

# **ANNUAL REPORT** 2021/22

**Department of Psychiatry**  
Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS



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Dalhousie University**

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This report covers the period of April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, with the exception of the education report, which covers the academic year, July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2022. Unless otherwise indicated, photography has been provided by Nick Pearce (Dalhousie) and Kate Rogers (Dalhousie).

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# MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT HEAD



Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Head, Department of Psychiatry.



The past year will go down in history as a year that has witnessed the most significant structural, administrative, and functional changes in the Department of Psychiatry. On Sept. 5, 2021, the department welcomed its first ever visible minority (African) department head, and shortly thereafter, its first ever female deputy department head. The department also appointed several women to newly-created leadership positions, including to important roles such as section head for acute, consultation, and inpatient psychiatry, director of social policy and advocacy, director of equity, diversity, inclusivity and accessibility, chair of the department's Wellness Committee, and vice-chair of the department's Clinical Council.

The department also transformed from having one division to having one division and four clinical academic sections. These include the division of child and adolescent psychiatry, section of community psychiatry, section of acute, consultation, and inpatient psychiatry, section of forensic psychiatry and section of geriatric psychiatry. Section heads were appointed through transparent search and selection processes. Plans are in progress to transform all the clinical academic sections into health authority clinical administrative divisions and to resource each of the divisions with administrative support, research directors, and research assistants who will assist clinical faculty and frontline staff with scholarly projects. This will include quality improvement initiatives that expand access to care and improve on the quality of care for patients.

The department has adopted a distributed leadership model, to increase formal participation of faculty in clinical and

academic leadership, and as part of a leadership succession strategy. To this end, several clinical academic leader roles have been identified and recruitment into these roles are in progress.

Throughout these numerous structural and transformational changes, our faculty, staff, and learners have been fully engaged through town hall meetings and also small group and individual meetings with department leadership. Valuable feedback and input was obtained through departmental surveys which were key factors for success in the change management process.

Clinically, the past year witnessed the launch of the Transcultural Mental Health Program to address traditional gaps in psychiatric care for African Nova Scotians, Newcomers, and Indigenous people. This has been a collaborative effort between the Department of Psychiatry, the Nova Scotia Health Authority Central Zone Mental Health and Addictions Program, the Brotherhood Clinic, the Newcomers Clinic, and the Friendship Centre. I am so proud of our faculty who stepped forward to volunteer their time to participate in the Transcultural Mental Health Program, and are providing psychiatry consultation services for patients and primary care providers within the designated primary care settings monthly.

The past year also saw preparation for the opening of the province's first ever day hospital for mental health, with our department's former deputy director of acute care providing co-leadership with the program leader for acute care Mental Health and Addictions Program for this initiative.

Stakeholder consultations around a proposed Rapid Access and Stabilization Program are also ongoing to address long-standing gaps in access to community psychiatry for residents of the Central Zone. I am appreciative of the input received so far from external stakeholders, including patient representatives, School of Social Work, School of Nursing, and the Department of Family Medicine at both Nova Scotia Health and Dalhousie University.

On the research front, in the past year, our department's researchers witnessed significant successes with securing grants from external funding agencies. There are also growing collaborations between our department's researchers and researchers from other departments within Dalhousie University. These include researchers from the Departments of Community Health and Epidemiology, Family Medicine, Anaesthesia, Pain Management, and Perioperative Medicine, the Thoracic Surgery Program, and the Faculty of Computer Science. In addition, our department researchers have participated in, or lead, several successful and pending team grant applications and are collaborating with researchers around the world. We continue to showcase our excellence in research at our annual departmental research day which occurred virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic on Nov. 12, 2021.

Our department's graduate program continues to attract several high-quality applicants. In the last year, our graduate students received multiple internal and external awards and scholarships. While space to expand our department's growing research programs continues to be a challenge for our department, we are working with the

associate dean for research for the Faculty of Medicine, and the vice-president for research and innovation for Nova Scotia Health, to address these space challenges.

On the education front, our undergraduate, postgraduate, and continuing professional development programs continue to be in good standing. Our psychiatry residency program remains competitive and is highly sought after by graduating medical students across Canada. Efforts were initiated in the past year to extend the distributed residency training to Cape Breton in the Eastern Zone. There were also two key education-related appointments made to the department in the past year: a program coordinator for the new International Graduate Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry Program, and a director of International Fellowships. The two new educational programs are intended to advance the global reach of our department's excellent educational offerings.

It is evident that our department has been highly productive in the last year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic and the significant structural and transformational changes the department has seen. I am truly appreciative of the effort and contribution of all our faculty, staff, and learners.



**Dr. Vincent I.O. Agyapong**

Head, Department of Psychiatry  
Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University  
Chief, Department of Psychiatry  
NSHA Central Zone



## OUR VISION

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



Photo by Oscar Portan from Pexels.

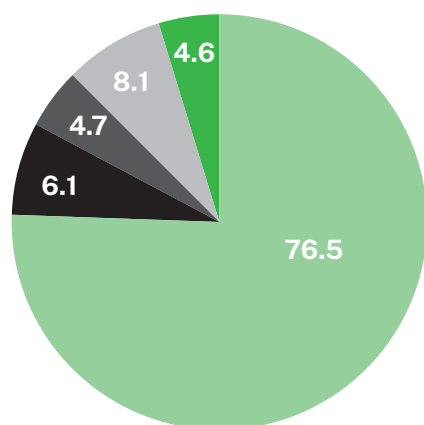
# A YEAR IN REVIEW

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 270 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 (ECFH), the Nova Scotia Hospital, the Operational Stress Injury Clinic, and various community clinics across the Central Zone.

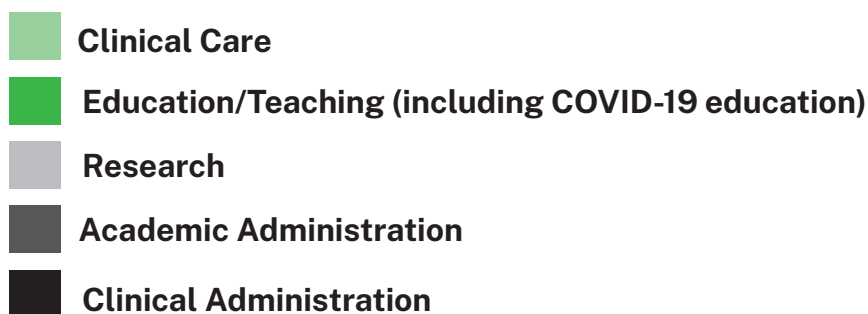
**266**  
faculty members

**21**  
cross-appointed faculty

**17**  
adjunct faculty



How our AFP faculty spend their time





## Education

### UNDERGRAD

**93** Core students rotated through our services at traditional clerkship sites\*  
*\*Clerkship year is from Aug. 30, 2021–Aug. 26, 2022.*

**79** students in the Halifax Regional Municipality

**5** students at distributed sites in Amherst, Charlottetown/Summerside, and Kentville

**9** students at the Sydney & South Shore longitudinal integrated clerkship (LIC) sites

**26** students at Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick sites with **17** of those at longitudinal integrated clerkship (LIC) sites

~**45** Elective requests (Dalhousie students only); **32** of the requests completed the elective

~**1,472** Teaching hours to undergraduate medical education (continues to be impacted by COVID-19)

### POSTGRAD

**43** residents received **547 hours** of instruction from **65 faculty** members

**9** applicants matched in the first round of CaRMS, including **4** Dalhousie graduates

**1** geriatric psychiatry subspecialty resident

**3** child and adolescent psychiatry subspecialty residents

**43** rounds total; **9** invited speakers

## Curriculum development and scholarly work

**\$7,245** in medical education grant funding received

**20** scholarly posters presented at various conferences

**11** learner scholarly projects on medical education

## Research

**\$6M+** in new grant money

**\$20M+** in continuing grant money

**28** faculty members were actively engaged in research

**250+** publications of journal articles, abstracts, and books

## Patient Care

### ADULT

**74,769** days were spent in adult inpatient services

**83.4** per cent occupancy rate in adult mental health and addictions services (including ECFH)

**1,754** discharges from adult inpatient care (includes 157 from ECFH)

**134,424** visits to adult outpatient services (does not include Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team and Psych ER)

**23,785** Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team interventions for clients in the Central Zone (includes telephone and mobile interventions)

**2,496** visits to the Psych ER

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### CHILD AND ADOLESCENT

**4,292** days spent in child and adolescent acute inpatient services

**69** per cent occupancy rate in child and adolescent acute inpatient services

**319** discharges from child and adolescent acute inpatient services

**4,054** days spent in child and adolescent inpatient intensive services

**54** per cent occupancy rate in child and adolescent inpatient intensive services

**87** discharges from child and adolescent inpatient intensive services

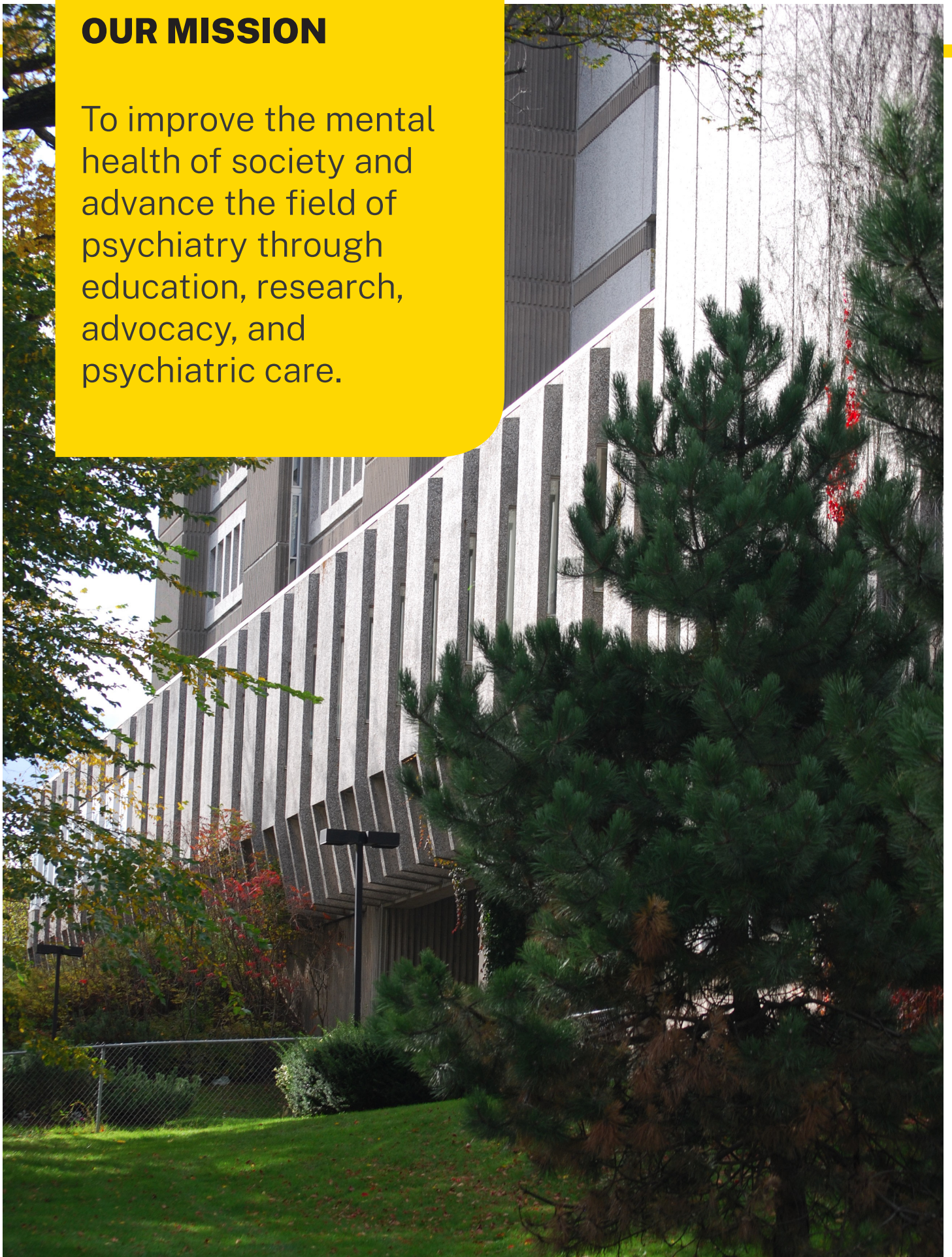
**50,915** Ambulatory Registrations to MHA Program (this includes all programs and ages)

Note: Inpatient intensive services registrations were lower in 2020/21 due to pandemic closure of intensive inpatient services and a move to virtual services during this period.



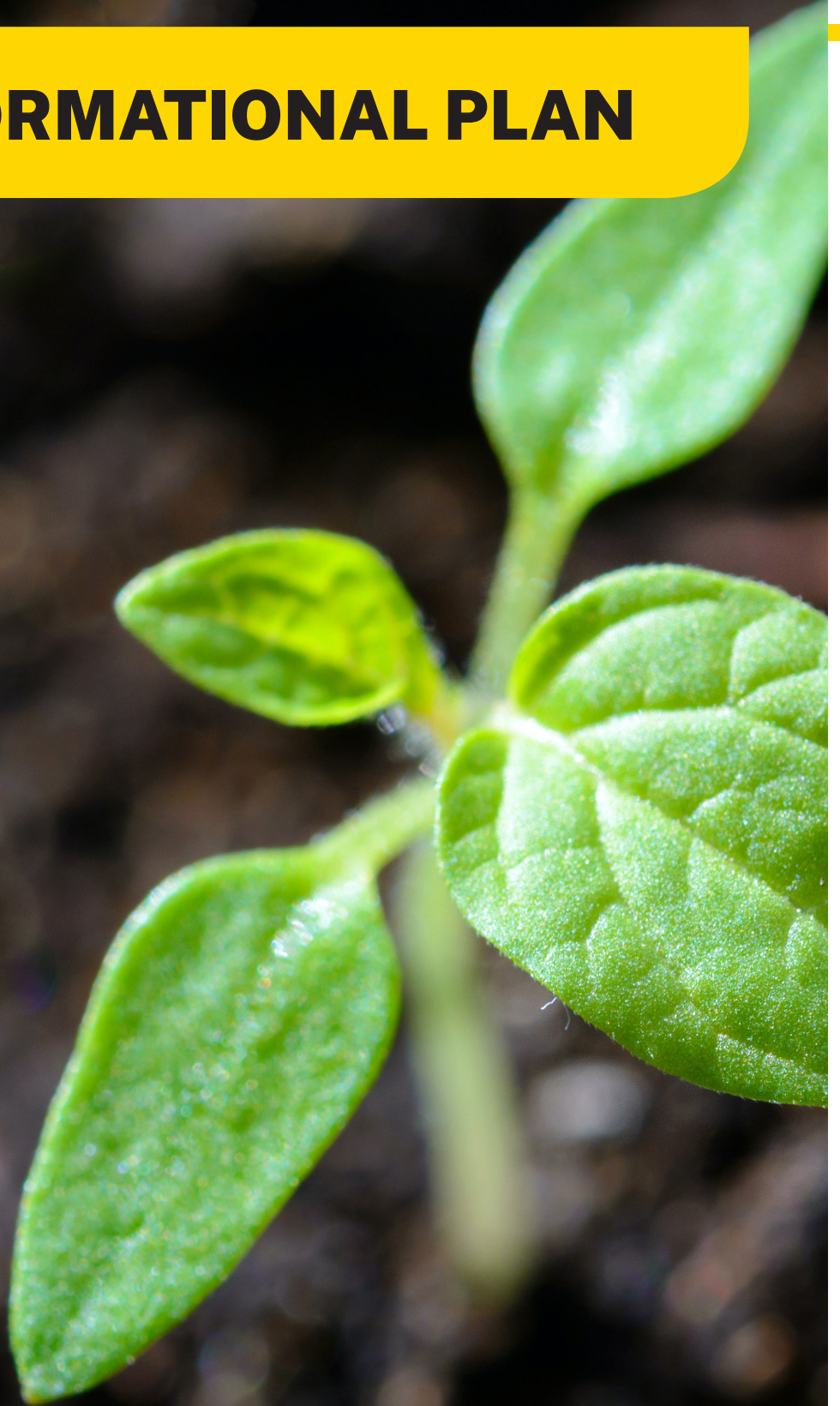
## **OUR MISSION**

To improve the mental health of society and advance the field of psychiatry through education, research, advocacy, and psychiatric care.





# A TRANSFORMATIONAL PLAN





# Implementing the Department of Psychiatry's strategic vision

In 2021/22 the department continued to adapt to the fluidity of the COVID-19 pandemic. While the pandemic has challenged us all to be responsive and flexible throughout its evolution, it has also provided us with opportunities to showcase our resiliency, sense of community, and humanity. It has allowed us to reflect, take stock, and rebuild.

This was when the department welcomed its new head, Dr. Vincent Agyapong.

Joining the department in 2021, Dr. Agyapong had a vision to transform the department while remaining committed to its mission, values, and strategic priorities.

Dr. Agyapong's commitments are:

- To build transformative departmental structures
- To provide transparent, accountable, and inclusive leadership
- To empower faculty
- To extend the global reach and leadership of the department

Following extensive stakeholder consultation and positive survey and feedback from faculty, Dr. Agyapong updated the department's strategic vision to include a transformational plan. Key actions were incorporated into the department's goals in the priority areas of education, research, and clinical care. The transformational plan also incorporated changes to the department's governance and leadership.

Below are key accomplishments in achieving the department's strategic vision.

## BUILDING THE FOUNDATION

Having the appropriate organizational structure is essential to achieving the department's objectives. As such, four new clinical academic sections were added as part of a plan for distributed leadership and to deepen faculty engagement. The four new sections are:

- Community Psychiatry
- Forensic Psychiatry
- Geriatric Psychiatry
- Acute, Rehabilitation, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry

Section heads and associate section heads were appointed through transparent and competitive search and selection processes to lead these new sections.

Several clinical academic leadership roles were also established within the clinical academic sections (across community clinics and inpatient services). This was part of a plan for a distributed leadership strategy to deepen faculty engagement and accountability. Leadership around faculty recruitment was also decentralized to clinical sections/divisions.

Research directors were also appointed for each clinical section/division. In addition, a plan was developed to recruit five research assistants (one for each division/

section) to support frontline clinical faculty participation in quality improvement and clinical translational research. This plan was part of efforts to enhance personal and professional development and prepare faculty for promotion.

In keeping with developing an organizational structure to best support the department's goals, new committees were formed, and some changes were made to existing committees.

The following new committees were established:

- A Clinical Council to further improve clinical administration and co-leadership in the Central Zone Mental Health and Addictions Program.
- An Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee, with membership including representation from distributed learning sites in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. A director for EDIA was also appointed.
- A departmental Wellness Committee, with membership including representation from distributed learning sites in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, to plan and facilitate programs to promote and enhance the wellness of faculty and staff.
- A Social Policy and Advocacy Committee, with representation from community-led organizations, to plan and execute programs geared towards advocating for resources and for the rights of patients with mental illness and their families.
- A departmental Research Management Committee.

Changes to existing committees included:

- Expansion of the Department of Psychiatry Executive Committee to include representation from Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick — a distributed learning site for the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University.

Other changes to administration included:

- Instituting monthly leadership safety rounds to deepen the culture of quality and safety among clinical teams and improve quality of patient care across clinical programs in the Nova Scotia Health Central Zone.
- Dedicating psychiatric resource to recruit a psychiatrist with special training in intellectual disability to provide psychiatry care for patients with high-functioning autism who do not meet the criteria for the existing COAST program.
- Organizing a human resource workshop for leaders of clinical programs to offer opportunity for faculty to have a shared understanding of human resource needs of the department. This was a first step towards developing a HR strategy for the department.
- Establishing department head/research chairs' quarterly meetings to enable peer-to-peer discussions around challenges and enablers of successful research programs in the department and explore solutions together.



*With so many strengths, dedicated and committed faculty members, a shared vision and working collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders, I am confident we will continue to work together to consolidate the gains, close the gaps, and extend the frontiers of the department, positioning it as a major player on the global stage in the areas of clinical care, education, research, innovation and advocacy.”*

— Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Head, Department of Psychiatry. Message from the Head, Headlines Newsletter, September 2021.

## **PUTTING THE PLAN INTO PRACTICE: NEW DEPARTMENTAL INITIATIVES**

### **Clinical Translation Research**

A project charter was developed for clinical translational research. The department also conceived and hosted a stakeholder consultative meeting to discuss a plan for clinical translational research in Nova Scotia.

Several clinical translational research projects were initiated, including a Provincial eMental Health clinical trial. Graduate training opportunities in this area were also expanded. These opportunities were expanded through the creation of a clinical translational and global mental health research program, with two PhD students joining the department in September 2022.

### **Neuropsychiatry**

An agreement with the Centre of Excellence for Neuropsychiatry at Beaumont Hospital, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons in Dublin, Ireland was secured. The agreement allows for a senior-year resident, or recent graduate, to complete a no-cost, one-year training fellowship program in neuropsychiatry in Ireland as the department prepares to establish a clinical academic neuropsychiatric program in Nova Scotia.

Given the department's interest in establishing this program in Nova Scotia, one FTE psychiatrist position within the Academic Funding Plan (AFP) was dedicated to support the program's establishment.

### **Centre for Global Mental Health**

A project charter was developed for the establishment of a Centre for Global Mental Health to promote Global Mental Health education, research, and knowledge translation through:

- An International Graduate Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry. A program coordinator has been appointed, and a concept paper has been approved by Faculty of Medicine Council.
- International Fellowship Programs. A program director has been appointed.
- Global Mental Health research
- Global partnerships

The Centre for Global Mental Health is intended to host a range of innovative mental health and addiction research and educational programs which have local, regional, national, and international impacts.



## **OUR VALUES**

Integrity

Creativity

Professionalism

Accountability

Collaboration

Compassion

Inclusivity



*Establishing an International Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry and a Clinical Fellowship program at Dalhousie University will be some of the important mechanisms by which we can close the psychological treatment gap at home in Nova Scotia and around the world, especially in low-and middle-income countries. Furthermore, the department can become a global leader in education and research by expanding the reach of our masters and PhD programs to global learners through leveraging the power of technology and partnerships with academic institutions and health authorities around the world. It is therefore the goal to establish a Centre for Global Mental Health at Dalhousie University to coordinate international mental health education and research.”*

— Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Head, Department of Psychiatry. On the Cover, Headlines Newsletter, September 2021.

## RECOGNIZING OUR PEOPLE

The following awards were instituted to recognize faculty and leaders for service to the department:

- A long service award for retiring faculty members who have served the department for at least 10 years. Five awards were given to faculty in May 2022.
  - Dr. Phillip Mills
  - Dr. Magdalena Walentynowicz
  - Dr. Ben Rusak
  - Dr. Aileen Brunet
  - Dr. Mark Rubens
- A leadership award for faculty members who have served the department in a leadership role for at least five years. Eleven awards were given to faculty in May 2022.
  - Dr. Mark Bosma
  - Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy
  - Dr. Scott Theriault
  - Dr. Cheryl Murphy
  - Dr. Margaret Rajda
  - Dr. Ben Rusak
  - Dr. Andrew Harris
  - Dr. Jason Morrison
  - Dr. Sonia Chehil
  - Dr. Sanjana Sridharan
  - Dr. Mutiat Sulyman



## WELCOMING OFFICIALS

The department was proud to welcome and visit with the following federal and provincial ministers:

- The Honourable Kamal Khera, Minister of Seniors, and Member of Parliament for Brampton West — March 4, 2022.
- The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and the Associate Minister of Health — March 16, 2022.
- The Honourable Brian Comer, Minister responsible for the Office of Addictions and Mental Health — April 6, 2022.



The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and the Associate Minister of Health, visited with the Department of Psychiatry on March 16, 2022.



The Honourable Brian Comer, Minister responsible for the Office of Addictions and Mental Health, visited with the Department of Psychiatry on April 6, 2022.



Department of Psychiatry leadership at Dalhousie University also met with the High Commissioner of St. Kitts and Nevis to Canada, Ms. Sherry Tross, and First Secretary, Mr. Kressell Daniel, to discuss opportunities for collaboration in Global Mental Health. In attendance from Dalhousie University were Dr. Balakrishna Prithiviraj, AVP Global Relations; Ms. Shawna O’Heam, director, Global Health Office; Dr. Vincent Agyapong, head, Department of Psychiatry; Dr. Lara Hazelton, deputy head, Department of Psychiatry; and, Dr. Pamela Arenella, coordinator, Graduate Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry.



# EDUCATION IN PSYCHIATRY

Dalhousie psychiatry has a strong tradition of excellence in medical education. Our residency program filled all its spots in the first round again this year, reflecting strength not only in postgraduate education, but also at the undergraduate level, where the teaching and supervision provided by our faculty and residents serve to attract high-quality medical students to our program.

In continuing professional development, attendance levels at grand rounds greatly exceed pre-pandemic levels. Our graduate programs continue to recruit and graduate high-quality candidates. Our scholarly activities in education, including our national student writing competition, position Dalhousie as a leader in psychiatric education in Canada.

The past year has seen many advances and transitions in Dalhousie psychiatry's educational programs; a few of these are highlighted below.

## THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

Throughout the pandemic, the department continued to provide the highest quality psychiatric education to learners across the spectrum thanks to the flexibility and professionalism of our teachers and educational leads. With shifts in the COVID-19 landscape, there has been a gradual return to in-person education activities. However, the technological advances in medical education adopted during the past few years continue to promote engagement of faculty and learners

in activities such as grand rounds. Remote educational technology will also support our distributed education mandate going forward, including a core inpatient rotation for psychiatry residents that will be piloted in Cape Breton in fall 2022.

## LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The 2021/22 academic year saw significant transitions in the educational leadership within the department. Dr. Margaret Rajda stepped down as director of education after many successful years in the position. Dr. Lara Hazelton, formerly director of continuing professional development (CPD), took over as the director of education in addition to her role as deputy department head. Dr. Cheryl Murphy, who for many years has overseen the department's medical student teaching as the director of undergraduate education, became the new director of CPD, and Dr. Kathy Black, a long-time department member, was appointed as the new director of undergraduate education.

This year also saw Dr. Mark Bosma finish his successful term as director of postgraduate education responsible for the psychiatry residency program. He becomes the postgraduate competency-based medical education (CBME) lead, as well as the new head of the section of geriatric psychiatry. Former deputy program director, Dr. Deborah Parker, stepped into the role of program director, and Dr. Ali Manning became the new associate director of postgraduate education.



## EDUCATION LEADS WITHIN SECTIONS

In addition, with the reorganization of the department into five sections/divisions, there are now education leads for each section who will sit on the education management team (EMT). These leads assist with recruitment of teachers, act as liaisons, and promote educational excellence in their sections. Through this structure, the department will be better able to integrate its clinical and academic mandates.

## NEW INITIATIVES

As part of the department's strategic engagement in global psychiatry, there were new educational programs introduced in the past year, and leadership positions created to support them. Dr. Pamela Arenella was appointed director of the nascent International Graduate Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry, and Dr. Mahmoud Awara takes on the portfolio of international fellowship director. The department expects to welcome learners into these programs in the next couple of years.

## HIGHLIGHTS FROM EDUCATION SECTIONS

### Undergraduate Education

Dr. Shiloh Ricciotti was chosen by the clinical clerks to receive the Clerk's Choice Award for outstanding contributions to their teaching. Cumulatively, our residents received 80 nominations for this award — a much-deserved recognition of their exceptional dedication to teaching.

One new clerkship seminar was added to the curriculum. It was developed by Dr. Abraham

Rudnick and entitled *Stress Reactions & Biopsychosocial Care for Adults with Trauma & Stressor Related Disorders: Person-Centered and Evidence-Informed Perspectives*.

The department participated in the Global Health Office's LINK program, preparing two students from the International Medical University of Malaysia for their entry into Clerkship.

The medical student-led Psychiatry Interest Group is in its 11<sup>th</sup> year. The group's mandate includes highlighting and facilitating discussion of mental health and encouraging interest in the field of Psychiatry.

SIIP (Summer Internship in Psychiatry), a resident-led initiative for Med 1 students to increase interest in and exposure to Psychiatry, was held for the second time, and expanded to include 12 students from Halifax and Saint John campuses. These students participated in a one-week program including small group didactic sessions, elective and simulated patient experiences.

### Postgraduate Education

Postgraduate education continued the transition to Competency Based Medical Education (CBME) in July with the new PGY-2 class and the change to a full-year Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) training cohort in PGY-2.

Drs. Shiloh Ricciotti and Katie Lines took the lead as co-chief residents for the year.

CaRMS 2022 was successful with all nine positions filled in the first round, an increase

of one spot from previous years. Four spots were filled by Dalhousie Medicine undergraduates.

The department hosted the 2022 virtual graduation exercises on June 22. The event included resident tributes to Dr. Mark Bosma as he finished his time as program director after eight years. Dr. Deborah Parker took the reigns as program director and Dr. Ali Manning moved into the associate program director role in July 2022.

Congratulations to the class of 2022: Drs. Lauren Chan, Jillian Cottleau, Emily Fraser, Amy Gough, Angela Wang, Holly Greer, Marissa Leblanc, and Graham Stevenson.

### **Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Subspecialty Program**

Our child and adolescent psychiatry subspecialty residency program successfully launched competency based medical education (CBME) led by Dr. David Lovas with faculty well prepared to support this new model of training. Nationally, Dr. David Lovas and Dr. Sabina Abidi as members of the Royal College subspecialty committee in child and adolescent psychiatry (CAP), have been actively involved with the other CAP programs across Canada in the development of the core components of the CBME curriculum and Dr. Lukas Propper chairs the National RCC Chairs Committee meetings for Competency by Design (CBD) Transition in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry.

Congratulations to Dr. Courtney Handford and Dr. Kate Stymiest who accepted positions in our subspecialty residency program. Drs.

Handford and Stymiest will join as PGY-5 residents in 2022 and enter the subspecialty program as PGY-6 residents in 2023.

This year we gathered for academic retreats, conferences, and celebrations virtually, and in person, as COVID-19 restrictions allowed. Dr. Sabina Abidi co-hosted the first international Choice and Partnership Approach (CAPA) conference in May 2021 along with Dr. Sharon Clark and other IWK MHA leaders which was attended by more than 400 clinicians, physicians, administrators, and those with lived experience from across the globe. The three-day virtual conference included networking and shared learning from other international programs about CAPA, the outcomes from which continue to be utilized towards continuous improvement in service delivery here and abroad.

### **Geriatric Psychiatry Subspecialty Program**

Dr. Christelle Boudreau graduated from the program in June 2022. She is now working in the Western Zone establishing a Geriatric Psychiatry program in the Bridgewater/Lunenburg area. She will join Ian MacKay and Elyse Ross as supervisors of our subspecialty residents in rural outreach.

Dr. Amy Gough is now in her second year of subspecialty training and Dr. Mackenzie Armstrong was successful in securing a position in the program.

We have completed our first Competency by Design year and the culture change towards outcome-based skill development and resident coaching is in full swing. Dr. Mark Bosma (chair for CBD in our department) and Dr. Cheryl Murphy have guided us with

workshops to support this change and will continue to do so.

Our program has been involved with other GP programs in the initiation of a National Seminar Series which will provide CBD-based education. It will complement the National Learning Path of online interactive courses.

The program is preparing for an internal review in November 2022. All faculty have been supportive in reviewing the documentation.

### **Curriculum development and scholarly work**

The department received grant funding for two medical education projects from the department's Education Methods in Psychiatry fund and Dalhousie's Centre for Learning and Teaching for a teaching enhancement grant:

- "Factors affecting the establishment of a rural training site for psychiatry post-graduate education: Identifying needs and defining outcome measures" (Lara Hazelton, Adewale Raji) for \$4,245.18.
- "Development of a virtual escape room to enhance undergraduate psychiatry education" (Cheryl Murphy, Mandy Esliger, Mark Bosma) for \$3,000.

Twenty faculty, learner and staff medical education projects were disseminated via conferences including:

- Psychiatry Research Day
- Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine's Medical Education Research and Innovations Showcase (MERIS)

- The Canadian Conference on Medical Education
- The International Conference on Residency Education
- Annual meetings of the Canadian Psychiatric Association, Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry, and Society for Academic CME
- Other venues including University of Toronto Donald Wasylenki Education Day and McMaster Program for Faculty Development.

Eleven learner scholarly projects were supervised by faculty and staff. Projects included needs assessments, curriculum development of medical student and resident teaching materials, and program evaluation of departmental programs.

### **Continuing Professional Development**

Dr. Cheryl Murphy took over from Dr. Lara Hazelton as director of CPD effective January 2022. Thank you to Dr. Hazelton for her dedication to the position during her term.

Clinical academic rounds continues to be offered in a virtual format. The way the number of rounds slots is divided among the department is being evaluated to ensure that all services are afforded proportional representation at rounds.

The 2023 W. O. McCormick Academic Day is planned for the coming spring. The topic will be Neuropsychiatry. Details to follow.

There will be at least four faculty development workshops offered for the 2022/23 academic year. Details to follow.



## **Graduate Training in Psychiatry Research**

The graduate program in psychiatry research welcomed its first PhD cohort in fall 2021. Two new students were admitted into our new PhD program as well as two master's students from our program who were fast-tracked into the PhD cohort. We also welcomed six new master's students into the program.

Funding success for these students was at an all-time high. Our students received Nova Scotia Graduate Scholarships (seven master's and one doctorate), Scotia Scholars Awards (five master's and one doctorate), three Canada Graduate Scholarships (all master's), four Maritime SPOR Support Unit Student awards, one L'Oreal award, and two Dalhousie Medical Research Fund awards. Many students were fully funded and therefore needed to accept honorary awards.

Despite the loosened pandemic restrictions, all our theses defenses continued to take place virtually. This past summer, we had five successful master defenses. We are currently preparing for two new courses that will be rolled out for PhD students. For our September 2022 cohort, we admitted six new master's students and two new PhD students

## **Medical Humanities**

The Medical Humanities program continued its activities effectively, with broader involvement of Psychiatry residents through an expansion of the Medical Humanities Committee. The medical humanities coordinator also took on the role of editor of Headlines, the department's newsletter.

## **LOOKING TO THE FUTURE**

As the new academic year begins, there are many new offerings and programs being planned. New clinical services, such as the Transcultural Psychiatry service, will provide experiences for learners. Among the most exciting developments will be the educational opportunities for faculty and learners that will be made available through departmental initiatives in areas of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA), social policy and advocacy (SP&A), and wellness.



# RESEARCH IN PSYCHIATRY

While the COVID-19 pandemic continued to influence and affect research programs, our researchers have managed to remain competitive, with local and national research grants being awarded, publishing in leading journals, and being able to continue to disseminate their research results, often virtually. Our residents were involved in, and completed, scholarly work/research, and our MSc and PhD students did extremely well in navigating online learning and the development and finishing of their theses, including successful virtual oral defenses. All the learners, their supervisors, researchers, and their research support staff should be able to look back at the last year and be proud of what they have been able to accomplish.

The 2021 Department of Psychiatry Research Day was again held virtually, with the plenary speaker being Dr. Brenda Penninx from the Department of Psychiatry, Amsterdam UMC, who spoke to the epidemiology of anxiety and depression. Congratulations to all the presenters and to the award winners. The 2022 Research Day on October 21 is pleased to have as a plenary speaker Dr. Paul Kurdyak from CAMH (Toronto) who will speak to mental health service delivery, and what we have learned from the pandemic.

The 2021/22 year saw considerable time and effort to review and revise the Department of Psychiatry's Strategic Plan. There are four overall areas that will guide our department's research vision for the next five years (full

details can be found on the departmental website).

1. *To support and build capacity of current departmental researchers.* This includes a focus on protected research time, foster/support mentorship opportunities for new researchers, coordinate support when needed for grant applications, review and identify our research priorities, and continue with the Department of Psychiatry Research Fund (DPRF).
2. *A strategic focus on new researchers.* By coordination of the recruitment of new researchers with existing research strength in the department, and identifying new areas needed, our department will continue with its research excellence. The filling of the Sun Life Chair in Adolescent Mental Health is a priority, building on the strengths of our current Canada Research Chairs/Endowed Chairs. We will also focus on enhancing resident involvement in research/scholarly activity.
3. *Build partnerships to support and enhance departmental research activities.* We will continue to encourage collaboration and facilitate engagement of faculty and partners in research provincially, nationally, and internationally. Partnerships and collaborations also include those with health authorities, people with lived experience, and institutions. Research space will be an immediate focus, as the

current limitations need to be addressed to allow us to move our research mandate forward.

4. *Support knowledge translation.* This will include the development of a communications plan as well as developing mechanisms for translating department research into improvements in psychiatric care, and health and social policy.

A significant change in research is the decision by Dr. Ben Rusak to step down as director of research after 23 years. Dr. Rusak has been an enthusiastic supporter of our research, its growth, and its excellence. Our reputation in mental health research is a result of Dr. Rusak's leadership. The department

wishes him all the best in his retirement. Other administrative changes as a result of the vision of the department's head will see research leads in the newly-created sections/divisions, led by the director of research. This will allow for section/division-led research, engaging our frontline clinicians in scholarly enquiry.

## DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY RESEARCH FUND

### **November 2021 DPRF Competition**

Funding was awarded for the following submission:

Eli Otis, Dr. Igor Yakovenko, Dr. Sherry Stewart — *Investigating the Role of Intolerance of Uncertainty in the Relationship Between Trait Anxiety, Coping Motives, and Disordered Gambling*

### **2021 DPRF Summer Students**

- Samantha Horne (Supervisor: Dr. Gail Eskes) — *Validating an online method to assess and train visuospatial attention*
- Hailey Silver (Supervisor: Dr. Sandra Meier) — *Social Media and Mental Wellbeing*
- Madison Szczygiel (Supervisors: Drs. Candice Crocker & Phil Tibbo) — *Potential Influence of Cannabis Use History on the Efficacy of Anti-psychotic Medications in Patients with Early Phase Psychosis*
- Dimitra Tsimiklis (Supervisor: Dr. Barbara Pavlova) — *Effortful Control in Offspring of Parents With and Without Mood Disorder*

# LIST OF RESEARCH TOPICS

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



# Canada Research Chair in Addictions and Mental Health: Dr. Sherry Stewart



Dr. Sherry Stewart

The Canada Research Chair in Addictions and Mental Health, Dr. Stewart, focuses on understanding underlying mechanisms/effective interventions for concurrent mental health-addictive disorders. Dr. Stewart is director of a \$2.5 million

SSHRC Partnership Grant. She is testing an adaptation of her personality-targeted adolescent substance misuse prevention/mental health promotion program for use with undergraduates. *Univenture* is taking place at five Canadian universities, in collaboration with 20+ methodological/knowledge translation partners. The trial was launched in fall 2021 and the adapted intervention was delivered to the first two of four cohorts.

Dr. Stewart is also 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. The trial launched this past year and data collection has commenced. Dr. Stewart organized webinars on youth substance misuse for parents.

*Univenture* and *CUSP* are the first national prevention trials to be supported by the Canadian Research Initiative in Substance Misuse (CRISM). Dr. Stewart led the successful application to establish a fifth node of CRISM in Atlantic Canada (\$2.4 million); CRISM's pan-

Canadian methamphetamine use disorder trial was also funded (\$1.25 million). Dr. Stewart recruited a Mitacs postdoc in partnership with River Stone Recovery Centre, Fredericton, to co-lead her CIHR-funded trial, *OpiVenture*, where her personality-targeted intervention is being adapted and piloted-tested for opioid use disordered clients.

Dr. Stewart co-leads the national Emerging Health Threats Working Group funded by Health Canada, focused on responding to the opioid crisis in youth/new users. Their research findings (national service provider survey, youth focus groups, and national summit) were recently published in a special issue (Dr. Stewart, guest co-editor); their scoping review was published in the *Canadian Journal of Psychiatry*.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Dr. Stewart began to study effects of lockdown and mandatory homeschooling on romantic couples' mental health/addictive behaviours. She published several papers on these topics last year and provided an invited talk at the American Psychological Society's Global Collaboration on COVID-19.

Dr. Stewart's mechanistic research addressing the high comorbidity of PTSD and cannabis use disorder (CUD) resulted in publications on trauma cue-induced cannabis craving (*Addictive Behaviors*, *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, book chapter). Her lab continued an fMRI study on reward and relief craving, and a trauma cue-induced automatic cognition study, to explain PTSD-CUD comorbidity. Dr. Stewart delivered an invited talk at the Canadian Institute for Military and Veterans Health Research meeting.

# 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, Dr. Sandra Meier, and the PROSIT (Predicting Risk and Outcomes of Social Interactions) lab are leveraging mobile

technology to improve the mental health care of youth and families.

A key area of the lab's research focuses on recording objective markers of people's behaviour via the innovative methodology of mobile sensing. Dr. Meier has developed her own mobile sensing app that has now been downloaded by more than 1,700 users, with more than 1,200 of them providing data for at least 14 days, rendering the study sample one of the largest in the world for this methodology. Dr. Meier currently leads a SSHRC-funded project using the app to predict new onsets of mental disorders in healthy youth as well as a CIHR-funded project using the app to identify youth with anxiety disorders who are likely to not respond well to CBT. Both projects have already resulted in valuable insights. Youth who travelled more or spent more time on screen, for example, were more anxious. In contrast, youth who made a lot of phone calls seemed to be more resilient. Translating these observational findings to clinical care, the lab has developed a mental health app called SMILE that provides personalized, just-in-time interventions to youth based on their individual mobile-sensing profiles.

Drs. Meier, McGrath, and Lingley-Pottie also co-led an initiative aiming to develop online interventions for families of children with rare genetic syndromes. The initiative has currently partners in over eight countries and is involving >19 patient organizations. In November 2021, the initiative received >\$1M of funding from the European Joint Programme on Rare Diseases with Dr. Meier as the international consortium lead with partner sites in Belgium, Canada, Germany, Switzerland, and the USA. The pilot studies are already successfully completed, and Dr. Meier presented the results at the European and International Patient Organization Meetings. Finally, Drs. Meier and Mattheisen lead a Pan-Canadian consortium funded through CIHR to uncover the genetic underpinnings of youth anxiety. As a novelty to classical large-scale genetic studies, all youth taking part in the study will be offered an online intervention. Regarding KT, the lab has launched its youth council and a booth showcasing its research at Discovery Centre, Halifax's popular science museum. Dr. Meier further supervised 15 students and two postdocs in the last year across disciplines (she became newly affiliated with the Department of Community Health & Epidemiology) and has authored 17 publications, with nine more in review, and four close to submission.

# Canada Research Chair in Early Intervention: Dr. Rudolf Uher



Dr. Rudolf Uher

As the Canada Research Chair in Early Intervention, Dr. Uher carries out clinical research with the aim to reduce the burden of severe types of mental illness, such as psychosis, bipolar disorder, and major depressive disorder, through early

identification and early intervention.

In October 2021, Dr. Uher's team received funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to continue tracking the trajectories of mental health of youth and families through the COVID-19 pandemic.

In November 2021, Dr. Uher launched Treatment Interrupts Depression Early (TIDE), the first project to examine personalized treatment for the first episode of depression in youth, supported by the Hewitt Foundation and the Medavie Health Foundation. As part of TIDE, Dr. Uher and colleagues see adolescents and young adults throughout Nova Scotia to find out who will benefit from psychological treatment and who required medication to overcome depression and build resilience.

February 2022 saw the launch of the Lancet and World Psychiatric Association Commission on Depression, an impact document and campaign aimed to enhance prevention and treatment for depression and to diminish the global burden of depression. As the Canadian commissioner on depression, Dr. Uher has co-

authored the commission and co-chaired its North American launch event.

Dr. Uher leads the data science platform of the Canadian Biomarker Integration Network for Depression, a network of Canadian researchers striving to improve depression outcomes through the use of biomarkers and personalized treatment, and by working on the update of the Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatment clinical guidelines.

In March 2022, the flagship Families Overcoming Risks and Building Opportunities for Wellbeing (FORBOW) project reached its recruitment target of 600 youth participants. The FORBOW team completed more than 800 assessments of youth and parents and published an early identification instrument that has been translated to 12 languages. Additionally, 20 families have received early interventions, bringing the number of Skills-for-Wellness participants to 120. FORBOW also launched a CIHR-funded brain imaging program to find out if the trajectory of brain development through adolescence can help predict the risk of depression.

Dr. Uher's team continues to disseminate knowledge and train highly-qualified professionals. In 2021/22, 20 research articles were published, one student graduated with a master's degree under Dr. Uher's supervision, three graduate students obtained competitive funding, and three FORBOW team members started doctoral training in clinical psychology or medical school.

For the fourth consecutive year, Dr. Uher has been listed as a highly-cited researcher by Clarivate and the Web of Science.



## Dr. Paul Janssen Chair in Psychotic Disorders: **Dr. Philip Tibbo**



Dr. Philip Tibbo

Dr. Philip Tibbo, as the Dr. Paul Janssen Chair in Psychotic Disorders, continues in his mandate to lead, foster, and mentor research in psychosis and schizophrenia. The research staff and graduate students (MSc/

PhD) have navigated well the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on research, with minimal disruptions over the last year. Effects were felt on longitudinal studies; however, we remain optimistic in completing ongoing studies and starting newly-funded projects.

Over the last year, research continued into the understating of the effects of cannabis on psychosis development and outcomes. Ongoing is a CIHR-funded neuroimaging study, aiming to characterize the effects of various levels of cannabis use on brain white matter (WM) structure and connectivity, examining groups of young adults with and without early phase psychosis (EPP). The chair is also co-leading a CIHR Team catalyst grant with colleagues across the country to examine the genetic, pharmacologic, and psychosocial factors linked to cannabis-induced psychosis and the neurodevelopmental mechanisms underlying risk. The Halifax arm, led by the chair, is actively recruiting adolescents to investigate neuroinflammation, neuronal connectivity, and function with adolescent exposure to cannabis via neuroimaging. Cannabis and gender-specific effects continue to be examined using neuroimaging

methods, and with colleagues, through event-related potentials (ERPs; Dr. Fisher) and university surveys (Dr. Stewart). A CCSA-funded collaborative project with members of the Department of Emergency Medicine is nearing completion, examining physical and mental health cannabis-related presentations to the emergency department. The chair was awarded a CIHR research grant in 2021 to further the understanding of comorbid substance use treatment in early phase psychosis, examining the use of cognitive enhancement therapy for problematic alcohol use, complementing the ongoing TRIC-funded psychotherapy study for those with past adverse events, substance use, and psychosis.

Collaborations with other researchers locally, nationally, and internationally remains important to the chair. Projects with collaborators are aimed to further our understanding of substance use in psychosis (e.g., examination of personality, vulnerability, and motives for use) and treatment (e.g., an examining of e-interventions for cannabis use). Other non-cannabis focused EPP collaborations include investigations of ERP markers in high-risk populations, neuroimaging markers of clozapine eligibility in EPP, and problematic gambling in EPP. A new CIHR-funded collaboration in 2021 with CAMH will investigate standardizing approaches to transitions in care in EPP programming.

The chair continues as president of the Canadian Consortium for Early Intervention in Psychosis (CCEIP), and clinical director of Early Psychosis Intervention Nova Scotia (EPINS).

## Killam Chair in Mood Disorders: Dr. Martin Alda

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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 2021/22 academic year. They continue their clinical and genetic studies

of bipolar disorder and pharmacogenetics of treatment response. Most recently, they helped co-found an international consortium to study the genetic underpinnings of long-term response to treatment with anticonvulsants. In this consortium, they coordinate the clinical phenotyping of the sample and analyze the clinical predictors of valproate and lamotrigine response. Their work on transcriptomic profile of stem cell-derived neurons from responders and non-responders to lithium has led to a patent application jointly with the University of Haifa and with Salk Institute.

Continuing work with several international consortia, Dr. Alda and colleagues also reported a number of findings from molecular genetic studies. As part of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium, they contributed to the largest genome-wide association study of bipolar disorder published in *Nature Genetics* (Mullins et al. 2021) as well as genome-wide studies of the genetics of suicide (Mullins et al. 2022).

Most recently, Dr. Alda has been a co-investigator on a CIHR grant awarded to Dr. Abigail Ortiz at the University of Toronto. Dr. Ortiz is a former member of the department and completed her fellowship training with Dr. Alda. The three-year grant will support a study examining heart rate variability in people with bipolar disorder and its link to the disease burden.

In 2021, Dr. Alda received the Max Forman Prize for research from Dalhousie University, the Heinz Lehmann Award from the Canadian College of Neuropsychopharmacology, the Aidan Stokes inaugural award for mentoring, and a medal for contribution to the field of psychiatry from the Czech Ministry of Health.



# EXCELLENCE IN PATIENT CARE

## ADULT GENERAL AND SPECIALITY MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES

The Department of Psychiatry, in collaboration with Nova Scotia Health, 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 Nova Scotia Health (NSH), the Department of Psychiatry provides clinical services to the Central Zone of NSH 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 NSH 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.

### New Initiatives

Building and implementing the transformational plan has been Dr. Agyapong's priority since becoming department head in September 2021. The department has begun working on new initiatives to put the transformational plan into practice and to advance its strategic priorities, including clinical service delivery. These new initiatives

include a Transcultural Mental Health Program, Rapid Access and Stabilization Program, as well as quality improvements in clinical service delivery.

### Transcultural Mental Health Program

A project charter was developed, and a Nova Scotia Transcultural Mental Health Program was established, to provide mental health support for African Nova Scotians, Newcomers, and Indigenous people in Nova Scotia.

The program's mission is to provide accessible, culturally-competent, culturally-safe, and collaborative mental health and addiction care for historically marginalized racial-ethnic populations of Nova Scotia.

Initially planned for implementation and evaluation in the Central Zone, the hope is the program will be expanded throughout the province. The aspiration is to eventually implement it in Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick to expand the research and educational opportunities it offers.

### Rapid Access and Stabilization Program

A project charter was developed for the establishment of a Rapid Access and Stabilization Program to address long-standing gaps in access to mental health support and psychiatric consultation for patients in Nova Scotia, and telephone



consultation support for primary care providers. Two FTE psychiatrists positions within the Academic Funding Plan have been dedicated to support this program.

The program's function would be to provide rapid, comprehensive in-person or virtual mental health and psychiatric assessments for patients and short-term stabilization for those who require it. Psychiatric consultation includes medication consultation, diagnostic clarification, and telephone support for GPs.

### **Quality Improvement Initiatives in Clinical Service Delivery**

Since the introduction of the transformational plan in fall 2021, each departmental section has been working on quality improvement initiatives in clinical service delivery. Below are key quality improvement initiatives from each section to date.

#### ***Geriatric Psychiatry***

- Resumption of in-person assessment in outreach and long-term care settings
- Planned hiring of clinical nurse educator for the acute care unit
- Adapted group Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to a virtual format
- Ongoing expansion of Provincial Web Education Program
- Implementation of Virtual Optimal Aging Workshops (in collaboration with Community Health Teams (CHTs) and Baycrest)

#### ***Forensic Psychiatry***

- Started a Patient Care Needs Assessment process at East Coast Forensic Hospital
- Development/implementation of many Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)
- Structured and transparent reporting structure and communication through the Clinical Advisory Committee
- Identified concrete workload for psychiatrists and other allied health providers
- Streamlining reports to the Criminal Code Review Board (CCRB) and seeking a CCRB Quality Coordinator position
- Initiated a new service — Provincial Virtual Cells Assessment
- Assessment tools/documentation for transfer of responsibility
- Care planning
- 24-hour chart check and monthly summaries

#### ***Correctional Psychiatry***

- Model of Care Review
- Expanded psychiatric assessment and care to all provincial facilities virtually
- Onsite records scanning to digital records at three facilities across the province
- Onsite dental services at the Northeast Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (NNSCF)
- Bio-Psycho-Social intake assessment
- Development of Mental Health and Addictions (MHA) pathway
- Development of client feedback process
- Process developed to monitor physical health, mental health, and suicide risk of clients in close confinement or segregation-like conditions

- Safe Work Practice for Medication Administration at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (CNSCF)
- Review of all policies and procedures to standardize across all sites
- Implementation of several new safe work practices
- Development and implementation of several SOPs
- Improvements in medication management/administration
- Patient transfer guidelines implemented for Flexible Assertive Community Treatment/Correctional Health Services (FACT/CHS)
- Development of standardized forms for Correctional Health Services (CHS)

### ***Community Psychiatry, Community Mental Health Program***

- Streamlining direct to psychiatry vs. other referrals (flow in)
- Enhancing consistency of psychiatry direct care time allocations and direct vs. indirect psychiatry care ratios (flow through)
- Streamlining discharges and transfers of care such as from Connections to outpatient mental health clinics (flow out)
- Expanding collaborative care such as with Dalhousie University's primary care clinics (shared care)
- Reducing clinical gaps such as for autism spectrum disorder and for refractory OCD and complex PTSD (specialized care)
- Addressing education gaps such as for UGME and research (academics)
- Addressing service gaps with continued recruitment and retention (HR)

### ***Acute, Consultation, and Inpatient Services***

#### Physician Co-Leadership for Day Hospital

- 1,073 inpatient days saved (5 months' data)

#### Addictions

- Clinical Academic Leader (CAL) for Addictions
- Staff/Physician Recruitment and re-structuring
- Integrating with the Recovery Support Centre & EDs
- International Fellow starting in January

#### Inpatient Restructuring

- Integrating units
- Cohorting high intensity patients
- New seclusion rooms in Mt. Hope
- Rapid tranquilization protocols

#### International Fellow starting in October 2022

#### Psychiatry Emergency Services (PES)

- Monthly meetings of PES staff
- Monthly leadership meetings with ED

### ***Child and Adolescent Psychiatry/IWK MHA Program Clinical Initiatives 2022/23***

- Continuing Improvement/Value Stream Work in Outpatient Psychiatry Services including Experience of Service and Morale
- Greenspace online outcome measurement platform launch
- African Nova Scotia Service model launch

- Adolescent Mentalization-Based Integrative Treatment (AMBIT) service pilot for complex, 'challenging to reach' youth development/training
- Emergency psychiatry service data collection pilot
- Establish HRM-based Integrated Youth Services (IYS) NS site
- Capacity building specific care clinic outreach with Maritime child and adolescent psychiatry network

## DIVISION OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

The Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, together with the Mental Health and Addictions program at the IWK, provide quality mental health and addictions care to children, youth, and families locally, provincially, and in the Maritimes. Services include emergency/crisis, inpatient, intensive, outpatient, and community based.

The Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry has enjoyed many successes this year in recruitment, research grants, education, ongoing clinical care transformation as well as faculty recognitions.



Retirement gathering for Dr. Stokes.

The year began with a survey review of Psychiatry at the IWK Health Centre which supported reappointment of Dr. Alexa Bagnell as Chief of the division, and encouraged the ongoing directions of the division, including our continuous quality improvement work and capacity building in education, clinical care, social advocacy, and research development. One of our primary clinical foci this year, in keeping with the strategic directions of the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry and IWK Mental Health and Addictions Program, was in addressing inequity of access to mental health and addictions care for children and youth in our province. We have been privileged to work collaboratively with several community groups in the past year leading to exciting new initiatives developed together with our African Nova Scotian (ANS), HomeBridge Youth Society, and Newcomer community partners.

In February 2022, after extensive engagement with ANS community members and our IWK MHA clinicians and psychiatrists, a report was produced titled "Towards Inclusive and Accessible Mental Health Care of African Nova Scotians." This report, reflecting identified needs from the ANS community partners, recommended a new service model for ANS to be incorporated within IWK MHA which includes cultural competency training for staff, clinicians and physicians. The first steps of training will be launched in spring 2022, and plan for launch of a new model by end of 2022.

For youth within our HomeBridge network, Dr. Selene Etches and the IWK concurrent disorders specific clinic have worked to strengthen community partnerships to better



support youth at risk for homelessness and addictions in the community. This team has worked to integrate an IWK MHA clinician within this service to foster timely access to mental health support, as well as collaborating with IWK pediatrics to have pediatric health care integrated to increase access to public health care services for these vulnerable youth. The IWK also launched the Newcomer project with NP Laura Callaghan integrated in ISANS and Newcomer Health Clinic in a Shared Care model within IWK MHA outpatient services. Laura Callaghan has also presented to the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry faculty in a workshop on Newcomer health in September 2021.

In clinical work, we shifted towards a new balance of in person and virtual care this year as the province pandemic restrictions eased. Almost all first psychiatry consults and choice appointments moved to in person in keeping with efforts to mitigate COVID related risk as well as recognizing clinical judgment and patient/family preference. Researchers and clinicians in the Division (Drs. Chorney, Campbell, Carrey, Bagnell, Orlik, Etches, Abidi) have been successful in applications for regional and national grants focused on reviewing our processes of shared decision making in care provision with respect to virtual care options. This work is transformative in helping to provide guidance and tools to support clinicians and physicians, and our patients and families, in decision making around methodologies of care provision going forward as we adopt more flexibility in our practice. Supporting capacity building and improving access to care, Dr. Chorney is also leading the IWK Mental Health and Addictions launch of a Knowledge Management System

application, known as Shelf. The goal of Shelf is to be a single point of access for users to find the best and most up-to-date MH&A expertise and resources readily available and aspires to make these resources accessible to our child/youth mental health & addiction partners regionally and province wide.

We have had opportunity to meet with and advocate with provincial and federal leaders in the newly-created provincial and federal offices of mental health and addictions. Dr. Bagnell has met with the new federal and provincial ministers several times this year to advocate for the importance of adequately resourcing child and youth mental health care and establishing standards for care with resources to support delivering evidence-based care that is equitable and accessible.

In the year ahead, the department will continue its work in improving access to care and collaboration among various health care providers, partners, and patients, and their families.



# THE YEAR AHEAD



Photo by S Migaj from Pexels.



## THE YEAR AHEAD

Although the department has seen significant change, it is making great strides in realizing its strategic vision. The year ahead will continue to build upon the foundation the department has laid and will continue to put the transformational plan into practice. The department is excited for the many opportunities that await in the future.

Below are the department's plans in key areas of clinical service delivery, research, education, social policy and advocacy, EDIA, wellness, and leadership development.

### Clinical service delivery

- Reduce, and work towards, complete elimination of long wait times for access to mental health support and psychiatric consultation for community patients in the Central Zone through the Rapid Access and Stabilization Program.
- Deepen collaboration between Primary Care, the Department of Psychiatry, and the Mental Health and Addictions Program through the Rapid Access Consultation Model, the Shared Care Model, and the Telephone Consultation Model.
- Develop partnerships and collaborations with local and community pharmacists to ensure carefully selected, stable patients, who are on long-term medication, and can be discharged back to a primary care provider, continue to receive refills of their medication and monitoring for adverse effects, if they do not yet have a primary care provider. The goal will be to create capacity within the Mental Health and Addictions Program (MHAP), modelled on the highly successful Western Zone pilot project.
- Continue to focus on eliminating barriers and expanding access to high-quality mental health services for patients and their families:
  - Continue with leadership safety and quality rounds with MHAP co-leads.
  - Continued involvement of internal and external stakeholders, including patient, family, and caregiver representatives in quality improvement initiatives that expand access to quality care.
  - Offer resources and support (protected time, research director, and research assistant) to clinical faculty and frontline staff to participate in quality improvement initiatives.
- Work with the MHAP to close existing gaps in mental health and psychiatric supports for adult patients with high-functioning autism.
- Continue to expand the Transcultural Mental Health Program with the addition of psychiatric support for the Friendship Centre Primary Care Clinic serving Indigenous people, and the Sisterhood Clinic serving African Nova Scotian women.
- Advocate for resources and opportunities to expand day hospital services through expansion of the operating hours as a means of diverting patients from hospital beds.
- Work with the MHAP co-leads to create a Psychiatric Intensive Care Unit to improve patient care for the most severely mentally ill patients, while building psychiatrists, residents, and staff capacity in management of severely and acutely ill patients.
- Streamlining services, such as improving flow in, through, and out of care, continue to be planned, implemented, and evaluated.



- Continue to work with the MHAP co-leads to address gaps in forensic and correctional services identified in the report prepared by three external reviewers.
- Establish a HRM-based Integrated Youth Services NS site for youth (14-25) years to bridge the gap in community tier 2 space and reduce access barriers.
- Launch ANS Child and Adolescent HRM Clinic embedded within the IWK Mental Health and Addictions Program based on community engagement and the February 2022 report, “Inclusive and accessible mental health and addictions care for African Nova Scotians,” prepared by ANS community consultants in partnership with IWK MHAP.
- Continue to plan, and work towards, addressing gaps in specialized mental health care, such as providing coordinated, evidence-informed biopsychosocial care for clients with severe anxiety disorders, refractory obsessive-compulsive disorder, and complex post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Prepare for the planned establishment of a neuropsychiatric service, such as by supporting related training of a psychiatrist.
- Implement the planning to expand onsite care for operational stress injury across Nova Scotia, such as in the Western Zone.
- Plan for the addition of ketamine treatment to the neuromodulation services

## Research

- Continue to work with the office of the NS Health VP research and innovation, and the Faculty of Medicine associate dean for research, to address the long-standing

research space challenges confronting our highly-successful departmental researchers.

- Continue to support our department’s researchers through the internal Research Fund and through the Bridging Funds program.
- Support and encourage our department researchers to participate and lead national and international team grant applications to national and international grant-funding agencies.
- Develop new collaborations between our department’s researchers, and researchers in other departments at Dalhousie, as well as develop collaborations with other mental health researchers nationally and internationally.
- Establish a formal research mentorship program for early career research faculty, and clinical faculty participating in clinical translational research, formalize peer-to-peer and mentorship support, and facilitate collaborations among junior and senior researchers.
- Expand clinical translational research across all community and inpatient Mental Health and Addictions programs in the Central Zone, and explore opportunities to extend participation in clinical translational research to psychiatrists working across clinical programs in the Maritimes.
- Continue to expand opportunities for graduate training through the expansion of clinical translational research.
- Appoint a director for resident’s research and scholarly projects to enhance residents’ participation in research, quality improvement, and other scholarly projects, and achieve the goal of every resident publishing at least one scientific paper in a peer-reviewed journal.

- Continue to support and promote the department's Summer Students Research Program.
- Continue to support and promote the Research in Medicine Program.
- Continue to expand and promote the department's research day to more internal and external stakeholders.
- Explore opportunities and actively work to develop new research programs e.g., neuropsychiatry, global mental health, neuromodulation (rTMS, ECT, etc).

## **Education**

- Maintain the highest standards for our postgraduate medical education program and address challenges.
- Maintain the highest standards for our undergraduate medical education program and address challenges.
- Expand undergraduate and postgraduate medical education to more distributed learning sites in NS and NB.
- Maintain the highest standards for our continuous medical professional development program, and identify or develop, new continuing medical education opportunities for psychiatrists and primary care providers.
- Achieve full accreditation and launch the International Graduate Diploma in Clinical Psychiatry by September 2023.
- Have a fully-functional International Fellowship Program to extend the reach of our postgraduate medical education program to clinicians in low- and middle-income countries as a strategy for supporting mental health service development for vulnerable populations abroad.

## **Social policy, EDIA & faculty, staff, and learners' wellness**

- Prioritize and promote the wellness of faculty, staff, and learners in the department through the work of the department wellness and EDIA committees.
- Promote Dalhousie University and NS Health's zero tolerance policies for discrimination, harassment, intimidation, bullying, and microaggression in all their variations and at all levels.
- Establish a departmental annual family fun day during the summer months.
- Continue to engage faculty, staff, and learners on matters impacting their wellness through regular individual, sectional/divisional, and department-wide meetings, and periodic town hall meetings.
- Seek direct and indirect feedback and input from faculty, staff, and learners on major strategic initiatives through direct engagement of individuals and/or groups, and departmental surveys.
- Continue to play a key role in advocating for the rights of patients with mental health and addiction problems, and their families, locally, nationally, and internationally.
- Continue to advocate for resources to treat and support patients with mental health and addiction problems, and their families, locally, nationally, and internationally.

## Leadership development

- The department will continue to identify and develop new leadership opportunities in the areas of clinical care, education, and research. It will also continue to recruit early career faculty into leadership positions as part of a leadership succession planning strategy.
- Three new leaders in the department are being sponsored to complete the leadership training program organized by Doctors Nova Scotia.
- The department is planning a leadership workshop for all faculty members who hold formal leadership positions in the department before the end of the year.

## OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Education

Research

Clinical Care

Social Policy & Advocacy

University Dept of  
Psychiatry





# APPLAUDING OUR PEOPLE

## PROMOTIONS

Dr. Lara Hazelton  
Professor  
Effective July 1, 2021

Dr. Zenovia Ursuliak  
Associate Professor  
Effective July 1, 2022

## RETIREMENTS

Dr. Magdalena Walentynowicz  
Effective Dec. 31, 2021

Dr. Aidan Stokes  
Effective June 30, 2021

## AWARDS & HONOURS

Below are some of the awards and honours department members received:

Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry, Geriatric Psychiatry Subspecialty Resident Award  
*Dr. Amy Gough*

Canadian Association for Graduate Studies Award for Outstanding Graduate Mentorship  
*Dr. Sherry Stewart*

Canadian College of Neuropsychopharmacology Heinz Lehmann Award  
*Dr. Martin Alda*

Canadian Psychiatric Association C.A. Roberts Award for Clinical Leadership  
*Dr. Suzanne Zinck*

Canadian Psychiatric Association J.M. Cleghorn Award  
*Dr. Rudolf Uher*

Canadian Society for Chronobiology Career Achievement Award  
*Dr. Ben Rusak*

Dalhousie Medical Alumni Association Resident Leadership Award for Royal College Specialties and Subspecialties  
*Dr. Marissa LeBlanc (PGY-5)*

Dalhousie Aurum Award  
*Dr. Patricia Lingley-Pottie*

Dalhousie Continuing Education Wayne Putnam Award  
*Dr. Suzanne Zinck*

Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine Award for Excellence in Education  
*Dr. Cheryl Murphy*

Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine Best Presentation of Research Award  
*Sarah DeGrace (first-year Master's in Psychiatry Research student)*

Dalhousie Medical Research Foundation Max Forman Senior Research Prize  
*Dr. Martin Alda*

Department of Psychiatry Inaugural Dr. Aidan Stokes Mentorship Award  
*Dr. Martin Alda*

Department of Psychiatry Educator of the Year Award  
*Dr. Alice Aylott*

Department of Psychiatry Larry Buffett Outstanding Teacher Award  
*Dr. Herb Orlik*

Department of Psychiatry Leadership Awards  
*Dr. Mark Bosma*  
*Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy*  
*Dr. Scott Theriault*  
*Dr. Cheryl Murphy*  
*Dr. Margaret Rajda*  
*Dr. Ben Rusak*  
*Dr. Andrew Harris*  
*Dr. Jason Morrison*  
*Dr. Sonia Chehil*  
*Dr. Sanjana Sridharan*  
*Dr. Mutiat Sulyman*  
*Carolyn Sisley*

Department of Psychiatry Outstanding Clinician Award  
*Dr. Mutiat Sulyman*  
*Dr. Mahmoud Awara*

Department of Psychiatry Service Awards  
*Dr. Phillip Mills*  
*Dr. Magdalena Walentynowicz*  
*Kate Rogers*  
*Carolyn Sisley*  
*Dr. Ben Rusak*  
*Dr. Aileen Brunet*  
*Dr. Mark Rubens*

Dr. Herb Orlik Award in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry  
*Dr. Katie Stymiest*

We are so proud of every single person who made 2021/22 a success.

Examiner, Royal College of  
Psychiatrists, U.K.  
*Dr. Mahmoud Awara*

Graham Boeckh Foundation Dr.  
Samarthji Lal Award for Mental  
Health Research  
*Dr. Rudolf Uher*

Inducted as Fellow into the  
Canadian Academy of Health  
Sciences  
*Dr. Christine Chambers*

IWK Board Award of Distinction  
*Dr. Aidan Stokes*

Medal from Czech Republic  
Ministry of Health  
*Dr. Martin Alda*

Resident Doctors of Canada  
Outstanding Volunteer of the  
Year Award  
*Dr. Ali Manning*

Royal College of Psychiatrists,  
U.K. Poster Prize by the Faculty  
of Rehabilitation & Social  
Psychiatry  
*Dr. Mahmoud Awara*

Top 2% of world's most highly-  
cited researchers, Stanford  
University List  
*Dr. Sherry Stewart*

Best Work in Clinical Research,  
2021 Resident Research Award  
*Dr. Abe Nunes*

### **Resident Recognition Awards**

Herb Orlik Child & Adolescent  
Psychiatry Award (PGY3)  
*Dr. Kyle Godden*

Geriatric Psychiatry Resident  
Award (PGY3)  
*Dr. Alex Whynot*

Clerks' Choice Award  
*Dr. Shiloh Ricciotti*

Alexander H. Leighton Resident  
of the Year Award  
*Dr. Katie Lines*  
*Dr. Shiloh Ricciotti*

Saint John Resident of the Year  
Award (PGY-1)  
*Dr. Niamh Campbell*

Charles J. David Memorial Prize  
(PGY-2)  
*Dr. Jared Allman*  
*Dr. Alison Toron*

W.O. McCormick Award  
*Dr. Marissa Leblanc*

Robert and Stella Weil Fund in  
Psychiatry Prize  
*Dr. Adi Nidumolu*

Teacher of the Year Award  
*Dr. Pam Arenella*

Above & Beyond Award  
*Chad Morash (PES)*

PGY-5 Excellence Award  
*Dr. Mark Bosma*

### **Mentorship Awards**

*Dr. Sherry James*  
*Dr. Mark Bosma*  
*Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy (2021)*

Resident Professionalism Award  
*Dr. Nadine Nejati*  
*Dr. Amy Gough*

### **Research Day Awards**

Best presentation by a resident  
*Dr. Jillian Cottreau*

Best presentation by a graduate  
student  
*Silvia Marin-Dragu*

Best presentation by an  
undergraduate student  
*Caitlin Robinson*

Best presentation by psychiatry  
staff  
*Kyle McKee*



# LEADERSHIP

## LEADERSHIP

Dr. Vincent Agyapong  
Head/Chief

Dr. Lara Hazelton  
Deputy Head/Director, Education

Dr. Abraham Rudnick  
Head, Community Psychiatry

Dr. Sanjana Sridharan  
Head, Acute, Consultation &  
Emergency Psychiatry

Dr. Alexa Bagnell  
Head/Chief, Division of Child &  
Adolescent Psychiatry

Dr. Phil Tibbo  
Director, Research

Dr. Risk Kronfli  
Head, Forensic Psychiatry

Dr. Mark Bosma  
Head, Geriatric Psychiatry

David Potter  
Chief Operating Officer

Dr. Satyendra Satyanarayana  
Head/Chief  
Dalhousie Medicine, NB

## EDUCATION

Dr. Lara Hazelton  
Deputy Head/Director, Education

Dr. Katharine Black  
Director, Undergraduate  
Education

Dr. Terry Chisholm  
Director, Geriatric Subspecialty  
Residency Program

Dr. David Lovas  
Director, Child and Adolescent  
Subspecialty Residency Program

Dr. Cheryl Murphy  
Director, Continuing Professional  
Development

Dr. Abraham Rudnick  
Humanities Coordinator

Dr. Deborah Parker  
Director, Postgraduate Education

Dr. Alexandra Manning  
Associate Director, Postgraduate  
Education

Dr. Lukas Propper  
Director of Education, Child and  
Adolescent Psychiatry

Dr. Celia Robichaud  
Pediatric Residency Coordinator

Dr. Pamela Arenella  
Coordinator, Diploma in Clinical  
Psychiatry

Dr. Sherry Stewart  
Graduate Program Coordinator

Dr. Mahmoud Awara  
Director of International  
Fellowships Program

## COMMUNITY PSYCHIATRY

Dr. Abraham Rudnick  
Head, Community Psychiatry

Dr. Aaron Keshen  
Associate Head, Community  
Psychiatry

## ACUTE, CONSULTATION & EMERGENCY PSYCHIATRY

Dr. Sanjana Sridharan  
Head, Acute, Consultation &  
Emergency Psychiatry

Dr. Pamela Arenella  
Associate Head, Acute,  
Consultation & Emergency  
Psychiatry

## CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

Dr. Alexa Bagnell  
Head/Chief, Division of Child &  
Adolescent Psychiatry

Dr. Sabina Abidi  
Associate Head, Child &  
Adolescent Psychiatry

## RESEARCH

Dr. Phil Tibbo  
Director, Research

Dr. David Gardner  
Director of Research,  
Community Psychiatry

Dr. Candice Crocker  
Director of Research,  
Acute, Consultation and  
Emergency Psychiatry

Dr. Kim Good  
Director of Research,  
Forensic Psychiatry

Dr. Gail Eskes  
Director of Research,  
Geriatric Psychiatry

Dr. Jill Chorney  
Director of Research,  
Child & Adolescent Psychiatry





# ADMINISTRATION

## ADMINISTRATION

David Potter  
Chief Operating Officer

Anila Balakrishnan  
Research Coordinator

Janet Bardon  
Physician Resource Manager

Jennifer Brown  
Postgraduate Education  
Coordinator

Tyler Creelman  
Acting Education Coordinator

Mandy Eslinger  
Evaluation & Curriculum  
Specialist

Linda Ford  
Administrative Assistant

Ariann Greenidge  
Administrative Assistant to the  
Department Head

Kelly Hancock  
Undergraduate Coordinator

Sandra Millar  
Finance Assistant

Penney Miller  
Communications Coordinator

Neha Singh  
HR Coordinator

Baoya Song  
IT Support and Database  
Coordinator

## DIVISION OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

Michelle LeBlanc  
Administrative Manager

Jennifer Cunningham  
Administrative Assistant

Melissa Davis  
Administrative Assistant

Patricia Evans (Leave of absence)  
Administrative Assistant

Debi Follett  
Administrative Assistant

Adrienne McCarthy  
Education and Research  
Coordinator

Tamara Smith  
Administrative Assistant (Term)

Robin Stinson  
Administrative Assistant

Joan Sweet  
Receptionist (Leave of absence)

# 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

## Provincial Programs

A lighthouse on a rocky shore at sunset. The lighthouse is white with a black roof and a red light. The sky is orange and yellow, and the rocks are dark and jagged.

Adult Neurodevelopmental Stabilization Unit  
Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Services  
East Coast Forensic Hospital  
Eating Disorders Program  
Mental Health Day Treatment Program  
Mood Disorders Program  
Nova Scotia Operational Stress Injury Clinic  
Nova Scotia Provincial Early Psychosis Intervention Service (EPINS)  
Reproductive Mental Health Program  
Seniors Mental Health Program

Photo by Alex Tapia from Pexels



**DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY**

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