

Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care

# Annual Report

2023/2024



A *Better* Future

We are proud to have launched the new Model of Care with Six Core Strategies project, one of our most significant quality improvement initiatives to date to enhance patient care, and patient and staff safety. We are also embracing our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion.

The Waypoint Research Institute is at the forefront of informing new evidence-based treatments. Our researchers' contributions are driving positive change on a global scale – impacting care, outcomes and experiences.

We are honoured to work with the professionals who make up the Waypoint team and care so deeply about the people in their care. Health care is a fast-paced and demanding environment, and we recognize our responsibility to prioritize the health and well-being of Waypoint staff. We've introduced a number of resources and services to support them and will continue to focus on their wellness. We've also intensified our efforts to attract new top talent and retain the excellent team we already have.

We encourage you to read more about our progress over the last year and learn how, as servant leaders, our focus is on creating a better future for all.



**Ernie Vaillancourt**  
Board Chair



**Nadiya Sunderji**  
President & CEO



We are excited to share this year's annual report, which highlights how we are advancing care at the hospital and leading within the broader health care system to enhance mental health, addiction and geriatric care in central Ontario, provincially and beyond. We hope you will feel inspired as we look back at all that's been accomplished in the past year to deliver on our commitment to create a better future – for patients, staff, our community and the health care sector.

More people than ever need the benefit of Waypoint's specialized services. As we strive to provide exceptional care for every patient, we believe that each journey contains the promise of a better future.

Witnessing the immense challenges in health care today, we are deeply committed to collective action with hospitals and community providers. Through the strength of partnerships, and by leveraging our respective expertise and resources, we are collaboratively organizing care and better supporting patients' needs. This is one of the many reasons we value engaging in meaningful ways with patients, clients, families and care partners. Together, we are cultivating a future of hope and resilience.

Our innovative work with partners includes creating more patient-centred, comprehensive and evidence-based care for people experiencing depression and anxiety. This year our Ontario Structured Psychotherapy program served more clients than ever. We are also co-designing services for people experiencing a mental health crisis, which will reduce pressures on emergency departments.

We are eager to get started on construction of a new 20-bed acute mental health care unit at Waypoint. These beds will benefit patients across north central Ontario and will include the area's first psychiatric ICU beds.

Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care is a 315-bed academic and teaching hospital that provides specialized mental health, addiction and geriatric care.

Located on the shores of Georgian Bay, we serve some of the most complex and disadvantaged individuals in Ontario and are the sole provider of high-secure forensic mental health services in the province.

Waypoint's 1,300+ staff improve lives and bring hope to people with mental illness and substance use issues. The care we deliver on site, in the community and through partnerships is informed by our innovative practices and – importantly – patient voices. We are sponsored by the Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario. Each patient's journey is unique, and we support their recovery with compassion, dignity and inclusivity.

Waypoint staff are internationally recognized for their leadership and research, which they approach with professionalism and humility. This dedication deepens understanding of mental health and addiction, and helps to build a better future for patients, their families and care partners, staff, the community and the health care system.



Waypoint's Strategic Directions

**Land acknowledgment**

Waypoint is situated on the traditional territory of the Anishinabek, which includes the Odawa, Ojibwe and Pottawatomi Nations (collectively known as the Three Fires Confederacy), the Haudenosaunee (Six Nations/ Mohawk of the Wahta Community), Huron, Wendat and Métis. We acknowledge and affirm our commitment to improving relationships between nations and to improving equity for Indigenous communities residing in central Ontario.



Cover Photo: Three clients of the North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub participate in a drum painting session run by Enahtig Healing Lodge & Learning Centre.



Patients are at the centre of everything we do. Their well-being, dignity and empowerment guide our every decision, treatment plan and support service, ensuring that each individual receives compassionate and personalized care. Through our team's dedication and expertise, and by working closely with patients and partners, we are continually evolving to best meet the needs of the people we serve.



Awenda A team (left to right): Brianne Horzempa, Trista Beniston, Ashley Silk, Laura Brady, Steve Glenney, Carolyn Turner, Al Geere, Emily Rondinone



“Since launching the new model of care, I've seen a significant improvement in the care we're able to provide for patients. Overall, it's been a positive change and I feel more equipped to support my team and ultimately provide better care to patients.”

-Brooke Geere  
Awenda B team lead

### Model of Care with Six Core Strategies

The new Model of Care with Six Core Strategies initiative is one of the largest and most complex quality initiatives undertaken at Waypoint to date. The model launched in March 2024 on two units in the provincial forensic mental health care programs and will be implemented across the hospital over the next year.

A model of care outlines the way we organize and deliver health care services. This model streamlines care delivery, engages patients and families, provides better access to information, and enhances patient safety, clinical outcomes and experiences, and staff engagement and retention. The Six Core Strategies outline a best-practice approach to provide exceptional care, and reduce incidents of crisis, while honouring patients' role in their own care.

Overall, the goal is to provide the right care for patients at the right time, by the right team, and in the right place by providing the tools necessary to ensure teams are efficient, effective, have a clear understanding of their roles and all staff work to their full scope of practice.

### Did you know?

As a specialized centre, we provide care for people with severe mental illness, substance use issues and geriatric needs. Care is provided in the hospital, in community settings and virtually depending on the needs of the patients/clients and the services provided.

### Advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

By creating a welcoming culture that values and respects equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) for everyone, we are supporting equitable access to high-quality care that is more responsive to the diverse needs of patients. We collect and use EDI-related data to tailor the care we deliver. This year many leaders and staff participated in the Human Library, in which people from around the world share their stories and experiences. We also joined in the County of Simcoe's #ITSTARTS awareness campaign about racism and discrimination. We are humbled to work collaboratively with the Indigenous Health Circle to support Indigenous health care partners in improving Indigenous wellness – spiritual, mental, emotional and physical – in a culturally grounded way.

### Integrated Mental and Physical Health Care

Under the leadership of Dr. Becky Van Iersel, Medical Director of Integrated Care, we are growing our team of family physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners to provide patients with the quality medical care they need at Waypoint, and bring a greater focus to education and preventative health care to keep patients well.

### Seniors Care

We have relaunched our Senior Friendly Care Committee and are transforming care in the Horizon Program for Geriatric Psychiatry, including through the installation of 14 vibrant murals depicting lively scenes and landscapes. The murals, along with new furniture, help to create a new type of recovery space that promotes calmness and reduces boredom. With patient safety in mind, the benefits include the clever camouflaging of exit points and contrasting colours that aid in depth perception, an important aspect as people age and vision deteriorates.



Smudging room at the Midland Community Health Hub.

## A Patient Story

Working in Waypoint's employment training program helps bring meaning and purpose to James Kenneth John Cribbie's days.

Cribbie is a 39-year-old inpatient on the Bayview program, which serves individuals with a developmental disability and mental health needs. He has been receiving care at the hospital for a number of years.

"I wasn't doing so well in the community," he said. "Being at Waypoint has been good."

Cribbie said he appreciates the chance to earn money by handling clothing donations at Behind the Seams, as well as working at the General Store and helping with flower bouquet sales. As part of their care, patients are given the opportunity to develop new skills at these operations in support of meeting their mental health recovery needs.

And there's also the personal enjoyment he receives.

"I like sorting the clothes and seeing if something new has come in," said Cribbie, who has reportedly developed a reputation for his sharp fashion sense.





We support our staff to be their best – healthy and thriving in an inclusive and welcoming environment, with opportunities to learn and grow. Programs that prioritize their mental health and well-being and recognize their invaluable contributions, along with efforts underway to develop strong leaders and high-performing teams, are enhancing Waypoint’s reputation as an employer of choice.



Lindsay Burrus, Care Coordinator at the North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub

#WhatMattersToYouMattersToUs

We care about what matters to the people who work at Waypoint. The #WhatMattersToYouMattersToUs awareness initiative reflects our commitment to staff well-being, and to keeping our expert talent and recruiting new health care professionals in this highly competitive environment. Shaped by staff input and what they value, we are embracing community, creating a brighter future, challenging the status quo, being remarkable, driving excellence and uniting the brightest minds, all in an inclusive environment that values each individual's contributions.

Leadership Opportunities

Our leadership development program focuses on a series of interactive and engaging opportunities that nurture competent, compassionate and innovative leaders who are equipped to lead teams and succeed in the complex health care environment. By supporting leaders to achieve strategic goals and foster a healthy workplace, we cultivate growth in both individuals and teams, and ultimately advance patient care. This continual development philosophy supports leaders at all levels of their journey, from emerging leaders to new and experienced leaders.

Supporting the Community

Waypoint staff often step up to support our communities in a number of ways. Last year, they contributed nutritious foods and financial donations to help local high school students start their day off right and support their mental wellness. Our Rehabilitation Services teamed up with local businesses and organizations for a winter coat drive – collecting coats, boots, hats and mitts to not only provide physical warmth, but also demonstrate caring to those in need. Braving frigid February temperatures, the Waypoint Wanderers walked in the Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser to support people experiencing hurt, hunger and homelessness.



The Waypoint Wanderers took part in the Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser Feb. 24 in Midland

Staff and Health Care Worker Well-Being

Caring for Waypoint staff’s emotional and psychological well-being is deeply important to us, as is sharing our expertise for the broader benefit of the health care workforce. Waypoint provides leadership to guide organizational health and well-being for all central Ontario hospitals. We are growing capacity in the system by using a collaborative approach to maturing wellness programs. The approach includes adopting a Stepped Care Model – developed as a digital tool – to enable health care workers accessing the right level of care needed to support resilience and mental health. Available to hospitals and community support services in central Ontario, more than 300 leaders have participated in the training to learn how to use the tool to support staff.

In addition, our Frontline Wellness program is a free, confidential service to help manage stress, enhance resilience and support the mental health of health care workers in the community. Last year, we launched The Coping Club, a virtual psychoeducational group providing strategies for coping with stress.



Left to Right: Marcus Lacey, Norm Petroff, Shannon Flood, Alyssa Hansford participating in the Wellness Curling Bonspiel.



Sonia Sousa (left) & Ryan Grozelle of Housekeeping.



Adam Vassair (left) & Mary Mitchell of Rehabilitation Services



Nick West (left) & Jackie Murrar purchasing flowers at the Spring Plant Sale

Appreciation and Recognition Events

Celebrating the contributions of people who work and volunteer at Waypoint is a key part of our culture. We love to show our gratitude for their hard work and dedication. These recognition opportunities include the annual Core Value Awards (see pages 12-13), the annual Employee Appreciation Week, dedicated time for shout-outs at team huddles, and professional group recognition events for nurses, pharmacy, administrative professionals and others.

We’re also grateful to our approximately 70 volunteers who contribute thousands of hours each year to support the hospital in providing excellent and compassionate care.



“For Humza Shahid, a typical day of volunteering involves spending time with patients in the computer lab or supervising gym activities, as well as swimming, sports, hiking or other recreational pursuits. “Hearing (patients’) stories, what they’ve been through, definitely impacted me. It would make anyone realize everyone here has a story, everyone here has a struggle.”



Keeping pace with an increased demand for care while also addressing service gaps within the health care system requires the leadership, innovation and expertise of many partners. There is an identified need for collective action, integration among hospital and community providers, and advocacy for resources across the system.



Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sylvia Jones, left, joined us in December 2023 to announce the approval of a new 20-bed acute mental health unit at Waypoint. Also joining us was the Minister of Colleges and Universities and MPP for Simcoe North Jill Dunlop, right. Pictured speaking is our President and CEO, Dr. Nadiya Sunderji. Also pictured is Yvette Brook, Executive Director of the Patient/Client and Family Council.

### New Inpatient Unit

This new 20-bed acute mental health unit at Waypoint is a great example of how we are working as a system of partners to address the growing need for mental health and addiction care in our region. The investment in this unit will enable us as a regional centre to support patients and partners with the specialized and expert care they deserve. The unit will include the first psychiatric ICU beds in central Ontario for individuals with increased risk due to severe mental illness, an important milestone toward delivering safer care and relieving pressures on the emergency departments of eight partner hospitals throughout the region. We are grateful for the support we have received from elected officials and partners across the region, which speaks to our shared commitment to better care for individuals with increasingly complex mental health needs. Construction will begin in early summer 2024 and is expected to take about one year to complete.

### Better Care in a Crisis

Patients and providers alike identify preferable alternatives to the emergency department (ED) for people who are experiencing a mental health crisis. This is why a significant focus of our work is on building an ecosystem of urgent, emergent and crisis mental health and addiction services with our partners. Better co-ordination provides people with the timely access to care they deserve in the community, reduces the strain on hospitals, and improves their experiences of asking for help for their mental health.

ED physicians at several partner hospitals can now access our urgent outpatient psychiatry consultation service, which better serves patients by offering alternatives to a hospital admission when appropriate and connecting them with a timely specialized assessment, advice, and connections to follow-up care and support. Waypoint is also leading work with hospital and community partners to conceptualize and bring forth a new model for comprehensive specialized support in the community for those experiencing a crisis.



Similarly, we are working with partners to improve care in emergency departments (EDs) for people with substance use disorders and better support their treatment after discharge. As a part of this initiative, Dr. Ginette Poulin, Waypoint Medical Director of Concurrent Disorders, is advising ED physicians across the region on standardizing opioid use disorder medications and management.

Dr. Ginette Poulin  
Medical Director - Concurrent Disorders

### Supportive Housing

Housing is health and health care for the people we serve. While the affordable housing crisis is well recognized, there is a further gap in the area of supportive housing. Waypoint is working with partners like LOFT and Shelter Now to provide this essential need, whereby health care and other supports are embedded into the home environment to support people living with severe and persistent mental illnesses and/or substance use disorders to live safely and successfully in the community. Through these amazing partnerships, 21 patients successfully transitioned to living in the community this year.



Minookmii Bear - Indigenous Structured Psychotherapy Program

### Leading and Partnering to Address Gaps in Depression and Anxiety Treatment

The Ontario Structured Psychotherapy (OSP) Program provides free, evidence-based, cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) and related treatments for adults with depression and anxiety-related conditions. The Minookmii program offers the same in a culturally safe way for Indigenous populations. More patients than ever are participating in these treatments and are achieving great results.

Learn more at [therapyontario.ca](https://therapyontario.ca)

“I whole-heartedly recommend CBT to anyone struggling with mental illness. The [OSP Program] and the therapist I worked with helped pull me from the darkness and gave me the tools and confidence to find my light, and for that I am so very, very grateful.”



Being at the forefront of medical and technological innovation positions us well to enhance patient care and outcomes, and attract and retain the best and brightest in the sector. This work is complemented by partnerships and new models of care that promote patient-centredness and lead to the delivery of more effective, efficient and equitable health care.



### Artificial Intelligence

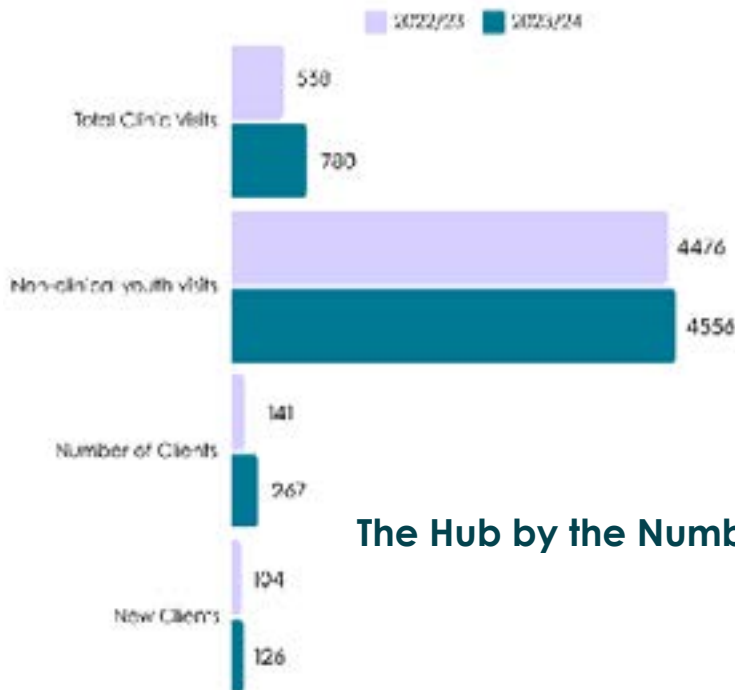
Waypoint's Dr. Andrea Waddell and her team are leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to make care safer for patients through the development of an early warning score system – the first of its kind in a psychiatric hospital. Early warning scores aid in early detection of clinical deterioration. The integration of machine learning algorithms and natural language processing is transforming the landscape of psychiatric care, offering the potential to reduce harms and risks before they unfold. Researchers are making excellent progress in predicting safety risks, showing promising potential to improve patient outcomes. Waypoint is proud to partner on this study with York University.

### North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub

Most mental illnesses begin before 18, and there is a growing awareness of the combined impacts of the pandemic, technology and social media on young people's mental well-being, contributing to a greater need for care. The North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub offers a wide range of services to a growing number of clients aged 12 to 25. The Hub offers services in-person at the Midland Community Health Hub and virtually. Services include mental health and substance use counselling, peer support, employment and education support, primary care, 2S-LGBTQ+ services, housing assistance, a youth drop-in, and a variety of recreation and leisure-based activities, workshops and cultural teachings.

### Academic Partnerships: York, TMU

Waypoint is proud to be supporting the expansion of medical schools in Ontario as a key area where hospitals and post-secondary institutions can collaborate to bring forward new solutions to address health care challenges. We're also partnering on research topics such as mental health, data analytics, machine learning and artificial intelligence.



The Hub by the Numbers

### Specialized Geriatric Services

North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services (NSM SGS) continues to redefine care for frail older adults and caregivers in hospitals, long-term care, and the community through a collaborative hub-and-spoke model. We plan, implement, support and evaluate care centrally while partnering with local providers for delivery. Among the successes in the last year is the introduction of Behaviour Success Agents (BSAs) in North Simcoe Muskoka hospitals to support the assessment and care of older adults with cognitive impairments and behavioural challenges. BSAs have improved care and reduced barriers that prevented these patients from being discharged from hospital.

### Co-ordinated Access

Waypoint is leading the design and creation of co-ordinated access to mental health and addiction services in our region, which will make it easier for individuals to navigate the system and receive timely and co-ordinated care. Prior to the inception of the co-ordinated access initiative provincially, Waypoint also worked with our partners in the Central Ontario Specialized Health (COSH) Network to launch [www.1door.ca](http://www.1door.ca), offering 24/7 access to online appointment bookings at partner organizations and programs, giving youths, adults and families access to free mental health and addiction counselling and support services.

### Did you know?

1 door.ca offers youths, adults and families 24/7 access to book appointments for mental health and addiction counselling and support services.

## Patient/Client & Family Council

The Patient/Client and Family Council (PCFC) is a not-for-profit organization that offers resource information, support, education and navigation support to patients and families. Known also as PCFC Connect, they also partner to provide direct peer support services and advocate for system improvement locally and at the broader regional/provincial level.

All PCFC staff have personal experience with the mental health or addiction system, either directly or supporting a loved one. Because they understand what it is like to live each day being affected by mental illness, their number one objective is ensuring that people living with mental illness and addiction have the best quality of life, both in the hospital and in the community.

As a valued Waypoint partner, the PCFC represents service users on approximately 73 Waypoint and 42 regional committees and working groups focused on mental health and addiction. They gather and share the client and family voice to advocate for system improvements through focus groups, one-on-one interviews, surveys, experience-based co-design and more. This extends beyond the hospital and enables a broader voice to support the work of Waypoint and other organizations across the region.

The council's impact is felt across Waypoint – peer support workers provide service on all hospital units, and council staff help facilitate patient-oriented research, contribute to quality improvement projects and advise on major initiatives.



Alex Charlebois (left) & Carla Hindle of PCFC with an information booth promoting the Partners For Change project, where people come together to learn how to share their experiences and how to get involved with PCFC events.





For 20 years, our Core Value Awards have celebrated staff for being exceptional.

Nominees are recognized by their peers for significant contributions that exemplify our values. Through actions that are simple and special, or grand and complex, we're proud to recognize those whose efforts have made a tremendous impact on patients, clients, care partners and each other.

#### Patient Safety Award



**Dr. Achal Mishra**  
Medical Director Provincial Programs

Dr. Achal Mishra prioritizes patient safety and uses best practices to lead to optimal patient outcomes. Dr. Mishra developed innovative patient-centred methods for the prompt evaluation of patients and set a new benchmark in patient safety. His techniques safeguard individual rights and freedoms and consider the broader emotional well-being of patients.

#### Innovation Award



**Celissa Vipond**  
Clinical Training Coordinator

Celissa Vipond's innovation, creativity and focus on equity helped the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy program reach more people who traditionally face barriers to accessing psychotherapy, including people who are Black, Indigenous, other people of colour, francophone, members of the 2S-LGBTQ+ community and people with disabilities.

#### Teamwork Award - Atrium Canteen Group



**From left to right:** Mike Zablotny (Recreation Therapist), Kate Aben (Occupational Therapist), Shannon Barley (Behavioural Support Specialist), Michelle Molloy (Registered Social Worker), Paul Percival (Clinical Manager), Curtis Gatschuff (Registered Nurse), Hunter Hughes (Registered Social Worker). **Front:** Aaron Siegel (Clinical Multi-faith Chaplain). **Missing:** Steven Glenney (Occupational Therapist), Kyrsten Grimes (Psychologist), Rebecca Wheeler (Registered Nurse), Kristen Wood (Psychometrist)

This group of individuals came together to advocate for the reinstatement of a patient service that had closed, respectfully outlining how the decision was adversely affecting patients. They brought their caring and expertise to find a solution, acknowledging the complexity and constraints of the situation while bringing forth thoughtful reflections on balancing and integrating our values. Their advocacy directly contributed to rethinking the approach to pursue alternative solutions for patients.

#### Leadership Award



**Chad Draper**  
Clinical Director

Chad Draper constantly looks for ways to involve others in positive change. He is a calm, cool and collected leader who is knowledgeable and supportive to those around him. Because of his leadership style, his team are all well versed in how each of their individual roles fulfils the overall objectives of the hospital to benefit patients and staff.

#### Accountability Award



**Mike Walker**  
Employment Specialist

Mike Walker is an ethical and transparent individual. As the backbone for The Pit Stop, a patient-run store, he teaches employment skills and goes out of his way to acquire needed personal items that contribute to patients' comfort and quality of life. He remains calm during challenging times and is the first person to go above and beyond the call of duty to serve patient needs.

#### Psychological Health, Safety and Wellness Award



**Austin Mixemong**  
Traditional Healer

As a Traditional Healer, Austin Mixemong does so much more than his job title suggests. Through his work with the Traumatic Incident Support Team, Austin supported a colleague through a difficult time with compassion, empathy and respect. He helped start the healing process and left a lasting impression on others.

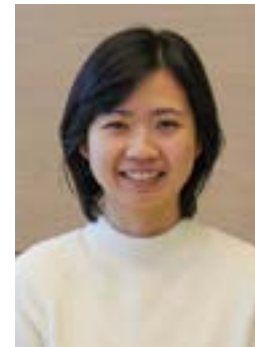
#### Caring Award



**Elisabeth Landry**  
Recreation Therapist

Elisabeth Landry is someone who treats patients and staff with compassionate sensitivity every day. As a recreation therapist, she takes the extra time to help ensure patients are heard and goes the extra mile to help them reach their goals. Lizzy is the first to jump in if anyone needs a helping hand and does so with a smile.

#### Collaboration Award



**Amanda Otting**  
Pharmacist

Amanda Otting is a collaborative individual who worked with many departments to develop a large-scale and multi-faceted hazardous drug exposure control program. Overcoming monumental challenges, Amanda developed education, medical record features and data reports, all having a significant impact on patient and employee health and safety.

#### Respect Award

**Tamara Marion**  
Shift Nurse Manager

Tamara Marion is a quality nurse who sees the inherent worth of every person and treats them with courtesy. She demonstrates compassion for patients and maintains a non-judgmental and empathic approach. Tamara quickly builds therapeutic rapport with patients, advocates for evidence-based patient care and encourages recovery principles.



In November 2023, the Waypoint Research Institute (WRI) recognized a decade of groundbreaking contributions to mental health and substance use research, both locally and globally. This milestone highlighted the pivotal role WRI plays in influencing policy-making and health care practices, and, most importantly, advancing access to evidence-based treatments in partnership with people with lived and living experience of mental illness, empowering them to shape science and care delivery. Noteworthy initiatives from the last year include leveraging artificial intelligence (see p. 10), as well as:

- **Cross-Canada project working to address intimate partner violence**  
Collaborating with police services and universities across the country, this study seeks to establish a common language for assessing and responding to intimate partner violence, including enabling them to better appraise risk, prioritize cases and allocate resources.
- **Building capacity for patient-oriented research in the forensic mental health system**  
In partnership with the University of Saskatchewan's Centre for Behavioural Science and Justice Studies and its partner forensic hospitals, this team is engaging patient partners to understand their care experiences in forensic settings and how to work together when conducting research.
- **Exploring the impacts of pandemic public health measures on people who use opioids and those closest to them**  
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Waypoint is leading and collaborating with specialty mental health hospitals and community organizations to study the effects of public health measures on people who use opioids and their closest supporters, aiming to safeguard lives during future pandemics.

In 2023-24, the WRI recruited a new Research Chair in Forensic Mental Health Science, one of only a handful in the world. The WRI successfully competed for 12 research grants this past year for a total of \$952,816, the most research funding the WRI has received in one year. Funders included the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and the Youth Endowment Fund. In keeping with the hospital's broad expertise in mental health and addiction across the lifespan, the WRI's active projects span the areas of forensic mental health, child and youth mental health, substance use, and implementation science, among others.



Stephanie Munten (left), Research Coordinator, & Nicole Adams, Manager of Research Operations



From left to right: Nicole Adams, Stephanie Munten, Kristy Allen, Dr. Carolyn Houlding, Sevil Dejavon & Stephanie Junes on Women in Science Day



Kristy Allen (left), Knowledge Translation & Implementation Coordinator, & Dr. Barna Konkoly-Thege, Research Psychologist



37

Peer-Reviewed Articles



32

Conference &amp; Event Presentations



35+

Active Projects



12

Research Grants

**A recently published study conducted by the Waypoint Research Institute bears hopeful news for youths whose emotional well-being has been impacted by excessive screen time.**

Research scientist Dr. Soyeon Kim was the study's principal investigator. She and her collaborators — Stephanie Munten, Dr. Barna Konkoly-Thege and Dr. Nathan Kolla — found that a 12-week mindfulness program may reduce hyperactivity and increase psychological health in youth.

Mindfulness is about being in the moment with an accepting, non-judgmental attitude. During the study period, participants were asked to embrace, pay attention to and process their experiences for one hour each week rather than just unconsciously perform them.

"After the mindfulness program, hyperactivity symptoms decreased significantly," said Dr. Kim, noting this applied regardless of the time youths spent in front of screens.

The study was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, and published on [frontiers.org](https://www.frontiersin.org).



**Congratulations** to Dr. Bernard Le Foll, Vice-President, Research and Academics, and Chief Scientific Officer, on being appointed to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) governing council. This prestigious body advises the federal health minister on research matters, and guides CIHR's strategic directions, goals and policies.

Dr. Le Foll was also recently recognized as one of Canada's 10 most cited primary care researchers. With 276 peer reviewed publications and 2,567 first-author citations, Dr. Le Foll is influencing clinical practice, health care policy and patient-oriented outcomes with his research.





◀ Congratulations to the Georgian Bay Family Health Team on winning a “Bright Lights” award from the Association of Family Health Teams of Ontario for “MyDAWN,” a clinical pathway designed to support primary care providers in the assessment, diagnosis and treatment of children and youth with depression and anxiety. Many thanks to Waypoint’s Dr. Rob Meeder, Medical Director of the Family, Child and Youth Program, for co-designing the pathway.



◀ Rehabilitation Services empower patients on their journey to mental health recovery by partnering with them to identify goals and chart a path forward. Offered to both inpatients and outpatients, services such as education, employment support, recreational therapy, personal care services, creative arts therapy and music therapy are helping patients find meaningful hobbies, make connections with their community and set a plan for self-discovery.



▲ We were thrilled to welcome back the family and friends gathering for patients in the forensic mental health programs — a cherished tradition that provides joy, connection and healing for patients and their families.



▶ We raised more than \$150,000 at the 10th annual Shine the Light Gala in December in support of the Waypoint Research Institute. It was an unforgettable evening marked by Susan Aglukark’s mesmerizing performance and the overwhelming generosity of our attendees.



◀ Waypoint is proud to be a part of the joint executive team of the Couchiching Ontario Health Team (OHT). We have strong relationships with a number of organizations that are part of this OHT and are already collaborating in mental health and geriatric care. Our closer involvement with the Couchiching OHT will help strengthen these connections and benefit the people we serve. We’ll continue to support all OHTs across the region with efforts to build capacity and co-ordinate access to specialized services, and to support OHTs based on individual initiatives.



▲ Celebrating our staff, volunteers and patients with the popular summer barbecue. It was a beautiful day for some good food and good company.



▲ Mental Health in Motion 2024 was a huge success, attracting 125 mental health advocates to the Community Health Hub on May 10. Participants enjoyed a free barbecue, explored mental health and wellness booths, embarked on a self-guided walk, and had the opportunity to smudge to cleanse, heal and restore. More than \$13,000 was raised to support community mental health programs including the North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub, Outpatient Assessment and Treatment Service, Mobile Treatment and Support Team, and the Family, Child and Youth Mental Health Program.



◀ Congratulations to Dr. N. Zoe Hilton, Research Chair in Forensic Mental Health Science, on receiving the 2024 Living the Mission Award from the Catholic Health Sponsors of Ontario. Dr. Hilton was recognized for her leadership at Waypoint and beyond and for being a champion for people in positions of vulnerability and Catholic health care. Her role as a mentor, leading the Traumatic Incident Support Team, and leadership in the development of the Ontario Domestic Assault Risk Assessment are just a few examples that stand out in Dr. Hilton’s career.



◀ Our heartfelt congratulations go out to Waypoint President & CEO Dr. Nadiya Sunderji on receiving a Tomorrow’s National Leaders Award from the Catholic Health Alliance of Canada. The awards are presented to leaders who demonstrate outstanding leadership in their organization and whose talents and gifts contribute to the ministry at a national level. Dr. Sunderji is guided by the vision that health care is not just about treating ailments, but also about fostering dignity and hope. In accepting the award, she noted it is a privilege to lead an organization with such a strong collective commitment to service in keeping with the mission and values of Catholic health care, and that together, we are striving to meet the needs of today and to lead and innovate for a brighter future.



# Shining More Light

Waypoint donors know how important it is for people in distress to be seen, heard and supported – and they know that we will embrace every opportunity to help make life better for the people of our region and beyond.

Avery Bassett is one of those thoughtful donors, who tells us that as a police officer for almost 30 years, she has seen how the issues of mental health and addiction can impact people in our community in many ways. “I feel passionate about trying to help. I'd also like to help end the stigma for the people who seek help. In my world, I see what lies underneath. I have seen what a big difference the programs and treatment offered by Waypoint can make to people.”

Avery reflects that, “everyone has been touched by the work of Waypoint, whether they know it or not.”

Your family, your friends, someone at work – anyone can struggle, and all can be touched by the issues of mental health and addiction at some point in their lives. Avery continues, “Why do we allow people to feel stigma, just for asking for help? It's a strong and healthy thing to ask for help. It doesn't make any sense to blame people who are already suffering alone. This is where Waypoint comes in. They have the experience to help the community have clear, open, positive discussions.” She states, “I always tell others that Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care brings the same kind of support to people in need as any hospital would bring. Physical and mental health are both just health. Period.”

Avery points out that for donors, it is quite simple to make a big impact when your gift of any amount “can help to bring more light into the world. I've seen how donor investments in Waypoint's programs make a huge difference in people's lives.”

She points out that Waypoint is much more than a building. “It's a huge number of community programs and positive outreach directed at children, youth, schools, families, adults, and increasingly seniors dealing with the many issues of aging. In my work I know well that there are incredible needs right here in your own backyard. And I know that when you give, you can bring so much hope and care to those who are struggling.”

As an active supporter and longtime member of the community, Avery concludes, “I know that Waypoint has well over 100 years of being at the forefront of partnering across the region with local hospitals, mental health and addiction community services, health care worker training programs, and leading mental health and addiction researchers. And it's all with one simple goal in mind – to help give the very best in care for generations of people in need.”

Avery Bassett - Orillia, Longtime Monthly Donor



## Annual Supporters

Waypoint is grateful for the significant contributions of donors and sponsors whose support has played a crucial role in improving mental health and addiction care, treatment and research across the region. Their generosity has positively impacted the lives of countless individuals on their journey to wellness. We are thankful for their commitment through donations of \$150+ made between April 1, 2023, and March 31, 2024.

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Waypoint's fundraising events bring caring people together to make a meaningful impact in supporting programs, services, and research for mental health and addiction. Thanks to everyone who participated in Mental Health in Motion and the Shine the Light Gala.

### Shine the Light Gala Sponsors 2023

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At Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care, we champion the boundless potential of healing and recovery amidst some of life’s greatest challenges. We believe that, directly or indirectly, mental health affects us all, but within every struggle lies the opportunity for growth and resilience.

Offering unwavering support, we guide individuals through their darkest moments with compassion and excellence. We challenge the stigma surrounding mental illness and addiction, and strive to foster a world where every person is embraced with understanding, acceptance and empowerment.

With hope as the guiding light, we believe in the transformative power of therapeutic relationships, inspiring each individual to reclaim their lives and rewrite their stories. No challenge is too great, and no triumph too small: we believe every journey contains the promise of a better future.

Waypoint serves some of the most marginalized and vulnerable individuals in our communities. We have 155 regional inpatient beds for individuals from central Ontario who require acute assessment and short-term crisis intervention or specialized care for their dual diagnosis (developmental disability and mental illness), concurrent disorder (substance use disorder and mental illness), or severe and persistent mental illness. Our regional services also include psychogeriatric services and general forensic mental health services for people of all genders.

We are the sole provider of high-secure forensic mental health services in Ontario. With 160 beds, these programs provide comprehensive care to men from across the province who have a severe mental illness and have become involved with the criminal justice system. Our interdisciplinary teams provide assessments, care and treatment to decrease risk, eliminate suffering and increase quality of life.

Many of Waypoint’s outpatient and community services are offered at the Community Health Hub in Midland. These include treatment programs, employment, education and therapeutic recreation supports, as well as the mobile treatment and support team, the Family, Child & Youth Mental Health Program and the North Simcoe Youth Wellness Hub. Other community programs located around the region or provided virtually include the North Simcoe Muskoka Specialized Geriatric Services, Ontario Structured Psychotherapy and Frontline Wellness.

Financial



Katie Palmer, Employment Specialist Rehabilitation Services, selling spring flowers as part of the new patient employment training partnership.



Kristi Lalonde (left) of Strategic Communications and Shelly Price of Fund Development and organizer of the 2024 Mental Health in Motion event.



Elnaz Moghimi (left) and Sevil Dijavan from the Waypoint Research Institute

31,734  
Total number of visits  
(in hospital, community  
settings and virtually)

315  
Beds

47 years  
Average age of patients  
served

1,300+  
Staff

58 days  
Average length of stay for  
regional programs

910  
Admissions

949.5 days  
Average length of stay for  
provincial forensic mental  
health programs

919  
Discharges



Waypoint is governed by a skills-based community Board of Directors, which provides strategic oversight and guidance to ensure the effective and efficient delivery of mental health, addiction and geriatric care. Waypoint and the volunteer Board of Directors actively engage with the community through a variety of public events as part of our commitment to strengthen the care system and the communities we serve.



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First Vice-Chair



**Dr. Howard Barbaree**  
Second Vice-Chair



**Morana Bakula**



**Gail Czukar**



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Vice-President, Medical  
Affairs, & Chief of Staff



**A Waypoint is a reference point for navigation, whether nautical or in finding your way on a road or journey.**

Waypoint Centre for Mental Health Care is situated on beautiful Georgian Bay, a nautical location that captures the healing power often associated with water.

It represents a safe harbour, a guiding light or safe stopping point during a storm, helping define the hospital's role in the journey of treatment and recovery from mental illness.

### **Mission**

We are a Catholic hospital committed to providing excellence in specialized mental health and addiction services grounded in research and education and guided by faith-based values.

### **Vision**


As an inspired organization, we will change lives by leading the advancement and delivery of compassionate care.

### **Values**

Caring - Respect - Accountability - Innovation



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