The Ontario Lung Association takes great pride in its position and reputation as one of Canada’s oldest and most respected health charities. Our 115-year history anchors the association in a tradition of service to the people of Ontario while helping to guide us as we confront the very different challenges of a rapidly changing world.

While our tactics and practices may evolve, our core mission remains constant: to improve lung health for all Ontarians by supporting patients their families and caregivers, funding life-saving research, providing professional education on respiratory health and campaigning for robust and effective policy responses to protect the more than 13 million people who breathe in this province.

As you will see from this brief overview, the past year has been a period of notable achievement in every area of our operation – respiratory programs and health promotion, research, fund development, advocacy and professional education.

With the finalization and launch of our new five-year strategic plan – Breath of Success: 2016-2020 – we have also taken the first steps on a journey of organizational renewal that will see the association approach the start of the next decade stronger, more focused and with an increased capacity to adapt to the new realities that lie ahead.

As we prepare to confront these emerging challenges, we are mindful that our organization, dedicated and focused though it may be, can only ever be part of the solution. Lung health is everyone’s business and that is why we are redoubling our efforts to reach out to new communities across the province – rallying Ontarians behind the life-affirming cause of breathing towards the day when we are all truly Breathing as One.

ON THE COVER: The Lung Association is truly fortunate to have patient ambassadors like Bev Black of St. Catharines. Bev lives with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease but her energy and enthusiasm astound all who meet her. “My COPD support group and exercise classes help me to stay active,” she says, “so that I can play with my beautiful granddaughter, Taylor.”
REACHING OUT to more Ontarians with programs and services
**Fitness for Breath**, a maintenance exercise program for people living with chronic lung disease, has been undergoing a major expansion following the successful execution of a two-year pilot phase in collaboration with the Abilities Centre in Whitby, Ontario and Lakeridge Health Services.

The program, developed and delivered by the Ontario Lung Association with financial support from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, is introducing basic movement skills to adults living with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other respiratory disorders. For people living with chronic lung disease, regular exercise results in fewer flare-ups and hospitalizations and a better overall quality of life.

Phase two of Fitness for Breath was launched in June 2014 and by the following March new programs had opened in Bradford, Barrie, Elliot Lake, Port Colborne, St. Catharines, Welland and Niagara Falls. Seven more sites are confirmed for the coming year.
The Value Demonstrating Initiative (VDI) on COPD is currently ground-testing a new approach in the diagnosis and treatment of the province's second most prevalent respiratory illness.

The new model is based on the premise that better patient care requires a systems approach involving hospitals, primary care and a range of other community-based health services to deliver all aspects of inter-professional care. The result: patients receive the services they need when they need them.

The new approach is currently being implemented at three sites with leadership from local partners: the Temiskaming Health Link in northern Ontario, the Toronto Western Family Health Team and the Wise Elephant Family Health Team in Brampton.

The VDI on COPD is a unique collaboration between the public, private and non-profit sectors – the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Rx&D (Canada’s research-based pharmaceutical companies) and the Ontario Lung Association.

The goal is to show that optimizing COPD care in the community will not only keep patients healthier but also save money by reducing the need for expensive hospitalizations.

“Our government is committed to improving care for people with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. This new collaborative approach to helping patients with COPD will ensure multidisciplinary care for COPD patients in the community, in settings like Family Health Teams and Health Links.”

- Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care
Pediatric Asthma Care Pathway

The Ontario Lung Association led the rollout of the new Pediatric Emergency Department Asthma Care Pathway to health-care professionals in September 2014. The P-EDACP is an evidence-based, standardized approach to treating patients aged one to 17 years with acute asthma exacerbations. The pediatric and adult clinical pathways improve quality of care by providing a standardized best-practices approach to the urgent treatment of asthma. Both pathway updates have been well received by providers and patients alike and have been fully implemented at a growing number of hospitals across the province, including: Grey Bruce Health Services, Owen Sound; Groves Memorial Community Hospital, Fergus; Peterborough Regional Health Centre; Ross Memorial Hospital, Kawartha Lakes; Scarborough General Hospital; Great War Memorial Hospital, Perth; Georgian Bay General, Midland; and Timmins and District Hospital.

New PRAM app

Meanwhile, the association’s Provider Education Program (OLA-PEP) finalized and released the new PRAM app to accompany and facilitate use of the P-EDCAP. PRAM (Pediatric Respiratory Assessment Measure) provides a valid clinical score for assessing acute asthma severity in patients from toddlers to teenagers. Using the new app on a smartphone or tablet, health-care providers can now quickly calculate a PRAM score based on five clinical findings (oxygen saturation, suprasternal retractions, scalene muscle use, air entry and wheezing). The app then indicates the patient’s asthma severity and provides specific management guidelines based on P-EDCAP. The app is available free from iTunes or Google Play and can be deployed on Android or iPhone devices.
Canada’s most trusted contractor, Mike Holmes, joined forces with the Ontario Lung Association to send a powerful message to Canadians about household radon contamination and its impact on lung health.

Holmes accepted an invitation from the Ontario Lung Association to appear in a television commercial urging home owners to get their dwellings tested for the colourless radioactive gas that causes an estimated 16 per cent of lung cancer deaths nationwide.

Released as a free public service announcement, the 30-second ad has aired more than 3,500 times across Canada and represents a valuable contribution to Radon Awareness Month (November) and Take Action on Radon – the federal government’s ongoing campaign to alert Canadians to the perils of household radon contamination.

View Mike’s radon message at on.lung.ca/take-action
In June, 2014, the Ontario Lung Association convened a select group of experts and leaders working in respiratory health, oncology and thoracic surgery at Ontario’s first Lung Cancer Summit, the first step in a process designed to improve patient outcomes in lung cancer through increased awareness, communications and earlier diagnosis.

The emergence of molecular diagnostic testing and new targeted drugs offer new hope for lung cancer patients but with these advances come significant challenges in moving the dial towards earlier detection and better treatments.

The mandate of the Lung Cancer Summit was to begin addressing these challenges by encouraging more effective communication among all those who support the lung cancer patient’s journey through better knowledge transfer strategies to implement effective change in practice.

As a result of the Summit, additional professional education has been provided, a needs assessment among health-care providers has been initiated, and public awareness activities have been implemented. A working group will also be established to guide The Lung Association’s future activities in this area.
CAMPAIGNING for better lung health policies
The Lung Health Act

For several years, the Ontario Lung Association and more than 40 organizations and individuals who make up the Ontario Lung Health Alliance have been calling for a comprehensive, coordinated action plan to address lung health in this province.

That campaign received a major boost on November 19, 2014 when Cambridge MPP Kathryn McGarry introduced a private member’s bill – Bill 41, The Lung Health Act (2014). The Bill, developed in consultation with Ontario Lung Association staff, passed second reading with all-party support and has been referred to committee.

Bill 41 offers a cost-effective way to address the growing problem of lung disease. Its provisions include:

• Establishing a Lung Health Advisory Council that will make recommendations to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on lung health issues.
• Developing and implementing an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan respecting research, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of lung disease.
• Requiring the Minister to consider the recommendations and reports of the Lung Health Advisory Council and the Ontario Health Quality Council and to make improvements in lung health awareness, diagnosis, treatment and care.

The Ontario Lung Health Alliance had already made substantial progress in developing an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan. A first draft was released in January 2014. This was subsequently revised based on the recommendation of 60 stakeholders who attended a workshop to review the plan’s recommendations and to prioritize those that can be implemented quickly simply by scaling up existing evidence-based resources and programs to make them available across the province. The results of this workshop constitute an excellent base on which the proposed Lung Health Advisory Council can begin its deliberations.
#4LungYears

The provincial election in June 2014 was an opportunity to draw attention to lung health issues and seek candidates’ support for an Ontario Lung Health Action Plan. In the weeks before election day, the Ontario Lung Association used social and mainstream media to propagate the #4LungYears pledge, inviting candidates from all parties to promise that, if elected, they would support the development and implementation of a comprehensive action plan on lung health.

Smoke-free movies

On Saturday, February 21, the day before the Academy Awards, staff and volunteers from the Ontario Lung Association Youth Advocacy Training Institute (YATI) were among more than 150 young people from Ontario and New York who formed a living banner across the International Rainbow Bridge in Niagara Falls in support of smoke-free youth-rated movies.

The cross-border event was jointly organized by the Ontario Coalition for Smoke-Free Movies and Reality Check of New York to support a campaign for movies that depict smoking to be rated 18A (Ontario) and R (New York).

Participants from both sides of the border met in the centre of the Rainbow Bridge, forming a human ribbon that spelled out the message “Smoking on Screen Kills in Real Life”. The event highlighted research showing that the more young people see smoking in movies, the more likely they are to start smoking and become addicted to nicotine.

The Ontario Tobacco Research Unit (OTRU) estimates that in an average year 13,241 Ontarians aged 12-17 are recruited to smoking by watching smoking in movies. It is projected that 4,237 of them will die prematurely as a result of tobacco imagery in movies.
ADDRESSING THE NEED for more research funding
Breathing as One

The Ontario Lung Association is proud to be the driving force behind the national rollout of Breathing as One, a five-year $10 million fundraising campaign to address Canada’s respiratory research deficit by funding the best scientists, clinical and biomedical researchers to focus on lung disease.

Breathing as One lays the groundwork for a new era in research and collaboration – one that will break down the barriers that impede advances in our understanding, prevention and treatment of lung disease. It represents a significant shift, to elevate awareness of the issues of breathing, and to draw people together as never before.

The Breathing as One campaign is a transformational exercise, not just for the Ontario Lung Association but also for the Canadian Lung Association and for provincial associations from coast to coast. A campaign of this size and scope will leave a strong legacy of cooperation and integration across Canada’s Lung federation.

And by communicating our visions and goals to Canadians, Breathing as One will create lasting partnerships across the country and help to position the federation for continued success and growth in the future.
Financial Sustainability

Non-profit organizations must always balance their ambition to expand the scope and reach of their work with the fiscal realities of operating in a crowded and intensely competitive health charity sector. The financial statements available here demonstrate that the Ontario Lung Association has achieved and maintained that delicate balance. We are justly proud of our record, achieved year after year, of dedicating more than 80 per cent of funds raised to funding research and delivering services and programs.

This strong financial record, combined with ongoing efforts to create and maintain a culture of excellence in all phases of our operations, have been recognized with the renewal of official accreditation under the Imagine Canada national Standards Program.

The Standards Program is a Canada-wide set of shared standards for charities and non-profit organizations designed to demonstrate excellence in five areas: board governance; financial accountability and transparency; fundraising policies and practices; staff management; and volunteer involvement.
Driving Greater Awareness During Lung Month

In November, provincial Lung Associations across Canada joined forces to put lung health at the top of the national agenda during an intensive 30 days of activities and outreach to mark the first nationwide observance of Lung Month.

In Ontario, Lung Month began with the raising of the Ontario Lung Association flag at Toronto City Hall, in a ceremony attended by board members, staff, supporters and the Acting Mayor of Toronto, Councillor Norm Kelly.

During Lung Month, the spotlight focused on respiratory research, with the launch of Breathing as One – the Campaign for Lung Research. November was also national Radon Action Month, an opportunity to urge all Canadians to test their homes for radon, the second leading cause of lung cancer.

Among other Lung Month activities in Ontario:

- Mayors and reeves in dozens of municipalities proclaimed November as Lung Month in their communities.
- An eight-page newspaper campaign promoting lung health awareness was distributed to almost a million households throughout the province.
- On World COPD Day (November 19), popup spirometry clinics were held at a number of hospitals and clinics across the province.
- The 2014 TB Conference, Rising to the Challenges, highlighted innovations in the diagnosis and treatment of a disease that continues to threaten populations worldwide.
- Government relations activities were at the forefront with a Lung Month statement in the legislature by Health Minister Eric Hoskins and distribution of “I Support Breathing” buttons to all MPPs. At a Queen’s Park reception on November 25, Ontario Lung Association staff and partner organizations entertained and educated MPPs and their staff on important lung health issues.
- The ongoing campaign for a Lung Health Action Plan moved ahead when stakeholders came together for a November 25 consultation workshop, the first of its kind with government representatives at the table.
Conclusion

We are deeply grateful to all those whose efforts have contributed to the work described in this report. They are a large and diverse group, including fellow members of the Board of Directors, the dedicated staff of our provincial and community offices, members of the Ontario Thoracic Society and the Ontario Respiratory Care Society, donors, volunteers and patient advocates. Thank you for your passion and your commitment and for helping to ensure that we can look back with pride on a year during which we made significant gains in our mission to improve lung health in Ontario.

Dr. John Granton
Chair, Board of Directors

George Habib
President & CEO

THE LUNG ASSOCIATION™