

Municipal Matters

GBPH's Biannual Newsletter for Municipalities

Issue 4 | May 2026

GBPH develops BYOB resource for municipalities

The Province has introduced new legislation, enabling municipalities to enact bylaws permitting bring-your-own alcohol (BYOB) at designated outdoor community events.

This legislation came into effect on April 30, 2026.

The following is a list of key considerations for municipalities regarding this new legislative framework:

1. BYOB at outdoor events is not mandated. Municipalities must opt in by enacting a bylaw.
2. Municipalities have full discretion over whether to participate and how BYOB-designated events are regulated locally.
3. Each eligible event requires municipal designation and an AGCO BYOB permit.
4. Municipalities should evaluate BYOB permissions on a case-by-case basis.
5. Municipalities have authority to impose conditions, deny applications, or revoke approvals.
6. BYOB events may increase municipal liability risks. Standard



Health Promoter Heather Innes discusses the new BYOB legislation with GBPH Senior Public Health Manager Andrew Barton.

event insurance policies may not cover claims where alcohol is supplied by attendees.

In collaboration with health units across southwestern Ontario, Grey Bruce Public Health has developed a resource to help municipalities decide if and how they will opt in to BYOB legislation. This resource highlights key considerations for health, safety, and risk mitigation.

It also provides guidance on developing criteria for BYOB permits if municipalities choose to enact BYOB bylaw.

Please find a copy of this resource in the email containing this newsletter. If you have any questions about this document or the BYOB legislation, contact Health Promoter Heather Innes at h.innes@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca.

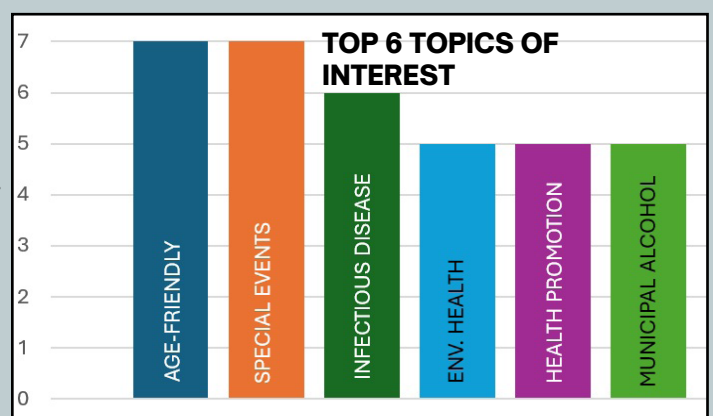
Thank you for your feedback!

Last December, Grey Bruce Public Health circulated a survey to all subscribers of the biannual *Municipal Matters* newsletter.

We wanted to know what you like about the newsletter and what you'd like to see in future issues.

This feedback, in addition to comments heard at municipal alignment meetings, has influenced the content in this newsletter and newsletters to come.

In this edition, we've included information on the cost of sport, recreational water, and vector-borne diseases.



Dr. Graham appointed Acting MOH

Grey Bruce Public Health is excited to share with our municipal partners that Dr. Brittany Graham has assumed the role of acting Medical Officer of Health for Grey-Bruce and Chief Executive Officer of Grey Bruce Public Health.

Dr. Graham’s appointment comes after Dr. Ian Arra decided to move on from the position, after serving for seven years as the area’s Medical Officer of Health and GBPH’s CEO.

Dr. Graham served as GBPH’s Physician Consultant prior to her appointment as Grey-Bruce’s acting Medical Officer of Health.

It is standard practice within Public Health for an organization’s Physician Consultant to step into the role of acting Medical Officer of Health when the need arises.

The following is a message from Dr. Graham:

“Partnerships are a foundation of effective public health. As I begin my role as Acting Medical Officer of Health, I am deeply grateful for the many organizations, leaders, and community partners who contribute to the well-being of Grey-Bruce. I look forward to strengthening these relationships and working together to address local needs, advance shared priorities, and support healthier communities. In keeping with Grey Bruce Public Health’s mission, I am committed to protecting and promoting the health of everyone who calls this region home, and I’m excited for what we can achieve through strong, collaborative partnerships.”



Upcoming Dates



[Bike to School Week](#) - June 1-5, 2026



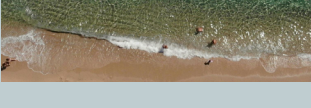
[World No Tobacco Day](#) – May 31, 2026



[Safe Kids Week](#) – June 1-7, 2026



[Seniors Month](#) - June 2026



[National Drowning Prevention Week](#) – July 19-25

June 15 is World Elder Abuse Day

By Angela Yenssen

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) is observed annually on June 15.

This year, the Grey Bruce Elder Abuse Prevention Network (GBEAPN) is celebrating WEAAD by highlighting the expansion of services in Grey-Bruce to address elder abuse.

GBEAPN partnered with Community Connection, Victim Services Bruce Grey, Ontario Health at Home, and the Alzheimer Society Grey Bruce to create an elder abuse response pathway for Grey-Bruce.

Older adults in Grey-Bruce, or anyone concerned about the safety or well-being of an older adult in Grey-Bruce, can call 211 and receive referrals to local resources.

Although services to address elder abuse are more accessible in Grey-Bruce through the 211 pathway, more work is needed to ensure all local service providers are equipped to address elder abuse.

GBEAPN’s 2024 survey of health, legal, and social service providers revealed that very few organizations in Grey-Bruce have policies, procedures, screening tools, or training related to elder abuse.

As we approach WEAAD 2026, the



GBEAPN calls on all organizations in Grey-Bruce to consider their role in elder abuse prevention and to pursue education about this issue.

Elder abuse information is available on the [Grey Bruce Public Health website](#).

Training about elder abuse can be requested by contacting Angela Yenssen, Chair of GBEAPN, at 519-370-2200, ext. 33 or by email at angela.yenssen@gbcllc.clcj.ca.

Beating the heat this summer

Extreme heat events are becoming more frequent and intense due to climate change.

Prolonged exposure to high temperatures can lead to health risks, like heat exhaustion and heatstroke, and worsen existing medical conditions.

Older adults, young children, people with chronic illnesses, outdoor workers, unhoused residents and those without access to air conditioning are most vulnerable.

To stay safe during extreme heat:

- Drink plenty of water, even before feeling thirsty
- Wear light coloured clothing
- Seek shade or air-conditioned spaces whenever possible

Communities can help by opening cooling centres and sharing information.



Keeping community members informed about local heat warnings, extreme weather events, and taking simple precautions can help to reduce the risks associated with extreme heat.

SOURCES

Government of Canada. [Health risks and who is at risk of extreme heat events](#)

World Health Organization (WHO). Heat and Health (2024). <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/climate-change-heat-and-health>

Government of Canada. Extreme Heat Events and Health (2024). Retrieved from: [Extreme heat events: Overview](#)

Municipalities can help to prevent vector-borne disease risk

Public Health monitors ticks and mosquitoes by using standardized methods, including tick-dragging and mosquito trapping.

Surveillance data detects risks early, identifies trends, and maps risk areas.

The [Ontario Vector-Borne Disease Tool](#) provides surveillance data about diseases, such as West Nile Virus and Lyme disease, as well as surveillance data for mosquitoes and blacklegged tick established risk areas.

Municipalities have a key role to play in the prevention of VBD by reducing tick and mosquito habitats by managing tall grass, brush, and leaf litter in public spaces; maintaining trails and recreational areas; and reducing standing water in catch basins, ditches, and parks.



Sharing public health social media reminders about tick checks, bug repellent, and protective clothing can optimize public education.

Community members can participate in surveillance by reporting sick or dead birds to the [Canadian Wildlife Health](#)

[Cooperative](#) and using [eTick](#) to submit pictures of ticks found in the environment, on animals, or humans to generate a map for public awareness.

For more information, email infectiousdiseases@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca.

Safety on the water

The plethora of beaches, shorelines, lakes, and inland waterways in Grey-Bruce offer multiple opportunities for recreational water activities, such as swimming, fishing, and boating. But they also pose potential health and injury risks.

At public beaches, bacteria levels in the water can change rapidly, especially after storms and other weather-related events.

Bacteria, viruses, and parasites found in natural and built water environments can make people sick.

Pools, spas, splash pads, and other recreational water facilities are also impacted by heavy use, warm

temperatures, and disinfection issues, which can allow harmful organisms to grow.

As the weather continues to warm, municipalities can play an important role in promoting safe waterfront use.

Municipalities should strongly advise residents and visitors to check water conditions before entering the water and to avoid swimming if the water looks cloudy, has debris, or smells unusual.

Local beach water testing updates are available through the [Grey Bruce Public Health website](#) and inspection results for recreational water facilities can be found on [Check It!](#).

In Grey-Bruce, emergency department visits for near-drowning incidents exceed the provincial average.

Wearing a life jacket or personal flotation device (PFD) is one of the most effective ways to reduce risk. Life jackets provide greater protection in higher risk conditions, such as open or cold water, or when someone may be unable to stay afloat, while PFDs are designed for calm water activities (e.g., boating or paddling) where the wearer can assist themselves.

All devices should be [Canadian-approved, properly sized, and inspected annually for fit and buoyancy](#).

Cost of sport hits rural communities harder

When the cost of participation rises, access to community-level, low-cost infrastructure becomes one of the strongest tools municipalities have to keep children and youth active.

According to research:

- 74% of Canadians say sport and recreational opportunities are not affordable
- Free or low-cost community spaces (parks, trails, pathways) are used by more than 70% of Canadians

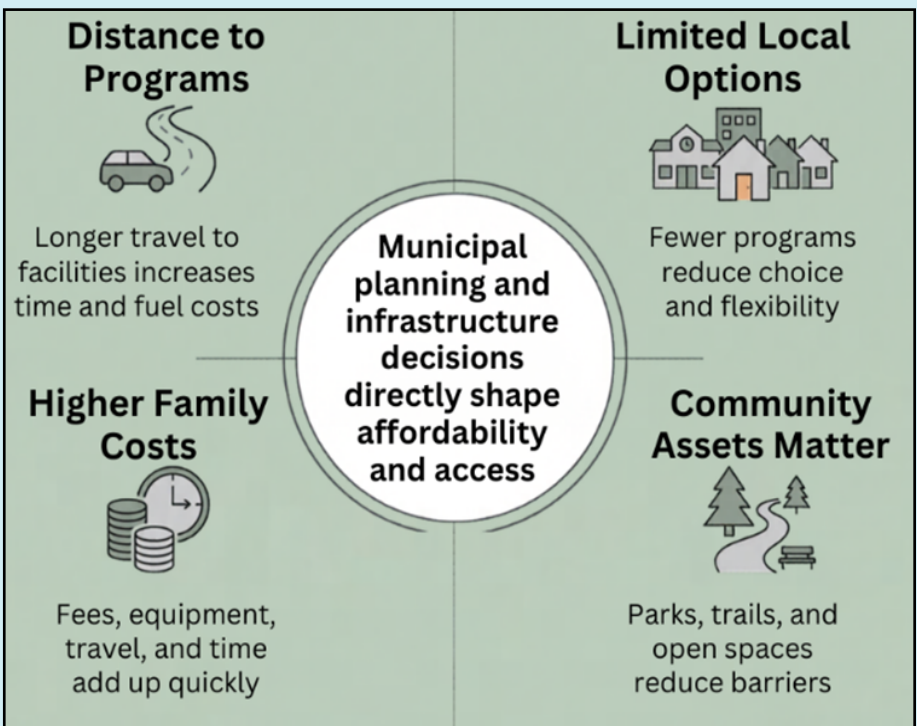
The rising cost of sport continues to limit participation for children and youth across Canada, with greater impacts in rural and remote communities.

Recent findings from Jumpstart, PASS indicators, and CPRA show that affordability, travel distance, and access to facilities all play a role in whether young people are able to participate.

Beyond registration fees, rural families also face barriers due to fewer local programs, longer travel distances, limited transportation options, and higher operating costs, which can make participation difficult or unattainable.

These pressures are frequently felt more strongly by families with lower incomes and by communities spread across large geographic areas.

Evidence consistently shows that access to safe, well-maintained, and nearby spaces is strongly



associated with higher levels of physical activity across age groups.

PASS data highlight the importance of the built and social environments, particularly in rural settings.

Free and low-cost assets, such as parks, trails, playgrounds, outdoor rinks, and community spaces, are among the most consistently used opportunities for physical activity.

These spaces reduce the need for travel, lower costs for families, and support informal and unstructured play close to home.

Municipal decisions related to planning, facility access, maintenance, and recreation

fees play an important role in sustaining these opportunities.

Prioritizing affordable, local spaces can help offset rising sport costs and support more equitable participation for children and youth across rural communities like Grey-Bruce.

SOURCES

- [PASS Indicators](#)
- [Jumpstart State of Youth Play and State of Youth Sport](#)
- [PHO The Impact of the Built Environment and Social Environment on Physical Activity: A Scoping Review](#)
- [Jumpstart Cost and Barriers to Sports Participation Study](#)
- [CFLRI and CPRA The Price of Inactivity](#)



Directory

Please refer to this directory to contact specific Grey Bruce Public Health programs.
Main GBPH Number: 519-376-9420

MAIN LINE WITH EXTENSIONS 519-376-9420

- Sexual Health Clinic - Press 1
- Immunizations - Press 2
- Adverse Water - Press 3
- PHI, Food Safety, Etc - Press 4
- Healthy Babies - Press 5
- Infectious Diseases - Press 6
- Tobacco Enforcement - Press 7
- Dental - Press 8
- Switchboard - Press 0

FAX NUMBERS

Immunizations - 519-376-7782

Rabies - 519-376-0980

Environmental, Dental, Food Safety, Health Hazard, Water - 519-376-6310

Infectious Diseases - 519-376-4152

Sexual Health, Youth - 519-376-5043

Healthy Babies - 519-376-1287

Administration - 519-376-8965

MOH/Media Confidential - 519-376-0605

EMAIL ADDRESSES

General: publichealth@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

Harm Reduction: harmreduction@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

Immunizations: immunization@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

Rabies: rabies@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

HBHC: hbhc@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

Infectious Diseases: InfectiousDiseases@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

IPAC: IPAC@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

Oral Health: Dental@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

Safe Water: SafeWaterDental@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

School Health: schools@publichealthgreybruce.on.ca

Let's work together to create healthier communities

Let's work together to create healthier communities.

Grey Bruce Public Health is available to work in partnership with council, staff and committees, along with other community organizations, on key health issues. We can help:

- Establish and strengthen connections
- Integrate health policies into community planning
- Collaborate on healthy community initiatives

To find out more, call GBPH at 519-376-9420.

