

SickKids®

Garry Hurvitz
Centre for Community
Mental Health



Land acknowledgement

This is the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat Peoples, and it is home today to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis people.

We acknowledge that this land was occupied over time by settlers and by peoples who were enslaved and not willing or intentional participants in the occupation and who were themselves displaced from their homelands.

We commit to hearing the stories of our country's first peoples, to educating ourselves about our country's history with First Nations, Inuit and Métis people and to understanding the cross-generational impact of that history on their families, communities and cultures.

We commit to incorporating our learning into our practice as an organization providing child and youth mental health services.

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From our Board Chair and Executive Director

Welcome to The Garry Hurvitz Centre for Community Mental Health at SickKids (GH-CCMH) 2023-24 Annual Report. This year, our story is about working to ensure that our services are safe, accessible, people-centred, and of the highest quality; it is about partnering and collaborating to do better for our service users, and their communities; and it is about our staff delivering their very best in all that they do for children, young people and their families and caregivers.

In October, we were honoured to be awarded Exemplary Standing in our first complete accreditation by Accreditation Canada. We are proud of the commitment to quality and safety shown by everyone at the Centre and grateful to the many partners, family members, caregivers and clients who gave their time to meet with the site surveyors. Your endorsement of our work is important to us.

This spring, after more than a year of detailed implementation planning, our first electronic health record went live. This was a big moment for GH-CCMH as we moved from our reliance on paper-based record-keeping to a digital platform that benefits both staff and clients.

Throughout the year, GH-CCMH worked with partners, collaborators, clients, their families and with community members to extend our reach and strengthen our capacity.

- We continued to expand transition pathways between The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and our community site, with innovations made possible through the generosity of the Arrell Family Foundation and the Slight Family Foundation.

- We expanded our work to leverage long-standing community partnerships through our Prevention and Early Intervention services to provide prompt, barrier-free access to brief mental health supports.
- We launched our sociodemographic data project to develop a more complete understanding of the diversity of the populations using our services and of the neighbourhoods in which they live.
- Our Board of Trustees introduced new bylaws so that we could expand our membership from five to as many as 10 members. This supports improved representation and accountability to the community we serve and gives us greater breadth of knowledge and experience in our governance decision-making.

You can read more about these highlights throughout our report.

Our thanks to our funders and donors, particularly Garry Hurvitz, for their commitment to the work of this organization, to our staff for their dedication and compassion, to our Trustees for their wisdom and guidance, and to our service recipients and partners for the privilege of working with them.



Jeff Mainland
Chair, Board of Trustees



Neill Carson
Executive Director

Our vision, mission and values

Our vision

Enriching health through mental health

Our values



Compassion



Integrity



Collaboration

Our mission

Achieve unprecedented outcomes in child and youth mental health through collaborations, innovations and partnerships



Inclusion



Innovation



Excellence



In 2023, we increased community representation on our Board of Trustees. [Meet our Board.](#)





Who we serve

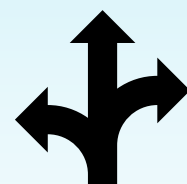
Mental Health Access Program

Through the Mental Health Access Program (MHAP), children, youth and their families and caregivers are assessed and referred to the appropriate first treatment at GH-CCMH.

THIS YEAR'S FOCUS



Supported the launch of Phase 1 of Help Ahead, the Central Point of Intake for child and youth community mental health in Toronto operated by our Lead Agency, Strides Toronto



Continued expansion of our pathways work with The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)

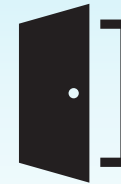
843

unique individuals served

Individual and Family Services

[Individual and Family Services](#) (IFS) provides specialized assessment, group, individual and family therapy for children, youth and their families and caregivers.

THIS YEAR'S FOCUS



Continuing improvements of internal referral processes to improve access to services



Ensured all staff had grounding in evidence-informed interventions to address developmental trauma (dyadic developmental psychotherapy)

999

unique individuals served



Espace Jeunesse – French Language Services with le Centre francophone du Grand Toronto (CFGT): Through our partnership with CFGT, we offer a range of mental health services in French for francophone children, youth and their families.




Partnering with **Native Child and Family Services of Toronto (NCFST)** in the first full year of the Intensive Family Healing Team, we provided holistic support to 11 children and families with complex needs.


Intensive Services for Children

[Intensive Services for Children](#) (ISFC) supports children in grades 1 to 8 who struggle with social, emotional and behavioural functioning at home and at school. Services include day treatment, in-home treatment, assessment and individual, family and group therapy.

THIS YEAR'S FOCUS



Working with the GH-CCMH Research, Evaluation and Innovation (REI) team, led a program evaluation of ISFC



Contributed to the intensive infant child and youth mental health (ICYMH) sector review led by Strides Toronto, and Capitalize for KIDS


85

unique individuals served

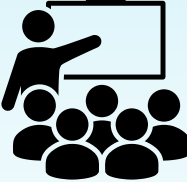
Intensive Services for Youth

[Intensive Services for Youth](#) (ISFY) helps youth with significant mental health needs, supporting them at home, at school and in the community. Services include assessment, day treatment, community transition support, individual, family and group therapy.

THIS YEAR'S FOCUS



Completed model of care review to better understand and address the needs of our clients



Served 8 youth in the 2SLGBTQIA+ classroom at Jarvis Collegiate Institute in partnership with the Toronto District School Board


83

unique individuals served


Prevention and Early Intervention Services

[Prevention and Early Intervention](#) offers a variety of free, accessible programs for infants, children, youth, parents and caregivers.

THIS YEAR'S FOCUS



Expansion of Community Outreach Intervention Initiative (COII)



EarlyON Innovation Grant supporting Black families in partnership with Caribbean African Canadian Social Services (CAF CAN) and Macaulay Centres for Children offers two days of programming a week focusing on the needs of Black children and their families

279

parents and caregivers participated in Prevention and Early Intervention workshops

3,574

unique individuals served



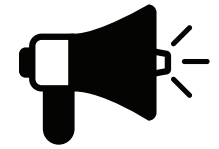
By the numbers



5,017
individuals served*



1,102
clients seen virtually



824
referrals for registered
clinical services



184
staff



56
trainees



5
clinical programs



9
day treatment
classrooms



1,276
postal codes served**



\$16M
budget

*3,574 individuals received Prevention and Early Intervention services;
some of these individuals may also have been registered for clinical services.

**Among registered clients

Our culture of quality improvement

“At GH-CCMH, we are committed to a culture of quality improvement and continuous growth. We are always looking for ways to improve the service we provide.”

— Adia Shivraj, Interim Senior Manager, Quality, Risk, Analytics and Health Information Management

Quality is not a result but something that is constantly practised. This year, we undertook two major centre-wide quality improvement initiatives: accreditation and the launch of an electronic health record.

Achieving Exemplary Standing from Accreditation Canada



Our Centre was evaluated against Accreditation Canada's Community Mental Health Standards which include more than 500 evidence-based national standards related to governance, leadership, clinical care, service excellence and infection prevention and control.

The surveyors reported back to our leadership and staff on what we are doing well and what we could do better. They commented on our collaborative team culture, our person-centred care and the pride and passion with which staff shared their success stories with them.

In alignment with The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) also accredited by Accreditation Canada, GH-CCMH now participates in a four-year accreditation cycle, ensuring daily commitment to quality improvement, person-centred care and safety and culminating in 2027 with our next site survey.

In the fall of 2023, GH-CCMH was awarded with a decision of Accredited with Exemplary Standing by Accreditation Canada. This is the highest ranking conferred by Accreditation Canada, an independent Canadian not-for-profit that has accredited more than 15,000 organizations in over 38 countries.



Neill Carson, Executive Director, above left, and Rob Giansante, Director of Operations and Capital Planning, above right, celebrate accreditation results with staff at Sheppard and at Jarvis, respectively.



From left: Merlyn, Amirtha, and Ed enjoying our accreditation celebration.

“A major accomplishment this past year was achieving accreditation and all the positive comments we received from our surveyors on the examples of person-centred care at our Centre.”

– Aparna Kajenthira, Co-Chair of Accreditation 2023 Working Group and Senior Manager, Health Equity, Community Engagement and Inclusion



Launching an electronic health record

Our new electronic health record (EHR) launched in the spring of 2024. This was a crucial step in improving the quality of care and service for our clients, participants, families and caregivers.

With this launch, our service providers can now coordinate communication and improve the efficiency and quality of care delivery through a centralized health information platform. It allows the entire care team of clinicians to see every piece of information they need to support the client.

The EHR provides the GH-CCMH team with reliable data and supports improved understanding of the population we are serving and of their experiences. The new system also supports GH-CCMH’s participation in system improvement by

allowing us to contribute to the provincial child and youth mental health central data repository.

Most importantly, the EHR meets the privacy and data protection standards of SickKids and gives our clients and participants comfort that their information is secure. It also simplifies and streamlines processes of information sharing to allow us to quickly respond to requests for information from clients, primary care, education providers and others. This capacity is critical to the continuity of care that supports children and youth in their recovery journeys.

Implementation of our EHR continues, as our physician group and our Prevention and Early Intervention teams are brought online over the next few months.

“We don’t want technology to drive the way we work with children, youth and families and what is best for them. The needs of our clients and participants come first and this drives the technology. Because of this, our EHR is always a work in progress.”

– Michael Dominic, Senior Director, Information and Communication Technology



What staff have to say about their new EHR

“Having an EHR moves us forward in the world! It is more secure and easy to navigate once integrated into daily practice, and it is helpful to access the client file when you need it. It takes time to get used to a new system – especially when the kinks are still getting sorted out – but my supervisor’s support helps greatly!”

– Larisa Levalds, Child and Family Therapist

“I think one of the best things about our EHR is you can see all your contact notes with the click of a button. It’s so easy to maintain the thread of what you’ve been working on, any follow-up from the last session, or notice any emerging themes in the work.”

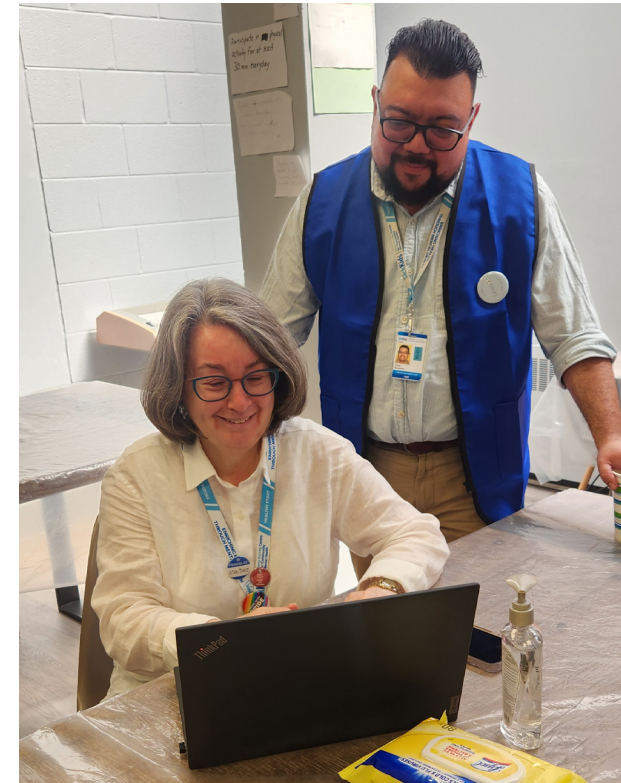
– Bonnie Miller, Child and Family Therapist

“Working in the Mental Health Access Program (MHAP), we have very specific user needs with our EHR. Unlike other users, we are on the system while also on the phone or video call with clients and family members. This gives us a unique perspective on improvements we can suggest to the EHR team to make the intake process as seamless as possible for those we serve.”

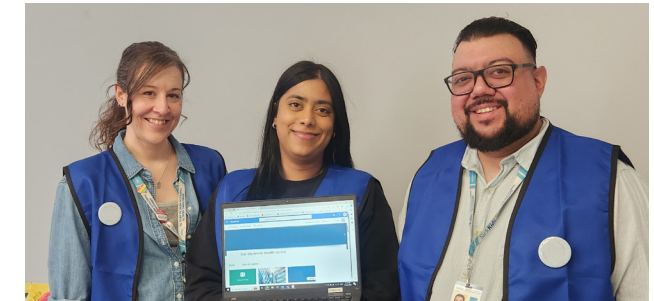
– Joanne Wilson, MHAP team

“The electronic health record is a great addition to GH-CCMH. The change from paper documents to an EHR will transform how information will be processed across many departments.”

– Lily Koo, Administrative Assistant, ISFC day treatment school



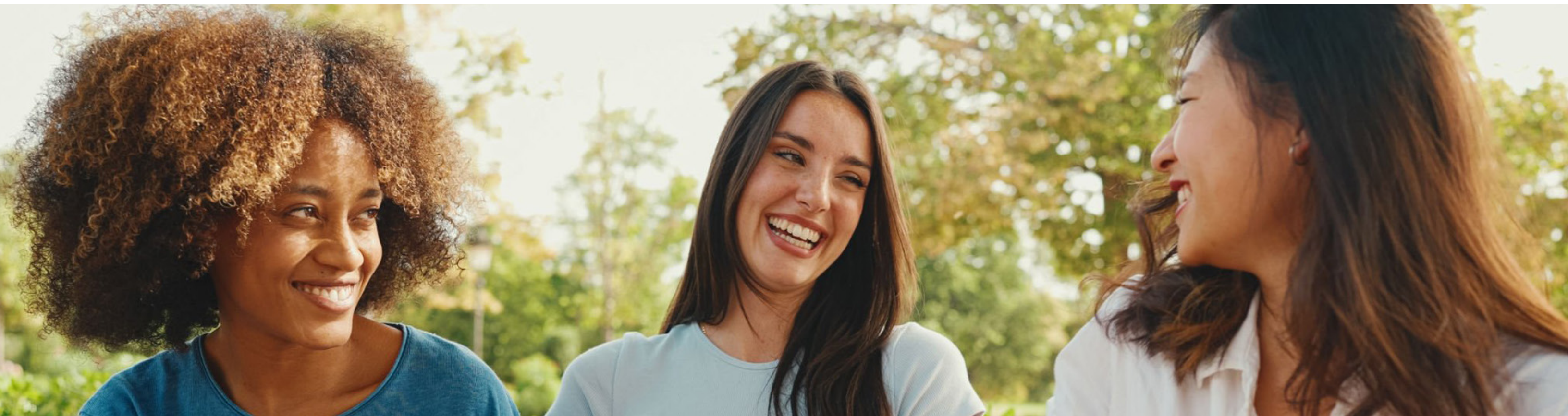
Dr. Susan Yabsley, Psychologist and Advance Practice Lead, receiving support from Felipe Santander on the day of the EHR launch.



Assisting staff queries and training at our Jarvis site on launch day, Laura Simmons, Adia Shivraj and Felipe Santander ease the transition to our new EHR .



Leah Lee, Cassidy Byard and Michael Dominic offer launch-day support at our Sheppard site.



Our person-centred approach, driven by data

“Collecting more information about our clients and participants gives us many learning opportunities on how best to gather data effectively and use it to inform person-centred care at GH-CCMH.”

— Sarah Anderson, Clinical Project Manager



We strive to learn the most about our clients and participants to support targeted program and service development. These learnings also inform the development of a welcoming, inclusive and accessible culture at GH-CCMH.

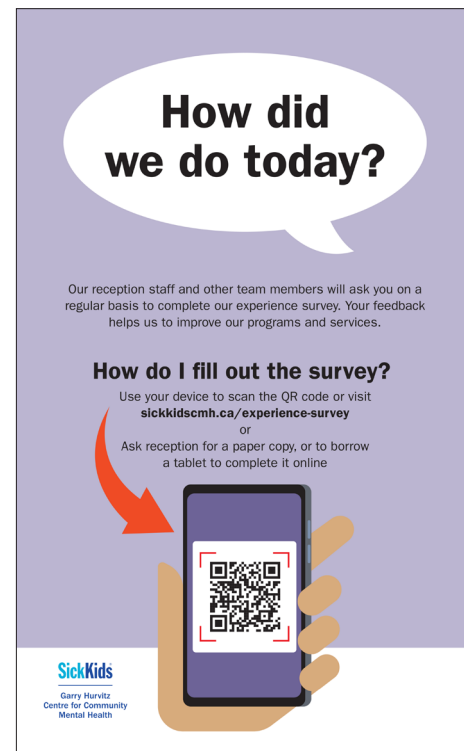
Launching a new sociodemographic questionnaire

In November of 2023, GH-CCMH launched a new sociodemographic survey to learn more about our clients and the communities we serve. We are committed to collecting this data to better understand the health inequities facing our clients and how we can improve programs and services for everyone. We approached this survey in line with our [strategic plan](#) and [values](#), pulling questions on languages spoken, income, ethnicity, gender, and sexual orientation from a

question bank shared with us from Ontario Health. After landing on the questions, the subsequent survey was developed by the Health Information Management and Analytics team and is now offered to clients through our Mental Health Access Program (MHAP) team at intake, or via email after intake. These categories are also available in our new electronic health record to capture client information and will be expanded to include participant information at a later stage.

Learning how our clients and participants experience their service

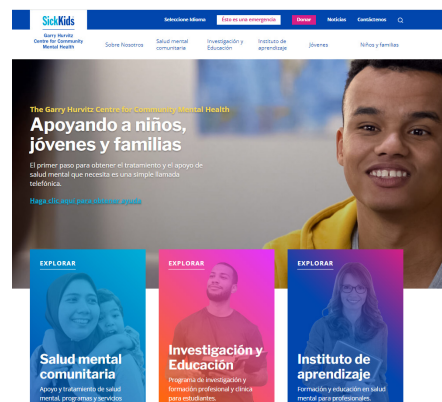
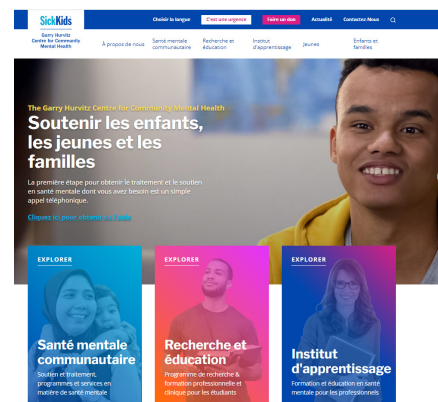
This is the second full year that we have been collecting responses to an updated client and participant experience survey launched in the spring of 2022. In 2023-24, we took steps to make the survey easier to access by creating a paper version, offering the survey on tablets at reception and sharing the survey after intake. As a result, we had a 30 per cent increase in responses since last year. Feedback from our clients and participants is valuable in letting us know how we are doing and where we can improve. Last year's survey results, for example, let us know that we needed to improve the availability of Centre information in particular languages (see story below). Survey results also led us to take steps to improve awareness of our feedback mechanisms by adding this information on our lobby screens and including feedback buttons on our website, including on our Contact Us page. We will take away the results from our most recent survey and take similar steps toward improvements based on this feedback. See the [latest results on our website](#).



Translating our website into French and Spanish

Our website, sickkidscmh.ca, is now available in both French and Spanish. This expands the French presence on our website which began in 2023-24 with the translation of key pages. Translation to Spanish was added as it was identified in our 2022-23 client and

participant experience survey as the language that the most respondents were comfortable speaking after English. As we learn more about the language needs of the populations we serve, we will continue to add new language translations to our website.



INTRODUCING GENDER-NEUTRAL WASHROOMS AT GH-CCMH

Promoting a sense of safety, belonging, community, and accessibility

As of May 1, 2024, the washrooms at GH-CCMH will be gender-neutral.

Our washroom signage will focus on the features available in each washroom, not the gender of the person using them.

WHICH WASHROOM SHOULD I USE?

<p>These washrooms have both urinals and stalls</p>	<p>These washrooms have toilet stalls only</p>
<p>These washrooms are accessible</p>	<p>I would like to use a change table</p>

Accessing a washroom is a basic physical need, and everyone is welcome to use the washroom of their choice.

Making our washrooms gender-neutral

Based on feedback from clients and staff, and with the support of our Anti-Black Racism, Anti-Oppression and Health Equity Advisory, GH-CCMH adapted our washrooms to be gender-neutral. The sign explaining this change, along with educational content on our lobby screens, were posted at each site.

Opening a new accessible washroom at Jarvis

This washroom – Room 104B at our Jarvis site – is fully accessible and can be used by everyone. The project was the result of an accessibility design review at our sites, informed by our strategic pillar of leveraging infrastructure to improve our client and staff experience. The washroom includes a change table that can be used by all ages.

Our collaborations and community partnerships

“Our community partnerships prioritize collaboration to help improve the social determinants of health and better meet the diverse needs of the children, youth and families we serve.”

– Shannon Greene, Interim Senior Clinical Manager, Mental Health Access Program and Research and Foundation Operations

We continue to work with The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and our community partners to expand service capacity for our clients, participants and families.

Growing care transitions from hospital to community

Since the fall of 2022, more than 160 children, youth and their families began their care journey at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and transitioned to GH-CCMH services closer to home. Recognizing the challenges families face while waiting for such services and in response to direct feedback, we added a case manager in the spring of 2023 to support our transition services: enter Elizabeth Gray.

Gray supports families on numerous levels, offering brief therapy, navigating access to physicians and developing a caregiver focus group. Building on suggestions from this group, she started a support group for caregivers to improve the client experience and promote peer support and skill development among clients and families waiting for services.

The transformative gift from the Garry Hurvitz Foundation in 2021 supported this work.

While we now have a case manager in place to help those waiting for service, a newly launched pathway provides community treatment for patients needing immediate follow-up care. Following a planning phase and the first client referral in March 2024, the Arrell Family Mental Health Bridging Service now provides a warm handoff to community-based clinicians at GH-CCMH for patients being discharged from the SickKids Psychiatry Unit (7A) and their families and caregivers. Referrals to the new service are made while the patient is still on the unit; this zero-wait transition support to improve patient outcomes post-discharge will be expanded to other programs across SickKids.

Patients receive up to 12 sessions of individual and/or family therapy and case management support in a community setting. Medical referrals between SickKids physicians and the GH-CCMH psychiatry team ensure medical follow-up and linkage to primary care. With this kind of support in place post-discharge, the risk of relapse, rehospitalization, or coming back into care through the SickKids emergency department should be significantly reduced.

Our thanks to the Arrell Family Foundation, the Ministry of Health, and the Brain and Mental Health Program at SickKids for their shared commitment to the children and youth we serve.

There is also a need to support children and youth who make frequent use of emergency services to address their mental health needs. Made possible through a philanthropic investment from the Slaight Family Foundation and a new partnership with SickKids and Strides Toronto, the Emergency Department Transition Service aims to reduce repeat visits to the emergency department at SickKids and provide timely access for these patients to community-based clinicians.

Thank you to the Slaight Family Foundation and our partners at Strides Toronto for helping to improve access to community-based care for children, youth, families and caregivers.

Sharing lived youth experience with community



From left: Aparna Kajenthira, Antonietta Gutierrez and Elim Wu presenting at the 2023 CMHO Conference.

Two of our youth mentors, Antonietta Gutierrez and Elim Wu, hosted a workshop titled *Challenging Power & Stigma - Amplifying Opportunities for Youth with Lived Experience* alongside Aparna Kajenthira, Senior

Manager, Health Equity, Community Engagement and Inclusion, during the 2023 Children's Mental Health Ontario (CMHO) Conference in Toronto. Here's what they had to say about their presentation.

"Elim and I highlighted our collective innovative work together over the past year, from informing policy documents and processes, supporting several staff working groups, facilitating focus groups for client and caregiver feedback and co-facilitating DBT groups for teens, to highlighting the importance of making content relatable and accessible for youth, actively involving youth in programming, and making a case for the power our lived experiences have in a clinical and institutional space."

- Antonietta

"Antonietta and I spoke briefly about our experience as clients receiving care in the mental health system, our barriers to access, and how we contribute to program implementation and development, while Aparna shared how our role in the organization came to be and the process behind it. My journey brought me here today, and I think it shows how your mental health does not define you or the potential you have as an individual. I'm excited to see what future opportunities are in store for us to further spread advocacy, challenge systemic barriers and use our voices and stories to influence change for the better."

- Elim

Leveraging Prevention and Early Intervention capacity to reduce barriers to mental health supports

In 2023-24, we were pleased to receive permanent funding from the Ministry of Health to expand our Community Outreach Intervention Initiative (COII). We doubled our number of youth mentors and child and family therapists embedded with Prevention and Early Intervention teams in key city neighbourhoods.



From left: Jen, Trina and Christine in front of "The Corner" in St. James Town where the team runs programs and provides individual and family therapy.

Supporting a youth wellness hub in Thorncliffe Park

The Thorncliffe Park Youth Wellness Hub opened in July 2023. The Hub – a Youth Wellness Hubs Ontario, East Toronto Health Partners, and The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO) initiative – is a welcoming space that provides easily accessible walk-in services for youth and young adults aged 12 to 25 living in Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park. Our COII team was involved in the planning of the Hub and our youth outreach workers and child and family therapists provide care at the site and have office space there two days a week. [Learn more about the Hub.](#)



Photos courtesy of East Toronto Health Partners.

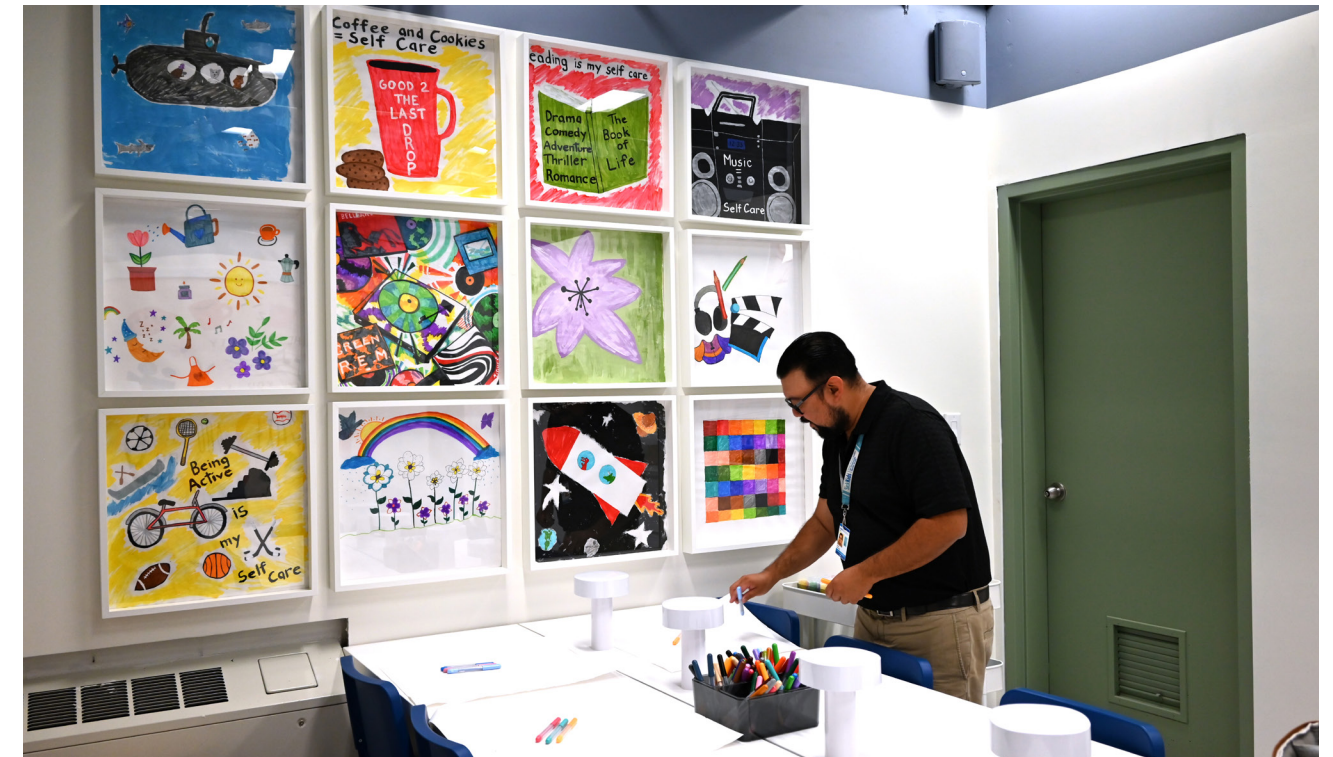
Building Brighter Futures for 30 years

Our Building Brighter Futures program celebrated 30 years in the spring of 2024. This program supports people in achieving healthy pregnancies and promotes the health and social development of at-risk children from infancy to six years old, including their families. Thank you to our partners Toronto Public Health, Macaulay Centres for Children, Black Creek Community Health Centre, Jane/Finch Community and Family Centre, Unison Community Health Centres and our funder, The Public Health Agency of Canada.



Creating a space for youth at our Jarvis site

Thanks to the SickKids Foundation, Breakfast Television and Rogers, a former art room at the Jarvis site was renovated into a multi-functional youth space which opened in the spring of 2024. A segment about the space will air in the fall of 2024.



Felipe Santander, Program Supervisor, Intensive Services for Youth, prepares for an activity in the new youth space in front of the gallery wall. The featured art was created by youth in the day treatment program, highlighting what they like to do for self-care.



Along with a large table and chairs, the space has a “chill zone” with beanbag chairs and an easel wall for art creation. The wall mural was created by a commissioned artist using cutouts by youth, highlighting more of their self-care choices.

Our culture of learning and excellence

“At the heart of our organization is a commitment to creating and nurturing an environment where staff are empowered and supported to do their best.”

– Surbhi Sud, Senior Manager, Human Resources

“We create a culture of continuous improvement and are constantly learning, growing and evolving.”
– GH-CCMH definition of excellence

Staying true to our value of excellence, we continue to foster a culture that supports our team members and celebrates the exemplary care they provide to our clients and families. We share their contributions to our organization with pride by strengthening our appreciation and recognition programs and increasing the access to growth opportunities and training at GH-CCMH.

Honouring our staff

For the first in-person Staff Recognition and Awards Celebration since COVID-19, we brought our celebrations to the Peter Gilgan Centre for Research and Learning at The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids). We were pleased to be joined by many of our Trustees and by Dr. Ronni Cohn, President and CEO of SickKids, who requested a selfie with the GH-CCMH team, below.

We celebrate excellence across the organization through our annual staff awards. Our awards focus on innovation, collaboration and service excellence. Congratulations to our 2023 staff winners, seen below: Laura Simmons, Elim Wu, Antonietta Gutierrez and Amirtha Mehanathan. [Learn more about our winners!](#)



Listening to and empowering staff

On the recommendation of our Anti-Black Racism, Anti-Oppression and Health Equity Advisory, leadership hired a human resource consulting firm to review our HR policies, procedures and practices through an equity lens. Staff participated in conversations and surveys

to inform that process, with feedback delivered in the spring of 2024. This input will be considered with the results of our 2024 Employee Engagement Survey to build a workplan for GH-CCMH leadership. This plan will be presented to staff in the fall of 2024.

Supporting and optimizing staff mental health and well-being

As part of our staff wellness program, we launched Peer Support at GH-CCMH in the spring of 2023. The Peer Support Network is a program offered by our colleagues at SickKids. Peers are a team of trained colleagues, from across disciplines, who provide confidential, individual support to any staff experiencing personal or workplace stress.

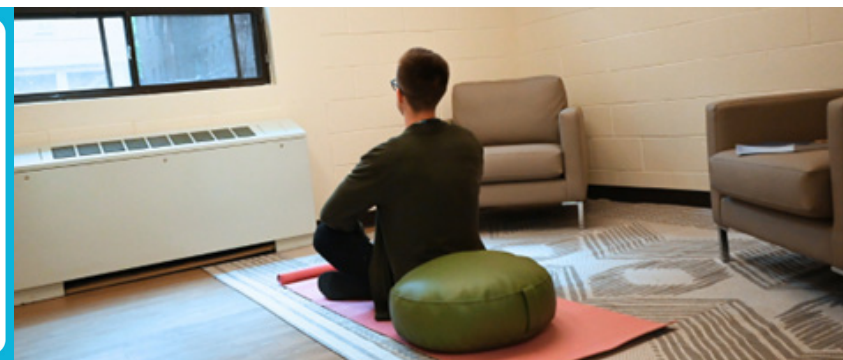
Our Health and Wellness Committee oversees many events for staff each year, encouraging

them to take a wellness break during their day and build healthy habits more broadly.

In December 2023, we opened a wellness space at each site for staff, clients and families, providing space for prayer, meditation and rest within our workplace. Staff input to the design of the spaces was garnered through a survey in early 2024. In the fall of 2024, ventilation improvements will be made to allow for smudging ceremonies within the spaces.



Clockwise from above left: Anie Najarian, Dr. Laura Orlando, Cassidy Byard, and Leah Lee at a wellness event for building sensory support tools; staff decorate their pots in which to take home seedlings; staff-painted soothing stones.



Andrew takes a quiet moment at our Jarvis wellness space.

Promoting a sense of safety and belonging

Our Anti-Black Racism, Anti-Oppression and Health Equity (ABRAOHE) Advisory laid the groundwork for mandatory diversity, equity and inclusion training for all staff, which will launch in the fall of 2024. See the latest updates on our [health equity work](#).

Health equity and professional recognition days are celebrated at the Centre based on a yearly curated calendar, with staff and leadership providing event support.



For Pride Month, we flew the Intersex-Inclusive Progress Pride flag at both sites (shown here at our Sheppard site); hosted a Lunch and Learn presented by Dr. Maisha Syeda, Clinical Psychologist, on *Building our capacity to provide affirming and evidence-informed care to our 2SLGBTQIA+ clients and families*; and offered a Pride button-making workshop for staff, clients and families.



At left, psychologist Ariana wears her handmade Pride button. At right, close-up of another button made by staff.

Ensuring our staff have the tools they need

GH-CCMH is committed to ensuring that all staff receive good quality supervision and opportunities for development. Last year, the Practice, Education and Training Committee (PET) undertook a current state analysis of the ways we provide supervision and support to our clinical staff. In addition, in early 2024, they completed a review across programs of the practice standards and clinical competencies of our child and family therapist discipline.

In September 2023, Dr. Adam Enchin, Medical Director, collaborated with a colleague at Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre, Dr. Rachel Mitchell, to provide a half-day training on risk

assessment and safety planning for clinical staff across programs. Child and family therapists, psychologists, occupational therapists and leadership attended the in-person training held at The 519.

Leadership also identified a need to ensure that all clinicians have foundational skills in cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). GH-CCMH is pleased to partner with the SickKids CCMH Learning Institute to develop training in CBT and culturally adapted CBT. Evidence shows that these approaches are effective in addressing severe anxiety and mood-related challenges in children and youth.



25

staff/leadership across numerous teams completed risk assessment and safety planning training



29

Prevention staff completed boundary training for professionals



12

Intensive services staff trained in therapeutic crisis intervention



21

staff completed evidence-informed grounding in interventions to address developmental trauma (dyadic developmental psychotherapy training)



16

staff completed other therapy and health equity trainings



38

GH-CCMH staff accessed trainings through SickKids CCMH LI



Our research program

“Through research, we can inform our pursuit of responsive, innovative and evidence-based care, ultimately leading to better outcomes for our clients and families.”

– Dr. Vasudha Gidugu, Research Scientist

To best serve our clients and participants, it is crucial to know what is working, to what extent and for whom. Our focus on program evaluation of innovative services within GH-CCMH provides significant insights to inform our path forward. Looking ahead, we are excited for the expansion of our evaluation capacity through the launch of outcome measurement across the organization.

Building capacity through a new position

We welcomed Dr. Vasudha Gidugu to our Research, Evaluation and Innovation (REI) team as our first full-time research scientist in September 2023. This position – an outcome of the transformational gift to The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids) and GH-CCMH from Garry Hurvitz in 2021 – provides leadership and sustainability for our growing program of clinical research and evaluation. This work will help GH-CCMH understand and improve the effectiveness of its services.

Learn more about our research by [visiting our website](#).

Choosing an outcome measure

The REI team previously completed a literature review to support the selection of an outcome measurement tool to support organization-wide outcome evaluation. Following consultation with clinicians, clients and caregivers, the Child and Adolescent Needs and Strengths (CANS) tool was chosen by GH-CCMH leadership. Following the selection of CANS, research and clinical programs have been working together to plan for its implementation in practice. Phase 1 of implementation launched in the summer of 2024. The launch of CANS presents a tremendous opportunity to consistently evaluate the effectiveness and impact of our services.

We can pursue our research work thanks to our generous donors, and through key collaborations with SickKids and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH), such as our participation as a study site in the CARIBOU study and supporting recruitment for the COMPACT study. We are looking forward to the launch of the intervention phase of the CARIBOU study in the fall of 2024; our clinical and research teams have been working closely with the study team to prepare for the launch of this phase.



Evaluating our care pathways with SickKids

The REI team completed evaluation of the COVID Surge Pathway, a hospital-to-community transition pathway established during the COVID-19 pandemic, that facilitated the transfer of clients from the Urgent Care Clinic at SickKids to brief psychotherapy at GH-CCMH. Youth who received treatment through this pathway experienced significant improvement in behavioural challenges according to both caregiver and clinician assessments. Caregivers reported lower levels

of internalized strain (worry, sadness, guilt, fatigue), and making some progress towards treatment goals.

This work contributed directly to the model of care design for the Arrell Family Mental Health Bridging Service. The REI team is collecting data to evaluate the impact of this work from the perspectives of youth, caregivers and clinicians to understand whether the services are effective and how they can be improved.



From left: Members of our REI team Alessia Petrella, Dr. Vasudha Gidugu, and Shannon Greene work together to promote the integration of research and practice.



From our SickKids CCMH Learning Institute Leadership

The SickKids CCMH Learning Institute (LI) is dedicated to providing evidence-based, top-tier training programs. These efforts aim to enhance the mental health knowledge of professionals, enabling them to offer the highest quality care to their clients. This year, we delivered an impressive 85 courses, introduced hybrid and on-demand training options, and provided customized training to seven organizations, including significant partnerships with two provincial ministries. Our efforts have reached more than 3,000 professionals, and we expanded our curriculum with 14 new courses.

Enhancing learning through innovation

On July 7, 2023, the SickKids CCMH LI marked a milestone by hosting its inaugural hybrid training session titled *Self-Harm in teenagers: The spectrum from nonsuicidal self-injury to suicidality*. This event not only expanded our training methods but also enriched participant engagement through a blend of in-person and virtual learning experiences.

In December 2023, we introduced our first on-demand courses; see story on the next page.

Fostering an inclusive learning ecosystem

The SickKids CCMH LI is dedicated to advancing health equity. This year, we delivered several programs addressing equity, diversity, and inclusion, including supporting neurodivergent children and youth; supporting 2SLGBTQIA+ youth with substance use and mental health issues; strategies for working with families of transgender individuals; addressing the mental health needs of racialized young people; fostering

inclusive and anti-racist organizations; and creating safe spaces for the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Our ongoing commitment to these critical areas is reflected in our continuous efforts to enhance our programming.

Strengthening Institute business operations

Developing a strong social media presence to enhance brand visibility and boost enrolment in educational offerings remains a primary focus for our organization. Since launching our Instagram account in October 2022, we have garnered over 1,400 followers and shared more than 200 posts.

We are proud of our accomplishments this year and remain dedicated to providing high-quality, impactful training and education. As we look ahead, our training curriculum will include more webinars, on-demand training, hybrid training and in-person sessions. We hope this diverse and comprehensive approach enriches the mental health literacy of professionals worldwide.



Kelly McMillen
Executive Director
Learning Institute,
The Hospital for Sick Children



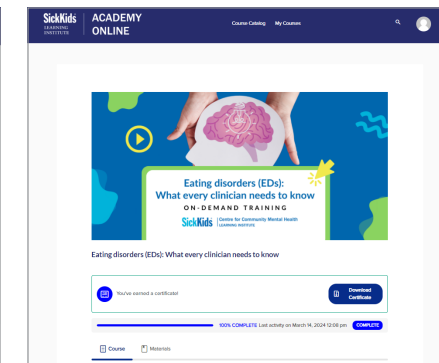
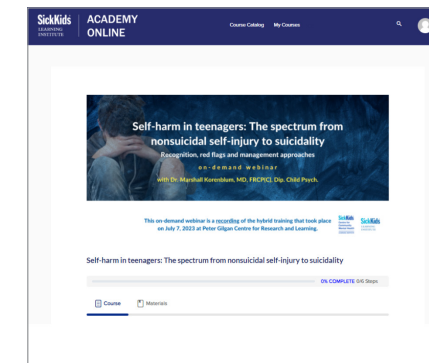
Angela Kaushal
Director
SickKids CCMH LI

Empowering professionals through on-demand training

2023 marked an exciting milestone as the SickKids CCMH LI introduced on-demand training via the SickKids Academy Online. We launched two courses: [Self-harm in teenagers: The spectrum from nonsuicidal self-injury to suicidality](#) and [Eating disorders: What every clinician needs to know](#). On-demand learning empowers professionals to tailor their learning experience and access courses at their convenience, effectively

addressing the timing obstacles for individuals, including those residing in various time zones.

The introduction of on-demand training marks a significant step towards enhancing learning accessibility and inclusivity and adds to in-person and hybrid formats offered. The SickKids CCMH LI is committed to expanding its on-demand training portfolio in the future.



“The eating disorders on-demand course was put together and delivered extremely well. The order made logical sense and the entire course provided an excellent summary and introduction of all topics. It was enough to provide some background information and inspired me to learn more.”

– Fyffe Hunting, social worker, participant in *Eating disorders (EDs): What every clinician needs to know* on-demand training

SickKids CCMH LI: Year in review



85
courses
delivered



14
new courses
delivered



3,028
professionals
trained



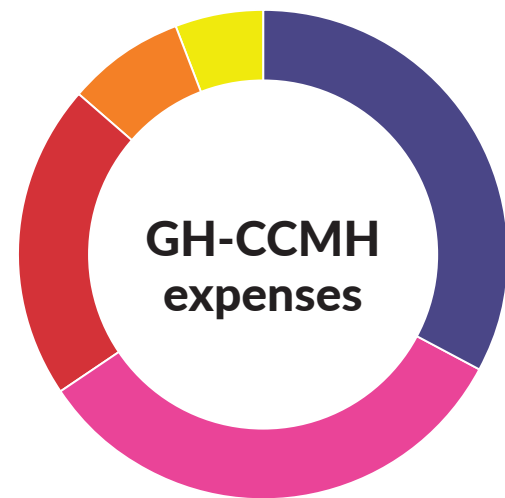
48
new expert
facilitators engaged



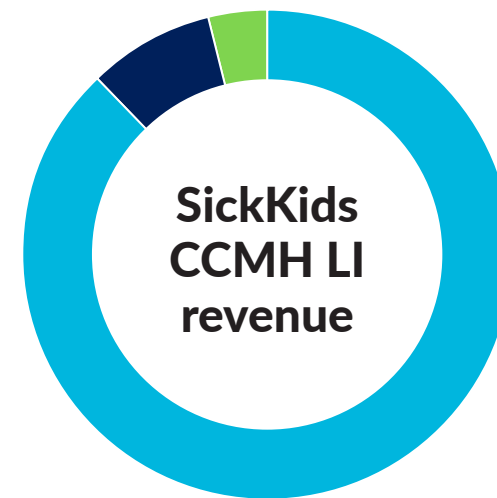
Financial summary



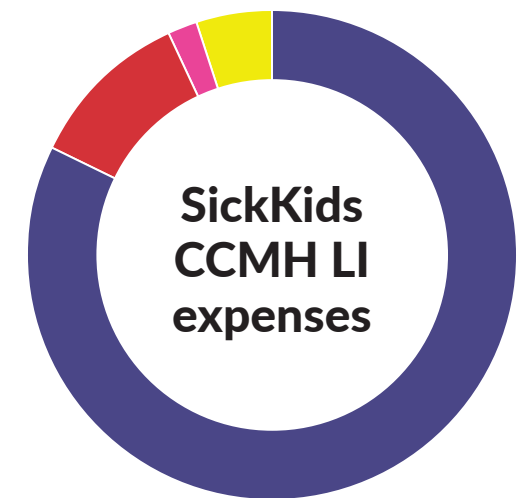
- Ministry of Health 78.26%
- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services 0.29%
- City of Toronto 9.06%
- Public Health Agency of Canada 3.77%
- Other 8.62%*



- Intensive services 32.86%
- Prevention and Early Intervention 32.74%
- Counselling and therapy 20.79%
- Administration 7.96%
- Other 5.65%



- Training fees 88%
- Building rental 8.28%
- Other 3.72%



- Training 82.34%
- Administration 10.92%
- Building 1.78%
- Other 4.96%

Please note that the legal name of our organization is SickKids Centre for Community Mental Health.

*This includes support from our wonderful community of donors. Thank you for supporting the SickKids vision of "Healthier Children. A Better World." and the GH-CCMH vision of "Enriching Health through Mental Health."

GH-CCMH and the SickKids CCMH LI amalgamated in April 2023 and the financial statements presented below are consolidated to reflect this merger.

[See full report](#)



SickKids®

Garry Hurvitz
Centre for Community
Mental Health

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