

Part 2 - Community Assessment

The Leeds, Grenville and Lanark (LGL) area encompasses a large geographic footprint of 6330 square kilometers. In 2016 the population count for LGL was 169,240 people. The population is spread across the region in 22 municipalities and 2 upper-tier Counties – Lanark and Leeds-Grenville.

Overall population growth was 1.2% from 2006 to 2011 and 2.6% from 2011 to 2016 (4.6% for Lanark County and 1.2% for Leeds-Grenville). Municipalities located within a horseshoe pattern around the City of Ottawa are growing in population with an increase in young families. In contrast, the population in many other parts of the region is decreasing with a very high proportion of seniors. The percentage of the population aged 24 and under was 24.9% in 2016 compared to 29.1% in Ontario as a whole. Some municipalities have over 25% of their population over age 65 years compared to 16.7% in Ontario. The municipalities with older populations also have a shrinking tax base which creates challenges to maintain and replace old infrastructure of water and sewage treatment plants.

Almost all work the Health Unit does is in partnership with others. The Health Unit is very well respected in the community and facilitates several local coalitions with partners, for example, the Rural Recreation Association led by municipal politicians and municipal recreation leaders; FoodCore with a focus on food sustainability; Municipal Drug Strategies in eight communities; and the LGL Harm Reduction Steering Committee.

In the past three years, strong ties have formed with the South-East LHIN, in which about three quarters of LGL sits. The Medical Officer of Health will sit on the Lanark, Leeds, Grenville Sub-Region Integration Table. The northern part of Lanark County and North Grenville are part of the Champlain LHIN which has Ottawa and two other Health Unit regions, so the ties are not as strong to this LHIN.

Population data identify significant public health concerns in our community:

- 19.1% of children in Leeds and Grenville and 13.6% of children in Lanark have been identified as being vulnerable in the *Physical Health and Well-being* domain of the Early Developmental Index by their kindergarten teachers.
- 22% of students in grades 7 to 12 had 10 or fewer out of 40 developmental assets. Students with fewer developmental assets are more likely to engage in unhealthy and excessive risk taking behaviour.
- 24.4% of individuals over age 15 report smoking cigarettes.
- 9.6% of those 12 – 24, 11.0% age 25 to 44 years, 7.4% 45 to 64, and 6.8% age 65 plus years reported exceeding the Low Risk Drinking Guidelines
- 40.6% of adults are physical inactivity and this increases with age.
- Average of 6 hours screen use among high school students versus the recommended 2 hour maximum.
- 60.2% report eating less than 5 servings of fruit and vegetables per day.
- 35.4% report not having dental insurance.
- One in six children and one in eight adults living in poverty (below LIM-AT) and 9.7% of the population report food insecurity.
- 31.4% of students grades 7 to 12 report being bullied.

- Rates of ambulatory fall-related hospital visits and hospital admissions due to falls are significantly higher in LGL compared to Ontario.
- Pregnancy rate is stable in LGL and therapeutic abortion rate increased significantly in LGL between 2000-2011.
- About 68% of new mothers breastfed exclusively upon discharge from hospital in LGL in 2013.
- The trends for Chlamydia, Gonorrhoea and Syphilis have been upwards in LGL between 2006 and 2015.
- The number of tick-related ED visits for the 2017 Fall period in LGL was the highest since 2013.
- 2017 has had the highest count of overdose and opioid-related ED visits for LGL residents, up 11% over 2016.

From an environmental health perspective, the LGL has many lakes, rivers, forests, hills, and fields in which to enjoy nature and its healing effects. Many municipalities are investing in the development of trails, bike paths, and creating attractive downtown spaces for people to enjoy walking and visiting.

The strongest asset of LGL is its people, many of whose forefathers actually settled this area. The 200th anniversary of the Perth and District military settlement in 2016 highlighted the industry and mutual support of the people who came from Britain and other European countries to the region, and this continues to be a hallmark characteristic of the LGL people. The 200th Anniversary also highlighted the essential role the indigenous people played in their initial survival. About 4% of the population currently reports being First Nations, Metis or Inuit, and they are spread throughout the region.