

# Sharing the GOOD THINGS

A newsletter for our community about the good things that happen here

October 2022

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Expanding access to ECT to help more people with severe mental illness

Get your tickets for the 9th Annual Shine the Light Gala featuring Sophia Fracassi

Idoor.ca is making access to mental health supports easier for youth and adults in Simcoe County

**Waypoint**  
CENTRE for MENTAL HEALTH CARE  
CENTRE de SOINS de SANTÉ MENTALE

## Reflections on my first three months as President and CEO

by Dr. Nadiya Sunderji



It's hard to believe it's been just over three months since I transitioned into my new role as Waypoint's President and CEO. These are challenging but exciting times to take the helm while we're still experiencing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. These last few months I have been truly inspired by the teamwork and solidarity of my colleagues as they strengthen my sense of purpose as a servant leader, and also by the knowledge that each and every one of us is making a difference in the lives of patients, clients and families

every day. I am also grateful for our partnerships across the health sector as we continually innovate together in service to our communities.

Over the past few years, I have witnessed hospitals and health service providers from across the province come together to work better as one health care system. I am extremely proud to share that time and again, the Waypoint team has stepped up to collaborate and provide leadership in mental health and addiction services, especially as it relates to supporting our hospital and community partners who have also been challenged by the pandemic, as we work together to reach and support people in real need of help and care.

Waypoint was one of multiple partners who supported public health to open COVID-19 assessment centres and immunization clinics. We also supported our long-term care partners through the combined expertise of our geriatric medicine and geriatric psychiatry team in the Specialized Geriatric Service, expanded mental health services for families, children and youth, and launched Frontline Wellness, which provides free virtual counselling for healthcare workers, first responders and social service professionals.

We've all read in the news the challenges that emergency departments and smaller hospitals across the province are facing even trying to keep doors open and beds staffed. Waypoint was able to step up and add to our existing 20 acute mental health beds, and we continue to operate 34 acute mental beds, including the first psychiatric intensive care services in our region, for patients in Simcoe County, Muskoka and across the Ontario Health Central Region. We are hopeful that these beds will be made permanent as they provide an immediate solution to the unmet needs locally and regionally as the pandemic has affected many people's mental health and strained an

**cont'd p.3**

# Waypoint expands access to ECT to help more people with severe mental illnesses

More patients now have access to electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) as Waypoint has expanded the availability of this highly effective therapy from three days a week to five.

“ECT is part of Waypoint’s role as the specialty mental health hospital for our region and is central to our providing both acute inpatient mental health services and outpatient services with a goal to keeping people well in our community. We are committed to improving access to high quality care and this ECT expansion as well as the additional 14 acute mental health beds we are operating are priorities in these challenging times, with emergency departments overburdened from the pandemic impacts and staffing pressures,” notes Dr. Nadiya Sunderji, Waypoint’s CEO. “I want to share my appreciation to our staff for making this happen for our patients and clients.”

Performed for over 80 years, the effectiveness of ECT is well documented in the medical literature but its uptake has been limited by stigma and fear. While this stigma persists, there have been many advances in the practice evolving it to a modern, safe and well-established medical procedure that can be life-saving and transforming for those who need it.

Recent research suggests that ECT works by stimulating brain cells (neurons) to grow and develop healthy connections to each other. It works similar to how a defibrillator or pacemaker helps restore a normal rhythm to a person’s heart; the electrical stimulation can help restore proper function to the brain.

“ECT has long been used for treating severe and treatment-resistant cases of mood and psychotic illnesses,” says Dr. Plabon Ismail, Waypoint Medical Director of Regional Programs and ECT Lead Psychiatrist. “Because of its effectiveness and improved side effect profile, we are seeing an overall trend where patients and physicians are opting for ECT early in the treatment course, especially in outpatient settings. Increasing our service from three to five days per week will allow us to meet these increasing demands while providing appropriate follow-up treatment promptly.”

Despite widespread staffing challenges throughout the pandemic, Waypoint was able to maintain ECT services during these times of critical need. The hospital has also been collaborating with the Ontario Health Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence and other experts across the province to identify the need and are now at the forefront of developing standards for high quality delivery of ECT. Expanding access at Waypoint takes the pressure off acute care partners and allows them to focus on restoring surgical volumes and reducing wait times.

Waypoint’s ECT clinic is located at the hospital’s Penetanguishene campus and is available for both inpatients and outpatients. A team of trained medical professionals that includes psychiatrists, anesthesiologists, and nurses assess patients, educate patients and families, and administer the treatment.

Not sure if ECT is the right treatment for you or your loved one? “Our team is happy to speak with anyone, patients, families, healthcare providers and students who are looking for more information on ECT and the services we provide,” says Jackie Watt, Program Director. “Our Central Intake Office staff manage referrals and can assist in identifying the right supports.”

For more information, please visit our website at [www.waypointcentre.ca/patients\\_families/electroconvulsive\\_therapy](http://www.waypointcentre.ca/patients_families/electroconvulsive_therapy).

***Increasing our service from three to five days per week will allow us to meet these increasing demands while providing appropriate follow-up treatment promptly.***

*~ Dr. Plabon Ismail,  
Medical Director  
Regional Programs and  
ECT Lead Psychiatrist*

# Reflections on my first three months as President and CEO

## cont'd

already challenged health system. We have also strengthened our physical health care services to support more complex patients with combined mental and physical health challenges here at Waypoint.

We innovated in developing a virtual intensive day program to support people living with concurrent addiction and mental health challenges. Grounded in research evidence and incubated during the throes of the pandemic and its disruptions to service delivery, this new virtual program adds to our inpatient treatment program, thus expanding our avenues for meeting people where they're at and making services accessible to people with different needs.

More recently, we expanded access to electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) from three to five days a week. ECT is a safe and effective treatment and it can be a life-saving for patients who need it due to the severity of their illness or lack of benefit from other treatments, but it requires anesthesia and, when done in acute hospitals it usually uses surgical recovery spaces and nurses. By expanding ECT at Waypoint we are ensuring access to specialized care for our whole region and enabling acute care partners to focus on restoring surgical volumes and reducing wait times. [\(More information can be found on page 2\).](#)

I'm excited to announce that we have just launched Waypoint's new Urgent Outpatient Psychiatry Consultation service. Having worked in these types of programs for many years before my transition to Waypoint in 2019, I know from experience what a difference it can make in people's lives, and for other members of their care team, to have rapid access to a specialist when there is urgency. In North Simcoe Muskoka, one in five people visiting the emergency department for a mental health reason has previously been to the ED for their mental health in the past month, so we know there's a significant unmet need for more effective care and alternatives in the community and across the continuum of care. Waypoint's new service provides clients with the right care at the right time and place, providing urgent psychiatric consultation to people who have been identified as needing specialized care, but who can be safely discharged home from the emergency department. Our team of experts can provide assessment and initiate treatment. In combination with having reduced our wait time for routine non-urgent consultation from two years to under two months, we hope and expect this new service will not only serve people in need but also alleviate health system pressures on emergency departments by reducing ED visits, repeat ED visits, and some avoidable admissions.

The North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services continues in their quest to support frail older adults maintain wellness, independence and quality of life in aging. Two projects they've been supporting include the County of Simcoe's Behaviour Support and Transition Unit at Georgian Village, and future community-based supportive housing through LOFT Community Services.

With our 10 partners under the Central Ontario Health Team for Specialized Populations, we continue to collaborate to serve seniors, people with mental health and addictions needs starting with children and youth, and Indigenous people. We are also working on expanded access to structured psychotherapy for people experiencing anxiety and depression. We are excited to see continuous improvement in clinical outcomes and are extremely proud of the team's work that supports our promise of improving lives. More people are getting better with their symptoms and well-being improved – that's definitely something to get excited about! Finally, with our partners we are developing care pathways and implementing quality standards for patients with schizophrenia in hospital, through discharge and transitions, and in the community. Our OHT partnerships will produce regional integrated care pathways co-designed with service users and caregivers, where Waypoint continues to care for the most complex patients in hospital and community partners meet clients' needs in a coordinated approach.

In closing, I am thankful for all of our compassionate and skilled staff and leaders, dynamic and expert medical leaders, forward thinking board of directors, and collaborative and perseverant system partners. I am optimistic and looking forward to a bright future where we continue working with patients, families, staff, volunteers, researchers, policymakers and partners to innovate services and tools that have an impact for people who need mental health and addictions treatment and care.



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Sign up for our newsletter and stay up to date on what's happening at Waypoint.

We respect your privacy. Your information is safe and will never be shared. Unsubscribe at any time.

# Advancing understanding at the Waypoint Research Institute



The Waypoint Research Institute continues to advance understanding of mental illness with several research projects underway. Building on the hospital's long and illustrious history in research, the strategic direction to Discover guides us as we advance research, embrace education, and seek, generate and apply new knowledge and practices to create the best possible outcomes for patients. Check out some of the projects underway.

## **Building youth resilience: A collaborative approach**

This collaborative project is being conducted by members of the Waypoint Research Institute, Soyeon Kim, Kimberly Belfry, and Christopher Canning, along with members of Organizational Development, Shavon Stafford, Sarah Farr, Dustin Kenney, and Nicole Mace. Funded through a \$335,000 grant from TD Ready Commitment, this project is supporting youth across the region through the development of a new online mental health program to promote mental health and resilience; a tool designed with youth for youth that will be available to youth and youth organizations for free.

## **Common language for intimate partner violence risk appraisal and mitigation: An evidenced-based policing approach**

Supported by a \$199,000 Partnership Development grant from the Social Sciences Humanities Research Council, Dr. Zoe Hilton, Elke Ham, and Meghan Weissflog are working with a team to guide law enforcement across Canada in assessing and responding to intimate partner violence, including enabling them to better appraise risk, prioritize cases, and allocate resources.

## **Reducing self-harm and suicidal behaviour in the inpatient services using experience based co-design**

Bolstered by a grant from the University of Toronto Department of Psychiatry, Suicide Studies, Dr. Andrea Waddell and her team are identifying the root causes of suicidal behaviour and self-injury among patients on the acute mental health inpatient program and integrating experience-based co-design to improve the suicide risk assessment process.

For more information on the Waypoint Research Institute visit [www.waypointcentre.ca/waypoint\\_research\\_institute](http://www.waypointcentre.ca/waypoint_research_institute)

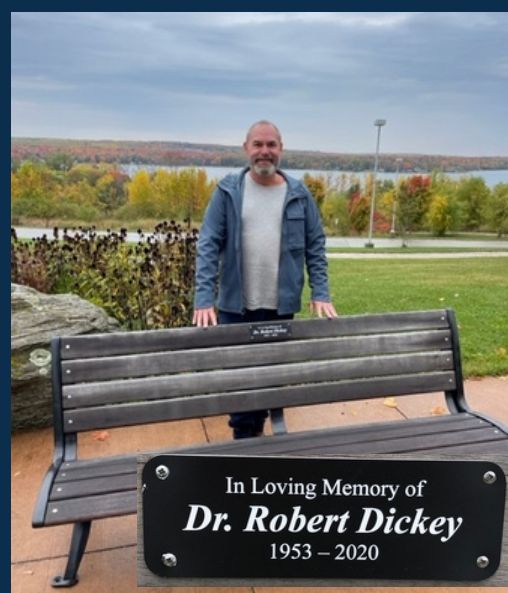
## In loving memory of Dr. Robert Dickey

A new bench sits in our Century Garden honouring the memory of Dr. Robert Dickey.

Dr. Dickey, a psychiatrist who spent many years caring for Waypoint patients, sadly passed away in January 2020.

Colleague and friend Mary Kraftscik remembers him as a large-in-spirit man with a tremendous amount of knowledge, "I learned so much from him and continue to hear his voice in my head occasionally," she shares. "He encouraged staff to think on their own and to be confident in their assessments. He was collaborative, always willing to listen to the team, valued the teams he worked with, and ensured they knew it. Dr. Dickey was also a funny guy, a storyteller who could have staff in stitches. His down to earth presentation made everyone feel comfortable. We lost a great psychiatrist, but we also lost a great man. He is missed."

The bench was donated by Dr. Dickey's partner and best friend Michael Williams (pictured), and offers patients, families and staff a peaceful, quiet spot for reflection or a visit with loved ones.



# SHINE THE LIGHT *Gala*

Join us November 4th as we welcome Canadian singer and songwriter Sophia Fracassi to headline the 9th annual Shine the Light Hybrid Gala at the Midland Cultural Centre, presented by TD Bank.

Taking inspiration from icons like Joni Mitchell and Taylor Swift, Sophia writes about what she knows. "It's important to realize life can go in many different directions," she says. "Sometimes plans don't happen as intended." Sophia wants her music to be a reflection of her own personal experiences, and a vessel to share her story authentically and honestly.

With a goal to raise \$100,000, proceeds from the event will support young people across the region by funding a new preventative online mental health program for youth; a tool designed with youth for youth that will be available to youth and youth organizations for free.

Waypoint is working together with youth and mental health partners to help kids and young adults maintain their mental wellbeing, build resiliency skills, and find the help they need before a crisis occurs.



FEATURING

*Sophia Fracassi*

FRIDAY NOV. 4

MIDLAND CULTURAL CENTRE

# *Tickets*

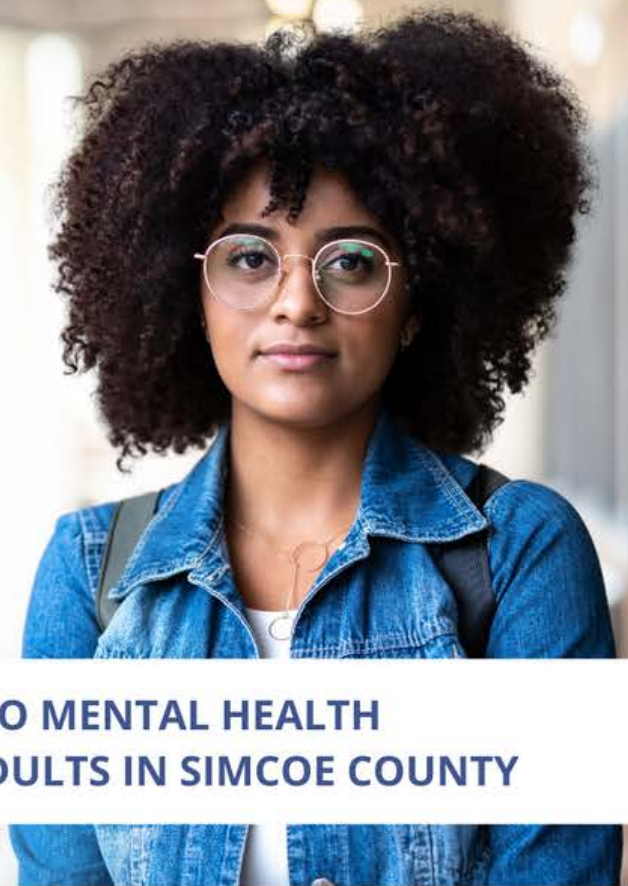
[www.givewaypoint.com/events](http://www.givewaypoint.com/events)

**Platinum Tickets are just \$125** and get you a show stopping live performance by Sophia Fracassi, a gourmet meal by Feast Catering & Events, dinner music by local musician Emma Reynolds, online auction, and inspiring and impactful stories shared by youth and mental health professionals. The meal will be enjoyed in-person at the Midland Cultural Centre or delivered right to your home if you are attending virtually.

FREE silver tickets are also available and will allow you to enjoy parts of the evening virtually including Sophia's music, testimonials and online auction.

**SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE!** To support this event through a sponsorship or online auction donation, please contact Shelly Price at [sprice@waypointcentre.ca](mailto:sprice@waypointcentre.ca).

# QUICK ACCESS MENTAL HEALTH APPOINTMENTS



**WWW.1DOOR.CA IS MAKING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH  
SUPPORTS EASIER FOR YOUTH AND ADULTS IN SIMCOE COUNTY**

## WHAT

Free, confidential single session mental health (aka 'walk-in') appointments

- Adult and youth counselling appointments
- Youth peer support and navigation services

## WHERE

Online

- phone
- virtual

In-person

## HOW IT WORKS

- Choose the appointment time that works for you
- Complete the booking and receive a confirmation email
- Attend your session

## WHEN

- Book an appointment 24/7/365
- Same and next day appointments available

**Easy, convenient and based on your schedule.**

Thank you!

## Your donations in action – Get Your Mental Health in Motion and Helicopter Golf Ball Drop smashing successes



### Get Your Mental Health in Motion

Your contributions to the May 2022 Get Your Mental Health in Motion fundraiser made this happen! With nearly \$23,000 raised, the newly resurfaced sports court now offers a more extensive outdoor experience with options for tennis, pickle ball, basketball, and shuffleboard.

One of Waypoint's signature events, the fundraiser featured wellness, mindfulness, music and physical activities for the whole family and a Choose Your Own Adventure virtual 5k.

Recreation and leisure are essential tools when it comes to fostering positive mental health. Your donations are helping to build skills, boost energy levels, enhance quality of life and quality sleep, and strengthening social connections through physical activity.



### Helicopter Golf Ball Drop

The September Helicopter Golf Ball Drop and Family and Friends Charity Golf Tournament supporting Waypoint and Hospice Huronia on September 10, 2022 went off with a bang!

Hosted by Family and Friends, the gorgeous sunny day kicked off with dozens of golf teams teeing off in a shotgun start, and ended with more than 9,000 golf balls being dropped from a helicopter in the sky onto the course at the Midland Golf and Country Club.

The balls landing closest to the flags determined who went home with big prizes! With three early bird draws and the main event, 28 lucky people walked away winners while also supporting two deserving charities.

Our many thanks to our lead organizer and volunteer Gerard LaChapelle and his volunteer team, staff and volunteers from Hospice and Waypoint, the many sponsors, donors and golf ball purchasers, and everyone who came out to support both of these incredible events.

*Transforming mental health and addiction care, keeping people healthy, and saving lives is a monumental responsibility. With your continued support, we can transform programs to meet evolving needs and work preventatively, purchase essential hospital equipment, increase access to care, conduct leading-edge research to better understand and treat mental illness and addiction, and ultimately save lives.*



**GIVE.**

**SO NO ONE GIVES UP.**

Supporting mental health through COVID-19 and beyond. Give, to give hope.

## **BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR**

A great way to support mental health and recovery at Waypoint year round is to become a monthly donor. Join a community of givers whose monthly gift provides reliable funds for essential hospital equipment purchases, patient care programs, and leading-edge research.

Giving monthly allows your gift to work harder. Together, gifts large and small change lives. You can help us change the lives of people faced with mental health and addiction challenges.

**DONATE TODAY!**

[www.givewaypoint.com](http://www.givewaypoint.com)