

Niagara Region Public Health

2022 PARTNERSHIP UPDATE



- ▲ *The Ontario government's GO-VAXX mobile clinic returned to Brock University on Monday, October 3, 2022, to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to the community.*

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 2022

The MOU between NRPH and Brock University provides experiential education opportunities for our students and enhanced research collaborations for our faculty to find new and innovative ways to support the health of Niagara's aging population.

Research

Niagara Region Public Health and Brock University collaborated and co-created unique community-based research in 2022:

Students on the Move

- 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 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 student. 10 Brock University student and 10 Niagara College students also took part in the photovoice component of the study.
- Supported by:
 - Christopher Fullerton, Professor, Department of Geography & Tourism Studies
 - Jackie Gervais, Public Health Promoter, NRPH
 - Bianca Fucile, Health Analyst, NRPH

Canada Summer Games Legacy Project

- This project studies the environmental analytics, the use of buildings (where they come from), and various green spaces to explain the legacy of the Canada Summer Games.
- Brock faculty are providing in-kind support to NRPH and another project partner Environics to evaluate big data in this pilot project. This includes looking at geo-fencing physical locations to see if the Canada Summer Games had any effect on increased visitors.
- Supported by:
 - Julie Stevens, Special Advisor to the President – Canada Games, and Professor Sport Management
 - Martha Barnes, Associate Professor, Chair, Recreation and Leisure Studies

Youth Tech Net

- Evaluating the impact of technology use on adolescent risk behaviours and well-being over time.
- NRPH and Brock's Lifespan Institute are working on a SSHRC Partnership Grant which has passed the first phase of review successfully.

Service

NRPH and Brock University supported each other in several ways in 2022 in efforts to improve the health and well-being of residents in the Niagara Region through service.

This includes:

- Brock University hosted indoor and outdoor vaccination clinics on campus, including welcoming the mobile GO-VAXX bus that provided COVID-19 vaccinations to community members.
- The NRPH were provided an informational booth at the Canada Games Park during the Canada Summer Games to promote their new research project. This project studies the environmental analytics, the use of buildings (where they come from), and various green spaces to explain the legacy of the Canada Summer Games.
- The NRPH presented to various Brock student cohorts on public health career opportunities.

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 2022, the partnership between Brock and NRPH included:

- One co-op student worked as a social media marketing student within the Reproductive/Child Health Division in the Spring/Summer term of 2022 for 630 hours.
- 19 Brock students were Vision Screening Volunteers.
- Brock students assisted with the vaccination clinics as volunteers.
- One Brock Health Sciences student worked with the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network under Health Equity: Mental Health and Addictions Living Library Developer.

- One Brock Health Sciences student worked as a Poverty Reduction Strategy Qualitative Research Assistant with the Niagara Poverty Reduction Network for 50 hours.

Next Steps

Brock University and Niagara Region Public Health collaborated to provide meaningful student experiences and developed unique community-based research in 2022. The partnership also advanced their collective goal of improving the health and well-being of the Niagara community. 2023 presents exciting opportunities to further this work and explore new ways to co-create research and provide meaningful opportunities for student experiential learning, especially in the following identified priority areas:

- Digital transformation in public health units;
- Creation of a knowledge translation and network centre;
- COVID response evaluation, and overall emergency preparedness; and
- Opioids and safe supplies by implementing surveillance sites.