

**SMITHS FALLS NURSE PRACTITIONER-LED CLINIC
ANNUAL REPORT
October 22, 2020
For period covering
October 01, 2019 – September 30, 2020**

**Message from Brenda Louttit-Bunker NP-PHC, MSN
Nurse Practitioner Lead**

This report covers the period October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2020. The Smiths Falls Nurse Practitioner- Led Clinic currently operates one site on Abbott Street in Smiths Falls. We are now in our 8th year of operation and we continue to be a not-for-profit organization.

In addition to Nurse Practitioners, our Allied Health Professional team consists of two Registered Nurses, a Social Worker, a Registered Dietitian, a Pharmacist, and a Physician Consultant. Our administrative support staff consists of one Administrative Assistant and two Medical Receptionists.

Staffing

The Clinic has had some staffing changes over the last year. We had a 3-month vacancy in one Nurse Practitioner role and have since been replaced therefore we are back to a full complement of 4 FTEs. There was also maternity coverage for our Registered Dietician who has since returned. We were short-staffed for three and one-half months in the Nursing department and were fortunate to hire a temporary Registered Nurse.

The new co-lead model of Nurse Practitioner and Administrative Lead over the past year has proven effective. I cover clinical aspects while Leeann does all the administration work. We have focused on improving our policies and medical directives, and to also obtain regular constructive feedback from staff and patients alike. Our goal is to enhance our employee environment through equitable treatment of staff and to ensure all staff are practicing to their full scope. For example, a new medical directive for our Pharmacist to enable active participation in our Flu Clinics and expansion in role for one of our receptionists to utilize her experience in the Privacy Act. We have kept the best interest of the organization at heart through risk mitigation. We are continuously learning and growing as a team.

Programs

Our team provides primary health care services to individual patients and families as well as providing several programs aimed at assisting patients in their health journeys. The programs include: Well-Baby visits, Immunizations, Flu Clinics, Desensitization injections, Prenatal, Hypertension, Lung Health, Diabetes, STOP (smoking cessation), Craving Change, Chronic Disease Management; including the use of social media (for example Facebook).

Patients

At present, the Clinic has a total of approximately 2550 patients for a funded 4.0 FTE NPs. Over the past year, there were a total of 16,432 patient encounters to see one or a combination of our Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, and Allied Health Professionals. Of those patients 117 required

consults between the Nurse Practitioner and collaborative physician; however, none of the patients required direct care by the collaborative physician. Also, out of those total patient encounters, 9,594 were repeat visits. This 58% repeat rate is indicative of the complexity of our patients. Not only do we see patients on-site we also do home visits and there were 66 encounters over this past year. We do our best for same day or next day appointment slots and we are approximately at a 25% rate for this.

We are actively registering patients to our Clinic and our target is 3200. We continue to run short of our target and an ongoing challenge is that people have not heard about our Clinic and our Nurse Practitioner model of care. Some continue to believe that the traditional model of care is the only option (for example, physicians and fee-for-service).

Community

We have actively put ourselves out in the community. We attended the Delegation Meeting at the Town Hall on March 02, 2020 where Leeann represented our Clinic well. Our Administrative Assistant joined the Complex Rounds, a program to bring community and hospital resources together to improve patient care. One of our Registered Nurses participates in the Palliative Care Group, which looks to bridge community- and hospital-based care. Our Social Worker has teamed up with Rideau Community Health Services, providing short-term counselling services to their patients at our Clinic. We continue to have a collaborative relationship with North Lanark Community Health Centre in that we have access to their Registered Respiratory Therapist through the Lung Health Program. Our Administrative Lead is involved in several community collaborations and she will expand on that. I, the Nurse Practitioner Lead, have signed on to the Primary Care Asthma Program Advisory group, a lung health foundation with a multidisciplinary team, from all areas of Ontario. We are continually trying to expand on our knowledge base.

Students

The Clinic continued their close ties with the University of Ottawa, Queen's, and Athabasca. Our professional staff provides placements and mentorship for Nurse Practitioner and Registered Nurse students. The Clinic supports the early introduction of students to allied health care team practice and collaboration.

Covid-19 Pandemic

As we all know, the Covid-19 pandemic wreaked havoc around the world. The negative impact of this pandemic brought about positive changes in our work environment in that our overall communication continued to be effective and our teamwork did not falter. Our Clinic remained functioning throughout the whole pandemic. We never closed our doors. Our staff continued to attend work on-site. Our hours of operation did not change. We adapted our way of providing care to include the use of phones for telephone and virtual appointments. These modes of appointments enabled a flexibility for our staff in that if any Nurse Practitioner needed to be at home for whatever reason, our 'mobile' provision of care was uninterrupted and they would be able to work from home. This helped to ensure even workload amongst our Nurse Practitioners.

Our Registered Nurse(s) continued to provide in-person appointments for all the Well-Baby visits including immunizations and our Allergy clinics for de-sensitization injections. The last thing we needed was to expose babies and children to preventable diseases, and we wanted to ensure control of allergy symptoms in children and adults since those symptoms may mimic Covid-19.

All in-person meetings and workshops were initially put on hold however have since been up and running, incorporating online platforms for virtual attendance. For example, Microsoft Teams and Zoom.

I am not saying it was always easy. Several logistics came to light, for example the number of patients without phone or computer access, and patients who could not navigate technology. The active engagement from the whole team provided support in many areas of clinic function and patient care.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank our patients who put their trust in us to advocate for them; our families for their support while we endeavor to provide quality patient care; and the citizens of the Smiths Falls area for their continued support of the clinic. We are very grateful to the dedicated staff who work hard and who also go above standard expectations, to provide quality patient care. Additionally, we acknowledge the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and in providing our Clinic the funding that enables the provision of quality and comprehensive primary health care to our patients.