

Sandy Hill
Community Health Centre

ANNUAL REPORT

2023 / 2024





A WORD FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we near completion of our first year as leaders of this beautiful organization, we are proud to share our accomplishments and strides in this year's annual report. We are also struck by the significant transitions and transformations that have shaped our journey at Sandy Hill Community Health Centre (SHCHC). It has been a year filled with both opportunities and challenges, and we are grateful for the resilience and dedication of our community and team throughout this period of change.

Transitions are an inevitable part of growth, and they provide us with invaluable opportunities for reflection, learning, and adaptation. Over the past year, we have experienced shifts in leadership, continued post-pandemic renewal and the

development of a new Strategic Plan. Amidst, our agency has never lost sight of the aim of serving the evolving needs of our community.

We have also been adapting to new and intensifying social issues, from the toxic drug supply to the housing shortage to the impact of inflation on household income. At SHCHC, we believe that true progress in healthcare stems from strong community bonds and active participation. Our approach goes beyond providing medical services; it encompasses empowering individuals and building resilient communities that can thrive even in the face of challenges.

Our mission has remained unwavering. Our new Strategic Plan continues to prioritize the health and well-being of our community members, and promote access to the care and support people need to thrive. By partnering with local organizations, community leaders, and healthcare providers, we have been able to identify and address the unique healthcare needs of our diverse population more effectively. By empowering individuals with the knowledge and resources to take control of their health, we are laying the foundation for healthier and happier communities.

We want to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to our community members, whose trust, support and focus on what unites rather than divides us have been the driving force behind our work. Your resilience and strength inspire us to push forward for excellence.

We also want to extend our heartfelt appreciation to our dedicated team members, whose hard work and commitment have been instrumental in navigating the ever-changing health care context with grace and professionalism. Your unwavering commitment to our mission is truly commendable, and we are honored to work alongside such passionate individuals.

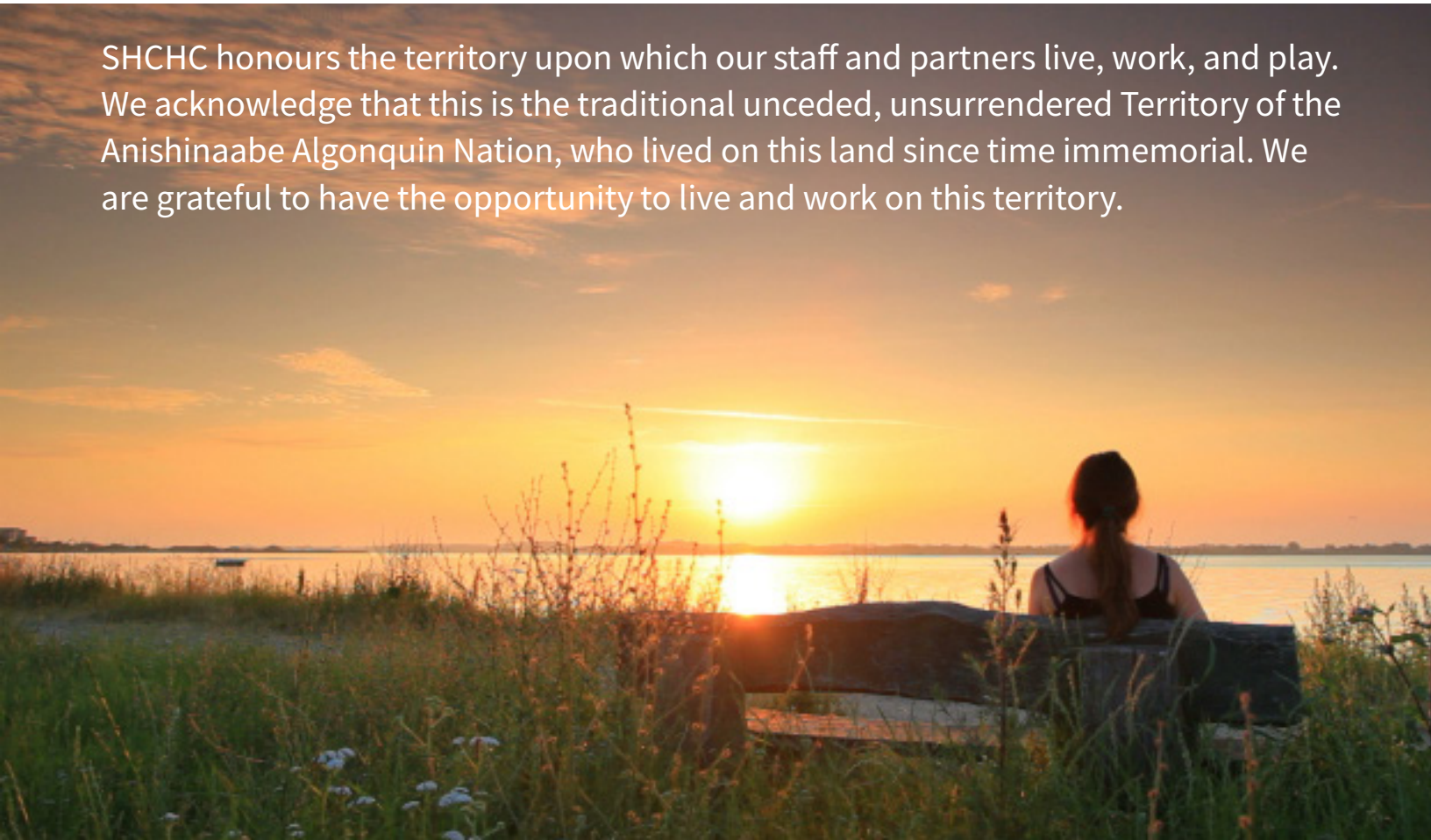
As we continue on our journey, we are excited about the possibilities that lie ahead. Together, we have the opportunity to build a stronger, healthier, and more resilient community—one that is inclusive, equitable, and supportive of all its members.

We thank you for your continued support, trust, and partnership, and look forward to the year ahead and the positive impact we will create together.

Robin McAndrew,
Executive Director

Glen Barber,
Board Chair

SHCHC honours the territory upon which our staff and partners live, work, and play. We acknowledge that this is the traditional unceded, unsundered Territory of the Anishinaabe Algonquin Nation, who lived on this land since time immemorial. We are grateful to have the opportunity to live and work on this territory.



CLIENT CARE

- 01.** *Interdisciplinary groups:* over the last year, staff members across different teams have received certification to offer Acu-detox at SHCHC. Acu-detox is a quiet and safe treatment that supports mental health and substance use recovery with the placement of acupuncture needles in strategic spots in both ears. As a result of this cross-training and collaboration across the Client Access Team, Addictions and Mental Health Services, Case Management and Intensive Case Management teams, the Acu-detox group is now offered to the local community every Friday afternoon at the Centre.

Furthermore, different professionals across these same teams are now collaborating to offer the *SMART Recovery* groups, *SMART Friends and Family* group (in collaboration with PLEO—Parents’ Lifelines of Eastern Ontario) and the *Supporting Your Loved Ones* workshop. As well, we continue our ongoing cross-team collaborations with the Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management team for the *Mindful Self-Compassion* and *Smoking Cessation* groups.

These interprofessional collaborations across teams facilitate innovation and foster contributions from different disciplines, thus enhancing the experience for clients in groups, promoting teamwork and communication amongst staff, and, in turn, enhancing client care.

- 02.** *“All About Me” book:* the Case Management team collaborated with an author from the community and put together a book for clients. This book encourages clients to tell their story, reflect on their lives, values and directives with their medical care. As well, the book is a place for clients to consolidate important information regarding their ID, bank accounts, family members and wishes in the event that they are faced with a TBI (traumatic brain injury) or end of life care. This initiative was created as an opportunity to increase clients’ autonomy and dignity within their lives.

- 03.** *Intensive Case Management (ICM) peer group:* the Case Management team has restarted the ICM peer group once a month as a way to engage clients in meaningful social activities and meals.

- 04.** *The annual Sock Project:* as has been tradition for the past 16 years, the Client Access Team led the sock project to ensure that warm socks stuffed with toiletries and food were handed out to community members again this year. Thanks to the many contributions from staff and local community groups, **150** socks were handed out this past winter.



CLIENT CARE

05. *New groups in Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management (HPCDM):* the team piloted a few new groups this year to promote social connectedness and foster positive mental health. These included a group looking at nutrition and mental health called *Nourish Your Mind*, a skill-building group called *Mindful Birding*, and a virtual *Quit Smoking Support* group.



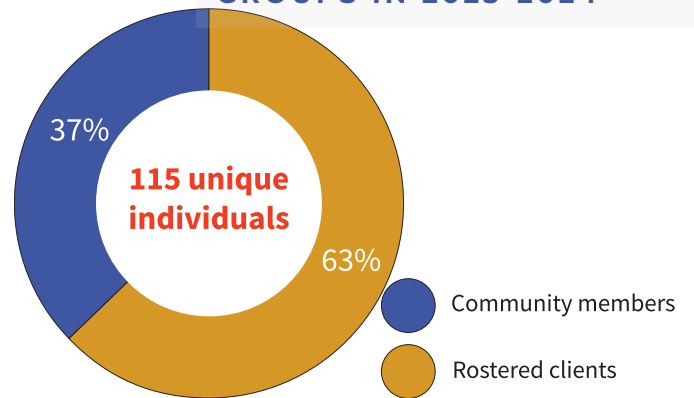
Mindful Birding facilitators Emily Clark and Eunice Carreon

30 IN-PERSON GROUPS OFFERED IN 2023-2024

290 UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS SEEN THROUGH OUR INDIVIDUAL SERVICES

We have also reviewed several existing groups to the development of self-management skills to the curriculum. Using client feedback to guide the process, the team revamped our *Lifestyle Solutions to Hypertension* and *Lifestyle Solutions to Stress* groups.

IN-PERSON AND VIRTUAL HEALTH PROMOTION GROUPS IN 2023-2024



“I have been a client of the Centre for several years. When I arrive at the Centre, I have a place to park my car, I am greeted by a welcoming staff, I am assured to see a doctor, I have a person who takes care of my diabetes, one who takes care of my feet, another person sees for my diet, and finally a person who makes sure to keep my body in good shape. And all this for free. What do you want more?”

- SHCHC client

CLIENT CARE

“Here, at Oasis, you are treated like a human being and not a statistic. People here are not about a pay cheque and are very supportive!” - Oasis Client

- 06.** *Oasis Medical Clinic:* the volume of need for service and complexity of care has significantly increased in the clinic over the past year.

CLIENTS SEEN - 1,239

SERVICE VISITS - 6,611

- 07.** *Consumption and Treatment Service (CTS):*

CLIENTS SEEN - 850

SERVICE VISITS - 17,728

- 08.** *Overdose trends at CTS:* in addition to the volume of visits, the complexity of care and outcomes are evident in the following data:

- **698 (4%)** - number of total visits that experienced an overdose;
- **23%** - number of overdoses that occurred outside the CTS;
- **34 (0.2%)** - number of overdoses that resulted in a call to emergency services;
- **12 (0.07%)** - number of individuals transported to the Emergency Department;
- **0** deaths.



CLIENT CARE

09. *Nurse Led Assessment Clinic:* one of the new developments is a novel Nurse Led Assessment Clinic. This clinic is run by the registered nurses, who work together with primary care providers. It gives our registered patients more options for access to health care services at SHCHC. Our nurses, who are well-trained and qualified, provide high quality care. They use medical directives approved by health services primary care providers to make sure patients get the right treatment at the right time.



10. *The Drop-in:* we provide client-centered and informed services delivered by people with living or lived experience, such as:

- Community drop-in/respice services: accessing mental health, HIV testing, access to dental care, harm reduction education, ticket infraction defense, etc.;
- We offered approximately **125** peer-led projects/low barrier employment opportunities, such as harm reduction kits, community clean-up, etc.;
- Opportunities for people who use drugs to participate in surveys/studies to better inform/shape future care and services, community events, public speaking and focus groups working with the police, community safety, safer inhalation, etc.;
- Client needs assessment offered by Carleton Cognitive Science Association (CCSA) at Carleton University;
- Study offered by Algonquin College Nursing School: *Understanding the Needs of Those Facing Homelessness in Ottawa.*

In 2023-2024, in the Drop-in there were:

- **12,523** unique visits,
- **267** peer project participants, and
- **791** participants in other groups, education activities, etc.

WOMEN

3,767

MEN

9,735

TRANSGENDER WOMEN

40

TRANSGENDER MEN

28

GENDER DIVERSE

11

CLIENT CARE

- 11.** *The Vanier Social Pediatric Hub:* we are excited to be working again with the Vanier Community Services Centre (VCSC) on this program! In January 2024, the Centre received notification from Ontario Health East of an increase to base funding to provide health promotion and illness prevention programming for children 0-5 years old and their families who are unattached to primary care.

The funding specified Vanier as the target neighbourhood, based on provincial data analysis. The funding will allow us to stabilize and deepen our partnership with the Vanier Social Pediatric Hub, and to expand the network of partnered agencies working with this age group. The partnership



was developed to provide preventative care and health promotion to children in Vanier who don't have a regular doctor. Our Health Services team is collaborating with the VCSC on project management and meeting key performance indicators and sustainability of the project into the next fiscal year.

ACCESS TO SERVICES IN 2023-2024

25,251

Number of active clients

1,884

Number of clients seen for case management, substance use, problem gambling, or support services

3,550

Number of clients receiving Primary Care services

363

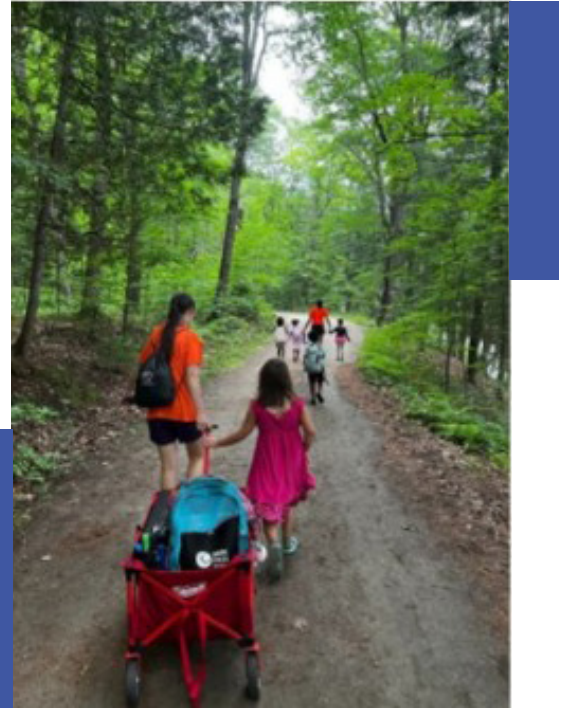
Number of clients receiving Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management services

2,268

Number of clients receiving foot health services through the Regional Chiropody Program based at SHCHC

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

01. *Summer camp in Strathcona Heights:* for the second year in a row, SHCHC, through the Community Development and Engagement team, held a six-week summer camp for children and youth in Strathcona Heights. The camp provided space for **60** children between the ages of 6 and 14 to attend the program for a duration of six weeks. Several youths from the neighbourhood were employed as camp counsellors through the Youth Services Bureau employment program. Many more also volunteered throughout the summer, acquiring the mandatory volunteer hours for high school. Activities included visits to Dutchie's Hole Wading Pool, Gatineau Park hikes and MASC (Multicultural Artists for Schools and Communities) workshops.



02. *Improved seating infrastructure in Strathcona Heights:* after receiving requests from older adults in the neighborhood, SHCHC applied to Green Communities Canada for funds to build more seating infrastructure in Strathcona Heights. In partnership with Ottawa Community Housing Volunteer and Engagement team, one multi-bench and five individual benches were built in the area, as well as a number of planters. These new benches and planters provide greenery and accessible seating for ageing Strathcona Heights residents, and for parents and caregivers accessing the playground at Lori Heath Park.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



03. *Strathcona Heights Fun Day:* at the end of August 2023, SHCHC partnered with multiple organizations, including The Parent Resource Centre, the Boys and Girls Club—through the Neighbourhood Ambassadors Program, The Ottawa Public Library, Prana Shanti, Ottawa Community Housing, and the City of Ottawa—in staging the second annual *Strathcona Heights Fun Day*. The event engaged more than **200** residents who gathered for a community BBQ and other activities such as yoga for seniors, face painting, henna tattoos, an inflatable playing area for children, and a youth basketball tournament.



04. *Bilan Iftar Assaim:* during the Holy month of Ramadan last year, the Algerian Association, in partnership with our Centre, hosted four Iftars in Strathcona Heights, which provided over **420** meals to at least **100** students, with the support of **10** volunteers.

05. *Yoga classes for older adults:* in partnership with our organization, the Sandy Hill Community Centre began offering yoga classes in Strathcona Heights for older adults living on a lower income. Classes are provided once per week, where more than **15** older adults and seniors participate regularly.

“Our community is a garden, and we are the colourful flowers in it. The more colours, the more beautiful it is. No discrimination.”

- Strathcona Heights Resident

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

06. *The Sandy Hill Community Liaison Committee:*

our Centre has been an active participant in the Sandy Hill Community Liaison Committee (SHCLC), a collaborative effort between five different stakeholder groups in the Sandy Hill community of Ottawa. The SHCLC has a broad and widespread representation of this community's diversity and endeavours to be part of an information network to ensure transparency, information sharing and ongoing trust building. Since its inception, the committee has been very productive, including facilitating the following activities:

- community clean-up activities,
- grant writing,
- consultations with community regarding city and social/health services,
- localized strategic priorities.

07. *Helping our community partners:* the CTS has provided in-kind nursing outreach support to Belong Ottawa, specifically Centre 454, and has partnered with them on community clean-up initiatives.



08. *Welcoming Ottawa Week:* in June of last year, as part of the Welcoming Ottawa Week (WOW) organized by the Ottawa Local Immigration Partnership, the Centre's Community Development and Engagement team, in collaboration with several other organizations, hosted an event in Strathcona Heights celebrating newcomers. Ten residents were selected to prepare meals for a community potluck. The event welcomed more than **200** community members who celebrated through many activities, including face painting, henna tattoos and live music entertainment provided by another resident who performs professionally. Several newcomer children participated in a short video documentary sharing things they like about Canada and things they miss about their home countries, in their preferred language.

WOW is an annual series of free and fun events designed to convey the genuine welcome and hospitality of Ottawa residents to newcomers. These events address aspects of newcomer integration and provide opportunities for quality interactions between newcomers and long-time residents.

09. *Localized service provider partnership:* a map/directory of local service providers has been developed by Oasis Program to be shared publicly with neighbours, clients and providers alike. The directory offers more clarity on who is providing what support to the community, and when and how they can be contacted.

QUALITY AND INNOVATION

01. *Drug checking services:* we received our SCATR unit in late October, and we were able to start our on-site testing in November. From November 2023 until March 31, 2024, we have conducted **582** scans providing our service participants with invaluable information about the substances they are consuming. With this technology we were able to detect that, as per our suspicions, the “fentanyl” was adulterated with many other substances including, but not limited to, Bromazolam, Alprazolam, Bromazepam, Temazepam and Desalkylgidazepam. We were also able to give clients data in real time, as the quick scan can produce invaluable results in as little as 5 minutes and provide information if the substances possibly contained Xylazine or other tranquilizers such as Ketamine. Not only does this allow our staff to give clients more informed harm reduction information, but it also serves as a very valuable tool for engagement.

We take the recommended cautions when reporting results to our service participants and inform them of the caveats that the technology is not perfect, this is part of a research study, and we remind them that we are just testing a very small portion of their substances. For the most part, they do not want to be consuming these contaminated substances, and this helps them make informed decisions about the substances they are using.

Staff have noticed a significant increase in the level of rapport building and engagement with clients using the drug testing service. They will find some grounds to start a conversation and use it as an opportunity to inform clients about other services we have, such as our Primary Care, our OAT (Opioid Agonist Treatment) and the plethora of social services we offer on-site.

02. *Ottawa’s Situation Table:* formed as a key part of Ottawa Public Health’s newly released *Ottawa Opioid Response Strategy*, the Integrated Community Services Table (ICST) of Downtown Ottawa is co-chaired by the SHCHC and the Salvation Army, and brings together community partners who provide street outreach, legal support, medical treatment, mental health and addictions support, and housing and shelter services. It also brings representatives and knowledge keepers from diverse communities including First Nations, Inuit and Metis, to facilitate better system coordination and evidence-based approaches to meet the needs of individuals who frequently interact with the criminal justice system. These interactions are often the result of unresolved risk factors, housing insecurity, mental health, and addictions issues.

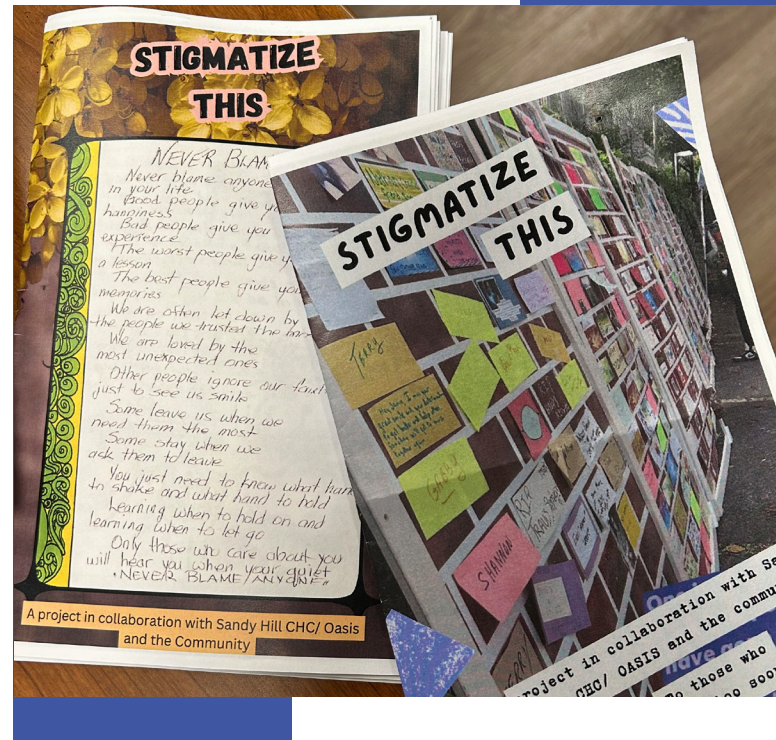
The ICST has created coordinated community partnerships which offer support services to these at-risk individuals, ultimately serving as a strategy to disrupt the ongoing cycle of criminalization.

QUALITY AND INNOVATION

03. *Zine - Stigmatize This:* the Case Management team collaborated with Oasis clients, community workers and case management clients to produce a 'Zine'. Artwork and poetry submissions were selected by a group of clients, community workers and staff. The clients are compensated for their contributions. The Zine is available at reception and sent to other community partners, and is set to release its 2nd edition imminently.

04. *The Overdose Prevention Task Force (ODPTF):* to ensure a collective and impactful approach to addressing Ottawa's drug crisis, the Centre is part of a collaboration with other agencies that are working closely as the ODPTF: mental health, addictions, substance use, health and social services advisory groups, and other key partners. This allows Ottawa Public Health to monitor trends through data collection, surveillance, and qualitative input, as we all try to meet the ever-evolving substance use health needs of the community.

05. *Mindful Birding:* this group started as a pilot project that got participants involved in co-creating and designing its structure. Together, the facilitators and participants created a code of conduct for the group, decided on outing locations within the community, and agreed on a safety and inclement weather protocol.



- 06.** *Improved client feedback:* in Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management, we started to include a question on our group evaluation form that evaluates health needs and seeks client feedback to guide the development of future engaging and relevant health promotion groups.
- 07.** *First hybrid-style group! Lifestyle Solutions to Stress* group was offered as a hybrid group for the first time. There are plans to offer more groups that support both in-person and virtual participation as a way to increase accessibility to our programs.
- 08.** *Booking algorithms:* we also improved our booking algorithms. One way this helps registered patients get access to primary care appropriately is by the addition of “early access” appointments with main care providers, in addition to our ongoing Urgent Access Clinic.

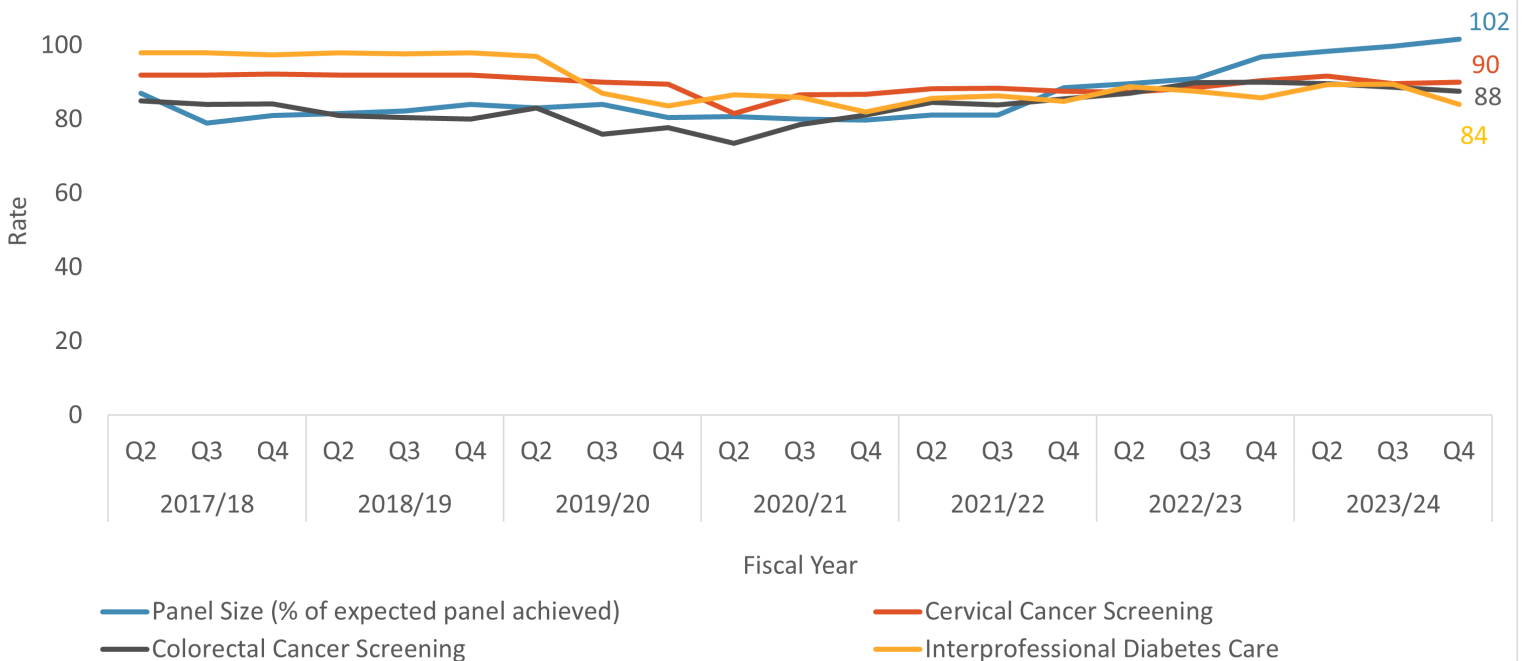
QUALITY AND INNOVATION

09. *New translation and interpretation services:* we have improved our ability to communicate with people who do not speak English or French by acquiring a new interpretation service called Voyce. The devices used to access this service were funded by the Systems Navigation Access and Partnership (SNAP) Project (through the Canadian Association of Community Health Centres). Voyce offers real-time medical interpretation in over 240 languages and dialects, 24/7. We can provide these services in-person or over the phone. This works hand-in-hand with

our new systems navigator position in Health Services! This role is crucial in guiding vulnerable clients through the healthcare and social services sectors. The systems navigator helps clients with different types of insurance, including OHIP, uninsured, and IFHP (Interim Federal Health Program). These clients often need help with things like getting health care services, finding housing, dealing with immigration issues, translation, getting food, and filling out documents.

QUALITY PRIMARY CARE INDICATORS

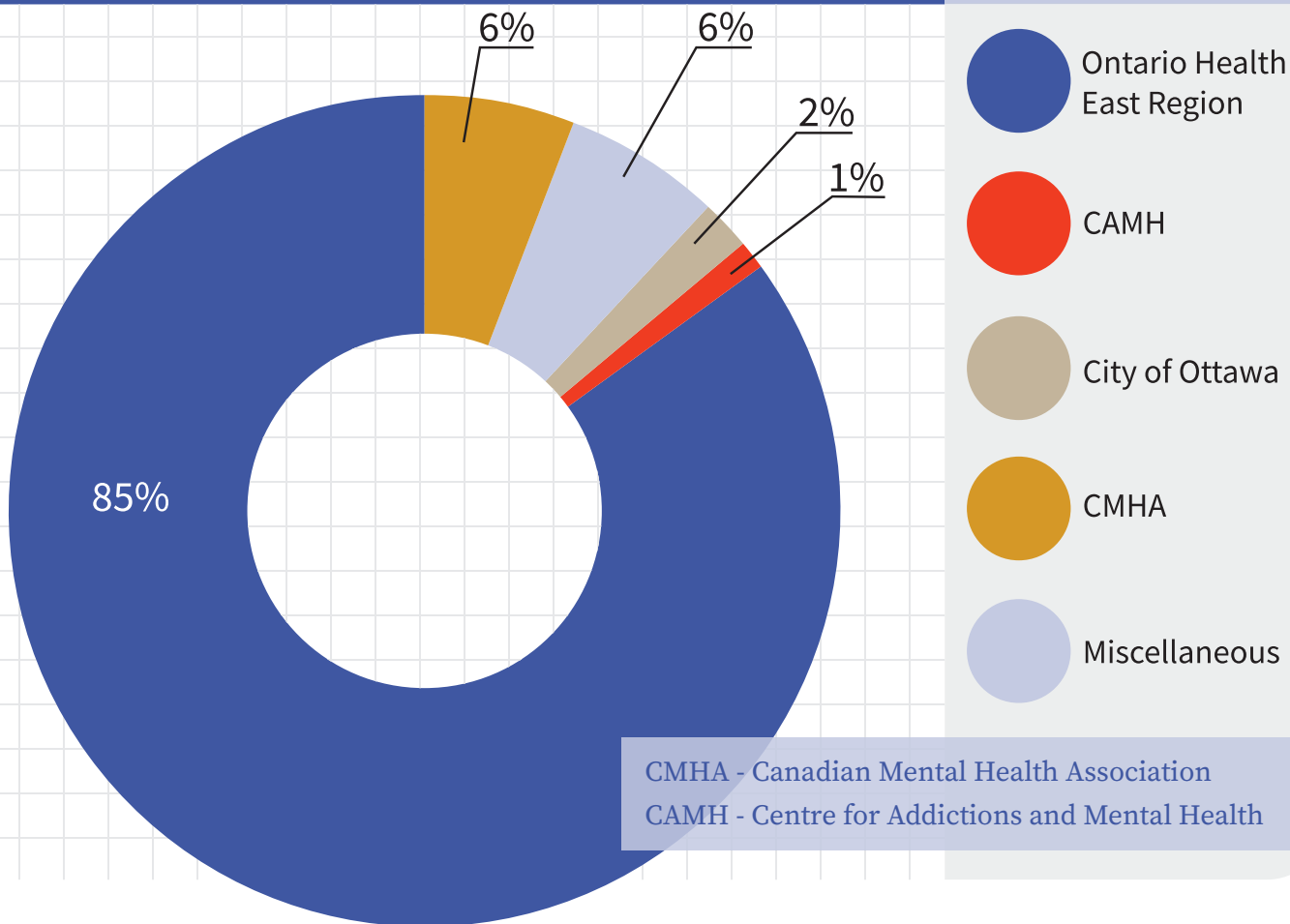
Best Practice Primary Care Indicators: Performance from 2017/18 to 2023/24



ACCOUNTABILITY

SOURCES OF REVENUE

2023-2024



Community Foundation of Ottawa

We are proud to be part of the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres of Ottawa.



We would like to gratefully acknowledge the continuous support of our funders, community partners, Mr. George Gaty and family, and other private donors. For complete details, please refer to the audited financial statements and notes available on the Centre's website.

Sandy Hill CHC

@SandyHillCHC

Sandy Hill Community Health Centre

OUR MISSION

To deliver excellence in person-centred primary care, social services, and community well-being.

For 49 years, the Sandy Hill Community Health Centre has been dedicated to meeting the health needs of a diverse community that is rich in terms of people, culture and heritage. We are grateful for the strength of commitment of our Board of Directors, the dedication of our staff and volunteers and the allegiance of our corporate supporters. Most of all, we are grateful for what we learn from our clients, who work so hard to find success and make a healthy life for themselves, their families and for their community.

OUR VISION

Everyone in our community will have equitable access to health and well-being.



LEADERSHIP TEAM

David Gibson (retired) • Executive Director
Robin McAndrew • Executive Director
Matthew Garrison • Director of Human Resources, Administration and Information Technology
Annabelle Finucan • Acting Director of Addictions and Mental Health Services, and Client Access Team
Kendra Jones • Director of Quality Improvement and Performance Management
Nancy Knudsen (retired) • Director of Health Services and Director of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management
Kailyn Pasma • Director of Health Services and Director of Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Management
Michelle Spencer • Director of Finance
Wendy Stewart • Director of Oasis Program

TEAM LEADERS • Stefan Amyotte • Alphadyo Balde • Emily Clark • Gerald Dragon • Magda Dorsainvil • Annabelle Finucan • Josée Anne Gauthier • Louise Goodman • Candace Hebert ^(R) • Kyle Heney ^(R) • Bill Juillette ^(R) • Sandra Nivyabandi • Christian Prevost • Shelley Reid • Derrick St John (Oasis Program Manager)

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Marie-Elise Blais • Staff Representative
Jessica Menard • Staff Representative
Derrick St John • Staff Representative

^(R) - Resigned