

Executive Director's Report April 27, 2016

ONHC- Ottawa Newcomer Health Centre

It has been an extremely busy but exciting start to 2016 at ONHC. As the coordinating organization for the Syrian Resettlement Process for health services, ONHC is involved in many aspects of the Syrian resettlement such as: coordinating the health response, providing outreach to clients in the community for education and navigation support, as well as supporting our partner CHCs with professionally trained interpreters, through the Ottawa Language Access Program. In order to increase access for the Syrian Refugees to have Initial Medical Assessments completed the ONHC has increased capacity. We are now open 5 days a week and have an additional physician as well as a psychiatrist who provide services on site at 219 Argyle Street. We underwent renovations to provide services more efficiently and effectively through the addition of an extra exam room and counselling space. Work is currently underway on a new website, www.onhc.ca, which we hope to launch by the end of April 2016.

Refugee 613

The PHC team remains very much involved in the Refugee 613 response through the completion of Initial Medical Assessments. Every Monday a refugee clinic occurs at 55 Eccles. Dr. Dona Bowers has been the provider completing this work and more recently Laura Kollenberg NP. Marie-Anne Larose Clinic RN has played a key role with Dona and Laura, assisting with the immunizations and assessments.

Jane Moloney continues to assist with much of the coordination and communication among the many partners involved and plays a key role as LHIN liaison.

Currently, work is underway to complete a funding request, to support continued work of CHCs and the Bruyere FHT to complete IMAs to the end of June 2016. The LHIN has expressed that they will continue to support the extraordinary costs related to ensuring IMAs are completed in a timely way.

Research Project on Syrian Refugee Screening

Two family medicine residents and a medical student will work closely with Dr. Laura Muldoon and Dr. Doug Gruner, of the Bruyere Academic FHT, to complete a chart review. They will be examining the results of screening done on all of the Syrian Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) served at SWCHC, the Radisson Hotel, Centretown CHC and Bruyere Family Health Team. They will look at specific screening tests to determine the results and if those tests were really necessary in this population. The results of this work will help to form best practices around screening for future Syrian Refugees. At the same time a review of health care utilization by the refugees will be examined. This work will better inform us so we are providing cost effective care and identify improved processes/services to meet the health care needs of large influxes of refugees in the future.

Special SWCHC Welcome for our New Babes

When SWCHC clients deliver babies these days they receive a very special gift thanks to Angela Cassell our Physician Assistant. Angie has been making beautiful baby blankets that are offered to new parents. Each one has a label affixed that says *Somerset West CHC Made with Love*. Thanks to Angie for making all our new parents, and their babes, feel cared for and about.

Research Projects

In 2015 Somerset West Community Health Centre was involved in a total of 9 formal research projects. All research undertaken at or under the auspices of Somerset West Community Health Centre or conducted by members of its professional staff is reviewed and approved by a research ethics board (REB) in accordance with the Tri-Council Policy on the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Human Subjects, 2010 (TCPS) before the research can begin. Studies include:

- Access to primary care for people with mental health and/or substance use issues: A qualitative study. Centre for Mental Health and Addictions, University of Toronto. Complete
- Learning from the Voices of Youth: Participatory Research Study Exploring the HIV and HCV Prevention Needs of Youth who Smoke Crack. University of Ottawa. Complete
- At the table with People who Use (d) Illegal Drugs: A Critical Ethnography into Power Relations. University of Victoria. Complete
- Effect of medical insurance on quality of prenatal care among newly arrived women to Canada. Ottawa Hospital Research Institute. Complete
- Participatory Research in Ottawa Understanding Drugs (PROUD) University of Ottawa. Complete
- Cardiac Health Awareness Program. University of Ottawa. Complete
- Participatory design of a digital paper/pen communication system. School of Information Studies at McGill University. In progress
- Headstart Research Project. Carleton University. In progress
- Family First Research Project University of Ottawa. In progress

Multicultural Health Navigator Program

The Multicultural Health Navigator program has increased capacity and now provides service in 8 different languages. In addition to Arabic, Nepali, Somali and French, the program has hired two new health navigators who will provide service in Spanish, Pashto, Dari and Farsi. This program continues to provide basic education around health system navigation and advocacy for newcomers to Ottawa.

The program recently hosted their annual health fair on Saturday, April 16th 2016 with a focus on preventative measures. Program staff collaborated with University of Ottawa medical students this year, to increase our outreach efforts. Partners such as Ottawa Public Health, Planned Parenthood, First Words and others came out to provide information to clients along with a Yoga/Zumba instructor who got the crowd going with the lively demonstrations. Approximately 115 clients participated at our event this year.

Yet Keen Seniors Program

Yet Keen completed a comprehensive program review which assessed the current services offered by Yet Keen. The review determined that we do not have enough core funding to maintain our current level of programs and services. The review presented us with restructuring options including utilizing more volunteers for some services and strengthening program partnerships to ensure the sustainable delivery of core services. As a result, Effective April 1, 2016, we laid off one employee, created a new part time Volunteer Coordinator position, reduced our hours of operation to four days per week (Tue-Fri), and cancelled some programming. We are also phasing out another part time position later this year.

Our goal is to ensure that the program remains sustainable and we are able to continue to meet our Early Persons Centre (EPC) mandate. We met with the Yet Keen membership, the Yet Keen Advisory Committee and affected staff during the month of March to communicate this information.

Children & Youth Program

Our Children and Youth team in partnership with Centretown CHC and Mothercraft / Ontario Early Years Centre (OEYC) staff supported the Syrian refugees by providing Playgroup four days a week, on-site where refugees were temporarily housed.

Community Health Promotion

On April 7, SWCHC held a Community Forum where we invited community partners and residents to share their feedback on what they see as the health priorities and community trends in the neighbourhood. Over 45 participants attended from various organizations and the community and participated in a knowledge exchange. Regional health priorities, an overview of SWCHC and the Canadian Index of Wellbeing were discussed and community partners and residents were invited to share their thoughts on what would contribute to a higher quality of life and greater health and wellbeing in our area. Feedback from this forum will feed into SWCHC's next strategic plan.

Community Development & HIV Health Initiative: African Caribbean and Black Community

The African Caribbean and Black (ACB) Community Development and HIV Health Initiative project continues to build on the capacities of the service providers through the Hub. Membership of the Hub stands at 118. The program also participated in a number of community meetings and workshops. The program hosted a Home country leaders meeting and a number of steering committee meetings. The program also submitted a letter of intent to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) to request funding for the continuation of the program beyond March 2017.

HIV/ AIDS Prevention

We organized a home country association meeting, the first of its kind in Ottawa, to bring together home country association and community leaders to create a platform for discussion about HIV prevention and other ACB community development initiatives. We were encouraged that 15 home country association leaders attended this meeting. This newly emerging network will enable us to eventually reach out to more ACB communities with HIV prevention information.

Rochester Heights Community House

The Rochester Heights Community House after-school program was very well attended throughout the month of March. In partnership with the City of Ottawa, after-school program participants, parents, and friend attended I Love to Skate Wrap Up event on March 5th. The day-long event took place at the Canadian Tire Centre and was a wonderful celebration for the children and community.

The Rochester Heights staff and Somerset West community developers teamed up to reach out to the community, going door-to-door on March 8th to provide information on locally available programs and services, upcoming community events, and to provide information on programming at the Community House. Outreach activities were a wonderful opportunity to connect with newcomers to the area as well as isolated residents. On March 15th a free spring celebration was held at 280 Rochester. The event was well attended by area residents, and proved a wonderful venue for both children and adults to connect with one another, and to access staff support and information.

On March 6th the Ottawa School of Art showcased some of the outreach program students' works in a vernissage called The Big Little Exhibition. The event was a beautiful exhibit of children's artwork from the Rochester Heights after school program, as well as several other community houses and children's programs in the community.

Harm Reduction Peer Network

A group of service providers and peers has been meeting since October to work on implementing one of the key recommendations of the community harm reduction action plan: to increase the involvement of people who use drugs in all aspects of harm reduction service design and delivery.

The group has decided to focus on peer distribution of harm reduction supplies as a first step in this work. Peer distribution is an informal system whereby people pick up quantities of supplies from sites in order to distribute to others who are not accessing the formal system. We held 7 focus groups in March across the city with structured questions to help us understand where peer distribution is and is not happening, how it works, and how we could better support peers who are involved in this work.

The results of the focus groups will be compiled into a report that will be disseminated through the Harm Reduction Coalition, the Tripartite Working Group, as well as peer services. The report will inform next steps about supporting the work of peer distributors.

New Safer Inhalation Program Partners

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) resumed distributing safer inhalation supplies last month- 8 years after their program was cancelled by the mayor at that time. The AIDS Bureau is aware that this has happened and will be monitoring OPH distribution statistics and the impact this will have on the provincial wide inventory/budget allocation for safer inhalation supplies. We are starting discussion with OPH about how to coordinate the services of the 2 van programs to avoid unnecessary duplication and calls to the same areas of the city.

The Ontario Addiction Treatment Centres (OATC) is a provincial wide methadone and suboxone treatment program with 3 locations in Ottawa. They also became a Safer Inhalation partner and began distribution in February. They are also needle and syringe partners with OPH.

We are currently in the process of meeting with and/or training staff in the following agencies which have expressed interest in become Safer Inhalation Program partners:

- Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre
- Orleans- Cumberland Community Resource Centre
- South East Ottawa Community Health Centre
- Gardiner Residence (John Howard Society)

NESI Program Service Volumes

We will be submitting our semi annual statistical report to the AIDS Bureau this week which will include the following service volumes for the NESI program from October 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016:

- 1823 client contacts through outreach (primarily the NESI van)
- 3269 client contacts on site in the NESI room
- 80 active peers

Submitted by: Jack McCarthy
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