

March 5, 2026

**SENT ELECTRONICALLY**

Dear Member Municipalities,

**Re: Discontinuation of Routine Beach Sampling**

This letter is to inform you that the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (Health Unit) will be discontinuing monitoring (conducting routine sampling) of recreational water at public beaches throughout the district, effective summer 2026. Follow-up will continue to occur for complaints. All municipalities will be supplied with updated public beach signage to support public awareness of water quality risks, health precautions, and safe swimming practices.

The decision to discontinue beach water sampling was presented to the Board of Health on February 27, 2026, along with the attached briefing note. The decision was informed by a review of the effectiveness of the program in terms of protecting the public's health. The review identified several factors that limit the effectiveness and sustainability of routine beach water sampling, including:

- Provincial expectations to conduct weekly sampling is resource challenging given that the Health Unit has approximately 60 public beaches located across an expansive geography.
- Overall, illness risk from recreational water in the Health Unit region is low.
- Notification from the lab to the Health Unit of adverse sample results typically occurs approximately 3-4 days after collection due to shipping and laboratory processing times. The reduced ability to provide current risk information is problematic as it could result in a beach remaining closed even though it is no longer impacted.
- Beach sampling provides only a single point-in-time snapshot of water quality while it is known that conditions can change rapidly. Regardless of sampling results, individuals should always take certain precautions when visiting a beach to reduce the risk of enteric illnesses.
- Current signage does not address potential risks with public beach use in between the sampling dates or for beaches not routinely sampled.

To help answer questions, the Health Unit will be hosting virtual information sessions for municipal representatives on the following dates and times:

1. **Thursday, March 26, 2026** – 10:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m.
2. **Tuesday, March 31, 2026** – 4:30 p.m. to 5:45 p.m.
3. **Wednesday, April 1, 2026** – 1:00 p.m. to 2:15 p.m.

To register please complete the [information session form](#) or contact us at [environmental.health@healthunit.ca](mailto:environmental.health@healthunit.ca) or 705-474-1400 ext. 5400.

Sincerely,

*Carol Zimbalatti*

Dr. Carol Zimbalatti, M.D., CCFP, MPH  
Medical Officer of Health/Executive Officer

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 90 Bowes Street, Suite 201,  
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# Beach Sampling Discontinuation 2026 03 05

Final Audit Report

2026-03-05

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