

2026-2029

STRATEGIC PLAN





LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit acknowledges that we work within the traditional territory of the Anishinaabek Nation; specifically, the Chippewa Tri – Council comprised of the Chippewas of Beausoleil, Rama and Georgina Island First Nations.

We also acknowledge the Pottawatomi of Moose Deer Point, the Mohawks of Wahta and the Georgian Bay, Moon River and Barrie South Simcoe Métis Councils in this region.

The Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee Confederacy have also walked on this territory over time.

Ontario is covered by 46 treaties and other agreements, and is home to many Indigenous Nations from across Turtle Island, including the Inuit and the Métis. These treaties and other agreements, including the One Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Covenant, are agreements to peaceably share and care for the land and its resources. Other Indigenous Nations, Europeans and newcomers were invited into this covenant in the spirit of respect, peace and friendship.

Many of us have come here as settlers, immigrants or newcomers in this generation or generations past.

We are all Treaty People.

Every day we are mindful of broken covenants and we strive to make this right. We commit to collaborating based on the foundational assumption that Indigenous Peoples have the power, strength and competency to develop culturally specific strategies for their communities. We are dedicated to honouring Indigenous self-determination, history and culture, and are committed to moving forward in the spirit of reconciliation and respect with all First Nation, Métis and Inuit People.



BOARD OF HEALTH CHAIR AND MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH/CEO



Ann-Marie Kungl
Board of Health Chair

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD OF HEALTH CHAIR

On behalf of the Board of Health, I am proud to share our 2026–2029 Strategic Plan for the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit. This plan positions us to address local needs through a focus on engagement, equity, and innovation to most meaningfully advance public health outcomes.

At its core, this plan reinforces our commitment to collaboration to improve population health across Simcoe Muskoka. The Board of Health is confident that, guided by this plan, the health unit will continue to lead with excellence and accountability, ensuring healthier communities for all.



Dr. Lisa Simon
Medical Officer of Health
(Acting)/CEO

MESSAGE FROM THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH (ACTING) AND CEO

It is my privilege to share the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's 2026–2029 Strategic Plan. Developed with input from our staff, Board of Health and community partners, this plan refreshes our guiding foundations and sets new strategic directions for the next four years. It positions our organization to strengthen the health of people who live, work, and play in our communities, in alignment with the Ontario Public Health Standards.

Our four strategic directions of community engagement, equity-driven action, quality and innovation, and a skilled and connected workforce, reflect how we will work together to build strong relationships, reduce health inequities, and deliver high-quality, evidence-informed programs and services. This plan is our roadmap for building healthier communities and supporting a resilient public health workforce.

VISION

Healthy communities. Healthy people.

MISSION

We work with our communities to protect health, prevent disease, and promote well-being for everyone in Simcoe Muskoka.

VALUES

RESPECT: We show respect for all people and the environment.

EQUITY: We believe that all people have a right to achieve their optimal health.

COLLABORATION: We build trusting relationships and work with others to achieve the best possible health outcomes for all.

EXCELLENCE: We provide high quality, evidence-informed programming while supporting innovation.

ACCOUNTABILITY: We are responsible to the public, our partners, and funders by using ethical and sustainable practices.

POSITIVE WORKPLACE: We foster a work culture that supports open communication, work-life balance, and continuous growth.

MANDATE

The mandate of the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is to deliver local public health programs and services that improve and protect health and well-being and reduce health inequities in Simcoe Muskoka. The mandate and authority for local public health is provided by the Health Protection and Promotion Act R.S.O. 1990 (HPPA) and, under this act, the Ontario Public Health Standards. As a recognized public health leader in Ontario, SMDHU is committed to advancing evidence-informed practice and strengthening population health across Simcoe Muskoka. We focus on prevention and upstream interventions, and regularly work in partnership with others. SMDHU's areas of programming include environmental health, community and family health, clinical services, and communications, health assessment, surveillance, and equity. The health unit is governed by a Board of Health and is funded through both provincial and municipal sources, as per the HPPA.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

GOAL #1:

Strengthen community relationships, engagement and collaboration to improve population health.

OBJECTIVE 1A: Enhance engagement with community members, current and new partners, and the broader health system to take collective action on local community needs.

OBJECTIVE 1B: Deepen respectful and reciprocal relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations through culturally safe engagement, knowledge sharing, and collaborative action.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION

EQUITY DRIVEN ACTION

GOAL #2:

Improve health equity by embedding actions in public health programs and services.

OBJECTIVE 2A: Advance data collection and analysis practices, including sociodemographic data, to monitor trends, inform priorities, and guide actions that address health inequities.

OBJECTIVE 2B: Enhance programming, partnerships and organizational practices to better serve the growing diversity of the local population and to reduce risk factors and build protective factors in the community.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION

QUALITY AND INNOVATION

GOAL #3:

Heighten the quality and impact of health unit programs and services by leveraging continuous improvement and innovation.

OBJECTIVE 3A: Expand quality improvement activities to enhance program efficiency and agency effectiveness.

OBJECTIVE 3B: Develop and implement an innovation strategy to advance data modernization and digital public health solutions, optimize the use of resources, and enhance service delivery.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION

SKILLED AND CONNECTED WORKFORCE

GOAL #4:

Foster a work environment where employees engage in ongoing learning and collaborate to support workplace well-being.

OBJECTIVE 4A: Support employees to grow their professional knowledge and skills for effective public health practice.

OBJECTIVE 4B: Develop and implement practical, effective approaches that promote workplace well-being and engagement.