

# 2021 Partnership Update

## Niagara Region Public Health and Brock University

On September 13, 2019, Niagara Region Public Health and Brock University signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to advance their commitment to collaborate in research and student experiential opportunities that improve the health outcomes of Niagara region residents. This agreement represents the mutual benefits of working together to address community health issues through a transdisciplinary approach to achieve the goal of Niagara being one of the 25 healthiest communities in Canada. This collaborative partnership is reflective of Brock's commitment to knowledge mobilization and using institutional resources to improve the health and vitality of the Niagara region.

### Projects and Initiatives in 2021

Below is an overview of collaborations and partnership activities that occurred in 2021 between Niagara Region Public Health and Brock University.

#### **Research**

Niagara Region Public Health and Brock University collaborated and co-created unique community-based research in 2021:

- Students on the Move
  - Supported by:
    - Christopher Fullerton, Professor, Department of Geography & Tourism Studies
    - Jackie Gervais, Public Health Promoter, Niagara Region Public Health
    - Bianca Fucile, Health Analyst, Niagara Region Public Health
  - With the primary goal of building an understanding of the impact that transportation, or the lack of transportation, has on the health and wellbeing of Niagara's post-secondary students, this study led to a set of recommendations for municipal transit operators and presentations were made to the City of St. Catharines including at a City Council budget meeting and a Transportation Advisory Committee meeting. Presentations were also made to the Niagara Region's Transportation Steering Committee and the Brock District Plan Technical Advisory Committee.
  - The online survey used to inform this research was completed by 1,235 Brock University students and 842 Niagara College students. 10 Brock University students and 10 Niagara College students also took part in the photovoice component of the study.

#### **Service**

Niagara Region Public Health and Brock University supported each other in several ways in 2021 in efforts to improve the health and well-being of residents in the Niagara Region:

- Brock hosted vaccination clinics on campus, in partnership with Niagara Region Public Health, donated PPE and provided residence spaces to health care workers who needed them during the pandemic.
- Niagara Region Public Health supported the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Race, Gender and Diversity (RGD) Initiative grant application developed by Liette Vasseur, Professor, Biological Sciences; UNESCO Chair in Community Sustainability: from local to global; Member of the Brock Environmental Sustainability Research Centre.

## **Student Experiential Learning**

Student experiential learning provides unique opportunities for students at the university to gain real world experience as part of their studies. In 2021, the partnership between Brock University and Niagara Region Public Health included:

- 19 students volunteering over 900 hours in vaccination clinics.
- Stacey Allegro, Outreach Nurse, Niagara Region Public Health, Katherine Houston, Evidence and Knowledge Mobilization Officer, Niagara Region Public Health, and Kate Harold, Strategic Initiatives Coordinator, Niagara Region Public Health delivered presentations to over 200 Med Plus students discussing career opportunities and community-based healthcare.

## **Next Steps**

Brock University and Niagara Region Public Health collaborated to provide meaningful student experiences and developed unique community-based research in 2021. The partnership also advanced their collective goal of improving the health and well-being of the Niagara community. 2022 presents exciting opportunities to further this work and explore new ways to co-create research and provide meaningful opportunities for student experiential learning. An example of a potential collaboration for 2022 is an experiential education opportunity for one undergraduate and one graduate student to evaluate the impact of recreation staffing and programming opportunities during the COVID-19 pandemic on responsive behaviours among elderly residents in long-term care homes in the Niagara region.