

Mission Moment

A lovely 85 year old woman, lived independently in her condominium in Thunder Bay found herself unable to get up and walk one day. Fearing a stroke or other life changing event and not being able to get up, she went to the Emergency Department. After a significant wait she was “told off” by a physician that she should not have called an ambulance just because she couldn’t walk. Yet, a brief assessment resulted in admission to a medical unit where she stayed for 1 week requiring minimal medical care and minimal physiotherapy, most of her time spent in bed. Following, she was transferred to the Geriatric Assessment and Rehabilitative Care Unit (GARC) where she received a Comprehensive Geriatric Assessment and her Goals of Care were discussed. The client indicated that she wanted to return home to her condominium.

The client received extensive physiotherapy and occupational therapy and it was determined that she could go home to live independently with minimal supports from Home and Community Care, with use of a wheelchair which she can self-propel; and a daily exercise program that she can continue at home on her own. Her family were involved in her decision and care planning and her goal to return home albeit with additional support was achieved.

Her story was the motivation for the redesign of the frail older adult pathway and introduction of FIT for GARC program where frail older adults are identified and assessed in the Emergency Room by rehabilitative staff trained in geriatric assessment. Over the past 6 months, 40% of medically stable frail older adults now are directly admitted to GARC and avoid an acute care stay.



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

Client Success Story

Following a relapse, a client of Balmoral Centre (withdrawal management and stabilization) expressed goals that aligned with Lodge on Dawson, a transitional housing program for people living with mental health and/or addiction issues. The client had struggled with temporary accommodation and subsequently experienced homelessness, which created challenges with resuming his recovery and returning to work.

Since moving into the Lodge, the client has accessed various community supports, including St. Joseph’s Health Centre’s Team Werks, to develop connections that allow them to work toward their goals and use positive coping skills.

Having access to services and support through recovery inspired and motivated the client to give back to the program and do what they could to support others. When improvements were needed in the front entrance of the Lodge, the client volunteered to assist with the task. As a former welder and fabricator the client using these skills to help out with different projects and jobs. With

the support of the Team Werks program, the client built and installed guard rails to protect the walls from damage, and continues to take on additional projects, including painting, small repairs and building maintenance.

An old adage says that to feel value and purpose, everyone needs a job, a home and a friend. This client has found all three, and is proud of being able to give back and make positive change as part of their recovery.

Note: This story is told with the consent of the client, who has asked that their name be withheld.

Supporting the Cultural Needs of Tenants

St. Joseph's Care Group's most recent Client Experience Survey told us that tenants wanted more opportunities to promote and celebrate diverse cultures. Working in collaboration with tenant committees at both PR Cook and Sister Leila Greco apartments, the Seniors' Supportive Housing recreational therapy team engaged external partners on cultural events that appeal to all the senses. Activities have included cooking, arts, music and, most notably, an outing to the Folklore Festival Activities at Fort William Gardens. Food Services has also featured several dishes with the input of tenants to reflect the many ethnicities within both buildings. Since the beginning of 2023, more than 40 tenants have participated in these activities to experience different cultures and learn something new.



Regional Rehabilitation Care Program Disseminates Innovative Programs Locally and Provincially

In May, Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) University's Rehabilitation Sciences Program hosted the Northern Connections Conference in Thunder Bay. Denise Taylor, Manager, Regional Rehabilitative Care Program, provided the following presentations to the 110 participants:

- Implementing a Regional Rehabilitation Care Outreach Program (with co-presenter, Linda Sanzo, Occupational Therapist at St. Joseph's Hospital)
- Implementing a Rehabilitation Post-Falls Pathway (with co-presenter, Alison Denton, Manager of the Regional Seniors' Care Program)
- Supporting Elders Living with Frailty in Remote Indigenous Communities in Treaties 5 & 9: Implementing the Role of a Community Rehabilitation Worker (with co-presenter, Dr. Taryn Klarner)
- Community Rehabilitation Worker Program was presented to an audience primarily comprised of physicians and NOSM faculty (with co-resenter Kirsten Pavelich)

Denise Taylor, and Dayna Quequish, a Community Rehab Worker (CRW) from North Caribou Lake First Nation, presented "Community Rehabilitation Worker (CRW) - A new role to Support Elders and Home and Community Care Clients to Remain in Community" at the Northern Ontario Home and Community Care Network Gathering in Thunder Bay. The new CRW role development and pilot implementation was also presented at the Ontario Region First Nation and Inuit Home and Community Care quarterly meeting.

Likewise, the results from the Post-Falls Pathway research project were virtually co-presented at the Greater Toronto Area Best Practices Day with Gabrielle Sadler from the Rehabilitative Care Alliance (RCA). The RCA works with partners across the province to strengthen and standardize rehabilitative care in Ontario through better planning, ongoing evaluation and quality improvement, and the integration of best practices.

Here for Our People

Real Life Learning through Simulation

On Monday, May 8th, SJCG unveiled a new Simulation (Sim) Lab, which creates a safe, immersive learning experience for staff and nurses that bridges the gap between theory and real-time clinical opportunities. Simulation is a teaching method in many industries across the world, and this hands-on learning is not a new concept for SJCG – from Nursing Skills Day to Mobile Sim Carts, staff have had many opportunities to experience learning that imitates their work environments. Now, they have a dedicated space to cultivate their skills with realistic scenarios in a safe, supportive setting.

A full-body mannequin can mimic patient characteristics and changes in vital signs including blood pressure, pulse, respiration, and more. From behind a mirrored wall, educators can even use a microphone to speak through the mannequin, allowing staff to practice communicating with clients directly. The room features a hospital bed, bedside table, headwall, and the necessary equipment to care for the “client,” including IV pumps, feeding tubes, pressure injury care, and wound care.



Indigenous Nurses Day Event – National Nursing Week



As part of our National Nursing Week celebrations and in recognition of Indigenous Nurses Day, St. Joseph's Care Group offered a special healing event organized by our Indigenous Health Team.

Hosted in Nagishkodaadiwin (Spiritual Gathering Lodge) at St. Joseph's Hospital, participants received a teaching about giizhik (cedar) as a sacred medicine, had the opportunity to make a cedar pouch, and try cedar tea.

Miigwech to Indigenous Nurses across Canada for your contributions to the nursing profession and the care you provide..

Here for Our Future

Creating the Future Together

On April 12th, 2023, team members from Inpatient Rehabilitative Care and N'doo'owe Binesi gathered for the day in a facilitated Design Event. The Creating the Future Together event acknowledged the need to dismantle systemic racism and discrimination, while cultivating organizational values for culturally safe care. The day started with a smudging ceremony and an offering of prayer and song from Elder Gerry Baxter in the Spiritual Gathering Lodge at St. Joseph's Hospital.

Throughout the day, the group looked at the current state of Indigenous Health services available before making decisions about future directions to further improve care. The group identified gaps that diminish culturally safe environments for Indigenous clients and staff, then collaborated to create action plans that included both Indigenous and non-Indigenous staff, emphasizing that everyone has a role to play in nurturing the fire for Truth and Reconciliation within Healthcare. The event featured candid discussion regarding the realities of racism and barriers to care faced by Indigenous People living in Thunder Bay.

Facilitator Amanda Bjorn encouraged staff to be optimistic when imagining a culturally safe care environment by consistently honouring mutual commitments to providing excellent, comprehensive care for Indigenous clients and staff. Elder Gerry Baxter also shared teachings of growth and healing using the medicine wheel. This teaching was deeply valued and referenced in discussion throughout the event. A notable theme emerged as participants repeatedly shared ideas from a loving, respectful foundation that clearly exemplified a genuine desire to build trust and prioritize relationships with St. Joseph's Care Group's Indigenous Health Team to truly create a culturally safe environment for Indigenous clients.

Changing our Organizational Structure

In May 2023, St. Joseph's Care Group announced changes to our Organizational Structure to ensure that we have the right structures in place to create the reporting relationships and dedicated teams needed to continually improve, advance, and sustain St. Joseph's Care Group in response to the needs of the people we serve. A high level summary of the changes are:

- Welcoming Paul Francis Jr as our first Vice President N'doo'owe Binesi
- Realignment of Clinical Vice President roles to focus on transitions in care, and advance our regional, inpatient, and community roles
- Placing the Chief Nursing Executive position at the leadership level recognizing the critical role of nursing leadership across all sites and sectors
- Addition of a Director of Quality, with dedicated resources to focus our quality care efforts across St. Joseph's Care Group

Realigning our organization will make us stronger, supporting our work with the right structures and reinforcing our commitment to delivering quality care while identifying and meeting unmet needs, and keeping St. Joseph's Care Group as a place where caring careers thrive.

Looking Good!

You never get a second chance at a first impression. In May 2023, St. Joseph's Care Group's Corporate Office was updated to create a warm welcome through:

- Improved navigation through branding on exterior doors and windows;
- Logo and Care, Compassion, Commitment messages at both entry points; and
- Photos of our clients and our sites that tell the story of the care we provide for body, mind and spirit.

