Context

• The Office of Border Health Services (OBHS) was created on April 1, 2013.

• OBHS amalgamated PHAC’s Quarantine Services and Health Canada’s Travelling Public Program.

• The programs both administer the Quarantine Act and the Department of Health Act.

• The programs have similar end-goals: to prevent communicable disease transmission at Canada’s borders, and to protect travellers and Canadian communities from public health risks.

• Both programs are operational, delivering 24/7 services across Canada.
Mandate – Quarantine Services

- Mandate to implement the *Quarantine Act*, to prevent the importation and exportation of communicable diseases into, and out of, Canada by:
  - assessing public health risk of ill travellers, travellers who have died en route and cadavers, body parts or other human remains, arriving in or departing from Canada, that are suspected of having or have been in contact with a communicable disease or are infested with vectors.
  - implementing public health measures when an Officer confirms or suspects communicable disease.
  - collaborating with partners including the Canada Border Services Agency, airport authorities, emergency medical services and local health authorities to ensure efficient notification and response to border health events.
Quarantine Services Resources and Activities

Who we are:

19 FTE Quarantine Officers
3 Regional Managers
0 Regional Support Staff
3 NCR HQ Program Staff (3 nurses)

25 total staff for Quarantine Services

What we do:

• Public health risks assessments of ill travellers
• Determine additional public health measures required.
• Coordinate with local authorities (e.g., airport staff, local public health)
• Train partners such as Border Agents.
• Provide scientific and technical advice on border health to international partners
• Design and implement border health security training exercises.
Mandate - Travelling Public Program

Mandate to protect the travelling public through the reduction of potential risks from water, food or sanitary conditions on passenger conveyances including:

- National and international aircraft
- Passenger trains
- Passenger ferries and cruise ships
- Interprovincial and international motor coaches (buses)
- Airports, train stations and port terminals and related services
- Flight kitchens and supply depots

*Department of Health Act* states that Minister’s powers, duties and functions include:

4(e) the protection of public health on railways, ships, aircraft and all other methods of transportation, and their ancillary services

- *Potable Water Regulations for Common Carriers* prescribe standards for safe drinking water on conveyances

*Quarantine Act* – EHO specific responsibilities related to conveyances, containers, cargo and postal packages
Travelling Public Program Resources and Activities

Who we are:

13  EHOs
3   Regional Managers
3   Regional Support Staff
8   NCR HQ Program Staff (5 EHOs)

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27  Total Staff - TPP

What we do:

In 2012-13:

• Over 325 inspections of passenger conveyances and ancillary service facilities.
• Over 725 ship sanitation inspections.
• Over 1000 water samples.
• Review and audit of industry Potable Water Management Plans.
• 49 Outreach activities including food handler and sanitation training for industry employees.
• 5 Response to elevated Acute Gastroenteritis on cruise ships.
Transition to Risk-based Approach

• Prior to April 1, 2011 TPP was a fee-for-service program

• Health Canada introduced a risk-based program to target resources at the highest risks to the travelling public

• A quantitative risk assessment tool was proposed to allow comparisons within and across conveyance sectors.
Risk-based Activities

Public Health Activities

- Active Prevention
  - Education & Outreach
  - Management Plans

- Targeted Oversight
  - Inspections
  - Audits
  - Surveillance
    - GI Surveillance
    - Complaint Surveillance
    - Sampling Programs

- Rapid Response
  - Investigations
    - Disease Outbreaks
    - Unsatisfactory Sampling Results
    - Complaints

- Food
- Water
- Environmental
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Note: Bolded font represents the regulatory component of the Travelling Public Program. All other services are delivered via voluntary compliance.
Normal Day to Day Operations: Environmental Health Officers

Risk-based approach to public health service delivery for passenger conveyances and ancillary services (e.g., terminals, flight kitchens) to:

• Deliver public health inspections – focus on food, water, sanitation.
• Provide outreach to industry staff and management
• Deliver training/education to conveyance staff (e.g., food handling, aircraft groomers).
• Conduct audits of management plans.
• Take water samples
• Prepare reports using an information system, and include recommendations from a public health perspective.
• Complete Ship Sanitation Inspections as per WHO International Health Regulations, and issue certificates to cargo vessels.
Normal Day to Day Operations: Quarantine Officers

- Assess public health risk of ill travellers, death on board internationally arriving/departing conveyances at all Canadian points of entry.
- Ongoing building and maintenance of networks to support engagement, collaboration, education and training of partners and stakeholders to support the administration of the Quarantine Act.
- Provide program education and roles and responsibility training on the Quarantine Act to key partners and stakeholders.
- Collaboratively engage key partners to support effective response.
- Review daily travel advisories and relevant outbreak information on countries of concern published by PHAC, HC and WHO.
- Collect data to prepare reports.
- Participate in partner’s emergency response planning and exercises.
- Represent PHAC/OBHS/Quarantine Services at relevant partner meetings.
Border Health Services – What Are the Differences?

- Quarantine operates in an event based environment, responding to cases as they arise, under the authority of the Quarantine Act.

- TPP operates primarily under a voluntary compliance approach, responding on request by conveyance or facility operators.

- Quarantine Officers assess the public health risk of ill travellers; TPP staff focuses on the conveyance environment, and conditions or practices that may present public health risks.

- Quarantine operates at Canada’s points of entry. TPP addresses public health risks associated with both international and domestic conveyances.

- Varying locations for both programs.
Locations of Quarantine and Environmental Health Offices

- Vancouver Quarantine & Environmental Health
- Calgary Quarantine
- Montreal Quarantine & Environmental Health
- Ottawa Quarantine
- Toronto – Quarantine & Environmental Health
- Moncton Environmental Health
- Quebec City Environmental Health
- Halifax Quarantine & Environmental Health
- St. John’s Environmental Health