

Leadership Team Report

November 2023



Mission Moment

“My daughter had a fantastic day! Thank you!” Allison Mary

Grade 9 students got to experience firsthand what healthcare – and St. Joseph’s Care Group – is all about. Students spent time doing hands-on patient care in our Simulation Lab, had a behind-the-scenes tour of our hospital, and learned directly from our staff through interactive activities.

“How fun!! What a great learning experience for youngsters,” said Angie Nicholas, on SJCG’s Facebook page. More than 15 staff contributed to making the day special, and showing youth the career opportunities that exist right here in Thunder Bay. Thank you to all!



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

Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program Northwest – Year One Update

Experiencing depression, anxiety, stress or worry?

Ontarians aged 18+ can access a new FREE mental health program.



It has been one year since the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (OSP) program officially began with St. Joseph’s Care Group (SJCG) as the Network Lead Organization for Northwestern Ontario. In the first year, more than 550 people from across the region have taken advantage of this high-intensity virtual or in-person cognitive behavioural therapy.

How the program connects is continually evolving, and is always done with the client experience at the centre. Upgrades were made to The Access Point Northwest website, making it easier for clients to self-refer to the program. Key to success is local promotion to compliment

provincial program promotion efforts. Robust regional stakeholder engagement was coupled with targeted advertising including radio (a medium that best reaches Northwestern Ontario’s widely dispersed population) and social media strategy to educate and keep awareness at the forefront. Program branding and assets were developed to support all stages of program growth and maturity.

Always looking to the future, a retreat was held in September 2023 to celebrate successes and support ongoing planning and growth of the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program across Northwestern Ontario.

OSP is a provincial program overseen by Ontario Health's Mental Health & Addictions Centre of Excellence.

Hogarth Riverview Manor DementiAbility Décor & Training Journey

On Thursday, April 13, 2023, SJCG and MPP Kevin Holland announced investment through the Local Priorities Fund, a targeted fund to help seniors with complex medical needs, such as dementia and bariatric care, connect to specialized care and supports in their long-term care home instead of a hospital.

A portion of the \$700,000 received by SJCG funded additional DementiAbility training for staff at Hogarth Riverview Manor (HRM). DementiAbility is a program that aims to improve the resident experience by demonstrating the abilities and potential of each individual living with dementia, through evidence-based, resident-centered education, physical environment changes, and approaches to care.

Working collaboratively with Family Council and in consultation with Resident Council, HRM's Therapeutic Recreation Team is leading the way in creating a DementiAbility-informed environment that helps reduce symptoms like confusion, anxiety and boredom that can result in responsive behaviours. Coined as the Décor Committee, the members have been hard at work selecting new paint colours and murals for the Home.

It's a group effort, and one that aims to bring dignity, joy and life to days for people living with dementia and their loved ones.



Stabilization Beds Lead to Effective Treatment & Bed Matching

As of October 15, 2022, 126 clients have accessed the Stabilization Bed Pilot Program, a partnership between SJCG (Balmoral Centre and Sister Margaret Smith Centre), Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, Crossroads Centre, Shelter House Thunder Bay and North of Superior Counselling Programs. With short term stays of 2-10 days, the Stabilization Bed Pilot Program is on track to serve over 150 clients in 2023. Clients access these beds following their stay at Balmoral Centre, in turn implementing maximum effectiveness of each bed by ensuring clients are accessing the specific care they need, when they need it. This is particularly important for individuals who have completed withdrawal management and are awaiting their bed after being accepted to a live-in treatment program.

The strength of the Stabilization Bed Pilot Program stems from its partnerships, demonstrated in many of the success stories. For instance, a client from a northern First Nation community accessed withdrawal management services at Balmoral Centre. Though they were accepted to live-in treatment on completion, they felt returning home – even on a temporary basis as they waited for a space to open - would re-expose them to triggers.

Rather than return home, the client transitioned to a stabilization bed at Sister Margaret Smith Centre, where they stayed for 6 days. The client then completed a live-in program and now resides in a post-treatment facility where they continue to access outpatient counselling and maintain sobriety.

Stabilization beds offer a safe, sober living environment, full bridging of urge reduction and/or opioid agonist treatment, which reduces drug-related harms, relapses, the potential for fatal overdoses and an increased likelihood that individuals start their treatment journey.

Expansion of Behavioural Supports Education Lead

The Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) Service offered through SJCG's Specialized Geriatric Services is expanding its reach to support acute and post-acute care settings as a result of Alternative Level of Care (ALC) funding available until March 31, 2024.

The investment is in response to survey results of current practices provided to older adults living with, or at risk of, responsive behaviours within acute care.

In April 2023, a Behavioural Supports Education Lead was hired to support care teams, clinical leads and management at the Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre and St. Joseph's Hospital. Additionally, this position works collaboratively to address knowledge gaps, opportunities for growth, provide solutions and build capacity.

This initiative is expected to increase the health care team's knowledge, understanding, confidence and self-efficacy in caring for people living with, or at risk of, responsive behaviours, and support staff satisfaction and retention. It is also expected to help reduce ALC and Length of Stay (LOS) rates; decrease use of physical restraints; and increase client and care partner and satisfaction while increasing the number of clients discharged to their most appropriate setting in a timely manner.

Supporting Our Colleagues: Community Rehabilitation Workers (CRW) Annual Refresher

The North West Regional Rehabilitative Care Program visited Sandy Lake and North Caribou Lake First Nations in September 2023 to share findings of the Community Rehabilitation Worker (CRW) role and training program research evaluation. At that time, clients, community health care teams and the CRWs were engaged to help inform the development of an annual refresher training program.

In response to needs identified by the CRWs, the North West Regional Rehabilitative Care Program supported the development and delivery of a Skills Advancement Week hosted by Confederation College's Thunder Bay campus during the week of October 23, 2023. CRWs learned about services available at Thunder Bay Orthopaedics; Lower Limb Preservation strategies by SJCG's Regional Wound Care Program; and how to repair equipment from Motion Specialties technicians.

North West Regional Palliative Care Program Partners with Lakehead University's Centre for Education and Research on Aging & Health

On October 3-5, 2023, the Centre for Education and Research on Aging & Health (CERAH) hosted the Northwestern Ontario (NWO) Palliative Care Conference in Thunder Bay, with the Regional Palliative Care Program (RPCP) providing support as a partner. This year's conference saw a return to an in-person format since the COVID-19 Pandemic and accommodated over 100 health and social care providers who traveled from across the region to attend the highly anticipated event.

The 3-day conference titled 'Navigating the Journey Together: Providing Care for Ourselves & Others' included keynote presentations from Dr. Sammy Winemaker and Dr. Hsien Seow, Dr. Kathryn Mannix and Dr. Jeff Myers, and offered other interactive sessions that focused on providing quality and culturally safe palliative and end-of-life care to individuals who reside in Northwestern Ontario.

Participants were also treated to sessions that informed them of tools and resources used to provide self-care, such as expressive art, self-care, tension relieving exercises and more. At the close of the conference, the attendees traveled back to their respective communities feeling equipped with various insights into providing quality palliative care and nourished with tools and techniques to care for themselves as providers.



Introducing the Clinical Scholar Program

On June 1, 2023, the Ministry of Health announced funding to all Ontario hospitals to implement the Clinical Scholar Program (CSP) within the fiscal year. The program aims to transition new graduate nurses into practice through a supportive work environment, while retaining nurses in clinical settings through dedicated leadership and mentorship opportunities.

Clinical Scholars are experienced frontline nurses employed in supernumerary positions. Clinical Scholars focus exclusively on providing direct guidance and mentorship to new nurses and assist them with integration into the clinical area in accordance with organizational and professional standards, and in collaboration with clinical teams.

The program officially launched on October 1, 2023 with three nurses recruited to Clinical Scholar positions at St. Joseph's Hospital within the inpatient Rehabilitative Care areas.

PR Cook Apartments Staff Lounge

A True "You Spoke, We Listened!" moment. Staff at PR Cook Apartments provide the supports tenants need to live as independently as possible. Until recently, the staff breakroom was part of a shared space with tenants, and leaders heard that staff would really appreciate their own space. We heard you! A private break room was constructed on the 6th floor with input and ideas from staff and includes a kitchenette space with a sink, microwave, fridge, toaster and storage for lunches.

Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario President Visits St. Joseph's Hospital

SJCG was honoured to host Dr. Claudette Holloway, President of the [Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario](#) (RNAO), as part of the RNAO's 2023 Fall Tour. Dr. Holloway recognized our continued achievements as a [Best Practice Spotlight Organization](#) (BPSO) since 2018 and ongoing efforts to promote evidence-based best practices that support safe and equitable care. As a BPSO, SJCG has trained 100 best practice champions and staff leaders who support and sustain standardized practice at the bedside, such as Early Identification for a Palliative Approach to Care, which creates a healthy and supportive work environment.



The N'doo'owe Binesi Indigenous Health team welcomed Dr. Holloway and her husband through a smudging ceremony in Nagishkodaadiwin (Spiritual Gathering Lodge). The Collaborative Practice team gave a tour of the Simulation Lab following a brief reception held by the living wall. Dr. Holloway was moved by the warm welcome and show of support for nursing and collaborative practice from staff, practice leads, management and leadership, including Janine Black, President & CEO.

SJCG is grateful to Dr. Holloway and the RNAO for helping to reinforce the importance of celebrating our nurses, interprofessional collaborative model of care, and the incredible work our health care teams do to support clients.



Northwestern Ontario Cybersecurity Local Delivery Group

Cyberattacks are a real and persistent threat in the world. Healthcare providers are especially vulnerable due to both the extremely sensitive nature of health information and the fact that healthcare is highly reliant on technology to effectively operate.

Ontario Health recently identified the need for stand-up sites across regions that are connected to a provincial expert cybersecurity resource. The joint informatics team of SJCG and Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre (TBRHSC) was recently identified for this service for the Northwest Region. Regional service providers will work together to establish a network model to share intelligence and learning. While the initial focus will be on the hospital sector, it is expected that this support will stretch to the community in the near future.

SJCG and TBRHSC have made significant investment to reduce vulnerabilities and mitigate risk associated with cyberattacks. We recognize that our staff are our greatest allies, and we support them to follow best practices in their daily work to keep networks safe. Throughout Cybersecurity Awareness Month (October), practical tips were shared for staying safe online at work and at home.