

October 23, 2024

**SMITHS FALLS NURSE PRACTITIONER-LED CLINIC
ANNUAL REPORT
September 30, 2023-September 30, 2024**

**Message from Leeann Langdon,
Smiths Falls Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic
Administrative Lead**

This report covers the period September 30, 2023, to September 30, 2024. The Smiths Falls Nurse Practitioner- Led Clinic currently operates one site on Abbott Street in Smiths Falls. We are now in our 13th year of operation, and we deliver comprehensive primary care to the people of Smiths Falls and surrounding community.

In addition to Nurse Practitioners, the Clinical care team includes 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 healthcare human resource recruitment challenges over the last year, and challenges continue as the cost of living continues to rise and the staffing wages gaps persist, reflecting rates that are significantly lower for the same work in other areas of healthcare. We have had vacancies in the Registered Nurse role, Pharmacy and Social Worker role. Staffing has somewhat stabilized, however we continue to have an unfilled 1.0 FTE NP Lead position. We continue to care for the current registered clients, despite a full time Nurse Practitioner vacancy.

Over the last year we have focused on improving our policies and medical directives, while obtaining regular constructive feedback from staff and patients. The Clinic's goal is to maintain the current employee environment and culture through equitable treatment and workload through supporting all staff to expand training where necessary to maintain their full scope of practice.

Programs

The team provides primary health care services to individual patients and families as well as programs aimed at preventative care and chronic disease management. Programs include Well-Baby visits, Immunizations, Flu Clinics, Desensitization injections, Prenatal, Hypertension, Lung Health, Diabetes education, Chronic Disease Management and self- advocacy.

Patients

At present, the Clinic has a total of 2900 registered patients. Funding continues as it was initially awarded in 2012. Over the past year, the total number of appointments continues to rise, with 20,327 to see one provider or a combination of the Nurse Practitioners, Registered Nurses, and Allied Health Professionals. This reflects the demographic of an aging population with multiple complex

health care needs. None of the patients required direct care by the collaborative physician over the past year, however the Nurse Practitioners do seek consults from time to time, and there have been 4 Nurse Practitioner consults with the physician.

Of the total patient encounters, 89% of the registered clients have been seen in the last year. Much of the planning related to the schedule and client care leverages various methods to ensure clients have access to appointments when needed for same day or next day visits, making up approximately 25% of appointment availability.

We are actively registering patients to the Clinic. The registered patient target is 3150. We continue to see many people of all ages moving into and out of the community quickly, for various reasons, related to social factors that include employment or underemployment, cost of living, and resources, etc.

Community

We continue to engage the Smiths Falls Council at delegations to the Committee of the Whole. The most recent was June of 2024 where the Board Chair and local Nurse Practitioner, Nicole Smith presented about the evolving scope of the Nurse Practitioner in healthcare, highlighting the Clinic's success in providing quality primary care to residents of the community since 2012.

The Administrative Assistant continues to attend Complex Rounds, a task force of healthcare navigation staff, connecting community and hospital resources to improve patient care through cross sector communication.

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. The Administrative Lead is involved in several community collaborations through the Lanark Leeds Grenville Ontario Health Team to address local challenges relating to residents without primary care, healthcare equity, and the Primary Care Network Working Group that supports local healthcare providers.

Students

The Clinic continued their close ties with the University of Ottawa, Queen's, and Athabasca University to support Nurse Practitioner practicum placements, and aims to support students in the Registered Nurse Program as well. The Clinic supports the early introduction of students to allied health care team practice models and collaboration as an option for future employment opportunities.

Post COVID-19 Operations

Although the COVID-19 pandemic is not behind us, there have been some practice and workflow adaptations that have had a positive impact on overall operations at the clinic that benefit both staff and clients. All in-person meetings and workshops have taken a hybrid model approach post COVID-19. This helps maximize the use of resources so multiple staff can take advantage of group training in either in-person or virtual connection via Teams and Zoom which has minimized travel time and helps to balance work life demands and reduces overall stress.

Workflows and Planning

We continue with flexible modes of appointments for both staff and clients to support Nurse Practitioners working at home, if need be, as well as the onboarding of online appointment booking for clients this past October. Online booking statistics will continue to be reviewed in terms of usage and will remain an option while funding is supported.

The Registered Nurse(s) continue to provide in-person appointments for Well-Baby visits including immunizations, Allergy clinics for de-sensitization injections. Currently the senior RN is taking the RN prescribing course. Work will be done to assess best use of these enhanced skills to ensure clients are seen by the most appropriate staff.

We continue to look at access as one of the main priorities of the SFNPLC. As such, we are embarking on embedding more of the principles of *Advanced Access and Efficiency*. We will provide updates at regular board meeting as work progresses.

Strategic Direction

The clinic has finished the leadership annual evaluations for the 2024 year, as well as the Board evaluations to identify strengths and areas of focus for the upcoming year and is looking at creative ways to leverage the individual members' expertise, and ways to enhance board training in a way that involves other community organizations. The Board has welcomed 3 new community members and 1 returning Nurse Practitioner working in the community. The current strategic plan runs from 2022-2025, and will continue to focus on health equity, community partnerships, and an environment that supports delivering quality services.

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank the clinic 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 people of the Smiths Falls and area for their continued support of the clinic.

We are very grateful to the dedicated staff who work hard while exceeding expectations to provide quality patient care. Additionally, we acknowledge the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and

Ontario Health in providing the Clinic funding that enables the provision of quality and comprehensive primary health care to patients.

Please see accompanying infographic highlighting clinical care statistics