

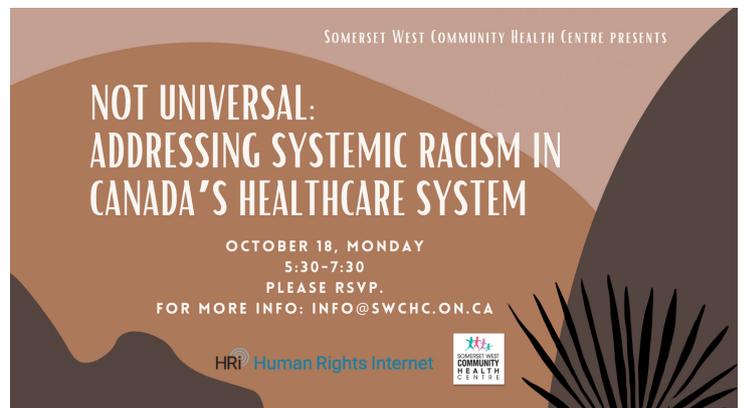
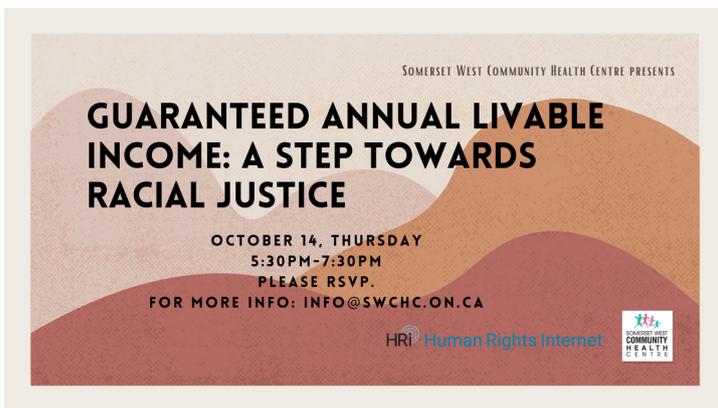
*Somerset West Community  
Health Centre*

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

*October 2021*

## FAMILY, COMMUNITY HEALTH AND HARM REDUCTION

## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH PROMOTION, AND ADVOCACY



The Community Anti-Racism Project is hosted two events in October:

- October 14: Guaranteed Annual Livable Income: A Step towards Racial Justice
- October 18: Not Universal: Addressing Systemic Racism in Canada's Healthcare System

### **ROCHESTER HEIGHTS COMMUNITY HOUSE**

The Community House will be moving to a temporary location in October and will operate in this temporary space until the definitive place is ready in December 2021. We are happy to announce that we have reopened our Breakfast program at 506 Bronson Rooming House. The Community House is working with Options Bytown and OCH to keep staff, volunteers, and clients safe as we bring this service back to this building. The Community House continues doing outreach in the community supporting residents with vaccine appointments, food delivery, and service connections.

## YET KEEN SENIORS DAY CENTRE

We are working to slowly open more days for in-person activities. Members are now welcome to register to visit one day a week as a start. Capacity will be limited with respect to COVID safety parameters.

We presented a riddle challenge as part of the mid-autumn festival celebration, as an attempt to engage seniors who prefer offline activities. About 30 members participated by mail and we will draw prizes for the winners in October.

## HELPING OUR COMMUNITY ACCESS THEIR VACCINE CERTIFICATES

Our staff coordinated a drop-in service at 280 Rochester for seniors to access their proof of vaccination receipt. 60 multicultural seniors were supported to access the Provincial website and print copies of their vaccination status. This drop-in was instrumental in removing barriers for already isolated seniors, and simplifying a very overwhelming process.



## CHILDREN & YOUTH

In partnership with Plant Pool Recreation Association we implemented an event in honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation on September 30th. It was well attended and will be done annually as we move forward. We have attended many community events to promote services and engage with community members. Algonquin College welcomed our Community Developer to present on our services as the students plan a fundraiser that will benefit our After School Programs.

## HARM REDUCTION

It has been a busy time for our outreach teams, with over 6,000 interactions over the summer months- this includes calls for service on our community response phone, community clean-ups, gear distribution and overdose responses.

Things are always more difficult when the drug supply worsens and we've recently had another bad wave of drugs laced with benzos. This results in individuals being more emotionally dis-regulated and more susceptible to harm because they're not able to take care of themselves.

Unfortunately, we've lost two clients over the last months with another client in serious condition in the hospital. By our count, we've lost 28 clients over the course of the last 2 years, 17 of whom died of overdoses, with others dying from issues related to the social determinants of health (lack of access to housing, mental health supports, adequate income, etc). The accumulation of grief and loss is having a significant impact on the community and is contributing to the overall level of stress and crisis.

We have thankfully had no deaths at our CTS site, despite the high number of overdoses we've had to respond to. In fact, we've successfully reversed 1,374 ODs since opening in the summer of 2018. This number does not include ODs reversed by our outreach teams so the actual number is higher than this.

The NESI Van has begun a pilot project in collaboration with Anonymous HIV Testing until the end of December 2021. Every 2nd Wednesday, our Anonymous HIV Testing Outreach Worker is offering services, including testing directly to NESI Van Harm Reduction clients.

We have applied for an extension to our two federally funded peer outreach projects, the Drug Overdose Prevention and Education program (DOPE) and the Peer Harm Reduction Worker Project. We are hoping to hear back on these extensions before Christmas.

We are supporting a weekly healing circle in Dundonald Park which is being led by Indigenous Elders. The circles are taking place every Tuesday at 2:00. Everyone is welcome.

### **ACB HIV PREVENTION**

We attended the Black Fair hosted by The Ottawa Black Diaspora Coalition. As an alternative to the University of Ottawa's 101 Week, the Black Fair aimed to create a space that brought awareness to the dialogues of beauty and diversity within the African Caribbean and Black community on and off the University of Ottawa campus. We provided on-site Naloxone training and HIV prevention education. The turnout generated over 50 people attending throughout the day.

## **PRIMARY HEALTHCARE**

### **CELEBRATING ONE-YEAR OF COVID-19 TESTING**

November 4th marks the one-year anniversary of Somerset West's onsite COVID testing clinic. Since opening, the clinic has completed over 1,700 COVID tests. The testing site provides timely access to testing, education, as well as referrals to health and social services for clients who are disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recently the clinic expanded its testing age to those 6 months of age and older. As a low barrier to accessing testing, people can walk, bus, or even bike to their appointment and do not need a health card.

## **LUNG HEALTH**

Our Lung Health staff are working hard to meet the demands of the program as they return to the same level of service offered prior to the onset of COVID-19. Our team of dedicated Respiratory Therapists are seeing clients for in-person and virtual appointments. Our team of Physiotherapists offering Pulmonary Rehabilitation are looking at ways to bring more clients on site in a safe manner while continuing to offer virtual options to those who are not able to attend in person. We continue to work closely with the Ottawa East Ontario Health Team to expand access to Lung Health Services in the east end of Ottawa and Orleans.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND COUNSELLING

Two staff members participated in the Asian Canadian Social Work Panel, put on by the Carleton School of Social Work, on October 7th 2021. The panel discussed what challenges are facing Asian Canadian communities at this time, the strengths and resources in these communities, and barriers to services faced by Asian Canadians. One of the main objectives of the panel was to promote social work to Asian Canadian students, therefore panelists also shared how they decided to get into the social work field.

## OTTAWA NEWCOMER HEALTH CENTRE

From August to September over 10 outreach events have taken place in partnership with Ottawa Public Health (OPH) targeting social housing communities in our catchment area where there are the highest numbers of racialized and newcomer residents with the lowest vaccine uptake rates. Following the data on vaccine uptake rates and qualitative data from our on-the-ground interactions, we targeted our activities to address the main concerns people had. Flyers and information about Covid19 were printed in multiple languages, Whatapp groups were created to share information with clients and let people know where vaccination popup clinics were taking place and support for transportation was secure for clients who expressed barriers in access transit.

Awareness-raising activities such as door knocking also proved successful. Our ACB Mental Health Navigator, visited over 311 families and resources such as masks, hand sanitizers, face shields were distributed to clients in need. As a result, 116 clients decided to get their Covid19 vaccine after speaking with Frederic at the door. Many appreciated the opportunity to receive information in their preferred language and also from a trusted face.

Five sessions were organized by staff provided in multiple languages (French/Swahili/ Lingala) to ensure people were accessing the information in their mother tongue. Topics covered; safety and effectiveness of the vaccine, vaccine ingredients, differences among vaccines, and why recommendations have shifted overtime. Over 200 community members attend the virtual events.

Practical assistance and case management support have also been extended to clients. In our outreach actives, many clients were flagging the need for other social services. Our ACB Mental health navigator has 24 families who he is assisting with system navigation support, many were connected to foodbanks, settlement services, school registration, and employment resources.

