



Executive Director Report to the
Annual General Meeting
June 28th, 2021

As Executive Director of Our Health Centre it is my privilege to present my 2020-2021 annual report. I agree with Thelma it would be much more pleasant if we were standing before you in person!

“What a year this has been!”how many times have you heard that phrase? Given all the challenges of the past year I am very grateful to have had the following people standing beside me - the OHC Association Board, committees and working groups that Thelma named in her report, the NS Health staff, and, our Walk- in Clinic staff particularly Cindy Robichaud. Together we navigated the ever-changing reality of providing health & wellness care during a pandemic. We stayed open, we followed all the public health guidelines, and we kept everyone safe. To say we have learned a lot is an understatement!

Our relationship with Nova Scotia Health (NSH), our major tenant, was strengthened last year with the signing of a new partnership agreement. This agreement lays out the ways we will work together for the benefit of the people we serve, including program development, service delivery, doctor recruitment, etc. I attend regular monthly meetings with the primary care clinic staff on the first floor; eventually the managers for the other NSH departments (Mental Health & Addictions, Continuing Care and Public Health) will be part of the meetings. Joanne Wentzell will provide a full update of all NSH services at OHC when she gives her report.

Sadly, we lost two of our long term part-time tenants because of the pandemic but have picked up a new tenant.

After several years of major infrastructure projects, I am happy to report that there are no major building issues on the horizon, just the regular maintenance and upkeep.

Our Walk- In Clinic continues to be the centerpiece of all the programs and services offered by the Association. Since opening in April 2018 there have been over 10,000 patient visits, 50% of those visits by people without a family doctor. The credit for the success of the clinic goes to our amazing administrator, Cindy Robichaud, and the wonderful doctors and nurse practitioners who work hard to provide the best care. With success has come some significant challenges, not counting the pandemic. It is a testament to the high standard we have set that people have high expectations of us, but with the shortage of doctors impacting our schedule we will need to hire more nurse practitioners to help fill the gaps until doctors are available. This comes at significant expense to the Association as nurse practitioners cannot bill MSI for the patients they see, which means the Association receives no overhead recovery for those visits.

Last May we initiated a Community Check-In Program thanks to funding from the Lunenburg County Community Health Board. Cindy started calling all unattached Walk-In clinic patients 60 years and over to reassure them that the Walk-In clinic would be staying open during the pandemic and that we would be following all public health guidelines. We wanted them to know that we were thinking of them, we encouraged them to share their fears or concerns and asked

how OHC could help . Cindy has spent countless hours on the phone doing this important community outreach and gathering data based on everyone responses.

Thanks to a partnership between Dalhousie University and NSH OHC is engaged in an exciting research project with four goals:

- Evaluate telephone intervention i.e., Community Check -In program
- Develop Social Network Mapping for this catchment area.
- Develop strategy to enhance Doctor Recruitment: explore the research interests of the primary care team at OHC. Every med student has 4-year research component – how can OHC be positioned to attract doctors because of the research capability here?
- Develop 5-year research program.

Developing community partnerships has always been very important to OHC. Last year OHC was successful in getting approval for 3 United Way grants to support the Musical Friends/ Growing Friends Collective, a cluster of charities, volunteers and hired managers who come together to do projects that make a difference to the community and beyond. Projects that address issues like food insecurity, senior's loneliness, isolation, etc. Examples of such projects are the expansion of the community gardens, Porch Pots provided to isolated seniors, Senior Serenading, Healthy Food workshops; Food Hampers, and this fall there will be free community dinners.

OHC has other ongoing community outreach partnerships with Chester Interagency, NOW Lunenburg Co, South Shore Housing Action Coalition, and the Nova Scotia Association of Community Health Centres (NSACHC). This latter partnership will mean that OHC will be able to apply for funding later this summer to launch a vaccine education program thanks to a significant grant from the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Erin Perry was recently hired as an Administrative Assistant to work alongside me. Erin has eighteen years as a licensed practical nurse in a wide variety of roles. I wish a warm welcome to Erin and look forward to having her as part of the team!

With the good news that Nova Scotia should be entering Phase 3 and 4 of the pandemic recovery in the next few weeks I am excited to be looking ahead to the new normal and have started booking wellness programming for the fall. Fingers are crossed that the application to Bell Let`s Talk Community Fund is successful- this will mean OHC can open a Mental Health Walk-in clinic, a much-needed service.

This December will be Our Health Centre`s 5th anniversary. Much has been accomplished, with much more left to be done. I look forward to the exciting work ahead!

Thank you for your support.

Respectfully

Lorraine Burch