

*Somerset West Community
Health Centre*

CENTRE HIGHLIGHTS

NOVEMBER 2024



UPDATE: HART HUBS

On August 20, 2024, the Government of Ontario announced that Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) within 200 meters of childcare centers or schools must close by March 31, 2025. They will be replaced by new Homelessness and Addiction Recovery Treatment (HART) Hubs. The Centre has been invited to transition towards a HART Hub, and has submitted their plan to the ministry.

The goal of HART Hubs is to provide integrated support to people experiencing complex health and social issues related to substance use and addictions; and aims to connect people who are experiencing homelessness or are at risk of losing their housing and/or people who have mental health, addictions and substance use health needs to treatment and preventative services.

Our proposed model aims to provide comprehensive support to Ottawa residents in the downtown core facing homelessness, substance use challenges, and seeking an integrated approach to substance use treatment. Designed in collaboration with individuals who have lived and living experience of substance use challenges, along with many community partners, the HART hub embodies principles of anti-racism, anti-oppression, integrating Indigenous and Afrocentric practices alongside anti-stigma work to foster a welcoming, compassionate environment.

The hub will offer a full spectrum of services—including primary care, mental health and substance use support, rapid referrals to withdrawal and medical stabilization beds, along with direct pathways to supportive housing. Many services will be located within or near the hub, streamlining access and enhancing coordination. Working closely with multiple community partners, including the Ottawa Health Team—Équipe Santé Ottawa, Ottawa Community Housing, Ottawa Salus Corporation, Ottawa Inner City Health, and the City of Ottawa, their proposed HART Hub model aims to connect clients with long-term stabilizing services, ensuring sustainable housing for those experiencing homelessness, mental health challenges and substance use disorders.

PRIMARY CARE & REGIONAL PROGRAMS

MENTAL HEALTH & COUNSELING

BLACK MENTAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

On October 16th staff from our Mental Health and Counselling team represented Somerset West CHC (SWCHC) at the second national Black Mental Health Conference. The focus of the conference was to highlight progress made across the country, share knowledge and discuss barriers and the social determinants of health that continue to result in health disparities for Black people and communities in Canada. SWCHC worked in collaboration with the Alliance for Healthier Communities to host a session focusing on intertwining the web of health equity in Black Community.



INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL PRESCRIBING CONFERENCE

Our Black Focused Social Prescribing team received the Social Prescribing Innovation Award at Canada's 2024 International Social Prescribing Conference. This honor was awarded alongside our partners, TAIBU, Black Creek, and Rexdale CHC, in recognition of our collective efforts to improve health outcomes in Black communities through innovative social prescribing approaches. We're proud of this achievement and look forward to continuing our work in creating meaningful impact!



VIETNAMESE CANADIAN COMMUNITY OF OTTAWA SEMINAR

Between July to October 2024, in partnership with the Vietnamese Canadian Community of Ottawa (VCCO), Somerset West Community Health Centre co-hosted 4 health seminars tailored to Ottawa's Vietnamese Community. Topics included: preventative treatments, holistic wellness and lifestyle habits, the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP), oral health and access to dentistry, eye care, as well as an overview of SW CHC services for the Vietnamese community.

With over 100 in-person attendees, and well over 60 community members joining through zoom, the series was a huge success thanks in large part to the coordination efforts of Ms. Nguyen Thi Bach Mai, Coordinator, Vietnamese Seniors Program with the VCCO.

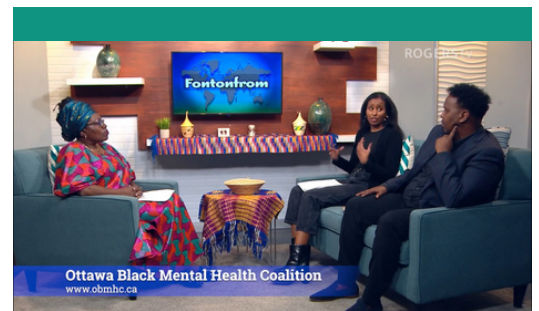
Somerset West CHC would like to thank Dr. Tran Viet Tan, Dr. Tran Le Hong Phuc, Dr. Le Hoang, Dr. Uyen Minh Pham, Dr. Nhu Ngoc Vo, and Health Canada's Director General: Marika Nadeau for the gift of their time, expertise, knowledge and support in ensuring that Ottawa's Vietnamese community has access to important health and wellness information and resources. SW CHC would like to further thank the volunteers from VCCO, led by Ms. Nguyen Thi Bach Mai, without whom these seminars would not have been possible: Mr. Nguyen The Tran Bao, Mr. Nguyen The Tran Khang, Mr. Hoang Chau, Mr. Le Phan Luong, Ms. Nguyen Hong Hai, Ms. Opal Duong, Ms. Doan Kim Anh, Ms. Duong My Hoa, Mr. Nguyen Thang, Mr. Truong Minh Tri, and Mr. Charlie Hoang.



COUNSELLING CONNECT

Nuradiin Mohamud, from Ottawa Public Health, and Nagad Hersi from Somerset West Community Health Centre, appeared on Fontonfrom with Sarah Onyango to highlight the work of the Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition (OBMHC). Fontonfrom highlights major events and uplifts stories about the National Capital Region's growing African and Caribbean community. The conversation was both inspiring and insightful, shedding light on the Coalition's ongoing efforts to make a difference in the lives of Black Canadians, and discussing the importance of mental health advocacy and culturally affirming and relevant mental health resources.

The segment can be watched here: [Fontonfrom: October 2024](#). The OBMHC oversees the African, Caribbean, and Black counselling hub on Counselling Connect. Should you or someone you know want immediate access to counselling please visit: www.counsellingconnect.org.



PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

WINTER CLOTHING GIVEAWAY

Primary Health Care's Rooming House Outreach along with the support of the Harm Reduction staff have begun their annual winter clothing giveaway to clients living in local rooming houses. Through November and December items will be given away to keep clients warm through the winter months including wool socks, gloves, hats, coats and boots.

COMBINED COVID-19 & FLU VACCINE CLINICS

As respiratory season is upon us, the Primary Health Care team began offering combined COVID and Flu vaccine clinics to clients, staff and community members. Starting late October to mid-November seven clinics were held. Depending on need, additional clinic dates may be added.

OTTAWA NEWCOMER HEALTH CENTRE

HEALTH INTERPRETATION TRAINING

The Ottawa Newcomer Health Centre's language interpretation program, Ottawa Language Access (OLA), is proud to conclude another successful round of professional health interpretation training. This latest group of community health interpreters brings our roster to over 91 certified professionals, offering in-person support in more than 45 languages.

OPPORTUNITIES EXPO FOR NEW CANADIANS

Our Multicultural Health Navigators (MHN) participated in this year's YMCA Opportunities Expo for New Canadians. They hosted a booth to showcase the MHN program, welcoming newcomers to the community and helping them connect with vital health and social services to thrive in their new Ottawa home. The team had the privilege of engaging with over 250+ newcomers who attended the event, as well as networking with community organizations dedicated to supporting immigrants, refugees, and newcomers.



FAMILY COMMUNITY HEALTH & HARM REDUCTION

The Somerset West CHC Community Response Team (CRT) is now active in the West Centretown area. The CRT responds to people in distress, public drug use and clean-up of needles and/or other items. The team is active from Monday to Saturday between 12:00 and 7:00 pm.

Somerset West CHC and Centretown CHC hosted a successful community event at Dundonald Park to launch ANCHOR, our Alternative Neighborhood Crisis Response program. ANCHOR provides 24/7 support for mental health and substance use crises, in partnership with Centretown CHC and the Community Navigation of Eastern Ontario 211. This pilot project is funded for three years, with plans for the City of Ottawa to expand the program citywide in the future.



The event featured games, food, and an Indigenous sharing circle, creating a welcoming atmosphere for the community. Both Executive Directors spoke about the importance of the collaborative model behind ANCHOR, highlighting the program's potential to make a positive impact in Ottawa. For more information, visit [Centretown CHC's ANCHOR](#) page.

ANONYMOUS HIV TESTING

The Anonymous HIV Testing team participated in the second phase of Project ACE (Acceptance and Commitment to Empowerment Intervention). This phase has involved learning alongside other service providers and community leaders with a focus on reducing HIV stigma and promoting community resilience.

In partnership with Operation Come Home, Planned Parenthood Ottawa, and the health promotion teams with Ottawa Public Health, we developed several educational workshops for youth and young adults at Operation Come Home. This month, we facilitated a workshop for the youth on HIV and Sexually transmitted and blood borne infections (STBBI) education, prevention, and care. The youth were able to receive credits for their participation towards their high school diploma.



We participated in the Fall Wellness Information Fair at the University of Ottawa and raised awareness amongst students around our weekly anonymous HIV testing appointments on-campus! At the fair, we provided Naloxone training and facilitated HIV education games while promoting our low-barrier testing appointments.

Our regular roster of anonymous HIV testing sites is ongoing: Operation Come Home, Centretown Pharmacy, Gay Zone, Ottawa Booth Centre, the University of Ottawa, and 55 Eccles Street. This month, we also offered pop-up anonymous HIV testing at Club Ottawa, Probe Ottawa (with Capital Pups), and the 2SLGBTQ+ BIPOC social at the AIDS Committee of Ottawa.

CHILDREN & YOUTH



The Children and Youth Services took part in an education session on Pikwakanagan's Child and Family Well Being Law, Nigig Nibi Ki-win. Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation is the only federally registered Algonquin community in Ontario with close to 3,000 members including 500 residents. Algonquin territory encompasses the watershed of the Kitchissippi (Ottawa River) in present-day Quebec and Ontario. Pikwakanagan First Nation is situated on the shores of Golden Lake and the Bonnechere River in Renfrew County one and a half hours west of Ottawa in Ontario. On April 19, 2024, Algonquins of Pikwakanagan First Nation's child and family services law, Nigig Nibi Ki-Win, came into force.

Nigig Nibi Ki-win will have the force of law as federal law, in accordance with An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families. If we have reason to reach out for child protection services for Pikwakanagan children or youth we should contact them directly. They respond within 24 hours at <https://www.nigignibi.com/>. To report an urgent concern about child abuse or neglect call 1-833-312-6008.

Somerset West CHC is updating our child protection/reporting policies to align with this law.



We were a host site for the Amazing Youth Worker Race. This annual event brings together individuals who work with youth to race across the city with help from OC Transpo to find out how well they know what's available to youth in our city! The Child and Youth Community Developer was able to share information about Community Health and Resource Centre's to over 100 participants.

The Child and Youth Community Developer and an Early Childhood Development Worker attended a Halloween event in Plouffe Park. This event was very popular, with over 300 in attendance. This was a great opportunity to connect with new families and share our services.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & DEVELOPMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, VOLUNTEERS & STUDENTS

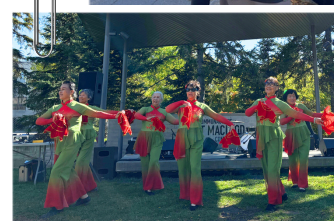
Our dedicated team — comprising three volunteers and five staff members — have begun work for the 2024 season to assist clients complete their online applications, ensuring no one is left behind this holiday season. The Christmas Exchange program offers vital support to those in need during the holiday season, providing food hampers or redeemable gift certificates to bring hope and dignity at a challenging time.

We are excited to announce that we've received an invitation from the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) to rejoin and register for the Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP) for 2025. This essential service plays a vital role in supporting individuals and families in need. Last year, we assisted over 359 clients, with 42.1% of them being 65 years of age or older.

The program has had a significant impact on reducing homelessness, with many clients using their tax returns to secure housing, pay rent, and stay in their homes. By providing this service, we help ensure that individuals and families are not at risk of losing their housing due to financial barriers. We look forward to continuing this important work and helping more community members access the support they need.

YET KEEN

We believe in the power of laughter to bring people together and improve well-being and are passionate about creating opportunities for people to connect, laugh, and thrive. Recently, we had the pleasure of hosting a table at the Parkdale Food Centre, where we had the opportunity to promote our laughter yoga workshops to the local community. Our seniors also took to the stage to showcase their dance performance — which was a beautiful reminder of the joy and creativity that thrive in our community.



We hosted an informative health talk focused on key respiratory health topics. Attendees learned about the latest Coronavirus mutations and the importance of staying protected against pneumonia infections. The session also highlighted the benefits of the influenza vaccine for the upcoming flu season and provided valuable insights on Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), especially for vulnerable groups.

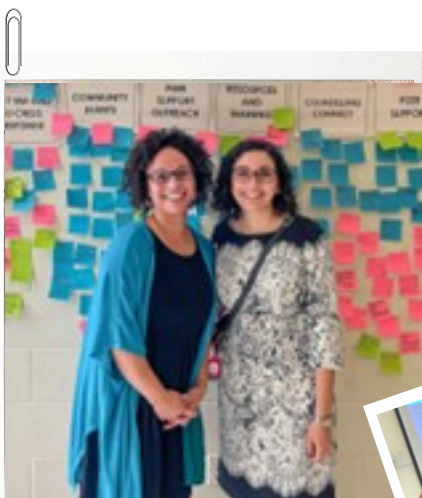


This month, our seniors' took advantage of the extended fall weather and participated in a refreshing volunteer-led walk through the beautiful Experimental Farm. The group enjoyed a peaceful stroll, surrounded by nature, while staying active and socializing with fellow community members. The walk offered a perfect opportunity for seniors to connect with the outdoors, get some exercise, and enjoy the seasonal beauty of the farm.



OTTAWA BLACK MENTAL HEALTH COALITION

Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition (OBMHC) held its second Strategic Planning Session. Building on the strategic plan of 2021, this session was held in person in the community for the first time. More than 60 members, clinical partners and community stakeholders attended the full day session focused on highlighting the accomplishments of the Coalition, recognizing our volunteers, mapping the work of partners and finding alignment moving forward. Participants also had a really great time! There was a lot of joy in the room and the engagement and feelings of connection were tangible.



Special thanks to facilitator Manal Sayid of Sayid Consulting, Chef Resa Solomon for the excellent meals and to the OBMHC's Executive Board members for their leadership and Somerset West CHC Executive Director Suzanne Obiorah for contributing to the success of the day.

