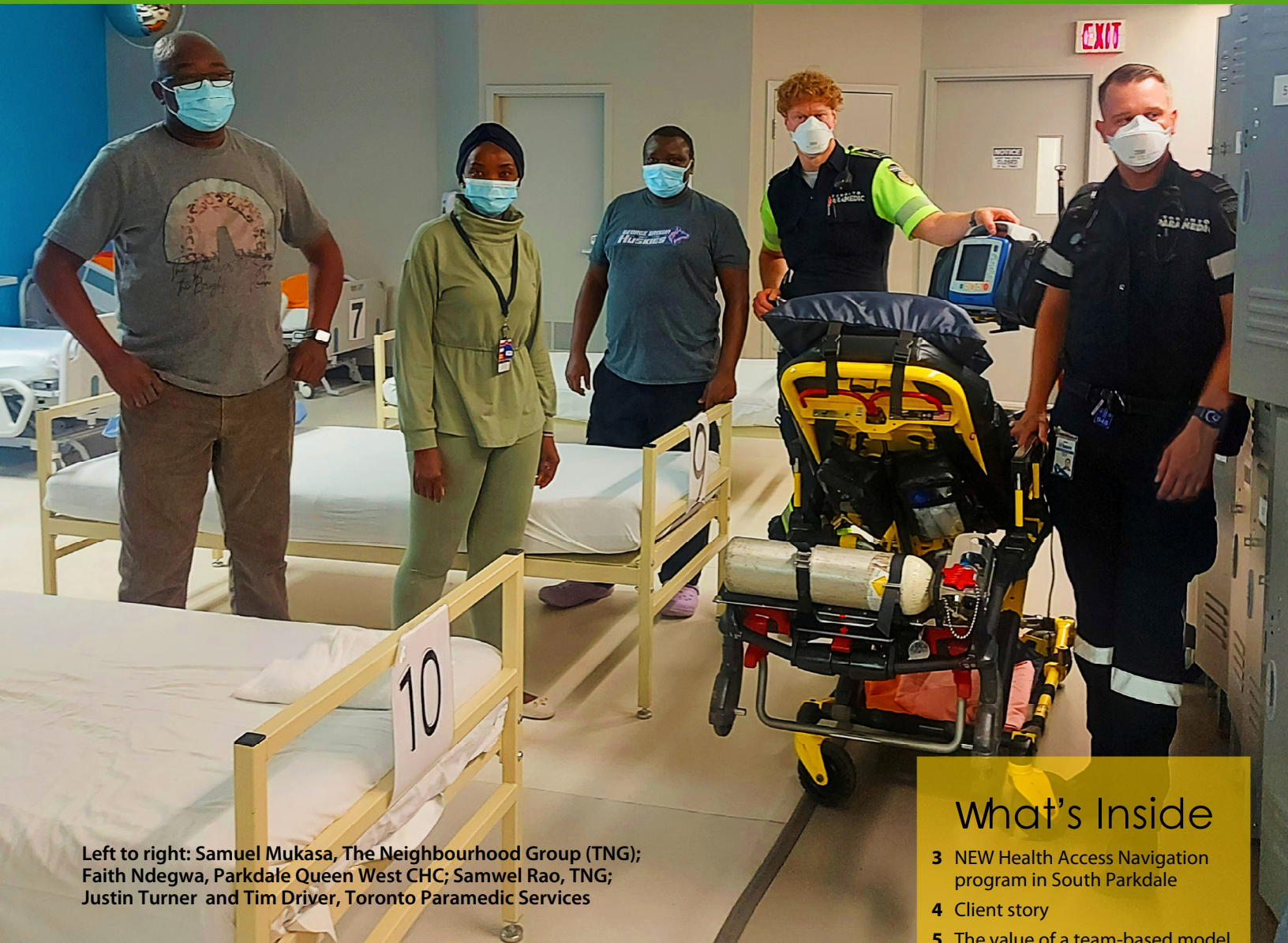




# PARKDALE QUEEN WEST

## COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE



Left to right: Samuel Mukasa, The Neighbourhood Group (TNG); Faith Ndegwa, Parkdale Queen West CHC; Samwel Rao, TNG; Justin Turner and Tim Driver, Toronto Paramedic Services

### PARKDALE QUEEN WEST, A PARTNER IN NEW COMMUNITY PROGRAM: THE STABILIZATION AND CONNECTION CENTRE

Launched in December 2022 by the University Health Network in partnership with several community organizations, including Parkdale Queen West CHC, the *Stabilization and Connection Centre* provides a space outside the hospital where people experiencing substance intoxication and homelessness can get respite and access relevant social and community supports. (Continued)

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## A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As the World Health Organization declared the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, our Centre continues to see the devastating impact of COVID and long-standing inequities in our communities and on our clients. This is evident in the rise in homelessness, the gaps in sheltering spaces, the alarming lack of deeply affordable housing and the access to care challenges for already marginalized populations. We also continue to experience the devastation of an increasingly poisoned illicit drug supply and the correlated opioid overdose-related deaths in what we see as another epidemic.

In the face of this, our Centre continues to provide a range of supports that respond to both the clinical, harm reduction and social care needs of clients, always adapting to ensure that the services we provide are meaningfully responsive to the clients we serve and those needing to access our services.

I am proud of the innovative services we continue to implement and the partnerships we cultivate to advance a service and system response. You saw the launch of our Mobile Health unit, and now a limb preservation project led by University Health Network - The Michener Institute, tapping into a broad range of our frontline staff members aiming to literally save life and limb by training staff to ask a simple question of our clients: Can I see your feet? All to reduce the 85% of preventable amputations with early detection and intervention.

The Stabilization and Connection Centre is another innovative and new service in Toronto providing an alternative place of dignity and care for those challenged by alcohol intoxication and opioid overdose, offering a recovery space other than the Emergency Department with support from our harm reduction staffing team in partnership with peers and clinical support from partner organizations.

The ongoing work of primary health care teams has been an integral part of our service to the community, and during COVID our programs remained open, our providers provided both in-person and virtual care, and we accepted 3,424 new clients into primary care services. This flies in the face of the critique that primary care was closed and the cause of the current crisis in our health care system. Our Centre and our community health centre model of care is and remains a solution for what ails the health care system.

Angela Robertson

## STABILIZATION & CONNECTION CENTRE (Cont'd)

The pressures in the Ontario health system are unprecedented. The emergency department (ED) has seen volumes and wait times that are causing significant distress to patients, families, and health workers. There is an urgent need to develop solutions to address system pressures and wait times and better respond to individual health outcomes for people with substance intoxication and challenges related to homelessness.

Currently, emergency medical services (EMS) personnel often monitor patients from 3 to 5 hours until transition to ED staff. Monitoring occurs in hallways or ED waiting areas without connections to meaningful social support.

The Stabilization and Connection Centre is a 24/7 service that operates within a harm reduction framework, providing a safe and welcoming space where people experiencing substance intoxication or homelessness can recover and connect to services.

This service also enables the EMS to drop off and transition care to an appropriate team within their standard time of 8-10 minutes, thus enabling their services to be available for other emergency calls in the community.

Within a community-led environment staffed by harm reduction workers, peer support workers, case workers and a physician on call, individuals can access food and shower, get referrals to services and follow-up care, and clinical consultation where needed.



Picture above: Staff from The Neighbourhood Group Community Services, Parkdale Queen West CHC and the University Health Network during the program launch.

The Centre is located near the Toronto Western Hospital and run by the University Health Network in partnership with The Neighbourhood Group Community Services, Inner City Health Associates and Parkdale Queen West CHC, in collaboration with Toronto Paramedic Services.

Preliminary data shows the program's success in responding to community needs.

From December 2022 to June 2023, the Centre:

- Served **653** clients;
- Made **178 referrals**, connecting clients with a variety of services; and
- EMS time with patients now averages **7.75 minutes**, an improvement from 3 to 5 hours.

The Centre's model of care helps reduce the impacts of systemic traumas and the stigma often experienced by the community when accessing emergency services.

In addition, the program helps improve ED wait time by freeing up beds and medical personnel to support critical emergencies.

**"The program is an effective community-based harm reduction strategy that reduces congestion and wait times in emergency departments while providing appropriate and compassionate care for its patients."**

- Bryan Quinones, Harm Reduction Worker, Parkdale Queen West

**NEW!**

## HEALTH ACCESS NAVIGATION PROGRAM IN SOUTH PARKDALE

Parkdale Queen West's newest program initiative, the **Health Access Navigation Services**, offers healthcare coordination and community supports to people recently discharged from the hospital to transition back into the community and reduce readmissions.

### WHAT THE PROGRAM OFFERS:

Care planning and care coordination, including:

- Short-term case management (approximately three months)
- Referral and connection to a suite of holistic and clinical services to address needs and prevent hospital readmission
- Home visits and accompaniment to appointments related to care
- Assessment to determine if adequate supports are in place

### ELIGIBILITY:

- One recent/current acute hospital admission
- A minimum of 3 admissions in one year for a chronic health issue
- In need of services, support or resources to live safely in the community
- Resident of South Parkdale

### HOW DOES IT WORK?

- Hospitals, primary care, home care facilities and community agencies can refer clients to the program.
- An intake worker verifies referral criteria, including hospital admission and discharge.
- Successful referrals receive timely access to community support, care coordination between new and existing services, and discharge planning once service integration is secured.

**For more information, visit our website:**  
[www.pqwchc.org](http://www.pqwchc.org)

# CLIENT STORY

## “EVERYTHING WE NEED IN JUST ONE PLACE”

**Margarida**, her husband and their two children first came to Parkdale Queen West in 2013, shortly after they moved into the Parkdale neighbourhood. On her first visit to the Centre, Margarida saw Nurse Practitioner **Falko Schroeder**, and Falko has been Margarida and her family's primary healthcare provider ever since.

Margarida's healthcare needs are complex. Her primary medical concern is high blood pressure, for which she needs continuous medication to maintain at an acceptable level.

Margarida also struggles with depression, anxiety and panic attacks. In 2022, she was diagnosed with adult attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), a neuropsychiatric condition that makes it hard for someone to stay focused and interferes with day-to-day functioning.

Margarida says her physical and mental health challenges take “half of my functionality.” In addition to seeing her nurse practitioner regularly, she sees the Centre's psychiatrist whenever she can get an appointment but wishes she had additional mental health support. She is looking into seeking counselling soon.

What's more, two years ago, Margarida's youngest child was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), a developmental disorder that significantly impairs communication and social interaction.

Margarida struggled for some time to get a diagnosis for her child. She knew early on that there was something “not quite right” and that getting a diagnosis was critical, for it meant she could get the supports to help her child.

Getting a diagnosis for ASD can be difficult as there is no medical test to diagnose the disorder. With the support from her nurse practitioner, this was possible: “He went the extra mile to get referrals to a developmental pediatrician, a neurologist and an occupational therapist who confirmed the diagnosis,” says Margarida.

Thinking retrospectively, Margarida says she is pleased to have found a place where she and her family can access the healthcare support they need. With their primary healthcare provider, they can access a variety of healthcare services, including referrals to medical specialists, when needed.

Margarida and her family continue to come to Parkdale Queen West CHC for their healthcare needs: “When you get this kind of support, why would I go anywhere else?”

**“My primary healthcare provider is amazing!  
At Parkdale Queen West CHC, my family and I get everything we need, including all the referrals to medical specialists. It doesn't get any better than this.”**

- Margarida

# THE VALUE OF A TEAM-BASED MODEL OF CARE

In December 2022, Parkdale Queen West Executive Director Angela Robertson and primary care staff contributed to the CBC broadcast show *About That* with host Andrew Chang (former anchor of CBC newscast The National). The segment focused on the value of team-based care as Canada's healthcare system looks for solutions to improve access to Primary Care.

Equipped with a "what if" scenario, Chang enquired about what would happen when a person without a healthcare provider comes to the Centre with a health condition and does not have access to the resources to get the necessary lab tests and supports. Primary care staff **Dr. Alison Gillies** (Physician), **Jane Rajah** (Diabetes Nurse), **Shona Mackenzie** (Nurse Practitioner) and **Thandy Younge** (Case Manager) shared snapshots of their roles while showing how teamwork and collaboration in an interprofessional setting are essential to supporting clients with multifaceted needs.

Executive Director Angela Robertson spoke to the benefits of the Community Health Centre model, including its cost-effectiveness and the opportunity for clients to access several healthcare and social care services, all under one roof, thus eliminating challenges in care transitions and system-wide barriers to accessing comprehensive healthcare: **"Why is it that there isn't one of this model in every community?"** asked Chang.

For the Centre, it was an opportunity to share with viewers the great work our interdisciplinary teams do in supporting the clients and communities we serve. We are pleased to share this affirming note from the show producer:

**"Keep up the fantastic work!  
Toronto is so much better because  
of what you and your team do".**

- Dru Nguyen

Angela  
Robertson  
and  
Andrew  
Chang



## MENTAL HEALTH AS PART OF THE BROADER HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

On February 23 this year, Federal Mental Health and Addictions Minister **Carolyn Bennett** and Member of Parliament **Arif Virani** visited our Parkdale site to feature our work as a case for integrating mental health and substance use services into the broader healthcare system.

A Parkdale Queen West team, including **Melissa Abrams** and **Raymond Macaraeg** (Nurse Practitioners), **Erika Fenner** (Harm Reduction Coordinator) and **Mish Waraksa** (SOS Nurse Practitioner), shared experiences and insights about their work and how an integrated model helps eliminate barriers to mental health care for clients with complex needs.

Currently, individuals with OHIP can see a psychiatrist with a referral, but unless they have private health insurance or can pay for services out-of-pocket, counselling services, including those provided by social workers, therapists and psychologists, are not available to most people. Integrating such services into primary care, as we do at Parkdale Queen West, enables more individuals to access these supports.

**"Offering mental health care to our clients should be the same as offering them a colonoscopy as part of their primary care."**

- Raymond Macaraeg, Nurse Practitioner

Picture above: Arif Virani, Carolyn Bennett, Melissa Abrams, Raymond Macaraeg (back), Erika Fenner and Mish Waraksa



# STRESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Health awareness observances such as **Stress Awareness Month** in April and **Mental Health Week** in May bring attention to the causes of stress and the social conditions that negatively impact mental health and wellbeing.

A recent report from the Health Canada research *Understanding the Mental Health of Canadians Throughout COVID-19 and Beyond*, which collects ongoing data through self-rated surveys since April 2020, indicates that while the negative impacts of the pandemic on the mental health of Canadians may have somewhat improved as of summer of 2022 when vaccines became more available and social distancing measures eased, new stressors, such as the increased cost of living (inflation), among others, present additional mental health challenges.

An October 2022 poll showed that 56% of survey participants reported feeling the negative impacts of inflation on their mental health, with some experiencing very high levels of stress, anxiety and depression.

A recent poll (February 2023) shows that 50% of survey participants who reported being affected by inflation and experiencing financial insecurity also reported significant signs of worsening mental health.

## STRESS: A BRIEF SNAPSHOT

Stress is the body's response to any change or event that causes physical, emotional or mental tension. As such, stress is a normal human reaction to everyday life changes, challenges and situations, and everyone experiences stress at some point.

Yet stress may mean different things to different people. For some, stress may be only temporary, and in some cases even 'beneficial' as in staying alert in the face of immediate danger or staying motivated and focused on what they need to do. But for others, stress may be constant, as in experiencing ongoing hardship and stressful situations.

## The 'mechanisms' of stress - simplified

Stress is the physical response to events or situations perceived as challenging or threatening that require immediate action. Adrenaline and cortisol are stress hormones produced and released in response to stress.

As **adrenaline** circulates through the body, it causes several physiological changes: the heart beats faster, pushing blood to the muscles, the heart, and other vital organs; breathing quickens, muscles tighten, and blood pressure rises.

Upon continuous threat or challenge, the brain stimulates the production and release of **cortisol**, a hormone produced by the adrenal glands (found on top of the kidneys) that helps regulate the body's response to stress.

This physical reaction is called the **stress response**, a mechanism that enables people to be alert and react quickly to stressful or life-threatening situations, also known as 'fight or flight.'

## What happens when there is continuing activation of this mechanism?

For someone experiencing continual stressful situations, a stressful incident can trigger the stress response only by thinking about past events or what might happen in the future, even when there is no immediate threat or emergency. This is often the case with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a mental health condition triggered by adverse events that interfere with day-to-day functioning and make it hard to focus on the present experience.

Stress, when experienced over a long period can cause a number of health-related issues, including difficulty sleeping, anxiety and depression, and much more. High levels of adrenaline can result in increased heart rate and blood pressure, and cortisol can cause changes in the brain and metabolic disorders that contribute to cardiovascular disease.

## STRESS AND THE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH

An individual's experience of stress may differ according to different experiences with the 'social determinants of health' (SDH), namely the social and economic factors that significantly impact the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities, including access to healthcare, housing, food security, education and employment opportunities, and freedom from discrimination and racism, among many others.

For individuals experiencing multiple and ongoing challenges to accessing the SDH, stress may be a constant state of being, particularly when these challenges exceed their capacities to cope. Ongoing exposure to stressful conditions can lead to chronic stress and a number of health-related issues, which with inadequate resources to cope, tend to add up to create higher levels of stress over an individual's lifetime resulting in increased vulnerability to poor health.

Understanding the links between stress and health and how the social environment influences people's experiences of stress can help raise awareness among policymakers about the importance of trauma-informed policies and programs that can help make life less stressful, particularly for those who experience the most stress and are most vulnerable to its health-damaging effects.

### What are some stress management techniques?

**Spending time with others.** Positive social connections, a sense of community belonging and social supports increase wellbeing and help build resilience to stress harmful effects.

**Engaging in physical activities.** Walking, yoga and any form of physical exercise adapted to individual needs can help relieve stress and promote physical and mental wellbeing.

**Breathing exercises and meditation.** Focusing attention on the breath is an essential aspect of meditation techniques and an effective tool to support relaxation and manage stress.

**Art and hobbies.** Making arts and hobbies (singing, reading, etc.) can activate reward pathways in the brain that help reduce stress, lower anxiety levels and improve mood.

**Journaling.** Writing thoughts and stories of what is happening is an effective way of releasing stress and, in the process, helps to recognize the sources of stress.

**Therapy.** A health professional can help find stress management resources when managing stressors becomes too challenging.

## 'MINDFULNESS' TO MANAGE STRESS

Mindfulness meditation techniques are an effective tool in helping people manage their stress and improve their overall health and wellbeing.

*Mindfulness* is the practice of purposely bringing attention to the present moment through a gentle, nurturing lens and without judgment.

With a focus on the breath, thoughts and physical sensations, mindfulness can help people gain further insight into what is happening to them and let go of unwanted thoughts and feelings.

Mindfulness is used in a variety of healthcare settings. At Parkdale Queen West CHC, our mental health professionals often train in mindfulness techniques, which they incorporate into their counselling sessions.

In addition, the teams offer a 9-week, group-based Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) program at least once a year.

The MBCT program aims to equip clients who experience anxiety or depression with mindfulness tools and strategies to help them reduce stress and increase self-regulation skills.

MBCT is evidence-based and trauma-informed.

**Keep an eye out for the next MBCT group in September 2023!**

For information about mental health services, visit our website: [www.pqwchc.org](http://www.pqwchc.org)

# LOVE

## IN TIMES OF MULTIPLE EPIDEMICS

### No shortage of loss and grief but plenty of love.

Parkdale Queen West has seen the loss of many clients and friends over the past years, many of which are related to COVID-19 and the toxic illicit drug crisis. With lockdowns, social distancing and other preventive measures in the first two years of the pandemic, there was hardly space for people to come together and grieve.

With this in mind, the Harm Reduction team created an ongoing **Community Memorial** to make space for clients, people in the community and staff to remember, honour and grieve those who passed, celebrate the lives of those lost and support those who did not have the opportunity to say goodbye.

The memorials are held quarterly at the Parkdale and Queen West sites, where people can acknowledge, share stories and write messages to the friends they lost.

The first gathering took place on March 15 at the Queen West site, drawing a number of community members, staff and clients, including members of the seniors' program.

**For more dates, look out for posters at both locations and in the community.**



### Taking every opportunity to increase awareness and prevent opioid-overdose deaths and poisonings.

When presented with the opportunity to take part in the screening of the documentary *Love in the Time of Fentanyl*, Parkdale Queen West's physician **Dr. Nanky Rai** and health promoters **Matt Johnson** and **Ray Clark** were more than willing.

The film premiered at Toronto's Ted Rogers Cinema on March 26 at the HOT DOCS festival, with a panel consisting of central film participants Norma Vaillancourt, Ronnie Grigg and Tray Helten, Karen McDonald of the Toronto Drug Checking project, Nanky, and Matt as panel moderator. Willing to do more, the team added information tables and Naloxone training to the event, with Ray taking the lead.

*Love in the Time of Fentanyl* tells the story of a group of staff and volunteers at a supervised drug consumption site in Vancouver, BC, as they work together to save lives and give hope to a marginalized community. The Site opened in 2016 in response to an increasingly high number of opioid overdose deaths resulting from toxic drugs in the illicit drug market.

In Canada, opioid-related overdose deaths reached a record high during the COVID-19 pandemic. Data show that between January 2021 and October 2022, there were 4,189 opioid-related deaths in Ontario alone, many of which involved Fentanyl.

"COVID shut down borders, and many people were left without social support," says Matt Johnson. With over fifteen years of harm reduction work, Matt knows of the difficulty of losing friends to opioid overdose and the importance of compassion, love and community support to help prevent overdose deaths.

"The film can connect people with substance users as human beings," he adds, "people who use substances need to know that there are people in the community who care about them a lot."

The team plans to bring the film to the communities at Parkdale Queen West and festivals across Toronto.

Picture above, from left to right: Dr. Nanky Rai, Karen McDonald, Tray Helten, Norma Vaillancourt, Ronnie Grigg and Matt Johnson

# TAKING AN EVIDENCE-BASED APPROACH TO COMMUNITY HEALTH AND SAFETY

In the past year, the Toronto transit system has been the site of an increased number of assaults, on workers and riders, with many resulting in injuries and some deaths.

In light of public safety concerns related to recent incidents in the Parkdale-High Park subway and surrounding areas, representatives from the three levels of government of the Parkdale-High Park riding Arif Virani (MP), Bhutla Karpoche (MPP) and Gord Perks (City Councillor) held a community meeting to share information and gather feedback on community safety as it relates to Toronto's transit system.

The meeting brought together a long lineup of community members who spoke thoughtfully about the need for immediate and long-term solutions to this increasing public safety concern. Also present were guest speakers Parkdale Queen West Executive Director Angela Robertson and representatives from the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC).

Overall, there was a recognition that addressing safety on the TTC, and everywhere, involves more than temporary solutions but addressing the broader social issues that undermine community safety and wellbeing, namely, structural poverty, including lack of adequate and affordable housing and barriers to accessing comprehensive healthcare and social supports.

Also, lack of shelter space, particularly during the winter, contributes to the problem. Despite adding more than 1000 shelter spaces last year, the City's shelters are still at maximum capacity. The TTC vehicles and surrounding areas are often the only places where many people experiencing homelessness find shelter to stay warm and safe.



Additionally, it was acknowledged that homelessness and mental health are intrinsically linked. Available data show that 30-35% of people experiencing homelessness and up to 75% of women experiencing homelessness have a mental health condition (*the Homeless Hub*). Without adequate housing, people who are homeless or under-housed often experience difficulty accessing the healthcare and supports that can help them manage their situation.

An evidence-based approach to community health and safety includes looking at the social impacts of the lack of adequate and affordable housing and social supports on individuals and communities, which can inform solutions.

Any strategy to address public health and safety concerns on the TTC and everywhere requires that every level of government commits to improving the social conditions for their communities, including supporting mental health and improved housing, a stance widely taken by government representatives and community members present at the meeting.

Picture above: Angela Robertson, Bhutla Karpoche and Richard Kikot, Harm Reduction Service Supervisor at Parkdale Queen West.

# PQW ABROAD

## PARKDALE QUEEN WEST REPRESENTED AT THE G20 2023 SUMMIT IN INDIA!

**In the right place, at the right time.**

**Melissa Abrams**, Nurse Practitioner at our Parkdale site was on holiday in India in March this year when she happened to be invited as an international delegate of Canada at a G20 Summit convention held at the hotel where she was staying.

An annual forum for international cooperation focused on global economic and social issues, including health, the G20 (Group of Twenty) Summit rotates its presidency each year, with India holding the presidency in 2023.

At the convention, Melissa connected with people from around the world, speaking of the social benefits and cost-effectiveness of the Community Health Centre model as an essential healthcare service in Canada and for the global community.

A huge thank you to Melissa for taking the opportunity to represent Parkdale Queen West, even while on vacation!



## PRENATAL BREASTFEEDING RESEARCH PRESENTED AT A CONFERENCE IN ENGLAND

On April 20, Parkdale Queen West's Director of Health Promotion and Community Engagement, **Bronwyn Underhill** and Health Promoter **Yi Man Ng** presented the findings of seven years of research on the Parkdale Infant Nutrition Security Targeted Evaluation Program (PINSTEP) at the **Maternal and Infant Nutrition and Nurture** conference in Northern England.

In collaboration with researchers **Alison Mildon** and **Jane Francis** from the University of Toronto and with the virtual participation of **Stacia Stewart**, Coordinator of the Parents Primary Prevention Project (5Ps), the group shared the learnings and successes of the PINSTEP program over the years.

The research, published in academic journals and presented at various conferences, includes studies on infant food security and breastfeeding practices conducted at the PINSTEP program. Funded by the Sprott Foundation, PINSTEP focuses on perinatal programs at Parkdale Queen West (the 5Ps' Feeding Tiny Souls, Great Start Together/GST) and the Healthy Beginnings program at The Stop.

Thank you to the GST, the 5Ps and The Stop teams who have supported this program over the years. And a special thank you to the participants for sharing their experiences with the research team.

For the full report, see: [https://pqwchc.org/wp-content/uploads/PINSTEP-2016-2021\\_WEB\\_FINAL.pdf](https://pqwchc.org/wp-content/uploads/PINSTEP-2016-2021_WEB_FINAL.pdf)

Picture above (left to right): **Alison Mildon**, **Bronwyn Underhill**, **Jane Francis** and **Yi Man Ng**

# SAFER OPIOID SUPPLY PROGRAM EVALUATION



The Safer Opioid Supply (SOS) Program at Parkdale Queen West recently released its 2023 evaluation report!

In 2019, primary care providers founded the SOS Program in response to increasing overdose deaths from the unregulated supply of fentanyl. In 2020, the Program received funding from Health

Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program.

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the Program's success in meeting the goals outlined in its pilot proposal to:

- Reduce the risk of overdose and deaths
- Implement a low-barrier, community-based, safer opioid supply model
- Engage participants who face access barriers in stabilizing healthcare, social care, and harm reduction services
- Reduce harms associated with illegal activities

Highlights from the evaluation findings include:

- **Decreased risk of overdose due to decreased exposure to the toxic, unregulated supply:** 50% of clients said they had had an overdose during the three months before starting safer supply. Among clients in the program for at least six months, only 15% said they had had an overdose within the past three months.
- Decrease in the use of unregulated fentanyl since starting the SOS program: **52% of clients reported having stopped using street fentanyl** since they started safer supply, and **26% reported a decrease in their fentanyl use.**
- Improved access to comprehensive healthcare: **73% of clients surveyed reported being able to address a health issue for the first time** since starting safer supply.
- Increased access to housing supports: **27% of clients reported getting new or better housing** as a result of the program.

For the full report, see: [https://pqwchc.org/wp-content/uploads/PQWCHC\\_SOS\\_EvaluationReport-Final-2023.pdf](https://pqwchc.org/wp-content/uploads/PQWCHC_SOS_EvaluationReport-Final-2023.pdf)

## MAKING FOOT ASSESSMENT MORE ACCESSIBLE



Foot care, treatment and prevention are essential for general health and safety. A foot condition can indicate a health condition such as arthritis and diabetes and, if untreated, can cause serious complications, including amputations.

The Michener Institute of Education, which trains chiropodists, among other professions, received funding from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training & Skills Development to create training for non-medical staff to conduct foot assessments as part of a drive toward *limb preservation*, that is, avoiding foot amputation. People with diabetes are most at risk; additional risk factors include sleeping on the street.

The Institute approached Parkdale Queen West last year about doing this training with some of our front-line staff, who often have better and more established relationships with some of our clients than clinical staff.

The goal with training is to have front-line staff do foot assessments when the opportunity naturally presents itself. If any issues are identified, they can offer a referral to primary care, or if the client is connected with a healthcare provider, offer to notify the provider about the assessment. Many staff have been trained, and we are looking to track foot assessments and any referrals made in these assessments.



## CELEBRATING NURSING WEEK AT PQW

Parkdale Queen West CHC marked Nursing Week in May this year with "Take your MPP to work" day, an initiative from the Registered Nursing Association of Ontario (RNAO) to highlight the importance of nurses in the healthcare sector.

The day celebration included a visit from RNAO president Claudette Holloway and Director of Nursing and Health Policy Mathew Kellway, as well as Members of Provincial Parliament (MPP) Chris Glover (Spadina-Fort York) and France Gelinas (Nickel Belt). As the guests toured the Centre, PQW registered nurses and nurse practitioners spoke about their various roles, including care for clients in the SOS, supervised consumption in the SCS, outreach through the mobile health bus, and the ongoing family practice care provided by the nurses on the clinical team.

The guests were impressed with the range of work and the team's remarkable accomplishments.

Picture above: PQW staff with Claudette Holloway and Matthew Kellway (RNAO); France Gelinas (MPP: Nickel Belt); and Chris Glover (MPP: Spadina-Fort York)

[www.pqwchc.org](http://www.pqwchc.org)

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**PARKDALE  
QUEEN WEST**  
Community  
Health Centre



# NEW!

## FREE DENTAL PROGRAM FOR SENIORS AT OUR QUEEN WEST SITE

Thanks to a partnership with Toronto Public Health, our dental clinic at 168 Bathurst Street is soon offering free dental services for low-income seniors who qualify. We are currently in the process of hiring additional dental staff, including a hygienist, dentist and dental assistant.

The program is run through the Ontario Seniors Dental Care Program.

### WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

- Seniors 65 or older with an annual net income of \$22,200 or less for a single person or a combined \$37,100 or less for a couple
- Have no access to any other form of dental benefits, including private insurance or dental coverage under another government program (OW, ODSP, NIHB)

### HOW TO APPLY?

- Call **416.703.8482 ext. 2203** to pick up an application form or to get support completing your application.
- You can also fill out an application online at <https://ontario.ca/SeniorsDental>

