



Frequently Asked Questions about HealthSTATS

Why did the health unit change the way it shares data?

The way people want to view data has changed, especially since the pandemic. In 2019, the health unit conducted a review of how health status information is provided to audiences across the province as well as examining best practices. Lessons learned from the pandemic were also included in this review.

A key recommendation from this review was the need to redevelop our external health status reporting products leading to the redesign of our website, including interactive Power BI dashboards that include sub-health unit geography and health equity analysis where available.

What is Power BI and what is it used for?

Microsoft Power BI is a powerful online data visualization and reporting platform. Power BI provides the following:

- The ability to create interactive online reports.
- Turns data into a wide range of different visuals, including pie charts, bar and column charts, and ribbon charts – among many other options.
- Provides access to large amounts of data, data visualization tools, and insights in the form of topic-specific dashboards.

For HealthSTATS, this means we can provide information by municipality and public health planning area as well as more in-depth health equity analysis by age, sex or gender, income and other factors in one place using more, powerful and interactive online tools. This gives our users the opportunity to dive deeper into the data and build a better understanding of what's happening in our local communities.

Why is the health unit using dashboards to display data?

The purpose of sharing health data in a dashboard is to support organizations, agencies and municipalities in their planning and decision-making by bringing important information about the health and socio-demographic characteristics of the people of Simcoe Muskoka into one place and making it accessible and meaningful to a wide audience.

Having a visual display of multiple data sources on a single dashboard that is easy-to-access and user-friendly can help individuals understand complex relationships between data sources. For example, the Smoking dashboard contains information on both smoking rates and on harms associated with smoking,

and the Cancer dashboard combines information about cancer screening, cancer diagnosis and cancer-related deaths.

Visual data dashboards manage data, organize important information, and prepare a display for users allowing them to understand what's happening within the health topic, between populations experiencing the topic, or even by different geographic regions.

What other changes to HealthSTATS have been made?

The majority of data included on specific HealthSTATS pages have been incorporated into the new Power BI dashboards. For example the analysis presented in all 20 Cancer-related HealthSTATS pages can now be found in the [Cancer](#) dashboard, with additional ability to slice the data up by sex, age group and cause.

Most reports included on the HealthSTATS website are available on the new website, including Focus Reports and Rapid Risk Factor reports.

The interactive HealthMAPS will no longer be available, as sub-health unit geography will be available within specific dashboards, where possible.