

HEADLINES

September 2021 / VOLUME 16/ ISSUE 5



A MOVE TO THE EAST

DR. VINCENT AGYAPONG
TAKES HIS PLACE AS HEAD
OF THE DEPARTMENT

IN THIS ISSUE

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This newsletter is published for the Department of Psychiatry at Dalhousie University.

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HEAD LINES

MESSAGE FROM THE HEAD

I am thrilled to join the Department of Psychiatry at Dalhousie University as department head. I am particularly grateful to all department members and staff who contributed in various ways to making my relocation from Edmonton to Halifax seamless. Former interim department head **Dr Jason Morrison** deserves special commendation in this regard. Since my appointment, I have had the privilege of meeting with and listening to many department members and staff. I have learned a lot about the many strengths of our department. Our undergraduate, postgraduate, graduate and continuing professional development programs are all in excellent shape, thanks to the dedication of the various education committee members, program and associate program directors, the education director, and all faculty.

The department's research program continues to flourish under the leadership of the research director and the research committee. With five academic research chairs, and a sixth research chair being recruited, our department's research output continues to be recognized nationally and internationally. The recent conferring of the Sam Lal Award for Mental Health Research by the Graham Boeckh Foundation and the 2021 J.M. Cleghorn Award from the Canadian Psychiatric Association on **Dr. Rudolf Uher**, as well as recent successes of Drs. Rudolf Uher, **Sandra Meier** and **Sherry Stewart** in CIHR grant competitions are testament to the department's strength and growing research reputation.



Dr. Vincent Agyapong

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, our clinical programs are also thriving as a result of the dedication of clinical faculty and the clinical leadership teams. In the areas of social policy, advocacy and leadership, department members and residents continue to excel. I would like to congratulate **Dr. Suzanne Zinck** for being the recipient of the 2021 Canadian Psychiatric Association C.A. Roberts Award for Clinical Leadership and **Dr. Ali Manning** for receiving the Resident Doctors of Canada Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award.

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. I look forward to meeting all department members individually to learn more about your work and how our executive leadership team can support your personal and professional development as we all contribute our quota to our collective efforts and shared vision.

ON THE COVER



When **Dr. Vincent Agyapong** arrived in Halifax in August, he got his first taste of the salty east coast air. Though he'd heard wonderful things about Nova Scotia, the native of Ghana had never set foot in the province. Arriving from Alberta where he was the Director of the Division of Community Psychiatry at the University of Alberta and the Edmonton Zone Chief for Community Mental Health for Alberta Health Services, he assumed the position of head in the Department of Psychiatry at Dalhousie, and chief of the Department of Psychiatry Central Zone for Nova Scotia Health on September 5.

Dr. Agyapong was born and raised in Koforidua, capital of the eastern region of Ghana. After high school, he completed his undergraduate medical training at the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi, Ghana. From there he went to Dublin, Ireland where he completed his basic training in psychiatry at the Dublin Royal College of Surgeons Rotational Training Scheme. He was awarded membership of the Royal College of Psychiatrists in 2008 and appointed an assistant professor of psychiatry at the University of Dublin Trinity College in 2009 as part of a higher psychiatry specialist program at St. Patrick's University Hospital. He rounded out his training with a doctorate in concurrent mood and addiction disorders in 2012, before heading across the Atlantic to Canada in 2013 where he had accepted a position at the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre in

Fort McMurray as a consultant psychiatrist. Dr. Agyapong's career continued to progress when he was appointed the Edmonton Zone Clinical Section Chief for Community Mental Health in August 2016, a position he held until this past August. In 2019, he was appointed the inaugural director of the Division of Community Psychiatry. Up until this appointment he had also been serving as the director of the Residents Quality Improvement Program in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Alberta, a position he had held since 2016.

It may be surprising from his already accomplished career that Dr. Agyapong did not always aspire for life as a psychiatrist. In fact, he planned to use psychiatry as a steppingstone into public health. "I liked to look at population health and thought I would become a public health physician," he recalls. When he was not able to secure a scholarship to study public health in the United States, he chose psychiatry by necessity, a discipline that was relatively easy to secure a training spot in Europe. His public health dreams were quickly extinguished in his first month of a psychiatry clinical observership at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage, UK, where he immediately fell in love with the specialty. He switched gears and focused on public mental health, completing a PhD in Global Mental Health at the Centre for Global Health after his clinical psychiatry training.

Assuming the headship in the move to Nova Scotia is a natural progression

for Dr. Agyapong's career. He sees the position as "the perfect opportunity to serve the people of Nova Scotia, the Maritimes and the world at large, and to help expand access to quality mental health care through leadership of service."

Looking forward Dr. Agyapong has some broad goals in mind for the Department of Psychiatry. He would like the department to work collaboratively with stakeholders to expand access to addiction and mental health services, improve upon the quality of care and standardization across the province and beyond. He would also like to build on the strong reputation the department has in the areas of research and education by extending the international reach of our education and research programs. To this end, in addition to providing the needed resources and support for existing educational and research programs to ensure ongoing excellence, he hopes to recruit additional faculty with diverse research and educational experience and expertise, and also explore opportunities to develop new education and research programs. "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" he says. "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 Center for Global Mental Health at Dalhousie University to coordinate international mental health education and research.”

During his first few months in the department Dr. Agyapong is expecting to spend a lot of time getting up-to-speed. He welcomes the opportunity to learn from department members and health services operational leads and staff, paying particular attention to the strengths and weaknesses,

opportunities and threats in relation to the department and how each of these impact department members, clinical service delivery, education and research. Within his first year, he hopes to see the roll-out of implementation plans for the updated department strategic vision.

Dr. Agyapong is fortunate to be stepping into a position that has been skillfully held by **Dr. Jason Morrison** for the last 20 months. Both he, and the department, are grateful for Dr. Morrison’s competent leadership during such a tumultuous time. He was able to capably navigate the department through the COVID-19 pandemic, while still ensuring

our faculty, learners, and staff felt supported and experienced success. We are fortunate Dr. Morrison has retained a leadership role and will work closely with Dr. Agyapong as he transitions to department head.

And so we look forward towards the coming months under the leadership of Dr. Agyapong. His term will be five years, with the opportunity to renew for an additional five. Let’s all give him a warm welcome, and when you see him in the hall, introduce yourself and help him achieve his first goal: knowing every department member by name.

FROM THE EDITOR:



I am delighted to step into the role of editor of *Headlines* starting this issue. I thank **Dr. Aidan Stokes** for his longstanding contribution for the same role. I also want to take this opportunity to remember Professor Julian Leff, who passed away this year. Julian was a British psychiatrist who was a pioneer of social psychiatry in the UK and worldwide. His work included the international schizophrenia research project that showed that diagnosis of schizophrenia varies across countries and helped revise DSM criteria of schizophrenia; expressed emotion of families of people with schizophrenia

and other disorders and its impact on these individuals’ outcomes; and community integration of people with schizophrenia, including the TAPS project that de-institutionalized many people with severe mental illness in London, UK. Even after his retirement Julian continued to conduct progressive mental health research, such as on use of Avatars for psychosis services. Julian was also an avid pianist and created personalized yearly calendars with his children and grandchildren, among many other activities. I first met him at the Maudsley hospital in London, UK, during my clinical clerkship elective

rotation there, when he was the head of a clinical inpatient unit that was practicing person centered mental health care, and later I connected with him as a peer, including as my guest speaker for the Division of Social and Rural Psychiatry that I founded at Western University. I learned much from my interactions with him and from his writings, particularly his person-centered, evidence-informed and socially responsive approach. Julian was a warm and thoughtful person as well as a creative and rigorous scholar. He will be sorely missed personally and professionally.

Dr. Abraham Rudnick

RESEARCH REPORT

Department of Psychiatry Research Day 2021

This year's event is scheduled for Friday, Nov. 12, 2021. The current plan is to hold Research Day at the Atlantica Hotel, but if pandemic-related restrictions are in effect at that time, we will have to revise our plans to create an online Research Day event.

Now in its 31st year, Psychiatry Research Day promotes student involvement in research and

showcases the department's diverse expertise to our university and local communities.

We are pleased to announce that this year's keynote speaker will be Dr. Brenda Penninx, a professor of psychiatric epidemiology at the Department of Psychiatry at Amsterdam UMC, who will be speaking on the topic of the epidemiology of anxiety and depression.

The deadline to submit an abstract was Sept. 1, 2021. After Aug. 31, 2021 please contact Kate Rogers at kate.rogers@nshealth.ca for all Research Day inquiries.

If you are interested in attending Research Day, registration forms will be circulated in September.

EDUCATION REPORT

UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

Academic year wrap-up

As we wrap up the 2020-2021 undergraduate academic year, we would like to thank our faculty for their ongoing contribution to teaching and supervising our medical students. Your dedication is truly appreciated, particularly given the unique challenges of the past year.

During 2020-2021:

- 68 clinical clerks rotated through the Department in the Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM), three in Amherst, four in Kentville, one in PEI and 15 in New Brunswick.
- The department received 62 clerkship elective requests from

Dalhousie students and successfully placed 44 of them for a 71 per cent placement rate. 38 electives were completed.

New academic year

As we start the 2021-2022 academic year:

- Clerkship teaching and most pre-clerkship teaching will resume in person.
- Medical students nation-wide are only permitted to attend local electives and we appreciate your patience and support while we attempt to place these students.
- To date we have received 40

clerkship elective requests and have successfully placed 26 of them on various services throughout HRM for a 65 per cent placement rate.

- UGME tutor recruitment continues; there are a number of teaching opportunities remaining. If you are interested in tutoring, please contact **Kelly Hancock** at kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca.

Our Undergraduate Education Committee would like to thank resident representative, **Dr. Holly Greer** and the various medical student representatives for their contribution to the committee over the past year.

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

Award

Congratulations to **Dr. Abe Nunes** for winning the “Best Work in Clinical Research” award at the 2021 Resident Research Awards on June 23.

Academic Year

The 2021/2022 teaching year is off to a great start with a mix of virtual and in person teaching in 4074. Please make your teaching preferences known to

the postgraduate coordinator, **Jen Brown** at jen.brown@nshealth.ca when agreeing to teach.



Dr. Abraham Nunes

FELLOWSHIP AND SUBSPECIALTY TRAINING NEWS

CAP Subspecialty Update

The child and adolescent subspecialty rollout of the competency-based medical education (CBME) has transitioned flawlessly. A big kudos to **Dr. David Lovas** who worked tirelessly to ensure faculty were prepared for the changes that CBME brought to teaching our residents.

Centre for Emotions and Health

We are very pleased to have had **Dr. Adrian Lawson** join the Department of Psychiatry on July 1 for a one-year fellowship with the Centre for Emotions and Health. His focus is on the treatment of somatic symptom disorders. After a brief career in

finance, Adrian completed medical school and residency training in psychiatry at the University of Toronto. Following that, he focused predominantly on collaborative care with a large family health team in Ontario, where he worked very closely with family physicians and the mental health team. He also worked in student health services at the University of Guelph and supervised psychiatry residents from McMaster University. In addition to his clinical interests, Adrian enjoys live entertainment, various physical activities and the outdoors, and is looking forward to exploring Nova Scotia with his partner and their Bernese mountain dog.



Dr. Adrian Lawson

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Rounds

Grand rounds finished for the summer in June, and will resume on Wednesday, Sept. 8, 2021. The plan is to continue offering online-only rounds until at least the end of December.

Workshops

A CPD workshop for psychiatrists on the Involuntary Psychiatric Treatment Act (IPTA) took place virtually on Friday, July 23, 2021. Over 30 people were online for the session, which featured presentations by **Drs. Jason Morrison, Scott Theriault, Aileen Brunet, and Philip Mills**, as well

as Ms. Kelly Ryan, Legal Aid lawyer. Many thanks to the presenters, and to Kate Rogers for providing support.

The next CPD workshop for faculty will be taking place on Friday, Sept. 24, 2021, from 1 – 4 pm via Zoom. The topic is newcomer mental health. Watch for more information coming soon.

FACULTY DEVELOPMENT

Faculty Development Opportunities

Dalhousie Continuing Professional Development

Online Learning

Online Courses:

Teaching and Assessing Critical Thinking – Phase One | Sept. 28-Dec. 7, 2021

Register by visiting: <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/cpd/faculty-development/programs/TACT.html>.

Fee: \$125

Fundamentals of Didactic Teaching | Oct. 26-Nov. 30, 2021

For more information or to register please visit:

<https://registration.cpd.dal.ca/Registration/Welcome.aspx?e=8808F45019E82DE7F407C393310705EA>

Fee: \$100

Teaching and Assessing Critical Thinking Phase Two | Jan. 25-March 29, 2022

Register by visiting: <https://registration.cpd.dal.ca/Registration/Welcome.aspx?e=30007418B84362EA90BEAFBC104F558A>

<https://registration.cpd.dal.ca/Registration/Welcome.aspx?e=30007418B84362EA90BEAFBC104F558A>

Fee: \$125 *Please note: TACT 1 is a prerequisite for TACT 2

Educating for Medical Professionalism and Wellness | Feb. 1-March 8, 2022

Register by visiting: <https://registration.cpd.dal.ca/Registration/Welcome.aspx?e=B10486B503BF4D2C300EF186D4D39CCA>

<https://registration.cpd.dal.ca/Registration/Welcome.aspx?e=B10486B503BF4D2C300EF186D4D39CCA>

<https://registration.cpd.dal.ca/Registration/Welcome.aspx?e=B10486B503BF4D2C300EF186D4D39CCA>

Fee: \$100

Emerging Leaders in Academic Medicine | April 5-June 7, 2022

Register by visiting: <https://registration.cpd.dal.ca/Registration/Welcome.aspx?e=2C3B989BE1B248042A30FEEA1B4DF57F>

<https://registration.cpd.dal.ca/Registration/Welcome.aspx?e=2C3B989BE1B248042A30FEEA1B4DF57F>

<https://registration.cpd.dal.ca/Registration/Welcome.aspx?e=2C3B989BE1B248042A30FEEA1B4DF57F>

Fee: \$125

For more information on the courses listed above please visit: <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/core-units/cpd/faculty-development/programs.html> or email FacDev@dal.ca – please note each course has limited registration.

For more information on Faculty Development and their programs, email FacDev@dal.ca.

Are you new to tutoring this fall and looking for resources to assist you in small group learning? Contact susan.love@dal.ca for access to the online Tutor Skill Development Program.

Note: Many Faculty Development activities are accredited. If you would like to receive a CME listing of your credits for the past year, or other date span, please feel free to contact Deirdre Harvey at 902-494-2234 or deirdre.harvey@dal.ca.

Faculty Development Fund

AFP faculty members are reminded that the department has a faculty development fund available. Visit the department database under 'Forms/Faculty Development Funding Application' and click in the blue box 'Find out what is eligible for funding' for details on funding criteria.

MED-ED MINUTE

This Med Ed Minute highlights the characteristics of a good clinical teacher.

What does it mean to be a good teacher?

Determining what it means to be a good teacher is complex and multifactorial.¹ What makes a good teacher may depend more on innate, noncognitive, relationship-based qualities than learned, cognitive skills such as medical knowledge and clinical reasoning.^{1,2} Sutkin et al. suggest excellent teaching “transcends ordinary teaching and is characterized by inspiring, supporting, actively involving, and communicating with students” (p. 457).¹

What are the characteristics of a good teacher?

Characteristics of a good clinical teacher are varied and extensive; notably most are noncognitive.^{1,2} The characteristics can be categorized as clinical knowledge and competence (physician characteristics), teaching skills (teacher characteristics) or human-centered traits (human characteristics).^{1,2} Such characteristics include but are not limited to the following (note enthusiasm is found in all three categories):¹⁻⁴

Physician Characteristics

- Demonstrates medical/clinical knowledge
- Demonstrates clinical and technical skills/competence, and clinical reasoning
- Demonstrates enthusiasm for medicine

Teacher Characteristics

- Maintains positive relationships with students*

- Provides a supportive learning environment*
- Makes time to teach*
- Provides relevant learning experiences*
- Provides effective constructive feedback*
- Pushes and challenges learners*
- Demonstrates enthusiasm for teaching*

Human Characteristics

- Demonstrates good communication skills
- Is dynamic, enthusiastic, and engaging*
- Acts as a positive role model*
- Treats students with respect*
- Values learners*

*also specified by our residents in **Mandy Esliger's** thesis study.

The importance of good teachers

Learners tend to adopt the positive behaviors and professional values of their good clinical teachers.³ Positive teacher-learner relationships is “essential to create a culture that promotes effective knowledge acquisition, professional growth, and lifelong learning habits” (p. 987).³ Clinical teachers can have a profound impact on recruitment of learners to their specialty; the “enthusiasm they display for their job is a compelling factor” (p. e1428).⁵

Future Med Ed Minute topics

If you have suggestions for what you would like to see in a future Med Ed Minute, please send them to Mandy Esliger (mandy.esliger@nshealth.ca).

References

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5. Passi, V., Johnson, S., Peile, E., Wright, S., Hafferty, F., & Johnson, N. (2013). Doctor role modelling in medical education: BEME Guide No. 27. *Medical Teacher*, 35(9), e1422–e1436. <https://doi.org/10.3109/0142159X.2013.806982>

CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY REPORT

Welcome new faculty

We are thrilled to have welcomed two new faculty members to the IWK child and adolescent psychiatry faculty in the summer. **Dr. Ali Manning** joined the team on July 1, 2021, and **Dr. Katie Radchuck** on Aug. 3, 2021. Dr. Manning is appointed as assistant professor at Dalhousie University, and staff psychiatrist based at the IWK MHAP in the Sackville Community Mental Health and Addictions Clinic and Bipolar Specific Care Clinic. Dr. Radchuck is appointed as assistant professor at Dalhousie University and staff psychiatrist based at the IWK Specific Care Clinics. Dr. Radchuck will be working in the Emergency Department as well as the Eating Disorders and Family Therapy clinics.



Dr. Ali Manning



Dr. Katie Radchuck

Awards

Congratulations to **Dr. Suzanne Zinck** who has recently been awarded the Canadian Psychiatric Association's C.A. Roberts Award for Clinical Leadership. Read more about this award on page 15.

Congratulations to Dr. Ali Manning who recently received the Resident Doctors (RDoC) of Canada Outstanding Volunteer of the Year Award. RDoC presented this award to Dr. Manning as an expression of gratitude for all her work on behalf of the organization and its members. During her time with RDoC, Dr. Manning led the accreditation team, was resident surveyor, as well as represented RDoC on several Royal College Committees to ensure the resident voice was well-represented and advocated.

In June 2021, The IWK Emergency Department held a virtual Award and Recognition night. The EMHAS and child and adolescent psychiatry and residents were recognized. The presenter noted: "This year has been a busy and trying time for many, with some shifts having more patients with mental health concerns than we have seen before. The EMHAS team and the Department of Psychiatry has been up to the challenge and collaborated with the ED team effectively to ensure the safest disposition for these patients." Thank you for all the great work done by these teams and especially to our residents!

Knowledge Management System (KMS)

Led by **Dr. Jill Chorney** and Jennifer Jeffrey, IWK Mental Health and Addictions (MHA) is developing a Knowledge Management System (KMS) application. The KMS aims to gather the MHA expertise and resources we have readily available

and create a single point of access for users to find the best and most up-to-date information on child, adolescent, and reproductive mental health. The KMS is currently in active pilot testing with over 30 users from across IWK MHA. In early results, participants' satisfaction with accessing resources to use in clinical sessions almost tripled (from 23 per cent to 77 per cent satisfied), and 89 per cent of participants would probably/definitely recommend the KMS to a colleague. The KMS will be further refined with plans to launch to the full IWK MHA program in early fall.

CRC Developmental Psychopathology & Youth

Congratulations to **Dr. Sandra Meier** who has been successful in obtaining research funding. Over the past few months Dr. Meier received a \$100,000 CIHR priority announcement grant entitled *An AI-based mobile sensing approach to optimize clinical monitoring of anxiety among youth patients*. Dr. Meier also received

\$66,210 in funding from SSRC for her project entitled *Paying Attention to the Right Cues and Success in Social Interactions*, as well as \$20,000 in bridge funding from the Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University.

She was also named on four new publications:

[*A Comparison of Ten Polygenic Score Methods for Psychiatric Disorders Applied Across Multiple Cohorts.*](#)

[*Sex-Dependent Shared and Nonshared Genetic Architecture Across Mood and Psychotic Disorders.*](#)

[*Are There Familial Patterns of Symptom Dimensions in Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder?*](#)

[*Mobile Sensing Apps and Self-management of Mental Health During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Web-Based Survey.*](#)

Best Wishes to Dr. Stokes

On August 13 the child and adolescent psychiatry faculty gathered at the home of **Dr. Lukas Propper** to honour **Dr. Aidan Stokes'** 50+ years of dedication and service to the psychiatry care of children and youth in Nova Scotia. Unfortunately, COVID

restrictions limited the number of people we were able to include in this celebration. The event was attended by division faculty, all of whom had been mentored by Dr. Stokes either as a resident or colleague, or both during his years with the department.



Back Row L-R: Normand Carrey, Herb Orlik, Suzanne Zinck, Phyllis Orlik, Anett Bessenyei, Andrew Cumming, Iva Propperova, Aileen Stokes, Aidan Stokes, David Lovas, John Aspin, and Lukas Propper.

Middle Row L-R: Helen Verbanz, Alexa Bagnell, Nicole Herschenhous, Jennifer Cumming, Sandra Meier, and Dympna Martin

Front Row: David & Jacob Propper.



NEWS FROM THE DEPARTMENT

Dr. Abraham Rudnick named director of RIM unit

Dr. Abraham Rudnick was recently appointed director with the Research in Medicine (RIM) unit at Dalhousie. RIM is designed to foster a high level of critical thinking and to create a culture of inquiry among Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine learners. As a

RIM director, Dr. Rudnick will play an important role in governance of the RIM unit and oversee assigned cohorts of undergraduate students. His most significant role, however, will be to advise students as they undertake research projects with the direct guidance of a faculty mentor and, when necessary, to assist/advise

students in the event that difficulties are encountered.

Dr. Rudnick assumed this new position on July 1 and will complete his three-year term on June 30, 2024, though he will have the option to renew at that time.

Dr. Phil Tibbo weighs in on bridging the research gap in the relationship between cannabis and mental health

In July the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) and its partners, the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR), the Canadian Consortium for Early Intervention in Psychosis (CCEIP), the Schizophrenia Society of Canada Foundation, and Veterans Affairs Canada, announced a \$2 million investment toward targeted research on the mental health effects of cannabis use among diverse populations in Canada. They will fund a total of 18 research projects covering a wide range of subpopulations that are under-

represented in current research. The groups included in the projects include racialized and Indigenous communities, individuals experiencing mental illness (such as schizophrenia and psychosis, PTSD, and depression), 2SLGBTQ+ communities, and Veterans. The research will aim to address topics such as the impacts of cannabis use for individuals with a history of trauma, cannabis use among individuals with substance use disorders who identify as 2SLGBTQ+, and improved pathways to care for young people in racialized communities with emerging psychosis.

of the CCEIP, expressed his pleasure that the organization has offered their support, stating they are, "extremely pleased to support a research project that will further the understanding of youth perceptions on cannabis use and its link to psychosis, with an emphasis on racialized and Indigenous populations."

To learn more please visit <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/mental-health-commission-of-canada-partners-on-2-million-investment-to-address-research-gaps-in-relationship-between-cannabis-and-mental-health-817738201.html> to read the news release from MHCC.

Dr. Phil Tibbo, who is the president

Dr. Ian MacKay addresses how COVID restrictions have exacerbated dementia symptoms in some long-term care residents

On July 12 **Dr. Ian Mackay**, a geriatric

psychiatrist in our department, spoke with Jeff Douglas of CBC's Mainstreet about the effects of COVID restrictions on long-term care residents with dementia. To listen to the interview please visit:

<https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-37-mainstreet-ns/clip/15854616-covid-restrictions-exacerbated-dementia-symptoms-long-term-care-residents>.

Dr. Mahmoud Awara presents at Royal College of Psychiatrists' International Congress

Dr. Mahmoud Awara was recently invited to present a case report at the Royal College of Psychiatrists' International Congress in June 2021, UK. The presentation, *Trials and tribulations of diagnosing and managing psychosis secondary to non-convulsive epilepsy*, was based

on a patient suffering from disabling psychotic symptoms for 28 years who was not responding to antipsychotic medications. It was determined that her symptoms were related to an undiagnosed non-convulsive state of epilepsy. Dr. Awara and his team, including Dr. Matt Havenga, and former resident Dr. Joshua Smalley, treated her with anticonvulsant medication allowing for a remarkable recovery.

The abstract was published by the College in the BJPsych Open, Cambridge University Press in June 2021 and can be accessed by visiting https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/bjpsych-open/article/trials-and-tribulations-of-diagnosing-and-managing-psychosis-secondary-to-nonconvulsive-epilepsy/C5260265EC37751E80F59F4092_E1F38F.

Nova Scotia Health's Mental Health and Addictions Program celebrates one year 'online'

By: Amanda-Hudson Frigault, Janelle Aucoin, and Deborah Purvis, NSH.

The COVID-19 pandemic brought much uncertainty to Nova Scotians, but the Mental Health and Addictions Program (MHAP) was here to help with their new MHA website and online tools.

Launched in June of 2020, MHAhelpNS.ca aims to provide Nova Scotians with information, resources, and supports in an easily accessible way. Community partners, Nova Scotia Health staff and physicians, and clients, are saying that the website is user friendly and makes finding pertinent information quick and easy.

Since launching last June, MHAhelpNS.ca has over 540,000-page views and over 122,000 people (or around one in eight Nova Scotians) have visited the website. It is a place where Nova Scotians can:

- Learn about mental health and addiction topics.

The MHAhelp.ns website.

- Search for mental health and addictions programs, and community supports in their local area.
- Access and sign-up for a range of online self-help and peer-supported programs and services.

The website supports [MHAP's Program Plan Direction 2025](#), that aims to help Nova Scotians access the Right Service, from the Right Provider, at the Right Time and Place. Clinicians

and community partners often encourage clients to visit the website as a trusted source of information and tools. "This new website can provide the basics of recovery and allow individuals to take charge of their mental wellbeing in a non-intrusive, self-directed manner" said Susan Henderson, executive director, Canadian Mental Health Association, Colchester East Hants Branch.

The website also links people to a

variety of free [online tools](#). These tools cover topics like mindfulness, coping strategies and skills, depression, substance use, building healthy relationships, peer support, and more. “Having an online tool to access on your own time, and in your own way, provides an important resource for Nova Scotians,” said Dr. Theresa Vienneau, psychiatrist, Mental Health and Addictions NSH.

To help community partners learn more about these online tools, MHAP launched interactive information sessions. To date, 20 sessions have been offered to community partners and organizations throughout the province. The sessions cover eMental Health and Addictions service basics (what it is and why we are offering), an overview of the eMental Health tools now available, and tips and

strategies on how to integrate eMental Health into recovery planning.

The website will continue to evolve and improve with input from the public and community partners. This fall, MHAP is excited to be launching a new Provincial Center for Training Education and Learning (PCTEL) portal where their staff, partners, and physicians across the province can access mental health and addictions education sessions and resources.

Working with people who have lived experience in mental health and addictions issues and other stakeholders has helped them quickly evolve their online presence. Bringing resources and information to Nova Scotians when, and where they need them, includes connecting with them online. The new site is a great start.

For more information on the eMental Health tools, to arrange an information session, or to request free promotional materials (e.g. posters, pamphlets, MHAP key resource contact cards) please contact amanda.hudson@nshealth.ca.

Visit the website: MHAhelpNS.ca

Watch and share their videos: [Website promo video](#) and [eMental Health video](#).

Provincial Mental Health and Addictions Crisis Line: 1-888-429-8167. Available 24/7

Mental Health and Addictions Intake: 1-855-922-1122
Monday – Friday, 8:30am to 4:30pm.
Voicemail evenings, weekends, and holidays.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Save the Date: Trans Health Symposium 2021

The annual Trans Health Symposium, *Integrated care for gender dysphoric, gender non-binary, & transgender children into adulthood*, will take place Oct. 21-22, 25-26, 1:00pm - 4:45pm on Zoom. For more information or to register please visit <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/news-publications.html>.



STAFF & FACULTY CHANGES

Arrivals

Dr. Katie Radchuck joined the department as an assistant professor on Aug. 3, 2021. Dr. Radchuck will be working at the IWK Specific Care Clinics. She can be reached at KatieA.Radchuck@iwk.nshealth.ca or by phone at 902-470-8375.

Baoya Song joined the department on Aug. 23, 2021 as the IT support and database coordinator, a brand-new position shared with the Department of Family Medicine. He will split his time evenly between both departments. He will provide IT support to the Department of Family Medicine and will coordinate faculty database projects and support researchers' IT needs in the Department of Psychiatry, as well as oversee videoconferencing and distributed meeting coordination for both departments. You can find Baoya in room 8216 of the Abbie Lane.

He can be reached at Baoya.song@nshealth.ca or 902.473.2795.

Departures

Hillary Yuill has left the department, effective Aug. 31, 2021. Hillary served as the research coordinator since 2018. She will be returning to school to complete a master's degree in physiotherapy. We wish her all the best.

Administrative changes:

You will see more new faces among the administrative staff in the department in the coming months, as we not only fill vacancies left by departing staff but hire for new positions. In addition to the IT support and database coordinator noted above, we will also be recruiting a new HR coordinator. Reporting to the physician resource manager, **Janet Bardon**, this individual will coordinate our faculty HR processes including our

database faculty information system, faculty appointments, credentialing, faculty orientation, promotions & tenure, and support the IPP process, as well as support Ms. Bardon with other HR-related activities.

We are also in the process of hiring a new administrative assistant to the department head, **Dr. Vincent Agyapong**. As Dr. Agyapong transitions into his new role, **Kate Rogers** will be managing his calendar until the admin assistant is hired. If you wish to book a meeting with him please contact Kate at kate.rogers@nshealth.ca.

If you find yourself on the 8th floor of the Abbie J. Lane, you may also notice some office locations have shifted. If you are having trouble finding someone, please check with reception to be directed to your destination.

AWARDS & HONOURS

Dr. Suzanne Zinck receives CPA award

Dr. Suzanne Zinck is the recipient of the 2021 Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA) C.A. Roberts Award for Clinical Leadership. Dedicated to the memory of Dr. C.A. Roberts, this award is presented annually to a psychiatrist-clinician who has made a significant contribution to the improvement of patient care.

Dr. Zinck is recognized by the selection committee as a clinical

innovator and exceptional leader based on her ground-breaking research, service across various roles, and her contributions to advancements in patient care. Of specific interest is her leadership in the development of the IWK Trans health team, along with orchestrating the peer supervision network to review cases and share resources, that are noted as "remarkable achievements that will have a lasting impact on the treatment of psychiatric disorders with high quality and consistent care."

Dr. Zinck is further recognized for her dedication to the improvement of educational resources, and commitment to extensive research, community outreach, and supervision programs which has significantly improved psychiatric care for gender-diverse, non-binary and transgender youth within an increasing number of communities throughout Nova Scotia.

Dr. Zinck will be recognized virtually during the CPA conference in the fall.

Dr. Rudolf Uher receives two significant awards: Sam Lal and J.M. Cleghorn

Dr. Rudolf Uher has recently been awarded two significant awards.

The Sam Lal Award for Mental Health Research is a prestigious award that recognizes a researcher working in a Canadian institution in the area of mental health and carries a \$25,000 prize. It was established in memory of psychiatrist and researcher Dr. Samarthji Lal, who passed away on Nov. 1, 2009. We are pleased to say Dr. Rudolf Uher is the recipient of the award for 2021.

Dr. Uher was chosen from a pool of strong nominations by an expert review panel, composed of scientists from Canada and the USA. He was elected as the strongest candidate with particular emphasis on his “out-of-the-box” work and the likelihood of having a major impact on improving the lives of patients and their families. Dr. Uher is a highly productive researcher who has most notably led a high-risk project of children of parents with severe mental illness, called FORBOW for the last eight years. The study is original in design as it combines risk assessment with prospective follow-up and tests of interventions to prevent or ameliorate psychiatric disorders in these youths. In the last 10 years he has published more than 200 articles on the assessment, classification, causation and treatment of mental disorders. Beyond his research he is an active clinician, and outstanding mentor to medical trainees. Dr. Uher's achievements in research, clinical work, leadership and mentoring are exceptional. He has made outstanding contributions to our department, our



Dr. Rudolf Uher speaks during the Sam Lal Award for Mental Health Research announcement video.

province and our field.

Due to current circumstances, Dr. Uher is not able to be physically recognized with an award. An announcement of his receipt was featured in the July issue of the Graham Boeckh Foundation Newsletter. To see more visit <https://mailchi.mp/d198bde25c2b/gbf-newsletter-volume-5223458#Alberta>.

Dr. Uher is also the recipient of the 2021 J.M. Cleghorn Award from the Canadian Psychiatric Association (CPA). Dedicated to the memory of neuroendocrine researcher Dr. John Cleghorn, this award recognizes a CPA member for excellence in clinical psychiatric research or leadership in advancing clinical psychiatric research in Canada. Dr. Uher is recognized for his exceptional impact in the fields of psychiatric genetics, personalized treatment for major depressive disorder, and early identification of risk and prevention of mental illness. The Research Committee at the CPA specifically noted his “exemplary efforts in personalizing the treatment of depression by

establishing a symptoms profile and a readily available blood test as differential predictors of outcomes with alternative antidepressants” as impressive, as well as his “commitment to and innovation in the identification of risk and prevention” as unparalleled. Dr. Uher was also recognized for his scientific contributions and leadership in the design and implementation of the Canadian Depression Research and Intervention Network (CDRIN) Registry, an innovation that will leave a lasting impact on the future of psychiatric patient care.

Similarly to the Sam Lal award and a virtual conference, Dr. Uher has not had the opportunity to be physically recognized with an award at this time. We congratulate him on these two tremendous honours.

ABOVE AND BEYOND



Celebrating the people that make our department the success that it is! We want to hear from you: Have you witnessed a colleague who has gone out of their way to help a patient, student, or other staff member? Have you seen someone do something that is beyond their job description? Contact **Kate Rogers** at kate.rogers@nshealth.ca with the name of the department member you wish to highlight! Be ready to answer a few questions about the individual and what led you to put them forward to be featured.

Dr. John Rogers

*Nominated by: **Dr. Scott Milligan***

Who is Dr. John Rogers? While every member of the Department of Psychiatry in Cape Breton has been going above and beyond, today I would like to highlight Dr. John Rogers, a senior colleague who should be enjoying his well-deserved and long postponed retirement. Instead, he goes out of his way to support his colleagues in service of his patients. Dr. Rogers embodies the principle of “above and beyond,” always being available for his patients, providing exemplary care, documented in detailed and always timely notes.



Dr. John Rogers

How has Dr. Rogers gone above and beyond? Apart from his very busy outpatient practice, Dr. Rogers helps our department by covering one of the inpatient units on a two-weeks-on, two-weeks-off schedule. During the two-week inpatient coverage, he cares for fifteen to sixteen patients.

Anyone who knows Dr. Rogers is humbled by his wealth of psychiatric (and other) knowledge, clinical acumen, dedication to his patients and commitment to the betterment of our department and this Island. His mastery of any topic he sets his mind to is nothing short of legendary. Many years ago, after leaving his family practice to complete a residency in

psychiatry at Dalhousie, he achieved the highest score in the country on his COPE examinations, although he would never say so himself. After returning to Cape Breton, Dr. Rogers took over my outpatient practice when I moved to inpatients. Since his “retirement,” John has covered for me on the inpatient unit and I have been privileged to see his work up close. When working with medical students or family medicine residents, I always advise them to look for a note from Dr. Rogers. It will tell them everything

they need to know about the patient and act as an exemplary model to follow. His diligence and attention to detail has never waned despite increasing time pressures. In any random two-month period, one can see between three and four hundred dictations he has signed off. His example to learners and colleagues is difficult to live up to and cannot be replaced.

I often say, two of the most useful things I have learned working on an inpatient unit are: (1) wait and see;

and (2) phone a friend. Over the years, John has been on the other end of many of those phone calls. Whether it is advice on a challenging case, feedback on an administrative issue, or simply, “Am I seeing this right?”, he never disappoints. His energy is seemingly tireless; his devotion and advocacy for those under his care—relentless; his demeanor—professional and unflappable; his advice—trustworthy; his moral compass—true. Despite years working in an under-resourced system, never once has John been anything less than respectful, kind and generous. Astonishingly, I have never heard an unkind word pass his lips. Learners under Dr. Rogers’ supervision have been most advantaged, and I consider

myself blessed to count him as a colleague and friend.

What makes Dr. Rogers an asset to the department? This cannot be overstated: without Dr. Rogers postponing his retirement the psychiatry department in Cape Breton would collapse. Throughout his career as a psychiatrist, Dr. Rogers has been a bright light to the students and learners under his teaching, helping many colleagues successfully complete their fellowship examinations. While never in an official leadership role, John has always given sound advice to those of us in leadership and has been an active member of our department. In Cape Breton, there have been many positive

changes made recently and we look forward to brighter days ahead. Until we get there, we could not keep doing what we do without Dr. Rogers going “above and beyond.” As a patient of his said to me today: “Dr. Rogers is a hero!”

THE HEAVY HELPERS: COMMUNITY GROUPS MAKING A DIFFERENCE

EATING DISORDERS NOVA SCOTIA

Who they are.

Established in 2000, Eating Disorders Nova Scotia is a not-for-profit organization that supports and empowers those impacted by eating disorders. Originally launched as the Eating Disorders Action Group by a group of women who had each recovered from an eating disorder, the idea was to create a community consultation to hear from those who had experienced an eating disorder, those who were currently struggling, families and friends, health care providers and others. They subsequently became a not-for-profit and for 10 years their Peer Support Groups provided a safe space for those working on recovery.

After some financial struggles they merged with the Self-Help Connection until they could be independent again, which happened in 2012 when they created a new advisory board and secured funding. By 2014 they were newly christened as Eating Disorders Nova Scotia.

How they help.

Eating Disorders NS offers a variety of programs including: a mentor program, groups and workshops, online chat peer support, a virtual peer support group, nutrition counselling, and family and friends peer support.

Want to make a difference?

Eating Disorders NS offers various ways to get involved.

- Volunteer
- Job Opportunities
- Research
- Donate

To learn more about Eating Disorders NS and how you can contribute to their excellent programs please visit <https://eatingdisordersns.ca/>.

HUMANITIES CORNER



Workshop

A history of psychiatry workshop for the department's psychiatry residents was conducted online on Aug. 25, 2021, by Dr. Susan Lamb, who is a historian from the University of Ottawa. The workshop addressed important historical learnings of psychiatry and how to apply them in practice, both as clinical experts and in relation to other CANMEDS roles.

Resident representatives

The psychiatry residency representatives for the medical humanities program in our department during the academic year 2021/22 are: **Drs. Alex Whynot** (PGY-3), **Alison Toron** (PGY-2) and **Julia LeBlanc** (PGY-1). Alison held this role during the previous academic year, leading a book club with a focus on memoirs related directly or indirectly to mental health. Alex and Julia are joining her during this academic year and all three are working with **Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick**, the Medical Humanities coordinator. They will collaborate on the book club (with a new focus), as well as on other projects. Anyone interested in more information about the Medical Humanities program or to contribute to it can contact Dr. Rudnick (Abraham.rudnick@nshealth.ca) or Kelly Hancock (Kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca). To learn more about the program visit <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/education/medical-humanities.html>.

Humanities Writing Contest

The national annual medical undergraduate and postgraduate learners writing competition organized by our department's medical humanities program occurred again this year with adjudication by June 2021. The adjudicators were Sue Goyette, who is a published author and instructor in the creative writing program at Dalhousie University, Dr. Alison Toron, who is a psychiatry resident representative for our department's medical humanities program, and psychiatrists **Dr. Lara Hazelton** and Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick, who are our department's founding and current medical humanities coordinators, respectively.

Twenty nine submissions from ten medical schools across Canada were received, which is the largest number of submissions from the largest number of medical schools in the competition to date. We are thrilled to announce this year's first place awardees: in the undergraduate category, Jordana Leilah (pseudonym) was the winner with a prose submission, *On applying to psychiatry residency as a psychiatry patient*, and in the postgraduate category, Dr. Howie Wu from the University of Alberta was the winner with a prose submission, *The Bridge*. Their winning entries can be read on our department's website at <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/education/medical-humanities/writing-competition.html>. Thank you to the learners and faculty who participated in this competition.

PHOTO FEATURE



Summerville Beach, Nova Scotia (Photo by Dr. Allan Abbass).

HEADLINES SUBMISSIONS

Headlines aims to provide a forum for the exchange of information, ideas, and items of general interest to the faculty, fellows, students and staff of the Department of Psychiatry. Your contribution(s) are needed and greatly appreciated.

The next issue of **Headlines** will be distributed on Nov. 1, 2021, with the deadline for submissions to be Oct. 15 2021.

Please send all submissions to Kate Rogers: Kate.Rogers@nshealth.ca