

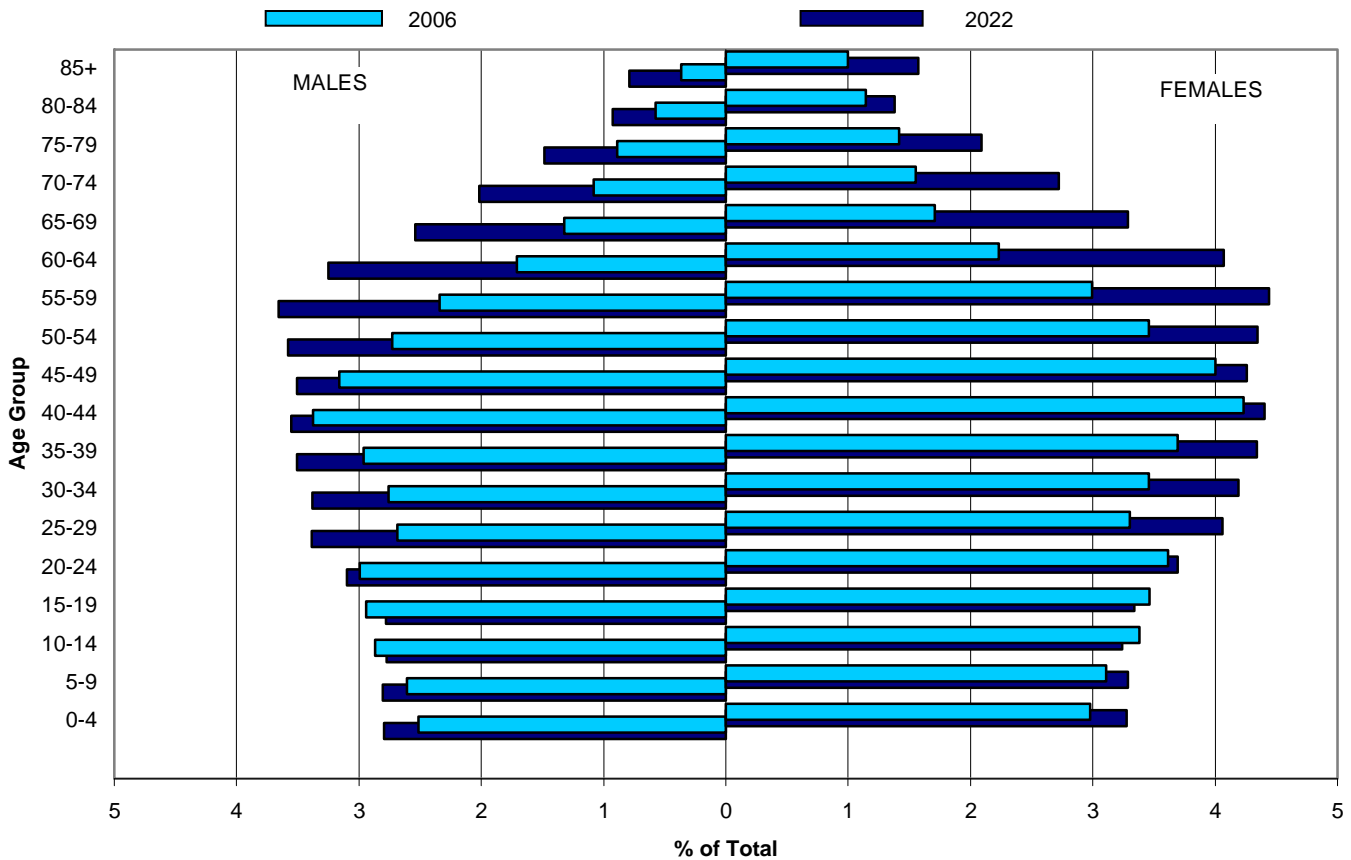
Appendix 4

Population Profile - WWLHIN

Population Characteristics

Census data from Statistics Canada provides us with the most accurate population and demographic information about the WWLHIN. In 2006, the most recent census data available, the WWLHIN population was 686,320, or 5.6 percent of the total Ontario population. Our population is growing at a projected rate of 16 percent, between 2006 and 2015, and is expected to be 797,600 by the year 2015. This growth rate exceeds that of the province, which is projected to grow about 13 percent between 2006 and 2015. Over the next few decades, seniors will represent the fastest growing age group in the WWLHIN population. In the WWLHIN, the Aboriginal population constitutes one percent of the population, while the Immigrant, Mennonite and Francophone populations make up 20 percent, 3.4 percent and 1.3 percent respectively.

Population Pyramids 2006 and 2022 for Waterloo Wellington LHIN, by age group, by gender



The WWLHIN can be further broken down into five sub-LHIN areas: Urban Waterloo and South Rural Waterloo, Rural Waterloo, Urban Guelph, Rural Wellington and Rural North Wellington and South Grey. Making comparisons among these areas allows for identification of distinct characteristics and needs. At this level, population distribution and proportion of the population 65 and over are shown in Figures 1 and 2 below.

Figure 1

**Population Distribution in WWLHIN, 2006
(Percent of Total WWLHIN Population)**

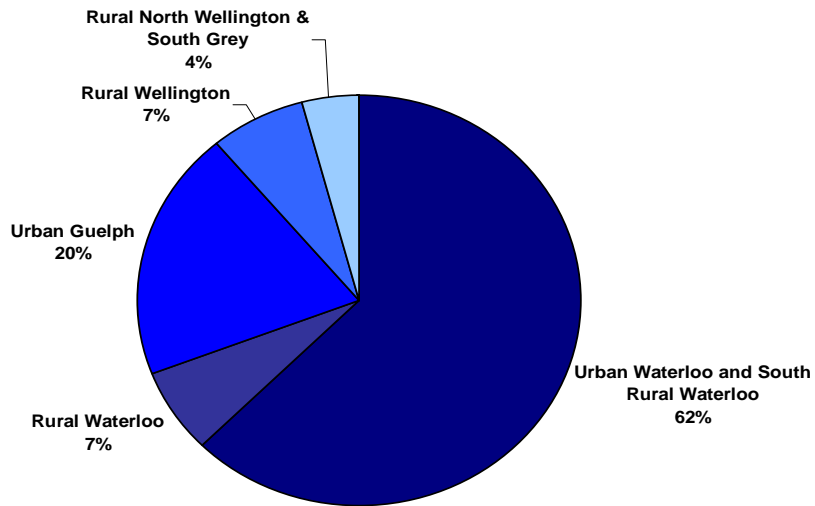
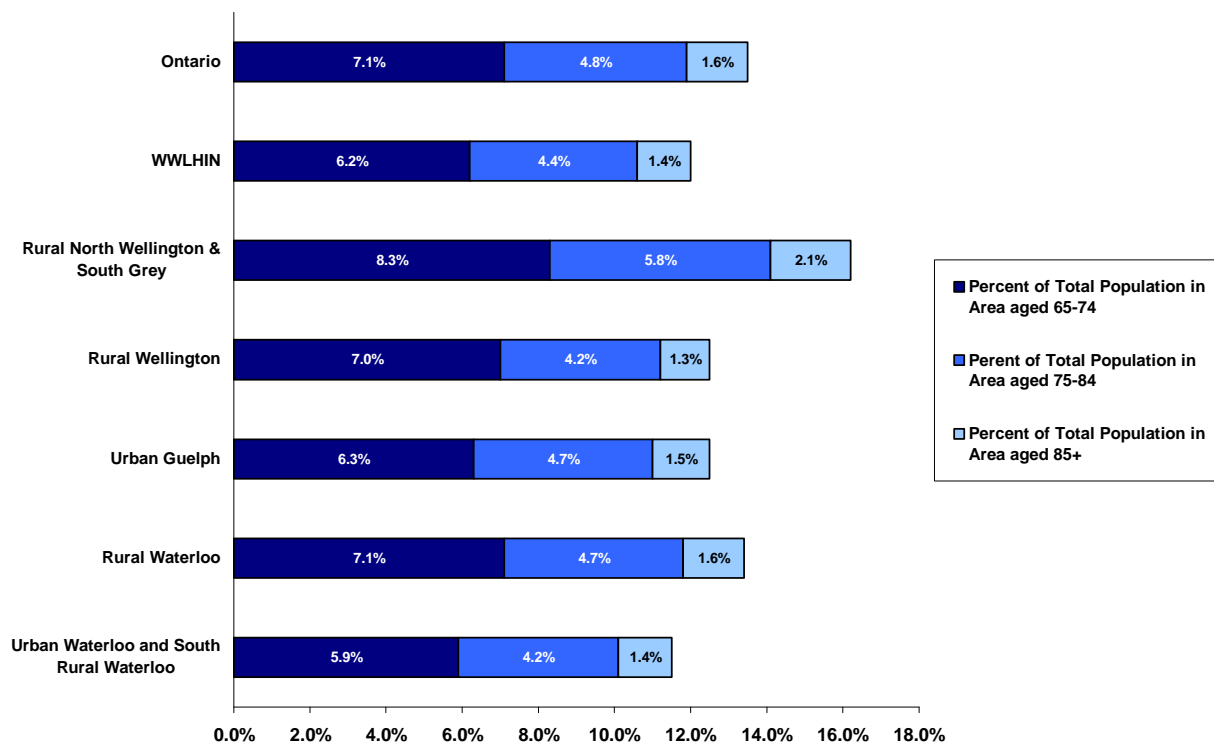


Figure 2

Percent of Population in WWLHIN 65-74, 75-84 and 85+



Socio-economic Status

Socio-economic status is a measure made of up several components, including education, income, employment, gender and others. It provides a general indication of the resources that people have available to them and is considered an important determinant of health. In general, residents of the WWLHIN are slightly better off compared to the province in measures of socio-economic status.

Education

Twenty-four percent of WWLHIN residents 15 and over have no certificate, diploma or degree, which is slightly higher than the province at 22%. Further, 48% of WWLHIN residents 15+ years have some level of post-secondary education, which is slightly lower than the province (Statistics Canada Community Profiles, 2006).

Income

In 2006, 9.8% of WWLHIN residents were categorized in the low-income bracket before taxes, compared to almost 15% for the province (Statistics Canada Community Profiles, 2006). Areas in the WWLHIN that have the highest proportion of residents living below the low-income bracket are Guelph, Kitchener-Waterloo and Southgate (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Unemployment

In 2007, the unemployment rate in the WWLHIN was 5.4%, compared to 6.4% for the province. Unemployment has been linked to an increase in certain health problems such as heart attacks and stroke. Job loss has also been found to be associated with depression and other mental health issues as well as substance abuse. (Gallo et. al, 2006 & Eliason & Storrie, 2009)

Gender

Socio-economic factors tend to have a more negative impact on the health of women than men. For example, women with lower income have higher rates of high blood pressure, arthritis, obstructive lung disease, diabetes, heart disease and stroke. Chronic disease in men was not affected as strongly by income as women. Similarly, rates of depression were higher for low-income women, where there was no income gradient present for men. Income and education disparity also had a greater impact on women for health behaviours, such as physical activity, poor diet, obesity and smoking. (POWER Study: Chapter 2 The Burden of Illness, June 2009)

Healthy Behaviours

Based on data from the 2007 Canadian Community Health Survey, our population is engaging in less healthy behaviour than in 2003. These include physical activity and fruit and vegetable consumption. As a result, our percentage of people who are overweight or obese has increased by 4.1 percent. Unsurprisingly then, the percentage of our population with diabetes, asthma and high blood pressure has also increased by 1.4 percent, 0.8 percent and 2.6 percent respectively. The percent of people who have 5 drinks or more on any occasion has also increased to 23.5%. The percent of non-

smokers exposed to second-hand smoke has decreased slightly, but at 8.3 percent it is much higher than the provincial average of 5.7 percent.

A similar trend among preventive behaviours is also emerging. From 2005 to 2007, the percentage of residents getting flu shots and the percent of residents who had contact with their medical doctor in the past year decreased both in the WWLHIN and Ontario. However, between 2007 and 2008, the percentage of people who had a mammogram, cervical cancer screening and fecal occult blood test increased.

Although these trends suggest that our population should be less healthy than they were two to four years ago, the percentage of WWLHIN residents who rated their overall health as very good or excellent has increased between 2003 and 2007 from 60.9% to 62.6%. A similar inconsistency appears in the area of mental health. While there was a decrease in the percentage of people who report having a lot of life stress, there was also a decrease in the percentage of people who rated their overall mental health as very good to excellent.