

# Program Update Series: Food Safety

Board of Health Meeting (April 27, 2026)  
Report BOH26016

Hamilton Public Health  
Healthy Environments Division  
Food & Water Safety



# Program Mandate

## Ontario Boards of Health

- Comply with the Ontario Public Health Standards and Operational Standards
- Deliver a comprehensive food safety program to reduce the burden of foodborne illness by:
  - Preventing foodborne illness through inspections, education, and enforcement;
  - Reducing exposure to health hazards in food premises;
  - Ensuring safe food handling practices through education and certification; and,
  - Ensuring compliance with Food Premises Regulation 493/17.



# Population Health



## Enteric Disease Rate

Enteric disease rates in Hamilton have remained stable from 2015 to 2024, averaging about 266 cases per year.



## Salmonella Rate

- Local salmonellosis rate declined by 37.2% from 2015 to 2024.
- In 2024, the local rate was 23.3% lower than the provincial rate.

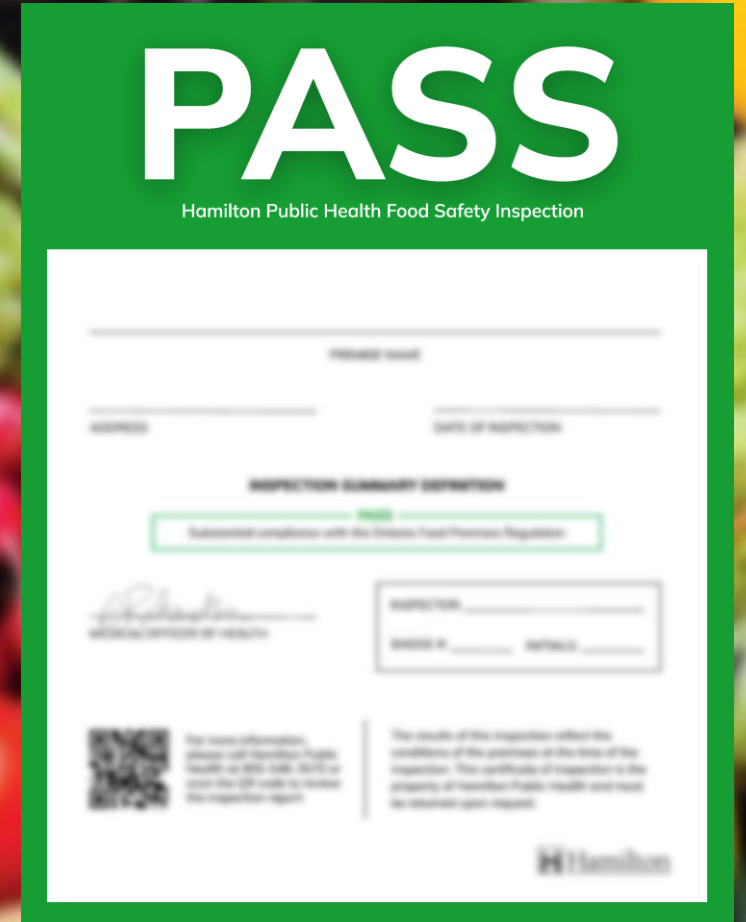


## Unreported Cases

- Only 9% of people with acute gastrointestinal illness in Canada sought medical care.
- An estimated 97,656 infectious gastrointestinal cases in Hamilton were unreported in 2024.

# Program Approach

- Risk Based Inspection Frequency (High, Moderate or Low)
  - e.g., High risk inspected more often
- Routine and complaint inspections of food premises
- Progressive enforcement
  - Education, written orders, closures, fines or summons
- Suspect foodborne illness investigations
- Food Handler Training and Certification
- Health Inspection Disclosure On-site and Online



# 2025 Activity Highlights (Slide 1 of 2)

1

## Total Food Premises

- 691 High-Risk
- 1,690 Moderate-Risk
- 1,123 Low-Risk

2

## Food Premises Inspection Activity Levels

- 6,119 Routine Inspections
- 834 Re-Inspections

3

## Food Handler Training and Certification

- 254 Registrants
- 209 Certificates Issued



# 2025 Activity Highlights (Slide 2 of 2)

4

## Complaints and Service Requests

- 1,819 Responded and Resolved

5

## Suspect Foodborne Illness

- 168 Investigations

6

## Supporting Special Events

- 317 Events Risk-Assessed
- 80 Events attended by Public Health Inspectors
- 920 Inspections and Re-Inspections



# Priority Populations

**Individuals at greater risk of severe outcomes from foodborne illness include:**

- Young children; and,
- Older adults.

**Public Health prioritizes food premises serving these populations, such as:**

- Retirement & Long-term care homes
- Licensed Childcare Centers
- Childcare Nutrition Programs
- Hospitals and other institutional settings

**Total Facilities (2025):**

427

**Total Facilities Inspected (2025):**

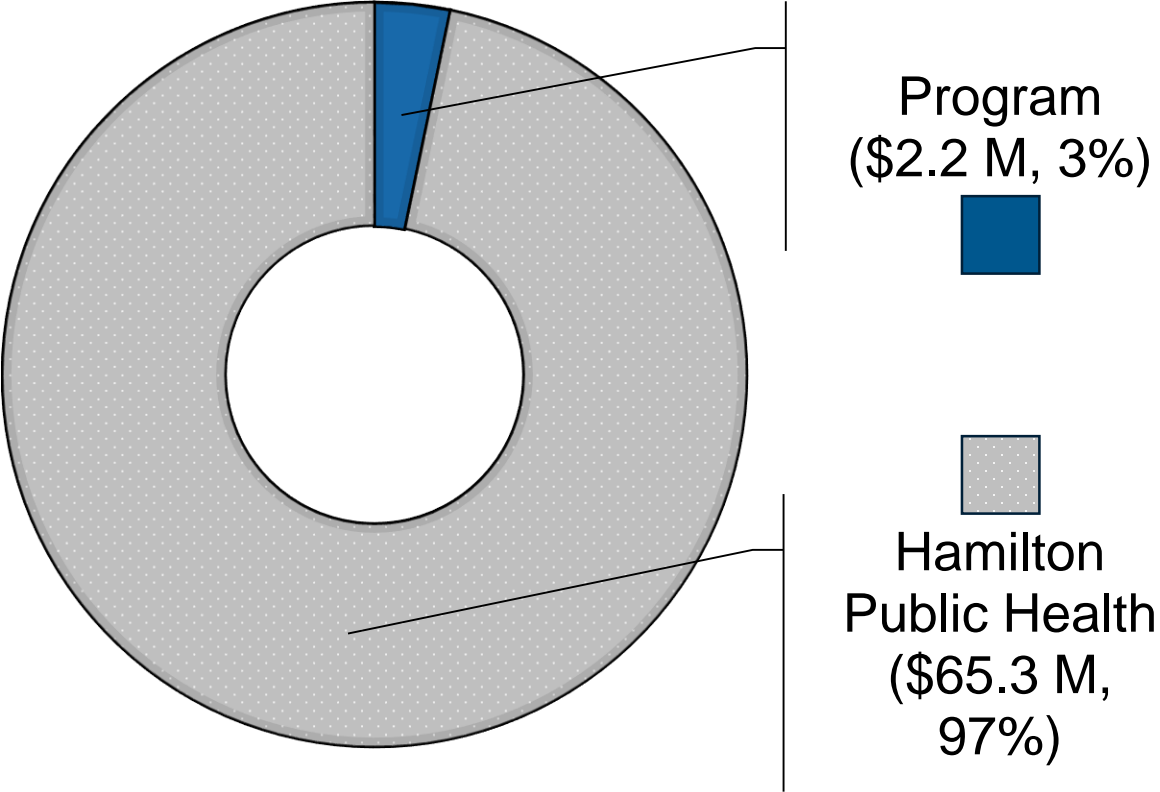
100%

# Relevant Partnerships

- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Ontario Ministry of Health
- Public Health Ontario
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness
- Central West Public Health Units
- City of Hamilton Licensing & By-Law Services
- City of Hamilton/Hamilton Water
- City of Hamilton Special Event Advisory Team (S.E.A.T)
- Local Boards of Education
- Various Community Groups



# 2026 Program Resources



**Total Expenditure:**  
\$2.2 Million (Gross)

**Staffing:**  
15.5 FTE

# 2025 Impact Measures (Slide 1 of 3)



## Routine Inspections

- 100% High, Moderate, Low Risk Inspections
- 6,119 Completed



## Food Handler Certification

- 82% of Participants Certified
- 209 Certificates Issued



## Suspect Foodborne Illness

- 100% Investigated Within 24-48 Hours
- 168 Completed

# 2025 Impact Measures (Slide 2 of 3)



**Critical  
Infractions**

23%

**Total:** 1,427  
Routine Inspections



**Non-Critical  
Infractions**

40%

**Total:** 2,538  
Routine Inspections



**No Infractions**

37%

**Total:** 2,286  
Routine Inspections

# 2025 Impact Measures (Slide 3 of 3)



*Health Protection  
and Promotion Act  
Closures*

Tickets Issued

Yellow  
Conditional

**Total: 25**

**Total: 33**

**Total: 287**

# Continuous Quality Improvement and Innovation

## Completed Improvements:

- Reduced overtime costs by scheduling staff for special events on weekends, resulting in significant savings.
- Implemented a software efficiency that supports improved food safety scoring.

## Ongoing Innovations:

- Participating in the Continuous Improvement Collaborative on Food Premise Inspections with Public Health Ontario alongside other local public health agencies





“Strong food safety practices, supported by routine inspections, reduce the risk of foodborne illness, and build public confidence.”

- Public Health Agency of Canada



Thank You!