

Mission Moment

"The Chronic Pain program at St. Joe's changed my life. It is an amazing program. The administration is flawless. Everything that we learned was done in a kind and safe environment. Each person who worked with us did so in a professional, caring and giving way. Humour was also a part of how they helped us. They never told us what to do. They filled us with knowledge about chronic pain that helped us make our own decisions about how to help ourselves. That is empowering. I believe this is a key part of why the program works. And all the employees are part of a team: one that works so well together. The dream team!!!!"

Leila Cano, Client, Chronic Pain Management Program



As we advance our vision of becoming a leader in client-centred care, we plan through the lens of Quality, Safety and Risk. Our Strategic Plan 2020-2024 will focus on four key Strategic Priorities:

Here for Our Clients

To address unmet needs through the provision of quality services.

Here for Our Partners

To transform the healthcare system.

Here for Our People

To support staff, physicians and volunteers to live our values.

Here for Our Future

To ensure continued organizational sustainability.

Here for Our Clients

Expanding the Chronic Pain Management Program

On March 31 2023, MPP Kevin Holland joined St. Joseph's Care Group staff and clients to announce \$1.4 million in funding to expand and enhance the Chronic Pain Management Program.

Launched in 1998, the Chronic Pain Management Program offers an in-person and virtual self-management approach to pain management. Together with a multidisciplinary health team, clients set goals and develop a personalized care plan along with education and coping strategies to meet those goals.

The funding will have immediate impact in Northwestern Ontario, reducing wait times by adding 150 spaces to the program, bringing total served to more than 1,000 people per year. A portion of the funding will be directed to earlier identification of people who would benefit from a Chronic Pain Management Program.



N'doo'owe Binesi – Indigenous Health Team Providing Client Support at Wilson Place

In March, the Cultural and Traditional Health Practitioners from N'doo'owe Binesi – Indigenous Health Team (IHT) – met with clients at Wilson Place (medium support housing), where approximately 50% of clients are Indigenous. The meeting was well received by all attendees and they provided feedback to the IHT on next steps to support clients at the site. Five clients and a supervisor also participated in a smudging ceremony.

Ongoing support will be provided bi-weekly for Indigenous clients living in Wilson Place, with plans to expand to all other medium and high support housing sites. It is anticipated that these efforts will improve the experience of Indigenous clients in medium and high support mental health housing, where the Client Satisfaction Survey cultural support score decreased from 2021 (3.28) to 2022 (3.08).

Partnering to Help Clients Reach Their Most Appropriate Discharge Destination

Almost immediately upon arrival at Hogarth Riverview Manor (HRM), an 80 year old resident stated that they did not want to be in long-term care, and it was evident that they could successfully live in an environment with a lower level of care. With the help of the HRM team, the client identified that Seniors' Supportive Housing would be the best destination at this time, and was successfully transitioned to Willow Place Community-Based Transitional Care where the client is receiving the right care in a more appropriate environment while waiting for placement in a seniors' supportive housing apartment.

This is one example illustrating the opportunity to enhance planning for movement within and between sectors. A joint flow committee with representatives from acute care, home and community care, and St. Joseph's Care Group is in its early stages, and will contribute to improving discharge planning across the system to ensure that individuals move from hospital to the most appropriate setting for the level of care that they require.

St. Joseph's Hospital Pilots Early Identification for a Palliative Approach to Care

Palliative care has traditionally been viewed as specialized care provided during the last few months, weeks or days of a person's life. Current best practice is for providing a 'palliative approach to care' beginning earlier within person's journey with an illness. A palliative approach to care addresses and manages a client and their family's psychological, practical, social, loss/grief, spiritual and physical issues like pain and symptom management in line with their goals of care, and helps prepare for eventual life closure.

Early Identification for a Palliative Approach to Care is identified as a priority in St. Joseph's Care Group's Quality Improvement Plan. The 3rd floor (General and Special Rehabilitation Services) at St. Joseph's Hospital are piloting a project to do just that: through screening questions on admission, people eligible for a palliative approach to care will be identified earlier. Subsequent assessment questions for identified individuals will support conversations within the care team, including clients and their families, around advanced care planning and care goals, appointment of a substitute decision maker, and/or referral to formal palliative care services.

At the time of this report, nearly 80% of staff have completed an education session on this pilot approach. For clients and their families, it means meeting the individual's health care needs and supporting family and caregivers throughout the illness, not just at the end of life.



Neurology Outpatient Services – Aphasia Community Group Supported System Gap

For some survivors of stroke experiencing aphasia, social communication can continue to be challenging even after completing active rehabilitation. Aphasia refers to trouble with speaking, understanding speech, or reading or writing as a result of damage to the part of the brain that is responsible for language processing or understanding. It may occur suddenly or over time, depending on the type and location of brain tissue involved. Recognizing this need, the Neurology Outpatient Team at St. Joseph's Hospital created an Aphasia Social Communication Group in 2017.

Recently, the March of Dimes established a "Coffee Club" for people living with aphasia. The Neurology Outpatient Program collaborated with the March of Dimes to transition clients of the Aphasia Social Communication Group to the Coffee Club, provided education on aphasia to the Facilitator, and had a team member shadow the March 2023 Coffee Club as a support. With capacity in community to meet the needs of people living with aphasia, SJCG's Aphasia Social Communication Group has been dissolved.

Here for Our People

Celebrating Quality Improvements with Long-Term Care Staff

At daily quality huddles on each clinical unit, long-term care front-line staff brainstorm ideas to improve resident quality of life and process efficiencies. These ideas are recorded on improvement tickets and are followed through to completion. Once completed, these small improvements are celebrated on the unit and members are recognized for their contributions.

In late March, Hogarth Riverview Manor celebrated a milestone of implementing 2,000 Quality Improvements since the start of the iCare quality journey in November 2020. During the celebration, staff and managers who had played a key role in this organizational change were recognized, as "spearheaders", "influencers", "champions" and "torch-bearers."



Keeping Staff Safe at Hogarth Riverview Manor

Throughout 2022, Hogarth Riverview Manor (HRM) averaged 50-60 staff injury incidents per month, with 10-15 of these injuries occurring when the staff member came into contact with a resident with responsive behaviours. So far in 2023, the Home has seen a significant decrease in staff injuries, with approximately 20 incidents being reported monthly, and one to two of which are related to responsive behaviours.

The HRM Joint Occupational Health and Safety Team actively monitors injury data and creates actions plans to address issues. It is the Team's belief that the decrease in staff injuries is a result of providing staff with the necessary knowledge and tools to carry out their job safely, including the rollout of Gentle Persuasive Approach education to all front-line care providers; active participation in whiteboard quality improvement huddles and safety conversations; and manager walkabouts that include "walk away and re-approach" discussions with staff. HRM aims to sustain staff incident improvements by continuing to ensure that staff have the required education and resources available, and by acknowledging and celebrating the ongoing achievements.

Nurturing the Fire for Truth and Reconciliation within Healthcare

On March 8, 2023, the Indigenous Health Education Committee held a one hour webinar entitled *Nurturing the Fire for Truth and Reconciliation within Health Care*, presented by Miranda Lesperance Ph.D., Vice President of Indigenous Collaboration, Equity, and Inclusion at Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) and Paul Francis Jr, Director of Indigenous Relations at St. Joseph's Care Group (SJCG). The session was attended by over 115 people from SJCG and community partners including TBRHSC, Children's Centre Thunder Bay and Options North West.

The presentation explained the meaning of cultural safety with historic and healthcare-specific contexts, while exemplifying the importance of building and supporting Indigenous lead initiatives for genuine reconciliation efforts. The event featured an open forum where attendees could offer questions, comments or feedback directly to Miranda and Paul in a safe and respectful space for shared learning.



Development of the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan

In March 2023, St. Joseph's Care Group launched the process to develop the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan. St. Joseph's Care Group has engaged Santis Health, a strategic advisory consultancy, to support the organization with this initiative. Over the next 18 months, Santis Health and St. Joseph's Care Group will work together on the development of the Strategic Plan, position the organization to successfully operationalize the Plan, and achieve desired outcomes.

A Steering Committee is in place to guide the work of Santis Health, and includes representation from St. Joseph's Care Group's Board of Directors, Leadership Team, clinical and administrative Directors, Physicians, and the Indigenous Health Team, as well as two Elders and three Client & Family Partners.