH.

Presently, planning is underway to start limited STI testing and immunization clinics at the main WDGPH offices this fall. Plans include:

- Consultation with ARCH regarding capacity and areas of need for STI testing.
- Refresher training for Clinical Services nurses on assessment, counselling, testing and treatment for STIs.
- Refresher training for Clinical Services for nurses on vaccines – publicly-funded and selected non-publicly-funded (e.g. Shingrix).
- Update of clinic resources, and ordering/restocking of supplies and clinic rooms. Clinic rooms were emptied of STI supplies to support COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Review presently vaccine supply and order new stock based on anticipated need.
- Refine clinic flow and patient contact to align with COVID-19 safety measures
- Update WDGPH website and inform the public/community partners of the opening of services.

Related Reports

BH.01.JUN0320.C10 – Clinical Services January to December 2019