

*Somerset West Community
Health Centre*

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

April 2022

PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

COVID-19 VACCINATIONS

In efforts to reduce barriers to accessing the COVID-19 vaccine, Somerset West Community Health Centre in partnership with OPH provided regular COVID-19 vaccine clinics onsite as well as hosted numerous pop up or mobile vaccine clinics in the community. Since May of 2021 the team has provided over 1670 vaccines and counting! This includes first, second and booster doses to eligible individuals 5 years of age and older from across the city. Clients of all ages have expressed strong appreciation for the Centre's vaccine efforts! As we enter the sixth wave, the Centre will continue to provide access to 4th doses to rostered clients as they become eligible.



LAUNCH OF APPOINTMENT REMINDERS

With funding secured by the Alliance for Healthier Communities, Primary Health Care has launched another electronic medical record add-on product- appointment reminders. Appointment reminders allow clients to review pre-visit information and complete forms, confirm their appointment, and update contact information, all before they step foot in the clinic! This not only helps clients feel more prepared the clinical experience is improved for clients, staff and healthcare providers alike.

LUNG HEALTH

OUR TEAM IS GROWING

The Complex Respiratory Care Program has received additional LHIN funding allowing the recruitment of 3 additional permanent staff member to join the team. Recruitment and hiring are underway to fill these much-needed positions serving the complex and vulnerable patient population, enabling them to live safely in a community setting or at home. The growth of the program will allow the staff to engage with community partners and clients to continue the excellent work devoted education, training, and patient care from our outreach team of Respiratory Therapists.

NEW PARTNERSHIPS

After working closely with the Ottawa East Ontario Health Team, we have expanded the Lung Health Services offered in the east end of Ottawa by partnering with a Family Health Team in Orleans. Our Registered Respiratory Therapist/Certified Respiratory Educator staff are now offering bilingual services at L'Équipe de Santé Familiale Communautaire de L'Est d'Ottawa, increasing access to primary care-based lung health services to people with COPD.

The Lung Health program has partnered with Best Care to deliver evidenced-based care defined by provincial and national guideline standards to treat COPD and Asthma. This collaboration will further support the SWCHC Lung Health program objectives of improving health outcomes while reducing health care utilization in this patient population.

PROGRAM INITIATIVES

The Pulmonary Rehabilitation program will re-introduce small group sessions for those who have previously graduated from the PR program. These 4-week sessions will be offered to cohorts of 4 clients at a time, to reinforce the education and skills acquired from their experience through the program. This condensed program will serve as a refresher in maintaining their home-based exercise program. This opportunity will also promote small groups of PR clients to engage socially in a safe and "distanced" environment.

MENTAL HEALTH

This year's Black Mental Health Week aimed to recognize leadership in the ACB community, innovative approaches in action and how we are leading the community towards health and growth. SWCHC's ACB Mental Health Program Staff participated in the development and launch of all three main events, hosted two internal events and participated in two partner events. Partnerships included, but were not limited to, Ottawa Public Health's community engagement team, youth strategy team and mental health & Substance Use team, Canadian Women of Leadership Network, and an internal partnership with the HIV Strategy work team. The Re-imagine Healing event was particularly well received by the community, as it addressed the gaps and barriers experienced by the ACB community when accessing services, provided resources and information regarding culturally affirming and centered resources available, and utilized creative writing as a method to engage in both an individual and collective re-imagining of healing for the ACB community. The 90-minute-long session was rich with dialogue and community building.

FAMILY, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HARM REDUCTION

CHILDREN & YOUTH

Nanny Goat Hill Nursery School recently completed a full renovation to their children's bathroom area that was last updated in 1981. Due to renovations such as this only being able to be done during a closer, it required significant planning and attention to timelines for it all to come together and be completed in one week!

Our Child and Youth Community Developer is working with ReCLINK to engage community youth in painting a mural this summer.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH PROMOTION, AND ADVOCACY

PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS ALL CANDIDATES MEETING

The Advocacy Committee is organizing a virtual All Candidates event, in partnership with the Centretown Community Health Centre. Once details are finalized, they will be circulated in the neighbourhoods and through social media. The goal of the event will be to bring forward presentations on key issues impacting the people and communities we serve.

NATIONAL VOLUNTEER WEEK

With this year's theme of "Volunteering is Empathy In Action", we are looking forward to celebrating all of SWCHC's dedicated volunteers the week of April 24-30. We couldn't agree more with Volunteer Canada in that "The empathy, compassion and generosity of volunteers creates connected communities and builds a stronger Canada." Our volunteers have made an impact by increasing access to food and services. They have helped build connections and reduce social isolation during the pandemic. They helped to teach and build new skills and have provided leadership and advocacy! We are so grateful to the volunteers that have been a part of our team effort to enable the best possible health and well-being for the people and communities we serve.



FOOD SECURITY IN OUR COMMUNITIES

Statistics Canada said “January 2022, Canadian inflation surpassed 5% for the first time since September 1991, rising 5.1% on a year-over-year basis and up from a 4.8% gain in December 2021...COVID-19 pandemic-related challenges continue to weigh on supply chains, and consumer energy prices remain elevated. Taken together, Canadians continued to feel the impact of rising prices for goods and services, especially for housing, food and gasoline”.

Additionally, StatsCan Consumer Price Index, released Feb. 16, 2022 stated food prices in January dramatically increased more than the overall inflation rate of 5.1 per cent.

- fresh or frozen beef (+13.0%)
- fresh or frozen chicken (+9.0%)
- fresh or frozen fish (+7.9%)
- Margarine (+16.5%)
- Condiments, spices and vinegars (+12.1%)
- Fresh fruit (+8.2%)
- Bakery products (+7.4%)

Higher input prices and shipping costs, unfavorable growing conditions for fresh produce, ongoing supply chain disruptions, have contributed to the increase in the price of food.

In the face of these growing pressures the Food Security team continues to deliver groceries, frozen meals and provide gift cards. The team has been leveraging all resources to ensure our neighbors have some food in the fridge. Through working closely with Parkdale Food Centre, we have been able to ensure our most vulnerable and isolated residents have access to fresh produce and meals.

Moreover, during the month of March community development staff started a senior’s breakfast program to combat the social isolation and negative mental health outcomes caused by the ongoing pandemic and exacerbated by the Convoy.



Image to the left: our Community Health Promoter restocking the community freezer with 200 frozen meals from Cooking for A Cause. Image to the right: Community Development staff preparing fresh produce hampers to deliver to residents

HARM REDUCTION

HARM REDUCTION OUTREACH

Despite the cold weather in the months of January to March, our outreach team were very busy with close to 16,000 interactions during this three month period. This is higher than the same timeframe in 2021. We anticipate these numbers will increase as the weather gets warmer and people are out and about more.

Our team is seeing an increase in overdoses in the community and the overdoses are more serious and require more intervention. In contrast to previous waves of benzos, we are now seeing stimulant drug toxicity which causes people to be very agitated, medically unstable, and to have stroke-like effects.

We are pleased to announce we have received a one-year extension for our Homeless Crisis Outreach Team! We have also applied for longer term funding through the City of Ottawa's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy fund and will hopefully hear about this in the next couple of months. Our team extends a heartfelt thank you to everyone who provided testimonials to support our application!

RESPIRE CENTRES

Tom Brown has been operating as an overflow shelter for the last several months, but will be pivoting back to respite services later this spring. We have received a funding extension to support the staffing at the respite centres and will continue to collaborate with our partners on this important service.

COMMUNITY LIAISON WORK

The committee is in the process of setting priorities and creating a work plan for the coming year. We feel incredibly lucky to have a very engaged group of community members supporting this work. We are exploring the possibility of using a collective impact framework to increase the coordination and collaboration that is already underway with a wide range of partners including the BIAs, community agencies and local residents. Collective impact is a framework for multiple stakeholders to turn the curve on complex issues. In this case, our focus is on addressing the intersections of wellbeing for our neighborhood as a whole, marginalized populations who live here, and the small businesses and housed residents who live here

MR CARL REINBOTH AWARD

Last April we lost our dear friend and colleague, Carl Reinboth. -In his memory we have established an award to commemorate Carl's legacy and to recognize the outstanding commitment of those working in harm reduction in Ottawa. This award honours an individual in the field of harm reduction who shows radical compassion for people who use drugs, and collaborates with people, organizations and communities to achieve better client care.

You can read more about the award and how to submit a nomination here:

<https://www.swchc.on.ca/post/carl-reinboth-award-2022>

Nominations are open until Monday, May 2, 2022.

ACB HIV PREVENTION STRATEGY

Inn addition to supporting Ottawa’s Black mental health wee, we participated in the AC Study action planning summit where we worked in groups to devise strategies to combat various issues affecting the health of the ACB Community especially HIV/AIDs and how to create safe spaces for conversation in families, schools, and events.

We worked with the ACB Wellness resource center and other organizations to hold an event called “Cancer while black.” We also had 2 separate instagram live sessions on nutrition, food and health and also on financial education for the ACB Community

ANONYMOUS HIV TESTING

This month, our anonymous HIV testing outreach worker was a panelist for an event discussing the mental health needs of ACB people in Ottawa. They also participated in a community consultation exploring the creation of a national Black LGBTQ+ organization, hosted by EGALE Canada.

