



Melissa Minutes

By **Melissa McCallum**
GHHN Director

May brings a dedicated focus on mental health week, the GHHN has also focused May on bringing attention to harm reduction as an equitable philosophy of care. Harm reduction education and activities are taking part throughout the month and we hope you can take the time to take part or learn from our local colleagues who have done incredible work in this space. At the April partnership meeting, we updated partners on the various working groups dedicated to integrated population health – it was incredible to see so many partners involved in system transformation – moving from planning to system design and care delivery for the patients we serve. Thank you for being excited and open to collective impact!

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GHHN Blogs

Visit our [Blog](#) page and check out our recent releases! If you would like to be a contributor please email us at info@ghhn.ca to learn how.



Engage GHHN

EngageGHHN: Sign up today for our online engagement platform at EngageGHHN.ca

Juravinski Research Institute funding new initiative in Residential Care Facilities

Megan Lynch,
Manager of Priority Populations

The GHHN is proud to partner on this initiative to continue to explore ways to improve health outcomes for people living in Hamilton's Residential Care Facilities. Leading the study are Chi-Ling Joanna Sinn, Anthea Innes, and Andrew Costa, who are aiming to leverage a pilot project of an integrated primary care team tested by Dr. Doug Oliver, medical director of the McMaster Family Practice and the principles of the Integrated Comprehensive Care model developed by partners throughout the St. Joseph's Health System.

With funding from the JRI, a consortium from Hamilton Health Sciences, McMaster University, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton and the City of Hamilton are working together with the GHHN RCF Steering Committee to learn from the pilot project, embed it with best practices from St. Joseph's Integrated Comprehensive Care Project, and create a framework for further implementation across other congregate care settings to improve health outcomes for residents.

To read the whole story, visit <https://bit.ly/3VbJxdc>.

CARING FOR ME : PATIENT HANDBOOK

Navigating health care in Hamilton, Haldimand, and Niagara Northwest

Caring for Me: Patient Handbook

Navigating Health Care in Hamilton, Haldimand, and Niagara Northwest

The Greater Hamilton Health Network and the GHHN Patient Family CarePartner Leadership Network co-designed a new handbook to be used as an educational guide to help support patients, families and carepartners in their healthcare journey.

The handbook includes tips on preparing for appointments, tests and procedures, hospital stays, and caregiver supports. The document was reviewed by physicians and patient advisors, both internally and externally of the GHHN. We encourage providers to share this document with their patients to foster clear communication in the care journey.

Read the handbook [here](#).



Language Accessibility in Healthcare through Interpretation Services Webinar

Held March 24, 2023

As part of the Greater Hamilton Health Network's Health Equity initiatives, we hosted a webinar on March 24th to highlight two examples of interpretation services available in the greater Hamilton area.

The webinar focused on how interpretation services can help improve language accessibility to provide safe care and services. Language accessibility and the utilization of interpretation services in healthcare is essential to achieving health equity. Trained medical interpreters enable providers and clients to trust the information communicated is accurate, allow clients to feel empowered and confident in their ability to decide the best path of their care, and prevent errors through untrained interpretation from affecting the client.

Thank you to our speakers and participants, it was a great discussion on learning how to make services more accessible and safe.



Mental Health Week #ChalkAboutIt

Mental Health Week was from May 1 - 7. On May 2nd, the GHHN held their second Chalking Day, where partners and the community in Hamilton, Haldimand and Niagara Northwest were encouraged to chalk messages of hope, wellness and support outside to end the stigma.

"In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness. Mental illness affects people of all ages, education, income levels, and cultures."
-Canadian Mental Health Association

Throughout our lives, we will all experience periods of positive and negative mental health. Everyone deserves to have the right supports and resources available to foster good mental health. The GHHN would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone who participated in Chalking Day, and we look forward to continuing to support this effort.

Check out some pictures from Chalking Day [here](#).





Gender Affirming-Care Position Statement

The GHHN is proud to share their position statement on gender-affirming care. In a global environment where gender-affirming care has been politicized to justify restricting or limiting access, we stand in support of our local Two-Spirit, transgender, non-binary, and gender diverse communities. Providing gender-affirming care confirms bodily autonomy to those we serve and is consistent with our Health Equity framework.

Read the full statement [here](#).



Meet the Team

Brad van den Heuvel, Director of Physician Recruitment

Brad's passion for health workforce planning is central to his work, and he brings over a decade of experience in physician recruitment and retention to the GHHN.

His experience with the Ontario Physician Locum Programs at HealthForceOntario (now Ontario Health) involved working closely with physicians and hospital leadership to prevent emergency department closures and ensure adequate specialist coverage throughout the province. In addition to leading process improvement initiatives and conducting departmental assessments Brad also provided operational oversight to the Northern Specialist Locum Programs.

His more recent role in Family Medicine Recruitment with Hamilton Physicians has involved working with a broad network of healthcare professionals and community stakeholders to address physician staffing challenges and attract qualified candidates to the area.

As the Director of Physician Recruitment with the GHHN Brad will continue this important work and will provide support and input on special projects aimed at improving the availability and quality of care in the Hamilton area.





Marijke Jurriaans

Project Manager,
Environmental
Sustainability

This newsletter, we've partnered with the Hamilton Family Health Team's Green Initiative to share their fun and engaging photo challenge! As we know, there are multiple inextricable links between health and climate change. This May we want to focus on sharing and celebrating your environmental action within healthcare. To participate, please send us a selfie showing something environmentally sustainable you have done at work for us to share in the Hamilton FHT's Green Corner newsletter this May. Let's show that making health care greener is good for our patients and planet, rewarding, and helps with morale!

Here are some categories to resources from within the Hamilton FHT's primary care project for some ideas. We look forward to seeing what our colleagues throughout the community share!

- Metered dose Inhalers: Did you know that one MDI has the equivalent carbon emissions of a 290 km car journey? Switch from metered dose inhaler to dry powder inhaler when appropriate, confirm an asthma diagnosis, or teach puffer usage.
- Plant-rich eating: Did you know there are evidence-based health benefits for multiple body systems from plant-rich eating? Suggest the plant-rich eating group to your patient (no referral needed, open to everyone), attend the group yourself, bring a plant rich lunch to work.
- Preventions: Preventing or finding illnesses early reduces the carbon footprint of care - offer smoking cessation counselling and suggest cancer screening.
- Reduce Waste (e.g., no exam bed paper, using eReferrals to avoid paper

GHHN Environmental Sustainability Corner



*A space to learn,
share and work
towards greener
healthcare.*

- Prescribe nature - Suggesting time in nature has many health benefits.
- Prescribe for impact ; prescriptions represent 25% of health care's greenhouse gas emissions - prescribing for impact helps us avoid low value care and enable shared decision making with our patients.
- Reduce Emissions (e.g., LED bulbs, programmable thermostat, active transport, planting trees).

We will be publishing your pics in the May edition of the Green Corner to help inspire others in healthcare and you could win a prize! We can't wait to see what you send to green.team@hamiltonfht.ca.



See You Soon, Jeff Wingard



Jeff, it is not goodbye but see you soon as you take on a new role with the City of Hamilton. You have been an integral part of developing the GHHN since the beginning, and we are grateful for your leadership and guidance. We wish you all the best in your new role and look forward to the opportunity to continue working with you to serve our local communities.

Seniors at Risk in Hamilton

In anticipation of the imminent closure of Catholic Family Services (CFS), Good Shepherd Centres, the Alzheimer Society of Hamilton and Halton and St. Matthew's House have worked to transition all existing clients from CFS seniors' programs into the partner agencies' services. This includes clients served by the following former CFS programs:

- Intensive Case Management for Seniors at Risk
- Intensive Case Management for Seniors Living with Dementia
- Gatekeepers
- Senior Peer Volunteers

In consultation with Ontario Health West, the Alzheimer Society, Good Shepherd and St. Matthew's will also implement a new collaborative approach called Seniors at Risk in Hamilton (SaRiH). SaRiH will support the same populations of seniors previously served by CFS. This includes a centralized referral and intake process to facilitate timely interventions and supports for seniors impacted by issues such as dementia, abuse/exploitation, mental and physical health challenges, precarious housing, food insecurity and social isolation.

"We have identified the opportunity to transform the way our agencies work together and leverage the integration of processes, reduce barriers to services, and streamline referral pathways," said Brother Richard MacPhee, chief executive officer of Good Shepherd. "This collaboration will help to ensure equity of access to services, local system transformation, and support the professional growth of our staff to meet the needs of these populations."

Referrals to SaRiH will be managed through a central access point and reviewed by representatives from the Alzheimer Society, Good Shepherd and St. Matthew's. Visit: www.goodshepherdcentres.ca





Vegan Menu at Haldimand War Memorial Hospital

Plant based nutrition is gaining popularity with research showing its effectiveness on reducing blood sugars, improving blood lipids, reducing weight and blood pressure. There is also evidence of Type II Diabetes reversal in patients who adopt this pattern of eating and cardiologists, recognizing its cardio protective attributes, are promoting a plant based diet for heart health.

Many hospitals are introducing patients to plant-based meals by adding choices to their menu. Haldimand War Memorial Hospital (HWMH) in Dunnville initiated a plant based menu over 10 years ago. Unfortunately, it was not well received by patients despite health teaching, and there was significant push back and negativity from staff and patients. Shortly after its introduction the plant based diet was replaced by the Healthy Heart Diet which incorporates plant based options.

Importantly, it acts as a platform for the Registered Dietitian and/or physicians to introduce the health benefits of a plant rich diet and the principles behind the Canada Food Guide, including improved health of people and our planet.

The Healthy Heart diet incorporates whole food and plant rich dishes; it is low in cholesterol and low in sodium. It does not offer eggs or meat at breakfast, although eggs are offered one to two days in a week at lunch as egg salad sandwich or omelets. There are no processed meats, no beef or pork, and processed and prepared foods are reduced.

Examples of plant based meals offered on the Healthy Heart menu include baked beans, hummus & vegetable sandwich, hummus & crackers, bean and tofu stir-fry/pasta and vegan shepherd's pie. This introduces patients in Dunnville to culturally appropriate plant-based eating.

Today, HWMH promotes healthy eating by offering all patients the Healthy Heart Diet upon admission, replacing Diet As Tolerated (DAT).

Visit their website [here](#) for more information.



Digital Health Update

Ceara Holditch

Surgical Transitions Program Success:

- Hamilton Health Sciences and St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton continue to operate surgical remote patient monitoring programs, which saw 2,000 patients supported through FY22-23. The GHHN continues to demonstrate leadership in the area of remote patient monitoring, which is helping to reduce length-of-stay, emergency department visits, and re-admissions, as well as improve surgical throughput and patient flow.

Project AMPLIFI: Digitally Connecting Long-Term Care Homes and Hospitals During Transitions of Care

- On March 23, 2023, 14 GHHN long-term care homes and 2 acute care hospitals (St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton and Hamilton Health Sciences) went live with a data integration solution between the Epic health information system (HIS) and PointClickCare electronic medical record (EMR) systems, as part of Project AMPLIFI.
- Project AMPLIFI enables a bi-directional health information exchange using Epic's Care Everywhere interoperability platform, creating seamless communication exchange between physicians, nurses, and caregivers on both ends of the care continuum. The goal of this instantaneous, secure transfer of patient health information is to reduce delays in care, inconsistencies in patient information, unnecessary diagnostic tests, and readmissions to hospital.
- This provincial project is an expansion of the clinical data exchange pilot conducted at St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton (SJHH), which demonstrated improved efficiency for both hospital and LTCH



staff in 2021, SJHH took a provincial leadership role to execute this clinical data exchange across the province.

Online Appointment Booking:

- In partnership with the eHealth Centre for Excellence (eCE) and the GHHN's Primary Care Digital Caucus, the GHHN has implemented a total of 325 licenses for Online Appointment Booking (OAB) across 53 sites in FY22-23.
- Primary Care Professionals (PCPs) and administrative staff have noted that the implementation of OAB has resulted in more time to focus on other responsibilities, such as the coordination of specialist referrals, in-office patients, and administrative tasks – with a decrease time spent on the phone. The dedicated partnerships, ongoing communication, and hybrid support model contributed to the success of the project.
- The GHHN website offers a directory with providers that are enabled with online appointment booking, visit the [here](#).



Haldimand Corner

Barbara Klassen

The Haldimand Stakeholder Council and the GHHN has completed the integration work that has taken place throughout the year with the Integration Lead Funding provided by the Ministry of Health. This dedicated funding was provided to support a full partnership for Haldimand and Hamilton as one OHT. With the end of the integration funding we said good-bye to Veronica Said from Santis Health, at the end of March. Veronica transitioned to the Integration Lead (IL) position having lead “Haldimand Health” in the early OHT proposals from 2019 onward. Through the Haldimand Stakeholder Council, and the work of the IL and the GHHN Project Management Team, Haldimand is now represented across all aspects of the GHHN. Thank you Veronica and Santis Health for your leadership in this partnership.

Work now begins to build on this strong foundation to identify priorities for the Haldimand Stakeholder Council and work collaboratively with our GHHN partners to expand rural-centred healthcare. This is an exciting time!

**Stay
Connected!**



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