

ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

Department of Psychiatry

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY



mission & vision

Excellence and innovation in education, research, and psychiatric care.

Our mission is to improve the mental health of society and advance the field of psychiatry through education, research, advocacy, and psychiatric care.

in this report



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This report covers the period of April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, with the exception of the education report, which covers the academic year, July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020. Photography has been provided by Nick Pearce (Dalhousie) and Kate Rogers (Dalhousie).



message from the interim department head



In reflecting on the past academic year, the last month dominates the previous eleven. The COVID-19 pandemic has completely shut down the world and dramatically shifted the way we live and work. It is very difficult to know how long it will last, but it seems that its impact will be felt far beyond the phase of infectious threat.

The speed with which the situation evolved was breathtaking. COVID-19 moved from a concern in another part of the world at the beginning of March to one that shut down our province only days later. On Friday, March 13, as many of our faculty were preparing to take their long-planned winter holiday, I was sending out urgent messages to cancel all plans and not to leave the province. It was too late for 15 of our faculty and residents who were stranded for a period outside of Canada. Our clinical, educational, and research activities had to rapidly adapt and continue to adapt, to a situation that seems to evolve daily. I am extremely proud of how we reacted to this crisis.

Within two weeks, the IWK had moved all their ambulatory care staff (and their computers) home and began to provide care virtually, reducing the risk of viral infection to our patients and staff. The NSHA services followed suit over the next three weeks. The cooperation, creativity and determination to accomplish this task was extraordinary. There has been a spirit of cooperation and positivity throughout our planning and adaptations so far that has been truly inspiring. Our partnerships and relationships with other groups in the hospital and across the province have gelled and it feels like everyone is working together towards the same goals. Projects that have been moving slowly for years, like virtual care and e-mental health resources, were immediately funded and green-lit. Thus, despite the uncertainty

and massive disruption there are new work realities taking shape that I don't think we will ever want to change.

The rapid move to phone and video visits with patients has been embraced by clinicians and patients alike. It is suddenly obvious how we can start to address the problem of serving remote and rural areas of our zone and province. Even our group-based clinical programs are learning how to move things online. Our educational activities have shifted to a video platform including all rounds and all resident teaching. For now, the clinical clerks have been sent home, but other undergraduate teaching has also shifted to an online platform. Our departmental meetings have never had better attendance, and they run more efficiently since moving online.

It has been a more difficult transition for our research faculty, but even they have found a way to make lemonade from the lemons of the pandemic situation. All research that required face-to-face contact (most of our research) has been stopped. Immediately a number of our researchers got together to create research proposals to study different aspects of the pandemic's impact on patients and healthcare workers. We convened a special iteration of our Dalhousie Psychiatric Research Fund that opened, received submissions, reviewed them, and awarded four

grants all within two weeks. We are optimistic that our teams will be successful in both the provincial and federal COVID-related grant competitions in the weeks to come.

Although it is hard to remember now, the year has not been all COVID! We signed a new AFP contract in the fall with salary increases that begin to address our gap with national averages. We recruited many new physicians so some of our teams are working with a full complement of staff for the first time in years. We finished a strategic planning process that involved extensive consultation with the whole faculty by November, and in January we began to operationalize the plan, again with broad participation from faculty, residents and community partners. Our senior leadership continues to enjoy a good relationship with NSHA leadership both at the zone and provincial level. Our faculty is involved in important provincial planning including the development of a new provincial model for Community Mental Health and Addictions services, and the provincial mental health and addictions strategic plan.

With a mix of sadness, gratitude and good wishes we said goodbye to Dr. Michael Teehan as he stepped down as department head in December after nearly forty years of service to the department. A search to find a new head is underway.

Our residency program continues to thrive under the leadership of Drs. Mark Bosma and Sherry James, filling all our residency positions in the first round of CaRMS, including a significant number of Dalhousie graduates. Our first cohort of residents in the new Competency Based Medical Education model begin in July.

Our research group also had a banner year. Our faculty won four CIHR grants in extremely tight competitions, as well as several other national and provincial grants. Our department continues to distinguish itself at the university with its strength in research. Read about the activities of our many research chairs inside this report.

As we move through uncertain waters, I feel confident that our strong, creative and resilient faculty will see us through the pandemic and on to greater strengths in the year to come.

Dr. Jason Morrison, MD, FRCPC
Interim Head, Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University
Interim Chief, Department of Psychiatry, NSHA Central Zone

a year in review

The Department of Psychiatry is a clinical academic department within the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We're home to nearly 250 faculty located across the province, country and even some around the world. Locally, faculty work out of the Queen Elizabeth II (QEII) Health Sciences Centre, the IWK Health Centre, the East Coast Forensic Hospital, the Nova Scotia Hospital, the Operational Stress Injury Clinic, and various community clinics in the province.

250
faculty members

21
cross-appointed
faculty

16
adjunct
faculty

Education

40 residents received 378 hours of instruction from 62 faculty members.

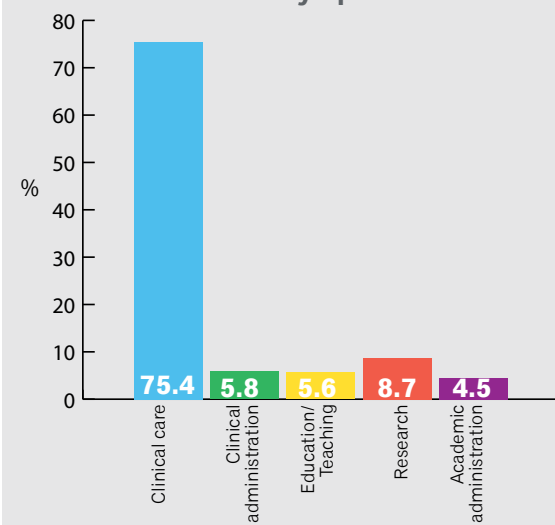
- 8 applicants matched in the first round of CaRMS, including 6 Dalhousie graduates
- 4 child and adolescent psychiatry subspecialty residents
- 2 geriatric psychiatry subspecialty residents
- 37 rounds sessions, 11 by visiting speakers

111 core students rotated through our services at traditional clerkship sites

- 1,443 Teaching hours to undergraduate medical education
- 147 Elective requests

\$7,850 in medical education grant funding from 2 grants

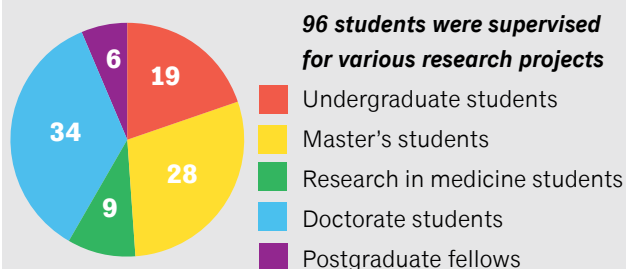
How our AFP faculty spend their time



Research

\$4,673,583 in new grant money
\$20,762,174 in continuing grant money

- 28 faculty members were actively engaged in research
- A total of 115 peer reviewed journal articles, 85 abstracts, 12 book chapters were produced by faculty



Psychiatrists and researchers Drs. Tomas Hajek (left) and Martin Alda.

Patient Care

83,214

days were spent in adult inpatient services

17,236

Mental Health Mobile Crisis Telephone (MHMCT) Line interventions

4,403

days spent in child and adolescent acute inpatient services

4,821

days spent in child and adolescent residential inpatient services

1,641

discharges from adult inpatient care (includes 182 from ECFH)

2,585

visits to the Psych ER

286

discharges from child and adolescent acute inpatient services

115

discharges from child and adolescent residential inpatient services

137,523

visits to adult outpatient services (does not include MHMCT and Psych ER)

48,690

visits to child and adolescent outpatient services

our mission statement in action

The Department of Psychiatry's mission is to improve the mental health of society and advance the field of psychiatry through education, research, advocacy, and psychiatric care. Here we highlight some of our faculty who are bringing that mission to life.

Educate.

Discover.

Heal.

Educate.

combining education and research



Dr. Lara Hazelton

Adaptable and dependable. That is how our Director of Education, Dr. Margaret Rajda, describes Dr. Lara Hazelton. Dr. Hazelton is the director of continuing professional development (CPD) in the Department of Psychiatry and has held numerous academic leadership roles over the years. She has been deeply involved in education since she joined the department 20 years ago and has

recently taken her love of education and parleyed it into a research project related to her role with the department.

Teaching or medicine – it was a toss-up for Dr. Hazelton when she applied for medical school after her undergrad. She had applied for her Bachelor of Education at the same time, but ultimately entered medical school, and postgraduate training in psychiatry.

After finishing her residency, Dr. Terry Chisholm encouraged her to join the Department of Psychiatry undergraduate medical education committee. Heeding that advice, she joined the committee and was a member for nearly 10 years. This was her first exposure to education administration and curriculum development, and it afforded her the

I count myself lucky that I don't mind writing, which is essential to a successful academic career.

”



Dr. Lara Hazelton speaking at Academic Day 2019

opportunity to meet educators outside the department.

At first, her focus was primarily on undergraduate medical education (UGME), and she did a lot of teaching and tutoring in the medical student curriculum, first holding the position of psychiatry component head for Clinical Skills, or Patient-Doctor as it was called then. She was cross appointed to the Division of Medical Education in 2009 where she was involved with the Program in Health and Medical Education Research (PHMER). The same year, she started her Master of Education at Acadia University, officially combining both her love of education and her love of medicine.

“Looking back,” she says, “this was a turning point for me professionally. Since then, education scholarship and administration have been my primary academic activities.”

It was also around this time that Dr. Hazelton was named the first humanities coordinator for the Department of Psychiatry, a position she held for five years. In this role she acted as a liaison to Dalhousie University's internationally recognized Medical Humanities Program. She advocated for the humanities within the department, ensured distribution of news and information regarding events of the Medical Humanities Program, arranged preceptors for elective

students, and collaborated with partners at the medical school and in the community. She also stepped back from UGME to concentrate on continuing professional development and started becoming actively involved in education research and scholarship. Since 2013, she has been the director of academic faculty development for the Faculty of Medicine, responsible for providing programs to the entire medical school faculty, over 1800 members. In 2017 she became the director of continuing professional development for the Department of Psychiatry.

In addition to participating in professional development to improve

her teaching skills, Dr. Hazelton regularly reads education literature to inform the work she does as a curriculum designer and program developer. When she encounters new theories or approaches, she carefully considers how they can be incorporated into her work for the medical school and the Department of Psychiatry. She also makes program evaluation a regular part of the work she does and aims for continuous improvement in the quality of offerings. She looks for opportunities to disseminate ideas or findings that she thinks might be helpful to others through presentations at conferences and publications in medical journals.

Dr. Hazelton, who has passion for education scholarship, is working with other department members on a research study related to her work in education. “One of the most important CPD activities in the department is the weekly academic rounds,” she says. “In addition to the content that is covered, there is a ‘hidden curriculum’ associated with grand rounds that relates to the academic life of our department.” She is the principal investigator on a study entitled, *Perceptions regarding the communication skills of grand rounds presenters; does gender play a role?* Mandy Esliger, and Drs. Heather Milliken and Kim Good, are co-investigators on the project, which is supported by a Faculty of Medicine Living Lab Grant. “We plan to expand the project to include other program evaluation data and hope to use what

we learn to improve our grand rounds and enhance career development for department members.”

Part of Dr. Hazelton's interest in scholarly activity comes from her desire to look for patterns and meaning in the work she does and relate them to the body of knowledge that exists in the education literature. She finds it especially satisfying when she can take the next step of sharing findings or perspectives with others through publications and dissemination at conferences. “There is a broad community of medical educators out there,” she says. “Joining in discussions with them, either in person or through my writings, is the single most fun and rewarding aspect of education scholarship.” The process is not always easy though, she admits, with frustrations arising over funding applications, ethics approval, and collecting data. “Also, it's not fun getting rejections from funding agencies and journals, though I know that's part of the process,” she says. “I count myself lucky that I don't mind writing, which is essential to a successful academic career.”

Through her time at Dalhousie, Dr. Hazelton has worn many hats, always adjusting to new challenges and opportunities flawlessly. “She doesn't miss a beat,” says Dr. Rajda. “She's very flexible and has adapted to change very smoothly.”

Dr. Hazelton has worked hard to get to where she is, and readily offers advice to those wishing to pursue a

similar path. “For those who are new to medical education, attending an education conference can be a good introduction to the topics and trends in the field,” she says. “If you want to make medical education a significant part of your career, I would recommend joining one of the Department of Psychiatry education committees as a first step.” Perhaps surprisingly, while some practical experience of teaching is essential, she advises against spending too much time on it if you want to pursue a career as a clinician educator. “While teaching may be rewarding on a personal level,” she says, “there are other education-related activities that count more when you are considering academic promotion or seeking administrative positions.” These include creating curriculum, developing and evaluating innovations, participating in change initiatives such as the introduction of CBME, or conducting education research and scholarship. She also cautions people of the investment of time outside of regular working hours. “I am fortunate to have reached a point in my career where I have protected time, but there were many years of ‘paying my dues’ to reach this point,” she recalls.

Though not consistently smooth sailing, Dr. Hazelton is grateful for the path she chose. “While it has not always been easy, I can honestly say my involvement with medical education has made for a more rewarding and enjoyable career in psychiatry.”

Discover.



Drs. Igor Yakovenko and Sherry Stewart discuss a project in her lab.

These partners bring together the necessary scientific and practical knowledge, methodological expertise, lived experience, and knowledge sharing capacity to tackle this critical social issue in a manner that no one group could alone.

”

Project targets university substance misuse

Canadian university undergraduates have alarmingly high rates of risky patterns of alcohol, cannabis, and prescription drug use. This substance misuse has harmful short and long-term effects that negatively impact students, their friends and families, and their communities. Harmful effects can include academic struggles and even university drop-out. These persisting high rates of substance misuse reflect a lack of effectiveness

of universal, one-size-fits-all prevention programs currently used by Canadian universities. Prevention programs that are targeted and personalized to the characteristics of vulnerable students are greatly needed.

Enter Univenture—a research partnership with one goal: to adapt, test, and begin sharing an effective, sustainable targeted wellness program to tackle the timely health issue of

heavy drinking and other substance misuse on Canadian campuses. Developed by department member Dr. Sherry Stewart and her colleague Dr. Patricia Conrod at the University of Montreal, Univenture is adapted from their already highly effective substance abuse prevention program for high school students. Preventure is a targeted, personality-matched substance use prevention and mental health program offered in junior and

senior high schools.

“We reasoned that [an adaptation of Preventure] could really help with the problems regarding substance misuse that are so prevalent on university campuses like binge drinking and prescription drug misuse,” says Dr. Stewart of the idea. Aptly named Univenture to reflect the focus on the university population, the program is a five-year, multi-site, controlled study involving first and second year undergraduate students at five representatively diverse Canadian university sites: Dalhousie University,

St. Francis Xavier University, Université de Montreal, York University, and University of British Columbia-Okanagan. Researchers will test a program targeting personality traits linked to substance misuse. The earlier version of this program, Preventure, led to marked reductions in substance use and distress in adolescents, and in several clinical trials around the world, that reduction was by 30-80 per cent. Despite this, the Univenture trial was not initially funded. Not until April 2019, when it was submitted as a partnership grant with Student Services at each of

the universities involved, was it finally funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

The novel objectives of Univenture are to examine the program's effects on substance use and distress among emerging adults; uptake of prescription drug use given the opioid crisis; and undergraduates' academic success. In parallel, they will assess two versions of the program: a face-to-face and an innovative and accessible technology-assisted distance-delivery format, both compared to availability of normal campus services alone. All

three arms of the trial will be carried out at each of the five sites. At each site, a clinical postdoctoral fellow will be certified as a program trainer and will supervise graduate students in clinical psychology in delivering the in-person and distance-delivered intervention groups to at-risk first- and second-year undergraduate students. The researchers will then examine immediate and short-term follow-up outcomes on substance use, mental health, and academic outcomes. Dr. Stewart notes feeling very fortunate that the trial contains a distance delivery arm given the need for such a delivery format during pandemic times.

The Univenture partnership is far-reaching, with involvement from: social science experts specializing in substance misuse, emerging adulthood (ages 18-25), and barriers to undergrad academic achievement; university student affairs units, student-led organizations, and in-house professional training clinics; and other methodological and national partner organizations. "These partners bring together the necessary scientific and practical knowledge, methodological expertise, lived experience, and knowledge sharing capacity to tackle this critical social and health issue in a manner that no one group could alone," says Dr. Stewart.

Univenture will also impact student training and knowledge sharing opportunities. "With a diversity of academic and non-academic partners and an integrative knowledge sharing approach, we will share results

with many audiences throughout the project," says Dr. Stewart. "The academic researchers have recognized expertise in training and mentoring students. Further, trainees will be exposed to many opportunities and settings both inside and outside of the university in which to apply their research skills to substance misuse prevention." Students from participating student groups at each site will help with sharing information about the program and encouraging student attendance. There will be research assistant opportunities for undergraduate summer students to help prepare feedback from the student surveys. There will also be clinical training opportunities for graduate students to deliver the interventions to students in person or remotely, as well as research opportunities for students to work with the large database that will be generated to answer questions pertaining to undergraduate substance use, risk taking, mental health, academic achievement and their interrelations.

Dr. Stewart, who is the project director, is also working with other Dalhousie faculty members on the project. Fellow department member, Dr. Igor Yakovenko, co-leads the Data Management and Analysis working group, while Dr. Stewart's research associate in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Dr. Raquel Nogueira-Arjona, co-leads the Distance Delivery Adaptation working group. Dr. Stewart says there are also opportunities available

for trainees from the Department of Psychiatry, both clinically and in research. Interested graduate students or psychiatry residents could conduct research projects on data collected, while the residents could also obtain relevant clinical experience in CBT and motivational interviewing by participating as a supervised group facilitator.

Univenture could have a dramatic effect on university policies on the prevention of substance misuse on Canadian campuses by helping partners appreciate the effectiveness of targeted and personalized approaches and leveraging partners' expansive networks to inform other Canadian universities. A successful technology-assisted distance-delivered program will provide universities with an effective, relatively low-cost, and accessible tool to intervene with risky substance use behaviors in undergraduates. A successful program for at-risk students will also profoundly impact their academic performance and goal achievement, as well as their lives beyond university.

For those interested in learning more, Dr. Stewart and her team are working on development of a Univenture website. In the meantime, if you have questions or would like to get involved please contact Dr. Stewart at [sstewart@dal.ca](mailto:ssewart@dal.ca).

Heal.

provincial eating disorders service

The provincial service will allow someone who presents with an eating disorder anywhere in the province to be assessed and treated with consistent, evidence-based care in their own zone, or transferred to the Central Zone program if more treatment intensity is needed.



Members of the NSHA eating disorders team.

In April 2015 when the province consolidated its nine district health authorities under one, the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA), and partnered with the IWK Health Centre, senior leadership wanted speciality services to gradually develop a provincial service that would be consistent across the province. Aiming to create a foundation to provide better healthcare, the process was first initiated in the Early Psychosis Program. Now, faculty members Drs. Aaron Keshen and Herb Orlik are working together as co-leads on a plan to create the Nova Scotia Provincial Service for Eating Disorders.

The IWK and NSHA eating disorder programs are currently quite different. At the IWK, the program is strictly an outpatient service, with three components: a subspecialty clinic, a community mental health clinic consisting of specially qualified staff with dedicated time for eating disorders treatment, and a training/sustainability component (ongoing training of clinicians in evidence-based



Co-lead of the provincial program, Dr. Aaron Keshen, works with a patient in the eating disorders program.

care such as FBT (family-based treatment), CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy), and mentoring of clinicians in practice. The program was revamped in 2015 as part of a restructuring of specialty clinics, and in response to identified operational issues. It utilizes psychiatry, specially trained nurses, a psychologist, dietitian, and social workers, as well as trainees from all these disciplines. If a patient receives an eating disorder diagnosis after an extensive assessment process, the patient and their family work with the eating disorders team to develop an appropriate treatment plan consisting of FBT, CBT-E (enhanced cognitive behavioural therapy), and more recently, CBT-T (a shortened version of CBT-E). These treatments may at times be augmented with ACT (acceptance and commitment therapy) or EFFT

(emotion-focused family therapy). Hospital admissions to the inpatient unit occur when there is medical instability, and last only until medical stability is attained and the family can continue with outpatient treatment.

The NSHA program, which has been in operation for over 20 years, consists of an outpatient, group-based program that runs Monday through Thursday, and individual CBT-T, a service added over the last year to allow for more treatment options. There is also an inpatient program that services mostly underweight patients with anorexia. Working in the program is a psychiatrist, two psychologists, an occupational therapist, nurses and a dietitian, as well as two master's in psychiatry research students and other research assistants. Most adult staff have been training and receiving

supervision in CBT-T for both outpatient and inpatient care. In the Central Zone, patients are referred directly to the clinic and have access to all these services. In other zones however, the treatment is less consistent and usually consists of CBT, DBT (dialectical behavioural therapy) and non-specific therapy.

In July 2018 when senior leadership at NSHA decided eating disorders would be the second provincial service, a steering committee was assembled with several representatives from the IWK and NSHA Central Zone teams, as well as representation from each of the other zones. Co-led by Drs. Orlik and Keshen, and with feedback from the Nova Scotia Eating Disorder Provincial Network, the committee met monthly with a project analyst from the Department of Health and Wellness.

The goal is to develop a consistent method of assessment, treatment, training of evidence-based approaches, and outcome measurement for eating disorders across the province. "We're attempting to develop an inclusive care pathway," says Dr. Keshen. "The provincial service will allow someone who presents with an eating disorder anywhere in the province to be assessed and treated with consistent, evidence-based care in their own zone, or transferred to the Central Zone program if more treatment intensity is needed."

The committee is nearly ready to submit their proposal to senior leadership, and if it's approved, implementation of the service will begin. Ultimately, there will be a clear path of care for adult eating disorder patients and another clear path for child and adolescent patients. "There will be an expectation for a minimum standard of care province-wide and a clear path for specialist care in the respective adult and child and adolescent services," says Dr. Orlik. There will also be provincial coordination and an evaluation system that tracks fidelity to the models of care expected, human resource issues, adherence to the care paths and clinical outcomes, and utilization.

Though the move to a provincial service will better equip the NSHA and IWK teams to provide consistent care to eating disorder patients in Nova Scotia, both services are currently excelling in their offerings. In late 2018, the IWK team presented their model of

care, along with their sustainability model, including a simulation of FBT, and initial clinical data at the Eating Disorders Association of Canada conference in Ottawa. "It was very well received," recalls Dr. Orlik. "Our model of treatment has been unofficially rated by our FBT trainer from the University of Toronto as excellent quality and in its utilization and outcome in-line with internationally recognized eating disorder centres with regard specifically to FBT." On the NSHA side, Nova Scotia has more adult specialized eating disorder treatment options compared to other provinces in the Maritimes, and the Central Zone program can offer an equivalent service to larger provinces. "Once the provincial service is in place there will be greater consistency across the province, which will improve what we can offer relative to other provinces like BC and Ontario that already have a provincial service in place."

The COVID-19 crisis in March 2020 unfortunately put some of the planning and approval of the program on hold. Once some normalcy returns, the team is hoping their proposal is approved and implementation can begin.

education in psychiatry

The Department of Psychiatry provides high calibre psychiatric education to residents, fellows, medical and graduate students, and mental health professionals.



Dr. Amy Bombay teaches a group of students.

Undergraduate Education

It was another successful academic year in undergraduate education with 95 core students rotating through psychiatry services at traditional clerkship sites. This included those in the Halifax area, as well as those in Amherst, Charlottetown, Kentville, and New Brunswick.

In June 2019 the department participated in the annual Global Health Office's Link Program; preparing three students from the International Medical University of Malaysia for their entry into clerkship in September.

The medical student-led Psychiatry Interest Group is in its ninth year and is jointly helmed by two Med 2 students, Matthew Cooper and Benjamin MacDonald,

who are currently serving their second terms. The group continues to work towards its mandate of highlighting and facilitating discussion of mental health, as well as encouraging interest in the field of psychiatry. Their first event of the year was Lifestyles in Psychiatry night, held in November.

Our new experiential offering for Med 1 students, the Summer Internship in Psychiatry (SIIP), planned to launch summer 2020 with an inaugural group of nine students from both Halifax and Saint John campuses. Unfortunately, the program was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This resident-led initiative is designed to increase interest in and exposure to psychiatry for medical students. We look forward to rolling this out in June 2021.

A small working group was assembled and has been working on operationalizing the undergraduate-level action items of the strategic plan.

Dr. Katie Lines was chosen by the clinical clerks to receive the Clerk's Choice Award for her outstanding contributions to their teaching. Overall, our residents received 54 nominations from the clerks, evidence of a continuing appreciation of their dedication to teaching.

Postgraduate Education

COVID-19 and social distancing forced the department to get creative in hosting the 2020 graduation exercises. Faculty, staff, and students joined together on June 24, 2020, to celebrate the graduates virtually on Zoom.

Congratulations to the Class of 2020: Drs. Nadia Hassanali, Matt Havenga, Ali Manning, Katie Radchuck, and Crystal Zhou.

Postgraduate Education implemented a CBME working group in the fall of 2019 to plan the training experiences and curriculum for the upcoming CBME launch on July 1, 2020.

CaRMS 2020 was a success again this year with all eight positions filled in the residency program, six spots filled by Dalhousie Medicine undergraduates, in round one of the match.

Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Subspecialty Program

The program welcomed Drs. Sarah Fancy and Celia Robichaud in July 2018, and Drs. Vhari James and Josh Smalley in July 2019. Drs. Fancy, Robichaud, and Smalley will complete the program in 2020 and Dr. James will finish in June 2021. Drs. Ali Manning and Katie Radchuck will begin the program in 2020. Provincial funding for the PGY-6 year for two residents was secured for the 2020/21 academic year.

The Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Residency Program Committee approved one new training site for subspecialty residents at the Kentville Outpatient Mental Health Clinic. Our first resident started a rotation at the site in March 2020.

Drs. Dave Lovas and Sabina Abidi have been attending the Royal College Specialty Committee meetings to help design the new Competency By Design framework for child and adolescent psychiatry. This is scheduled to roll-out in July 2021, and changes in rotations, objectives, evaluation, and didactics are currently under development.

The Child and Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty program underwent its first accreditation site visit in November 2018. A formal accreditation report was received on July 29, 2019 with a final accreditation status of an Accredited Program with Regular Accreditation Review in 2026. The program was recognized as having demonstrated leading practices and innovations for our work with the unique three-way tiered supervision for subspecialty residents on call, and there were no noted areas for improvement.

Geriatric Psychiatry Subspecialty Program

Dr. Olga Yashchuk began the program in July 2019. Dr. Kathleen Singh returned from a maternity leave in



Dr. Herb Orlik lectures to a group of students.

the fall. Both residents completed the program June 30, 2020. We have been fortunate to also work with Dr. Crystal Zhou, PGY-5, in preparation for her subspecialty program.

Geriatric psychiatry will launch their new CBME program July 1, 2021. Dr. Terry Chisholm has also been attending the Royal College meetings to help design the new Competency By Design framework for geriatric psychiatry. A small internal working group has been active developing the CBME program.

A formal accreditation report was received July 2019 with a final status of an Accredited Program with Regular Accreditation Review in 2026. The program was acknowledged for leading innovation for the online interactive teaching modules, which have been presented at CAGP meeting and garnered national recognition.

Curriculum Development and Scholarly work

The clerkship eLearning module "Patients identifying as transgender" has been transitioned from Soft Chalk to Articulate Rise and fully updated. A geriatric psychiatry eLearning module on "Alzheimer's Disease" has also been developed. All geriatric psychiatry modules are now being shared with other Canadian Geri Psych programs and those programs are also sharing their resources.

Several training videos were developed for faculty development workshops.

The department received grant funding for two medical education projects from Dalhousie's Continuing Professional Development Medical Education (CPDME) annual Living Lab grant competition:

- *Integrated video simulation and role play: Exploring a novel faculty development approach to teach assessment and feedback skills.* (Mark Bosma, Cheryl Murphy, Mandy Eslinger, Janice Chisholm (Anesthesia)) \$4,425
- *Perceptions regarding the communication skills of grand rounds presenters; does gender play a role?* (Lara Hazelton, Mandy Eslinger, Heather Milliken) \$3,425

Scholarly work completed by department members was presented at the annual CPDME's Medical Education Research and Innovation Symposium (MERIS) on *Innovating with interactive, case-based eLearning modules in the Psychiatry clerkship* (Mandy Eslinger, Crystal Zhou, Cheryl Murphy, Shannon MacDonald, Herbert Orlik, Jonathan Wan) and *Representation of Women at Psychiatry Grand Rounds* (Lara Hazelton, Mandy

Starting March 25 rounds was offered online-only in response to the COVID-19 pandemic precaution measures. The department leadership team was able to communicate their response to COVID-19 faculty-wide using this platform.

”

Eslinger, Heather Milliken) which was also presented at the departmental Research Day.

Continuing Professional Development

The 2019-2020 academic year saw the presentation of 37 rounds sessions, 11 given by visiting speakers. Additional CPD was offered to faculty in February with a workshop on Writing Multiple Choice Questions. The 2020 W.O. McCormick Academic Day Conference, *Coaching and Behaviour Change*, was cancelled due to the pandemic. A strategic planning working group was created and has been meeting virtually to work towards implementing the strategic plan objectives for continuing professional development in the department.

Starting March 25 rounds was offered online-only in response to the pandemic precaution measures. Thank you to Dr. Suzanne Zinck who

presented from isolation for the first session. The department leadership team was able to communicate their response to COVID-19 faculty-wide with record attendance. The COVID-19 response series has been recorded for all faculty to access when convenient. A quick transition to distributing rounds via ZOOM happened on April 15, after difficulty distributing with Skype for Business. There has been very positive feedback about the new platform.

Graduate Training in Psychiatry Research

Fall 2019 brought six new students to the graduate program from across Canada, the US, and China. Included in our students' many successes this year were three Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarships, a Mitacs Scholarship, a Faculty of Medicine Graduate Studentship, and two Canadian Graduate Scholarship – Masters awards from the Social Sciences

and Humanities Research Council of Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, respectively. While the class of 2021 was busy completing the core courses, the class of 2020 was wrapping up data collection and preparing to defend their theses. 2019 was an exciting year as we celebrated five successful graduations in the fall and had our PhD program proposal fully approved at all levels. The PhD program is set to commence in the fall of 2021.

Medical Humanities

The Medical Humanities Program introduced a collaboration with Dalhousie University's English Department's Creative Writing Program. As part of that, faculty from the Creative Writing Program facilitated workshops for faculty and postgraduate learners of the Department of Psychiatry.

research in psychiatry

Spanning a wide variety of topics and involving basic and clinical research, clinical trials and studies of animal model systems, we collaborate with researchers locally within Dalhousie and its' affiliated teaching hospitals, and nationally and internationally.

It has been another productive year of research in the Department of Psychiatry with many grants awarded and various research projects underway. The department is dedicated to supporting its researchers. The Department of Psychiatry Research Fund (DPRF) is key to that goal. The DPRF makes grants available to facilitate the development of new research projects for faculty members and others in the department. This year eight grants were awarded:

Dr. Amy Bombay – *Indigenous youth-driven participatory action health research: Re-visioning Indigenous youth health and wellness in the HRM*

Dr. Aaron Keshen – *Binge focused therapy: A pilot RCT of a novel, group-based, guided self-help intervention for binge eating disorder*

Dr. Zenovia Ursuliak – *Investigation of plasma copper/zinc ratios in people with early phase psychosis*

Dr. Ian Weaver (co-applicant: Dr. George Robertson) – *Brain region-specific transcriptome in prenatally stressed and/or forebrain ATRX deficient mice, and idiopathic autism*

Dr. Igor Yakovenko – *Exploring chasing losses as a fundamental mechanism of action in gambling addiction*

Dr. Raquel Nogueira (co-applicant: Dr. Sherry Stewart) – *Drinking motives and dyadic conflict effects on drinking behaviour in dating couples: A lab-based experiment*

Dr. Derek Fisher – *Neuroimaging markers of auditory change detection mechanisms in early phase psychosis: A magnetic resonance spectroscopy add-on*

Dr. Igor Yakovenko – *Investigating the addictive potential of a new psychiatric diagnosis – predictors and correlates of gaming disorder*



Dr. Igor Yakovenko works with a research assistant in the gambling lab.

The department also awarded a People with Lived Experience Research Fund (PLERF) grant to Dr. Pablo Romero Sanchiz (co-applicant: Dr. Sherry Stewart) for his project *The ethics of using cue exposure methodology in cannabis users with trauma histories: A mixed methods study from the perspective of people with lived experience*. PLERF grants are small grants awarded by the Department

of Psychiatry (in collaboration with the Maritimes Depression Hub of the Canadian Depression Research and Intervention Network) for research projects initiated by people with lived experience (PLE) of depression and related illnesses in collaboration with an experienced researcher.

The Psychiatry Summer Studentship Program is designed to provide qualified undergraduate students with

an opportunity to become involved in research in the Department of Psychiatry over the summer. This program offers students an opportunity to learn new research techniques as they acquire hands on experience in running experiments and analyzing data. In 2019 summer studentships were awarded to four learners:

Matthew Arora (Supervisors: Drs. Derek Fisher and Phil Tibbo) - *Differential*

External Grants for Department Principal Investigators

A variety of international, national, provincial and non-profit organizations provide funding opportunities for basic and clinical research aimed at improving our understanding and treatment of mental illness. In 2019-2020 department members were very successful in securing external grants as principal investigators.

Dr. Kara Dempster (co-investigators: Drs. Phil Tibbo, Candice Crocker, Chris Bowen) – Nova Scotia Health Authority Research Foundation (NSHARF) grant, \$100,000

Dr. Martin Alda (co-investigator: Dr. Rudolf Uher) – Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) grant, \$753,526

Dr. Martin Alda – ERA-Net (in partnership with CIHR) grant, \$1,022,308 EUR

Dr. Rudolf Uher (co-investigators: Drs. Benjamin Rusak, Martin Alda) – CIHR grant, \$462,825

Dr. Amy Bombay (site investigator: Jocelyn Paul) – CIHR grant, \$150,000

Dr. Igor Yakovenko – CIHR grant, \$124,805

Dr. George Robertson – Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program, \$150,000 USD

Drs. Phil Tibbo, Patricia Conrad (Montreal) – CIHR, \$1,500,000

Dr. Phil Tibbo – QEII Foundation Translating Research Into Care (TRIC) grant, \$24,988

Dr. Joanne MacDonald – John & Judy Bragg Family Foundation, \$275,000

Dr. Rudolf Uher (co-investigator: Dr. Martin Alda) – CIHR grant, \$536,924

Dr. Derek Fisher (co-investigators: Drs. Phil Tibbo, Candice Crocker, Kara Dempster) – NSHARF grant, \$24,750

Dr. Sherry Stewart – Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Partnership Grant, \$2,500,000



Dr. Tomas Hajek (left) works with a research assistant.

effects of cannabis use on event-related potential (ERP)-indexed brain function in males and females

Nacera Hanzal (Supervisor: Dr. Sherry Stewart) - *Drinking motives mediate the relationship between conflictual interaction and alcohol use within undergraduate romantic dyads: A lab-based experiment*

Ross Langley (Supervisor: Dr. Rudolf Uher) - *Conventional and automated analysis of speech to facilitate diagnosis and predict mood disorders in youth*

Claire Reardon (Supervisor: Dr. Cynthia Calkin) - *Neuroprogression in psychiatric illness: The result of metabolic dysregulation and compromised blood-brain barrier?*

The 29th Annual Research Day was held November 8 at the Atlantica Hotel, gathering together 115 faculty, students, staff members and researchers. Dr. Glenn Waller, head of the Department of Psychology at the University of Sheffield, opened the event with the keynote talk *Therapist Drift: Why Well-Meaning Clinicians*

Do Dumb Things (And How To Do Fewer of Them), followed by 14 faculty, staff, and student oral presentations and 22 poster presentations throughout the day. The Café Scientifique, titled *Current Topics in Eating Disorders: A Public Conversation* was held in the Pub and Games Room at the Dalhousie University Club the evening before Research Day

on November 7. The event featured presentations from: Research Day keynote speaker, Dr. Glenn Waller; Dr. Aaron Keshen, psychiatrist, Nova Scotia Health Authority, Dalhousie University; Dr. Jamie C. Farquhar, PhD, R.Psych, Coastal Psychology; Shaleen Jones, executive director, Eating Disorders NS; and Maria Nemis, peer mentor.

list of current research topics

With more than \$25,435,750 in total research grant funding during the 2019-2020 year our researchers are actively working in the following areas:



Aboriginal mental health	Medical sociology
Addictions	Medically unexplained physical symptoms
ADHD	Memory
Alcohol abuse	Mental health education
Alzheimer's Disease	Mindfulness
Animal model	Mood disorders
Anxiety disorders	Multiple sclerosis
Attachment	Neurodegenerative diseases
Autism	Neurodevelopmental disorders
Biomarkers	Neuroplasticity
Brain imaging	Neuropsychology
Child and adolescent mental health	Neuroscience
Chronic pain	Pain
Cognitive behaviour therapy	Perfectionism
Cortical development	Personality
Cross cultural mental health	Personality disorder
Cross cultural psychology	Pharmacogenetics
Dementia	Pharmacological interventions
Depression	Problem gambling
Dopamine	Programming of gene expression
Early interventions	Psychoeducation
Eating disorders	Psychopharmacology
Electroencephalography	Psychosis
Emotional processing	Psychotherapy
Emotions and health	PTSD
Endocrine and behavioural stress responses	Rehabilitation
Epidemiology	Schizophrenia
Executive functioning	School mental health
First episode psychosis	Sleep
Gambling disorder	Smart health technology
Gene expression	Social behaviour
Genetics	Social media
Group resilience	Socio-economic factors
Health psychology	Somatic symptoms
Implementation science	Somatization
Implicit cognition	Somatoform disorder
Knowledge translation	Substance abuse
Magnetic Resonance Spectroscopy	Suicide
Medical education	

CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR IN ADDICTIONS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Dr. Sherry Stewart



The work of the Canada Research Chair in Addictions and Mental Health, Dr. Sherry Stewart, in her Mood, Anxiety, and Addiction Comorbidity Lab (MAAC Lab) focuses on advancing understanding of biopsychosocial factors contributing to the complex interplay between emotional and addictive disorders. She investigates underlying mechanisms and effective interventions for these concurrent disorders.

Dr. Stewart is project director on a \$2.5 million Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership Grant. It involves adapting her effective personality-targeted substance misuse prevention/mental health promotion program, to be relevant for undergraduates. She is testing the adapted intervention, Univenture, at five universities across Canada, in concert with 20+ methodological and knowledge translation partners. Dr. Stewart received an infrastructure grant from the Canadian Foundation for Innovation to support technology assisted delivery within the Univenture trial. She is also co-investigator and

site lead on a \$1.7 million CIHR Project Grant, the Canadian Underage Substance Prevention (CUSP) trial, to disseminate her personality-targeted substance use prevention program to Canadian high-schools, including nine in Nova Scotia. Three MAAC Lab staff are now certified CUSP trainers.

Univenture and CUSP are the first national prevention trials to be funded through the Canadian Research Initiative in Substance Misuse (CRISM), a CIHR national research network to promote collaboration and innovative interventions for substance misuse. Dr. Stewart is the Atlantic Scientific Delegate of CRISM's Quebec-Atlantic node, and National Executive Committee member. The Atlantic team has expanded to 125+ members from all four Atlantic Provinces. The third annual CRISM Atlantic symposium, Informing Research and Practice in Substance Use, was held in November 2019 in Charlottetown. The event brought together 100+ researchers/stakeholders and featured presentations on topics including vaping in youth, evidence-informed

policy on access to addictions care, and effectiveness of opioid prescription monitoring.

Dr. Stewart is also co-leading the National Emerging Health Threats Working Group funded by Health Canada, focused on responding to the opioid crisis in youth and new users. Her team has conducted focus groups with university students who use/misuse opioids, stimulants, or sedative/tranquillizers, examining their motivations for use and service needs. Dr. Stewart and her team also held a summit with 35 university students with lived experience to gain their input on making interventions for prescription drug misuse more appropriate for use on campus. Similar summits were held with at risk groups across the country and collective results were presented by youth at the United Nations Office of Drug Control in Vienna.



CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR IN DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOPATHOLOGY AND YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH *Dr. Sandra Meier*

Dr. Sandra Meier, the Canada Research Chair in Developmental Psychopathology and Youth Mental Health, is in the second year of her five-year term as chair. As part of her mandate, she is invested in leveraging modern technology to improve mental health care in youth outside the clinical setting. Her projects focus on behavioural monitoring based on mobile sensing technologies, the development of health-promoting apps, and online interventions for parents of children with genetic syndromes.

Dr. Meier has several active research projects. The Predicting Risk and Outcomes of Social Interactions (PROSIT) study aims to build a large-scale longitudinal cohort, in which she and her team will explore if they can better predict onset and course of mental disorders in youth by passively recording their daily social behaviours. In February 2020, they began piloting the PROSIT app, a mobile sensing tool they developed, and assessing its acceptability and feasibility in youth. The pilot presently includes 120 youth, with well with over 80 per

cent completing all assessments, with over 85 per cent parental approval. In October 2020 Dr. Meier and her team will further increase recruitment in collaboration with the Discovery Centre with special focus on social media usage.

The Smile for Mental Health (SMILE) is the second app the PROSIT lab has in development. With a focus on person-centred care, SMILE will respond to a youth's mobile-sensed profiles and automatically encourage them to engage in more health promoting behaviours. SMILE will focus particularly on stress and anxiety management.

In collaboration with the Centre for Research in Family Health, Dr. Meier also co-led an international team developing the 22q11 Caregiver Program. This program is an online intervention for families of children with the 22q11 deletion syndrome, a rare genetic disorder affecting multiple body systems ranging from cardiac defects, immunodeficiencies, intellectual disability, psychiatric

disorders to epilepsy.

The projects developed by Dr. Meier and her team offer unique learning opportunities to students, residents and staff. She is currently supervising a postdoctoral fellow, a PhD student, three master's students, and four research assistants.

In the past year Dr. Meier has authored seven PubMed indexed publications, including articles in JAMA Psychiatry and Molecular Psychiatry. She has presented two lectures for the German Society of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatics, and she has also taught lectures on epidemiology for graduate students and functioned as tutor for medical students.

In the last year, she has obtained Canadian Foundation for Innovation funding, a Department of National Defence Innovation for Defence Excellence and Security (IDEaS) grant, and a Social Sciences and Health Research Council Insight Grant, bringing the two-year total grant income as a principal investigator to \$2.1M.

CANADA RESEARCH CHAIR IN EARLY INTERVENTION *Dr. Rudolf Uher*



The Canada Research Chair in Early Intervention, Dr. Rudolf Uher, and the FORBOW (Families Overcoming Risk and Building Opportunities for Well-being) team have been working on identifying the early signs of risk for mental illness and testing preventive interventions in youth.

Major types of mental illness, including schizophrenia, bipolar disorder and major depressive disorder continue to be the leading causes of disability and premature death. These disorders often start at a young age and are difficult to treat. The key idea behind Dr. Uher's research is that if we can identify signs of risk in children or adolescents, we can prevent the onset of mental illness through targeted early interventions. The 2019-2020 year has seen some major milestones in participant enrolment, funding and publication of new findings.

The FORBOW program reached its target of 500 youth participants in the fall of 2019. FORBOW now monitors 530 children and youth from 280 families. Parents and children visit the FORBOW

team for assessments once per year. To date, the FORBOW team has completed two thousand annual assessments that provide detailed information on two thousand years in the lives of over 500 children. Of these, 100 children have already participated in trials of early psychological interventions aiming to reduce the risk of mental illness.

The information provided by participating families is proving valuable in detecting the early signs of vulnerability and resilience. Dr. Uher and his team have found that inattention, changeable emotions, unusual sensory experiences, irregular sleep and less accurate memory for pictures are linked with family history of mental illness among children. Some of these early signs are linked to decreased folding of the brain surface, which suggests links to early brain development. FORBOW researchers also discovered that genetic variants linked to attention deficit and hyperactivity make children more likely to have adverse and traumatic experiences. These findings have been published in ten peer-reviewed journal

articles. To make the new knowledge available to the broader public, each new FORBOW finding is described in accessible lay language at www.forbow.org/results.

Dr. Uher's research program continues to attract competitive funding. In 2019-2020, Dr. Uher led two successful bids for funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). These newly funded projects will use objective measurement of sleep and automated analysis of speech to identify individuals who may benefit from specific interventions and treatments. In addition, the Sutton Family Mental Health Innovation Fund, through the Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation, pledged \$250,000 to support a trial of personalized treatment choice for first episode of depression in youth. These new funds will support further innovative research aiming to reduce the burden of ill mental health in youth.



KILLAM CHAIR IN MOOD DISORDERS

Dr. Martin Alda

Dr. Martin Alda, the Killam Chair in Mood Disorders, and the research team at the mood disorders program have been active in several areas during the 2019-2020 year. They continue their clinical and genetic studies of bipolar disorder and pharmacogenetics of lithium response. One of their recent findings relates to the possibility of predicting response to lithium from clinical and genetic data. In a study of 1266 patients treated in Halifax and several collaborating centres in Europe, the group found very good accuracy of identifying people who stabilized on long term lithium treatment (Nunes et al. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica*, 2020) and confirmed the hypothesized proposed earlier that lithium responders are a genetically distinct subtype of bipolar disorder (manuscript under review).

Continuing work with several international consortia, Dr. Alda and colleagues also reported several findings from molecular genetic studies. As part of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium, they contributed to the largest study to-

date showing genetic correlations between individual psychiatric disorders (published in *Cell*, 2019). In collaboration with a team at the Salk Institute and with a research group in Beijing, they identified synaptotagmin-7 as a possible genetic link between bipolar disorder and metabolic syndrome (published in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science USA*, 2020). Another exciting finding from the collaboration with the Salk Institute shows the possible mechanism of lithium non-response by finding that neurons derived from induced pluripotent stem cells from lithium non-responders displayed physiological instability that could account for their inconsistent response to pharmacological interventions (accepted in *Biological Psychiatry*).

The research program supports training of students. Most recently, two students defended their graduate theses, one student has prepared her Bachelor of Science honours thesis. Dr. Alda has also accepted another student for the Master's in Psychiatry Research program.

To continue their investigations in the coming years, Dr. Alda's group has secured new research funding, namely a \$753,526 CIHR Project Grant for continuing the studies of mood-stabilizing treatments, as well as a joint grant with Drs. Rudolf Uher and Ben Rusak to investigate sleep in children at risk for mood disorders and their parents (CIHR Project Grant of \$462,825).

DR. PAUL JANSSEN CHAIR IN PSYCHOTIC DISORDERS

Dr. Phil Tibbo



The Dr. Paul Janssen Chair in Psychotic Disorders, Dr. Phil Tibbo, continues in his mandate to lead, foster, and mentor research in psychosis and schizophrenia.

Focusing on research and knowledge translational activities in the last year, Dr. Tibbo and his team have continued to investigate the interaction between cannabis and psychosis. A CIHR funded study is well under way aiming to characterize the effects of cannabis on brain white matter (WM) structure and connectivity. This one-year longitudinal study is focused on healthy young adults and additionally, those in early phase psychosis (EPP). Complimentary to this study, Dr. Tibbo and Dr. Candice Crocker are currently investigating gender specific cannabis effects on brain WM, and with Dr. Derek Fisher (PI; MSVU) the effects of cannabis on event related potentials (ERPs) by gender, in an otherwise healthy population. Dr. Tibbo is also co-PI on a \$1.5 million team grant with Dr. Patricia Conrad from Montreal. The CIHR awarded grant will support their project Canadian Cannabis and Psychosis

Research Team. Another recent grant will be exploring specific psychotherapy for those individuals with adverse events, substance use and psychosis (QEII Foundation Translating Research into Care (TRIC) Level 2 grant).

Other active cannabis studies includes: 1) a CRISM funded project to create a multi-site research protocol examining the effectiveness of a staged approach to substance use treatment in EPP; 2) the development of order sets to aid in the diagnosis and treatment of cannabis related psychosis, funded by Health Canada; and 3) investigating personality, vulnerability and motives for substance use in EPP (Dr. Alissa Pencer PI; Department of Psychiatry Research Fund). Supervision of graduate students in these and other research projects has continued.

During the 2019-2020 year Dr. Tibbo and his research team, along with collaborators, published 10 papers, with one additional paper in press, and three submitted for review. This is in addition to published abstracts/conference proceedings at national

and international research meetings. Additionally, Dr. Tibbo was invited to lecture locally, provincially, nationally and internationally on various topics associated with early phase psychosis, and engaged with media when asked and appropriate.

Dr. Tibbo has continued to hold his position as President of the Canadian Consortium for Early Intervention in Psychosis (CCEIP), whose mandate is to enhance optimum care for Canadians in the early phase of psychosis through improved service models and the generation and translation of knowledge. Provincially, he has been active with the development and roll out of a provincial model of EPP care, evaluation and research in Nova Scotia.

excellence in patient care

Our faculty members hold key positions in clinical programs, provide consultation and assistance to community-based mental health programs, and work to ensure that primary care physicians are equipped with the knowledge and skills to identify mental illness.



Drs. Sanjana Sridharan and Amy Gough discuss a chart with a nurse.

Adult General and Specialty Mental Health and Addictions Services

The Department of Psychiatry, in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Health Authority (NSHA), the Department of Health and Wellness, and Doctors Nova Scotia, provides publicly funded clinical psychiatric services across the adult age spectrum encompassing the breadth of psychiatric illness in both general mental health clinic settings and in specialty areas.

Under the auspices of the NSHA, the Department of Psychiatry provides clinical services to the central zone of the NSHA and in some specialty areas, provides services or consultative services across the province of Nova Scotia and throughout the Maritimes.

The department embraces the co-leadership model espoused by the NSHA and has an outstanding cadre

of academic staff engaged in co-leadership roles overseeing key components of the organization, coordination and delivery of clinical services. Significant changes in the past year have included:

The retirement of Dr. Michael Teehan, head, Department of Psychiatry, and chief, Mental Health and Addictions (MH&A) central zone in December 2019.

Dr. Jason Morrison, deputy clinical director, recovery and integration services, central zone, returned from leave in the fall of 2019 and became interim head with Dr. Teehan's departure.

RECRUITMENT

Drs. Joshua Green, Ian MacKay and Justin Paradis were recruited from the class of 2019 and have successfully transitioned into staff roles. We also welcomed Drs. Kathleen Howell, Kara Dempster, Jennifer Cumming, and Michaela and Sunil Routhu.

SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

Community Mental Health

Our community mental health teams (five in total) continue to provide the bulk of clinical services to community-based patients throughout the central zone.

In the last year we have had a continued focus on development of

consultative services for psychiatry with development of provincial guidelines for delivery of publicly funded psychiatric services.

We have continued with the provision of outreach services to the eastern and northern regions to assist with human resource shortages in psychiatry in those zones.

Acute Care and Psychiatry Emergency Services (PES)

There have been successful discussions with the QEII Foundation to support revitalization of the inpatient units at the Abbie J. Lane building. We will learn more about this plan in the future.

Recovery and Integration

A new site for Connections Halifax was identified and is in development. Work will continue in 2020.

Operational Stress Injury Clinic (OSI)

The OSI clinic welcomed Dr. Kathleen Howell, as well as Dr. Ezio Dini on a part-time basis. The clinic also saw the resignation of Dr. Jeffrey Buttle.

In March 2020 COVID -19 changed the world as we knew it overnight. Community mental health and R&I responded by rapidly deploying procedures to allow staff to work from home and this led to the rapid development of virtual mental health services.

Acute Care and PES were active in

developing admission procedures for patients to minimize the likelihood of introduction of COVID 19 onto units with vulnerable patients and secured a unit to cohort positive patients should the need arise.

As we look forward to the 2020-2021 year, we know the next months will be challenging ones for all members of the Department of Psychiatry. As professionals however, we will rise to the occasion and continue work to advance clinical care with fortitude and courage. As W. T. Sherman wrote: "Courage- a perfect sensibility of the measure of danger, and a mental willingness to endure it." May we all find the courage to endure.



Dr. Celia Robichaud works with a patient.

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Services

The Division of Child and Adolescent (C&A) Psychiatry, together with the Mental Health and Addictions program at the IWK, provide quality care to children, youth, and families of the Maritimes. Programs include crisis, emergency, inpatient, outpatient and community mental health support.

This year marked the expansion of Lean Health Care initiatives and Quality improvement approaches within the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. The focus is on psychiatry-led services including specific care clinics (autism, psychosis, transgender, eating disorder, OCD, bipolar, concurrent, forensics, pharmacotherapy consults), community mental health and addiction psychiatry consults, consultation/liaison, as well as the emergency mental health and addictions services. This work built

on the success of the lean initiatives in IWK community mental health and addictions from 2017-2019 which resulted in a marked decrease in wait times and improved quality of service. Clinical service leadership was further strengthened to take on these challenges through co-leadership workshops with psychiatry leaders and managers, and a new co-leadership model launched in January 2020.

The division held a one-and-a half-day psychiatry value stream event in June 2019. The result was a clear map of desired outcomes and targets for the division and action steps. Early outcomes from this work include identifying wait times for specific clinic services and standardization of processes for access, quality, productivity and morale. Data collected on wait times indicates improvement

The IWK Mental Health and Addictions Program (MHAP) provides a full range of mental health and psychiatric treatment services for children, adolescents and their families, and is the only mental health program in the Halifax district.

”

in meeting the target of 30 days for psychiatry specific care clinic assessment.

The innovative psychiatry telephone consult service and psychiatry collaborative care consults showed increased uptake this year, using a shared care model with our primary care partners across the Maritimes. This fostered provision of evidence-based care for children and youth mental health needs in their home communities.

SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS

Community Mental Health Psychiatric Services

Community mental health and addiction clinics started to collect wait time and productivity data to foster enhanced understanding of the service, productivity and ensure quality when meeting the needs of our patients and families. We've established a goal of 28

days for psychiatry consultation in the clinics, with first steps being taken to attempt to meet the target of 60 days from time of referral, which was met for the first time in January 2020.

Specific Care Clinics

The autism spectrum disorder (ASD) specific care clinic started Lean initiatives with a Value Stream event in March 2019. The team developed a plan and has already completed work on items such as developing standard processes and criteria for referrals, outlining a mandate, and developing the new Brief Intensive Outreach Service (BIOS team). New staff have been hired, including a registered nurse, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, board certified behaviour analyst, and psychologist, to meet the mandate and vision for the service. Capacity building projects have also begun with Central Referral and Community Mental Health and

Addictions, soon to be expanded province-wide.

The IWK emergency mental health and addictions service (EMHAS) also underwent a Lean process this past year as part of the IWK emergency department (ED) lean initiative. This involved multiple stakeholders, including patient and family representatives. With the aid of industrial engineering we are monitoring wait times, flow, and patient and family experience, as we roll out these changes. We are also in the process of working with architects, consultants, and the rest of the ED team on the new ED design layout, which will feature improved spaces for emergency mental health and addictions assessment and treatment.

Capacity building around evidence-based treatments for child and adolescent psychiatric illness was also a focus during 2019-2020. The Specific

Care Clinics treating children and youth with serious and persistent mental illness continue to consult and develop capacity locally, provincially and in the Maritimes to deliver evidence-based interventions. The faculty continue to provide clinical, as well as academic telehealth services and outreach to the children and youth and colleagues in the province, while also providing education sessions to increase awareness of mental health problems, early identification and treatments for communities, schools, and other stakeholders in our region. In June 2018 in partnership with Capitalize for Kids the IWK launched a new capacity-building initiative to design solutions for youth mental health and addictions services across Nova Scotia. Two webinars: *Autism & Psychiatric Co-Morbidity* and *Working with Trans and Gender Diverse Youth* took place in April and June 2019 with more than 70 clinicians across the province in attendance.

The concurrent disorder specific care clinic led by Dr. Selene Etches has been engaged in significant efforts to build capacity including: formalizing pathways and guidelines for managing vulnerable and higher risk populations in substance use disorders including partnering with the maternal health clinic and sexual health clinic, building capacity in concurrent disorder competency and care within CMHA teams and community partners (Phoenix, Homebridge, BFEC), further developing resources for caregivers (presentation at Atlantic Pain and

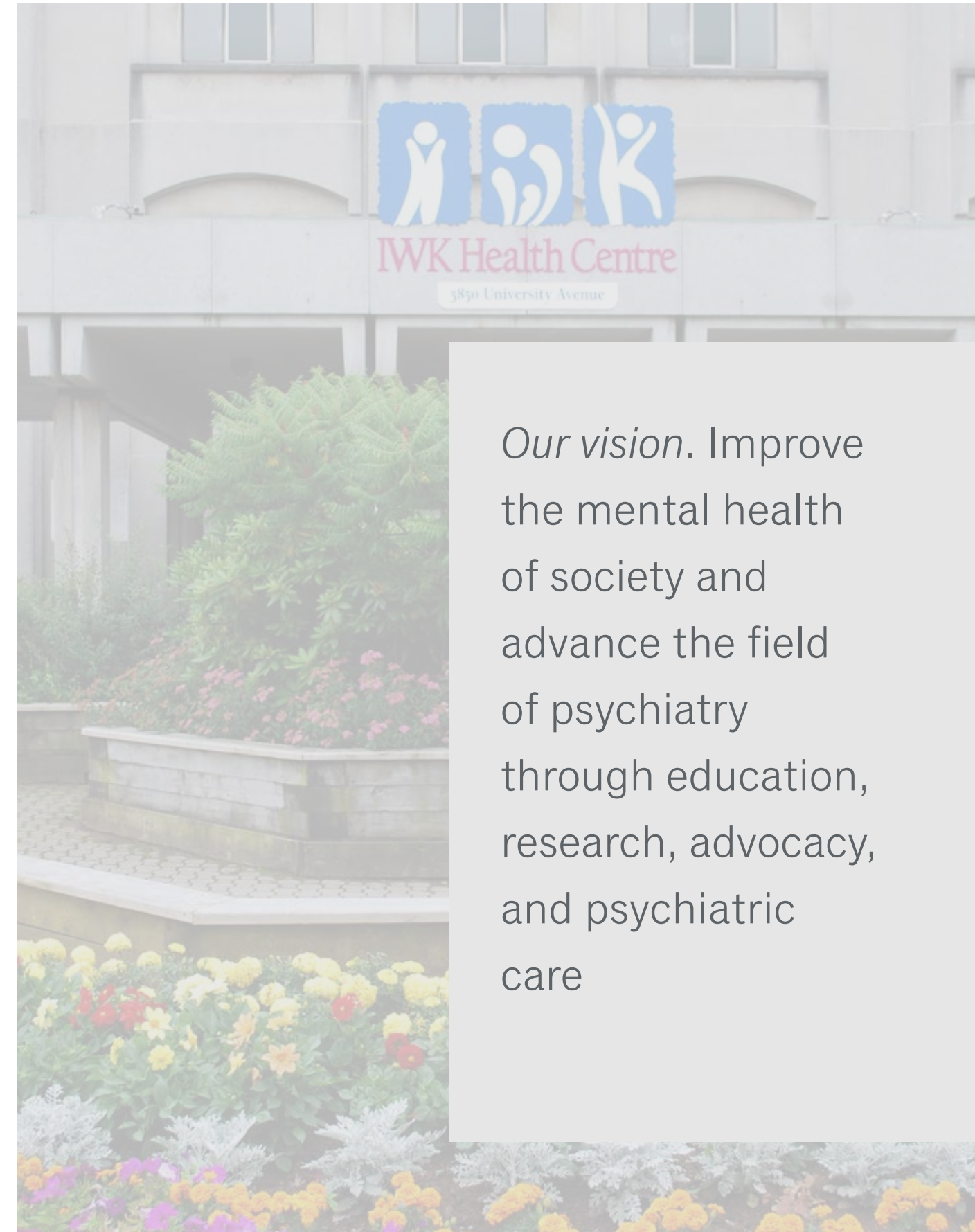
Addiction Conference) and developing a clear pathway for youth with acute intoxication/overdose to receive urgent care access and an evidence-based harm reduction approach.

The trans* health specific care clinic led by Dr. Suzanne Zinck, chair of the trans* health peer supervision network, organizes and provides Maritime mental health clinicians with case discussion and consultation support. This is a monthly peer supervision call open to all child and adolescent clinicians who have World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) training seeking consultation to help provide evidence-based patient care. Dr. Zinck is also chair of the annual Trans* Health Symposium, a two-day training for mental health professionals, primary care and psychiatry physicians in an integrated care for trans* and gender-diverse youth. This Royal College and WPATH-accredited symposium has increased the capacity for quality care for trans* and gender-diverse people across the Maritimes.

The psychosis specific care clinic, led by Dr. Sabina Abidi, continues collaboration with the Nova Scotia Early Psychosis clinic building upon their 2018 efforts to enhance the now termed EPINS (Early Psychosis Intervention Network of Nova Scotia). The network is comprised of both general and child and adolescent physicians and clinicians treating youth with psychotic spectrum disorders. Transition of care across the lifespan is a focus of the EPINS group along

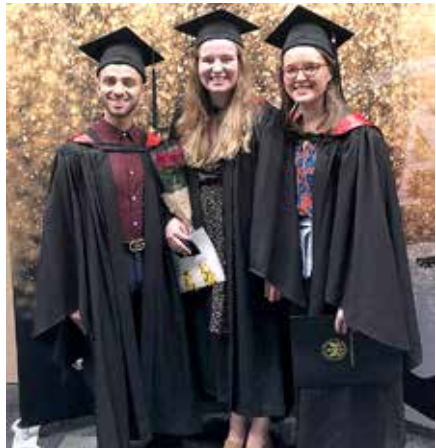
with creating of order sets to help standardize care provision across the lifespan and province.

The OCD specific care clinic, led by Dr. Alexa Bagnell, has continued to host monthly webinars joined by clinicians from across the province to help build capacity in OCD treatment and support consultation on cases. The clinic has also collaborated with pediatric subspecialty colleagues at the IWK to develop a care-path and guidelines for assessment and management of PANS/PANDAS (pediatric acute onset neuropsychiatric syndrome/ pediatric autoimmune neuropsychiatric disorder associated with streptococcal infection) with hopes these will be finalized in 2020.



Our vision. Improve the mental health of society and advance the field of psychiatry through education, research, advocacy, and psychiatric care

applauding our people



applauding our people

PROMOTIONS

Effective July 1, 2019

Dr. Amy Bombay - Associate Professor

RETIREMENTS

Dr. Siobhan Bergin
Dr. Christopher Childs
Dr. Allan Cook
Dr. Wade Junek
Dr. Saravana Muthu
Dr. Michael Teehan

AWARDS

Association of Chairs of Psychiatry in Canada (ACPC) Award for Creative Professional Activity
Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy

Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Best Poster Award
Dr. Alexa Bagnell

Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) Champion of Mental Health
Dr. Patricia Lingley-Pottie

Clarivate Analytics Highly Cited Researcher Award
Dr. Rudolf Uher

Canadian College of Neuropsychopharmacology Heinz Lehmann Award
Dr. Martin Alda

Canadian Psychiatric Association Best Poster Award
Dr. Alexa Bagnell

Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA) C.A. Roberts Award
Dr. Sabina Abidi

Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA) Fellow
Dr. Heather Milliken

Canadian Psychiatric Association's RO Jones Award for Best Research Paper
Dr. Zenovia Ursuliak

Cumberland Healthcare Foundation Distinguished Service Award
Dr. Pippa Moss

Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine Early Career Award for Excellence in Clinical Practice
Dr. Jacob Cookey

Dalhousie Award for Excellence in Diversity
Dr. Suzanne Zinck

Dalhousie President's Award for the Advancement of Equity, Diversity and Inclusiveness (EDI)
Dr. Amy Bombay

Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry Outstanding Clinician Award
Dr. Sonia Chehil

Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry Larry Buffet Outstanding Teacher Award
Dr. Sonia Chehil

Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry Educator of the Year Award
Dr. Abraham Rudnick

Discovery Awards Professional of Distinction
Dr. Christine Chambers

Government of Nova Scotia House of Assembly Certificate of Recognition
Dr. Joe Sadek

IWK STARS 45 Years of Service
Drs. Herb Orlik & Aidan Stokes

The Journal of Maxillofacial Surgery Award for Best Paper
Dr. Gail Eskes

Publons Top Peer Reviewer Award
Dr. Rudolf Uher

RESIDENT RECOGNITION AWARDS

Herb Orlik Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Award (PGY3)
Dr. Marissa Leblanc

Geriatric Psychiatry Resident Award (PGY3)
Dr. Amy Gough

Clerks' Choice Award
Dr. Katie Lines

Alexander H. Leighton Resident of the Year Award
Dr. Chelcie Soroka

Health Network, Saint John Zone PGY1 Resident of the Year Award
Dr. Matthew McAdam

Charles J. David Memorial Prize (PGY-2)
Dr. Mackenzie Armstrong
Dr. Kate Stymiest

W.O. McCormick Award
Dr. Sarah Fancy
Dr. Marissa LeBlanc

Robert and Stella Weil Fund in Psychiatry Prize
Dr. Tyson Rizzardo
Dr. Chelcie Soroka

Special Recognition: Chief
Dr. Chelcie Soroka
Dr. Marissa Leblanc

Teacher of the Year Award
Dr. Selene Etches

Above & Beyond Award
Jennifer Brown

PGY-5 Excellence Award
Dr. Mahmoud Awara

Mentorship Award
Dr. Aileen Brunet
Dr. Sonia Chehil

Resident Professionalism Award
Dr. Mackenzie Armstrong
Dr. Laura Downing

RESEARCH DAY AWARDS

Undergraduate Student
Caroline Rajda

Graduate Student
Toni Spinella

Resident
Dr. Omar Alwatban

Psychiatry Staff
Kyle McKee

Jr. Faculty/Postdoctorate
Alyson Zwicker

our leadership

NSHA CENTRAL ZONE LEADERSHIP

Dr. Jason Morrison

Interim Head/Chief

Dr. Scott Theriault

Clinical Director

Dr. Sanjana Sridharan

Deputy Clinical Director Acute Care

Dr. Jason Morrison

Deputy Clinical Director Recovery and Integration

Dr. Sonia Chehil

Deputy Clinical Director Community Mental Health

NSHA CLINICAL ACADEMIC LEADERS

Dr. Andrew Harris

Consultation/Liaison

Dr. Mutiat Sulyman

Dual Diagnosis Program

Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy

Geriatric Psychiatry

Dr. Martin Alda

Mood Disorders

Dr. Phil Tibbo

Early Psychosis

Dr. Allan Abbass

Centre For Emotions and Health

Dr. Grainne Neilson

East Coast Forensic Hospital Interim Clinical Director

Vacant

Addiction Prevention and Treatment Services

Dr. Joe Sadek

Mayflower Unit

Dr. Michael Flynn

ECT

IWK LEADERSHIP

Dr. Alexa Bagnell

Head/Chief

Dr. Sabina Abidi

Associate Chief IWK Head, Division of Outpatient Services

Dr. Jonathan Brake

IWK Head, Division of Inpatient Services

IWK MEDICAL DIRECTORS

Vacant

Medical Director of Inpatient Services

Dr. Ahmed Alwazeer

Medical Director of Adolescent Intensive Services (AIS)

IWK PHYSICIAN CO-LEADERS

Dr. Sabina Abidi

Dartmouth Community Mental Health Clinic

Dr. Suzanne Zinck

Halifax Community Mental Health Clinic

Dr. Lourdes Soto-Moreno

Sackville Community Mental Health Clinic

Dr. David Lovas

Emergency Mental Health and Addictions Service (EMHAS)

EDUCATION LEADERSHIP

Dr. Margaret Rajda

Director, Education

Dr. Mark Bosma

Director, Postgraduate Education

Dr. Sherry James

Associate Director, Postgraduate Education

Dr. David Lovas

Director, Child and Adolescent Subspecialty Training Program

Dr. Terry Chisholm

Director, Geriatric Subspecialty Training Program

Dr. Cheryl Murphy

Director, Undergraduate Education

Dr. Lara Hazelton

Director, Continuing Professional Development

Dr. Lukas Propper

Director, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Education

Dr. Sherry Stewart

Graduate Program Coordinator

Dr. Abraham Rudnick

Medical Humanities Coordinator

RESEARCH LEADERSHIP

Dr. Ben Rusak

Director, Research

our administration

ADMINISTRATION

Janet Bardon

Physician Resource Manager

Jennifer Brown

Postgraduate Education Coordinator

Kate Clarke

Executive Assistant to Department Head

Mandy Eslinger

Evaluation & Curriculum Specialist

Linda Ford

HR Administrative Assistant

Kelly Hancock

Undergraduate Coordinator

Tracy Fraser MacIsaac

Education Coordinator

Sandra Millar

Finance Assistant

Kate Rogers

Communications Coordinator

Carolyn Sisley

Director of Finance and Administration

Hillary Yuill

Research Coordinator

DIVISION OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

Megan Bellefontaine

Education and Research Coordinator

Jennifer Cunningham

Administrative Assistant

Melissa Davis

Administrative Assistant

Patricia Evans

Administrative Assistant

Debi Follett

Administrative Assistant

Michelle LeBlanc

Administrative Manager

Joan Sweet

Receptionist

Robin Stinson

Administrative Assistant

our psychiatric services

ADULT PSYCHIATRY SERVICES

Addiction Prevention and Treatment Services
 Adult Neurodevelopmental Psychiatric Unit (Mental Illness & Intellectual Disabilities)
 Centre For Emotions and Health
 Community Mental Health
 Consultation/Liaison
 Early Psychosis
 Eating Disorders
 Emergency
 Forensic Psychiatry Services
 Geriatric Psychiatry
 Inpatient Psychiatry
 Mental Health Day Treatment
 Mobile Crisis
 Mood Disorders
 Recovery and Integration Services
 Reproductive Mental Health
 Shared Care
 Short Stay Unit
 Sleep Disorders

CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY SERVICES

IWK Acute Care Psychiatric Inpatient Unit (Garron Centre)
 IWK Consultation/Liaison Service
 IWK Emergency Mental Health and Addictions Service (EMHAS)
 Children's Intensive Services (CIS)
 Adolescent Intensive Services (AIS)
 Youth Forensic Services (Includes Nova Scotia Youth Facility Secure Care Unit)
 Community Mental Health and Addictions Clinics
 Specific Care Outpatient Clinics:
 Eating Disorders
 Bipolar Disorders
 Concurrent Disorders
 Obsessive Compulsive Disorder
 Tourette's/Movement Disorders
 Early Psychosis
 Autism Spectrum Disorders

our provincial programs

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Services
 Dual Diagnosis Program
 East Coast Forensic Hospital
 Eating Disorders Program
 Mental Health Day Treatment Program
 Mood Disorders Program
 Nova Scotia Provincial Early Psychosis Intervention Service (EPINS)
 Reproductive Mental Health Program
 Seniors Mental Health Program



REPORT 2019-2020

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DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY

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