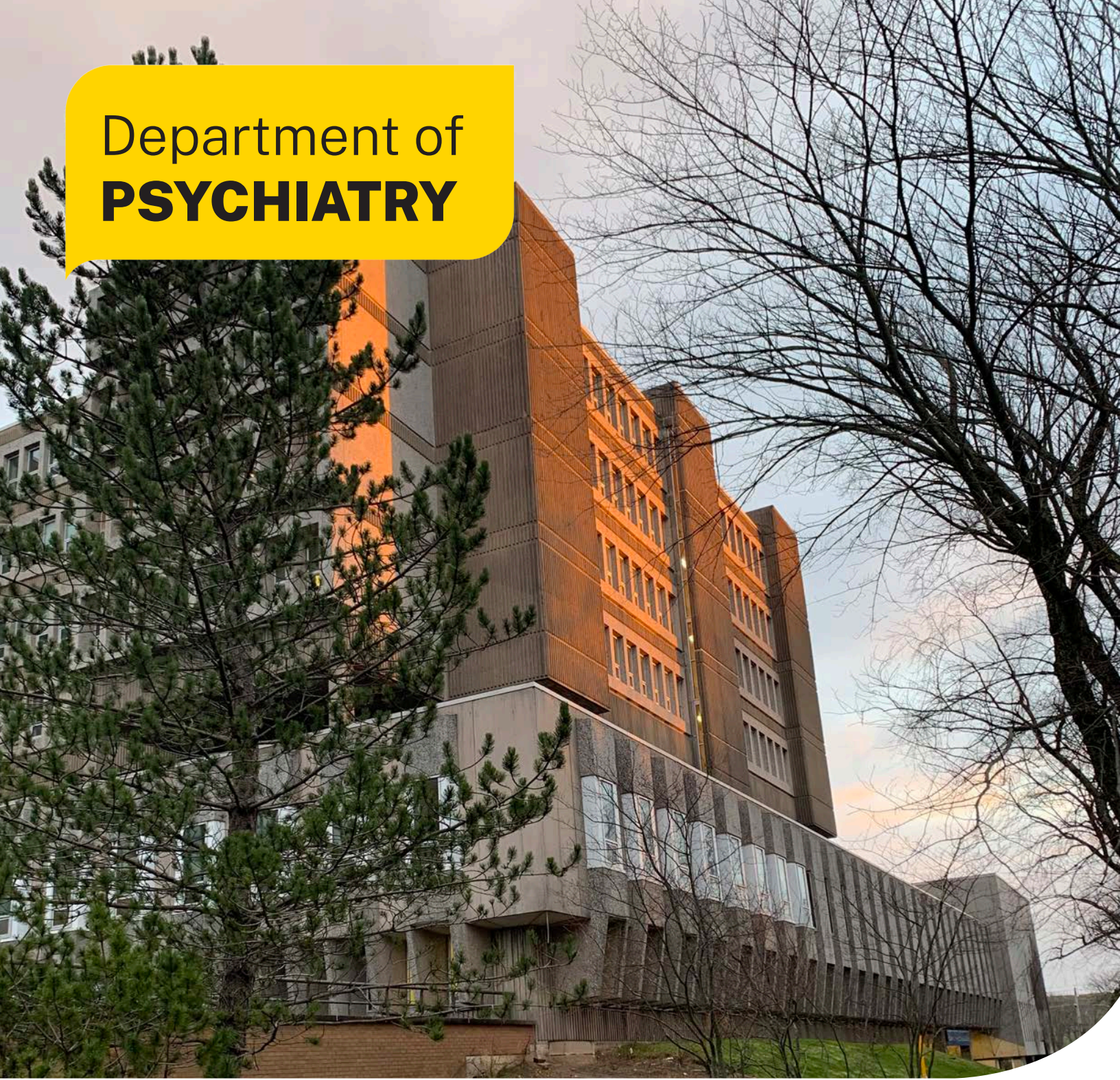


Department of  
**PSYCHIATRY**



# 2023/24 Annual Report



**DALHOUSIE**  
UNIVERSITY





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This report covers the period of April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, with the exception of the education report, which covers the academic year, July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024.



# Message from the **Department Head**



The Department of Psychiatry has accomplished much in 2023/24. As we complete the third year of our Transformational Plan, we are making progress in becoming a more diverse, inclusive, innovative, and global department.

We have made a concerted effort to increase involvement of our distributed learning

sites in the department's research and education mandates. These efforts range from activities such as research to identify opportunities and challenges in expanding medical education to distributed sites, expanding training opportunities at distributed sites, establishing a one-time zonal seed funding grant to help foster research at distributed sites, and to hosting the first departmental academic leadership retreat which included leaders from distributed sites in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

The global influence and leadership of the department was a significant focus. We launched two global mental health initiatives to provide a forum for knowledge dissemination: the Dalhousie Global Mental Health Guest Lecture Series in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Health Innovation Hub, IWK Health, and the Office of Community Partnerships and Global Health, Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University; and, the Dalhousie Special Interest Forum for Global Mental Health and Leadership Development. The department also established a Memorandum of Understanding between Dalhousie University and two academic institutions in Ghana – The University of Ghana Medical School and the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons to facilitate training opportunities for Ghanaian Psychiatrists and psychiatry residents from Dalhousie. We also continue to see momentum in our International Fellowship Program welcoming fellows in a variety of subspecialties.

Equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) and wellness remain central to our progress. Clinical programs such as the Rapid Access and Stabilization Program, the Transcultural Mental Health Program, the IWK African Nova Scotian Service, and Integrated Youth Services – Nova Scotia are working to support

equity-deserving populations and close psychiatric treatment gaps. Through the department's Social Policy & Advocacy (SP&A) pillar, a new funding opportunity was developed that supports initiatives by department members to reduce or eliminate marginalization of equity-deserving groups. Our EDIA Committee continues to work with initiatives for welcoming newcomers. In summer 2023, the Wellness Committee completed its department-wide Solutions for Wellness survey, and committee members are working with local leaders to action the results.

Each clinical academic section/division continues to focus on quality improvement, programs, recruitment, and processes to improve psychiatric care and training opportunities.

Our education programs continue to deliver high-quality training opportunities for residents and graduate students. Training opportunities for residents and medical students are expanding at local and distributed sites. Our graduate program is now in its seventh year, and students are successful in securing external funding. We are making progress in establishing a new masters program in global clinical psychiatry, which will help build capacity in treating mental health conditions within the global community.

Since the introduction of our distributed leadership model, we have seen an increase in involvement of frontline clinical faculty in research, which has been aided by the hiring of research assistants in each clinical academic section/division to help facilitate research.

Our well-established annual conferences, Research Day and Academic Day, continue to be well-attended and successful in showcasing the research in the department, and delivering informative continuing professional development presentations.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to another great year in the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Vincent Agyapong'.

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

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

# A YEAR IN REVIEW

The Department of Psychiatry is a clinical academic department within the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We're home to over 300 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, Nova Scotia Youth Centre, the East Coast Forensic Hospital (ECFH), the Nova Scotia Hospital, the Operational Stress Injury Clinic, and various community clinics across the central zone.

**333**

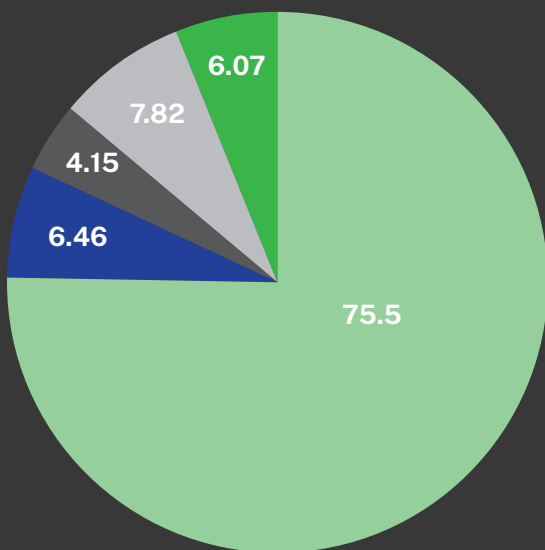
faculty members

**20**

cross-appointed faculty

**19**

adjunct faculty



## How our AFP faculty spend their time

April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

- Clinical Care
- Research
- Clinical Administration
- Academic Administration
- Teaching

# Education

July 1, 2023 - June 30, 2024

## UNDERGRADUATE

Clerkship year is from Aug. 28, 2023 – Aug. 25, 2024.

**104** core students rotated through our Dalhousie Medicine Nova Scotia (DMNS) sites

**83** students in the Halifax Regional Municipality

**10** students at distributed sites in Amherst, Kentville, Truro, and Yarmouth

**11** students at Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC) sites in Sydney and South Shore

**30** core students rotated through our Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick (DMNB) sites

**14** students in Saint John

**16** students at Longitudinal Integrated Clerkship (LIC) sites in Fredericton, Miramichi, Moncton, and Upper River Valley

~**98** Elective requests; **58** of the requests completed the elective (**50** home electives and **8** visitors)

~**1,540** Teaching hours to undergraduate medical education

## POSTGRADUATE

**43** residents received **521 hours** of instruction from **65 faculty** members

**9** applicants matched CaRMS, including **3** Dalhousie graduates

**1** Geriatric Psychiatry subspecialty resident

**3** Child and Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty residents

## CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT AND SCHOLARLY WORK

**\$25,724** in medical education grant funding received

**3** funded scholarly projects

**17** scholarly projects presented at various conferences

**3** scholarly publications

**8** residency scholarly projects on medical education

# Patient Care

April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024

## ADULT

**71,171** days were spent in adult inpatient services

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

**1,219** discharges from adult inpatient care

**170,827** visits to adult outpatient services (does not include Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team and Psych ER)

**30,277** Mental Health Mobile Crisis Team interventions for clients in the central zone (includes telephone and mobile interventions)

**2,303** visits to the Psych ER

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## CHILD AND ADOLESCENT

**3,520** days spent in child and adolescent acute inpatient services

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

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

**3,862** days spent in child and adolescent inpatient intensive services

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

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

**51,030** Ambulatory Registrations to MHA Program (this includes all programs and ages)





Charlotte May photo/Pexels

# Department research explores expanding training at distributed learning sites

## **EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED BY DISTRIBUTED LEARNING SITES IS A WAY TO MEET THE EXPECTATION TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF TRAINEES IN THE DEPARTMENT’S RESIDENCY PROGRAM, TRAIN MORE PSYCHIATRISTS LOCALLY, AND ENHANCE THE RECRUITMENT OF PSYCHIATRISTS TO RURAL AREAS.**

Following visits made by the department head to distributed learning sites in 2022 and 2023 to explore collaborations, the department conducted an environmental scan to identify opportunities and challenges in expanding its medical education program to sites outside of Halifax, NS.

“We wanted to do an environmental scan to see what’s available and the willingness of psychiatrists at distributed learning sites to contribute to the academic mandate of the department, specifically relating to residency training and medical student support and training,” says Dr. Vincent Agyapong, head of Psychiatry at Dal.

The scan was a collaboration between researchers, staff, and psychiatrists from Halifax, other health zones in Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick. Many of the collaborators are members of the newly-formed NS/NB Psychiatry Academic Council.

“This exercise shows the importance of working together across silos to solve systemic issues,” says Dr. Nachiketa Sinha, regional chief of staff, Horizon Health New Brunswick. “Our Horizon physician leaders did an amazing job on identifying gaps and working towards finding solutions. I must also point out that effective leadership does get results. My good colleagues from Nova Scotia led by Dr. Vincent Agyapong have shown great leadership in this initiative.”

The environmental scan results will inform how the department approaches expanding medical education opportunities at distributed learning sites. The research was published in three papers.

The first paper, outlining the protocol for the environmental scan, was published in 2023. Two subsequent papers based on the results of the environmental scan survey, one exploring engagement in teaching activities at distributed medical education sites, and the other engagement in research activities, were published in 2024.

“We learned we have quite a lot of talented psychiatrists in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, all around our distributed learning sites,” says Dr. Agyapong. “We had

### **Distributed education and research in Psychiatry publications:**

Hazelton L, da Luz Dias R, Esliger M, Tibbo P, Sinha N, Njoku A, Satyanarayana S, Siddhartha S, Alexiadis-Brown P, Rahman F, Maguire H, Gray G, Bosma M, Parker D, Connolly O, Raji A, Manning A, Bagnell A, Israel Opoku Agyapong V Exploring Current Practices, Needs, and Barriers for Expanding Distributed Medical Education and Scholarship in Psychiatry: Protocol for an Environmental Scan Using a Formal Information Search Approach and Explanatory Design *JMIR Res Protoc* 2023;12:e46835 URL: <https://www.researchprotocols.org/2023/1/e46835> DOI: 10.2196/46835

da Luz Dias, R., Hazelton, L., Esliger, M. et al. Distributed Medical Education (DME) in psychiatry: perspectives on facilitators, obstacles, and factors affecting psychiatrists’ willingness to engage in teaching activities. *BMC Med Educ* 24, 192 (2024). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-024-05178-8>

Obeng Nkrumah S, Dias RdL, Hazelton L, Esliger M, Brown PA, Tibbo PG, Sinha N, Njoku A, Satyendra S, Siddhartha S, et al. Psychiatrists’ Engagement in Research as a Pathway towards the Expansion of Distributed Medical Education (DME): A Regional Analysis across Two Provinces in Atlantic Canada. *International Medical Education*. 2024; 3(1):62-77. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ime3010006>

about 60 psychiatrists participate in the survey and willingness to contribute to the academic mandate of the department was very high.”

“Distributed medical education really is great news,” says Dr. Hugh Maguire, head, Department of Psychiatry, Nova Scotia Health northern zone. “The chance to live, learn and work in rural Nova Scotia will be so rewarding for students, and they in turn will enrich our communities. No matter where they end up spending their careers, this experience will be of great value to our future doctors, and of course a good number of them will learn how great living and working here is — and choose to stay.”



The environmental scan survey found that respondents are particularly interested in contributing to resident training and many are also willing to receive training in the new competency by design methods from the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada. In fact, there's an association between those who are willing to receive training and those who are willing to contribute to training residents.

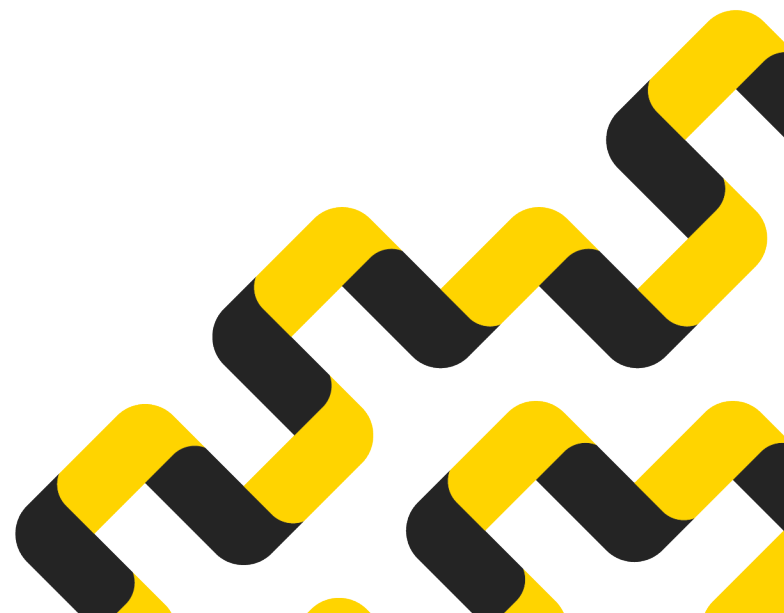
There was less interest in research activities, but it's not surprising given the respondents are clinicians and not researchers, says Dr. Agyapong.

Since the results of the environmental scan survey, academic and other leaders in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick have been meeting to gather more information, address identified barriers, and decide next steps to start planning an expansion of the training program. They hope to create a training stream in New Brunswick, increasing the number of psychiatry residency spots by two, says Dr. Agyapong.

Dr. Deborah Parker, former director of postgraduate education, and Dr. Lara Hazelton, director of education for the Department of Psychiatry have visited Fredericton, NB to identify potential training opportunities. Dr. Alexa Bagnell, head of the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry for the Department of Psychiatry, and her team, have also visited Cape Breton looking for placement opportunities for fellows and residents.

“Spending time at distributed sites in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia provides medical students and residents with distinct training opportunities that are unlike what they would experience in Halifax,” says Dr. Hazelton. “As a department, we value the enthusiasm, expertise and engagement of psychiatrists at the distributed sites who dedicate their time to teaching and supervising our learners.”

*“The chance to live, learn and work in rural Nova Scotia will be so rewarding for students, and they in turn will enrich our communities. No matter where they end up spending their careers, this experience will be of great value to our future doctors, and of course a good number of them will learn how great living and working here is — and choose to stay.”*



# Education in Psychiatry

## Undergraduate education

The department successfully transitioned to providing three blocks of Skilled Clinician 2 tutoring in 2023/24.

The undergraduate psychiatry program is preparing for an increase in clerk numbers for the 2024/25 academic year.

The Rapid Access and Stabilization Program is being added as a new outpatient site and is slated to supervise clerks starting September 2024. This expansion to the department's educational offerings is aligned with the increasing numbers of medical students joining the department this year.

Truro, Kentville, Yarmouth, and Amherst are active distributed sites, enriching the department's educational outreach. The department continues to have clerks who request distributed sites as their first choice of block placement.

The department again welcomed Med 1 students from both campuses of Dalhousie's Medical School for the Summer Internship in Psychiatry (SIIP). SIIP is a resident-led initiative for Med 1 students to increase interest in and exposure to psychiatry. This initiative took place May 21-25, 2024, with 12 Med 1 students participating.

Following a temporary pause, the undergraduate program is fully open for visiting elective students from International and other Canadian medical schools.

Dr. Julie Munich was chosen by the clinical clerks to receive the Clerks' Choice Award for outstanding contributions to their teaching.

## Postgraduate education

Postgraduate psychiatry education continued to implement Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME). In 2024, a double cohort of residents (PGY-4s and PGY-5s) sat their Royal College exams. The 2024/25 year will see the first CBME cohort to complete the Transition to Practice (TTP) phase.

In 2025, the postgraduate psychiatry program will undergo a two-year follow-up internal review by Postgraduate Medical Education.

Residents are on track to complete 10 per cent of their five years of training at distributed learning sites (outside of Halifax) by the end of the 2024/25 academic year. The one-month inpatient Cape Breton experience in PGY-2 has been a success. Eight residents in PGY-3 completed a five-day geriatric psychiatry rotation in the Annapolis Valley. Starting in 2024, PGY-5s will complete a minimum of three months of training outside of Halifax. The program continues to explore other opportunities to expand training at distributed learning sites.

CaRMS 2024 was successful with all nine positions filled.

The program's graduation celebration was held on June 7, 2024. Congratulations to the class of 2024: Drs. Shaheem Abid, Kyle Godden, Matthew McAdam, Nadine Nejati, Aditya Nidumolu, Alex Whynot, and Natasa Zatezalo.



The graduating class of psychiatry residents at the Year-End Celebration on June 7, 2024. From left to right: Drs. Vincent Agyapong, department head; Ali Manning, associate director of postgraduate education (now director); Nadine Nejati, Kyle Godden, Shaheem Abid, Natasa Zatezalo, Alex Whynot, Matthew McAdam, Aditya Nidumolu, and Deborah Parker, former director of postgraduate education.

## Child and Adolescent Psychiatry education

### Learners in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

In the 2023/24 academic year, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry faculty members supervised 33 medical students, six PGY-3 Pediatric residents, eight PGY-3 Psychiatry residents, and three Child and Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty residents within our services.

### Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Residency Program

Congratulations to Dr. Lauren Chan who successfully completed her Child and Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty training on June 30, 2023. Dr. Chan accepted employment in Edmonton, Alberta.

Congratulations to Dr. Emily Fraser who successfully completed her Child and Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty training on Dec. 31, 2023. Dr. Fraser accepted a position starting March 1, 2024, with BC Children's Hospital and will hold a clinical faculty position with the UBC Department of Psychiatry.

Dr. Courtney Handford and Dr. Kate Stymiest began their PGY-6 year within the subspecialty program, with an anticipated graduation date of June 30, 2024.

Dr. Kyle Godden began his PGY-5 year with the Child and Adolescent psychiatry subspecialty program on Jan. 1, 2024 with anticipated graduation of Dec. 31, 2025.

Dr. Sophie Church and Dr. LeAnne Revell have been offered and accepted Child and Adolescent Psychiatry subspecialty positions in the residency program. Drs. Church and Revell will begin their PGY-5 Child and Adolescent Psychiatry training on July 1, 2024.

### *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Rural Rotations*

Dr. Celia Robichaud and Adrienne McCarthy visited Sydney Cape Breton for a site visit on March 25, 2024. Dr. Faisal Rahman, Dr. Kayla Choo Chong, and Dr. Vhari James from northern zone were all part of the site visit. The training site was approved for rural rotations for subspecialty Child and Adolescent Psychiatry residents and there is now an established site across all zones in the province.

### *Dalhousie International Fellowship in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*

Interviews were held on February 9 and 16 for the first International Fellow in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Global Residency elective with Dr. Celia Robichaud, Dr. Lade Abuah, and Dr. Alexa Bagnell on the interview committee for the first international fellows in Child and Adolescent Psychiatry. We hope to welcome our first international fellow Sept. 1, 2024.

## Geriatric Psychiatry subspecialty program

In May 2024, Jana Tamm joined the department as education coordinator, supporting the Geriatric Psychiatry subspecialty program.

The Geriatric Psychiatry subspecialty program secured funding for two residency positions for the 2024/25 year. Drs. Eileen Burns and Lauren Haslam will officially join the subspecialty program in July 2024.

Dr. Mackenzie Armstrong will start his transition to practice in June and is on schedule to graduate in August 2024.

The Geri-COPE Committee, which includes all program directors of Geriatric Psychiatry subspecialty programs in Canada, voted to move to a CaRMS based selection process. The Geriatric Psychiatry program will join the 2025 medicine subspecialty match through CaRMS in fall 2024.

The Geriatric Psychiatry subspecialty program will welcome its first international fellow in September 2024 for six months.

## Graduate training in psychiatry research

The graduate program in psychiatry research is entering its seventh year. Graduating students have gone on to begin other degrees in Medicine, Clinical Psychology, Pharmacy, and other graduate programs, or to work in research.

The MSc class of 2023 was successful with their theses, with six successful MSc defenses held in summer 2023. In October 2023, these six students graduated with their MSc in Psychiatry Research. Congratulations to Ross Langley, Hailey Burns, Haley Bernusky, Tulayla Katmeh, Temi Toba-Oluboka, and Ruth Shelton.

In September 2023, we welcomed six MSc students and two PhD students.



In summer 2024, seven MSc and one PhD student will be defending their theses/dissertations. This will include two MSc students defending their theses after only one year of MSc study, both of whom are starting PhDs in the fall, and the program's first PhD (Sarah DeGrace) who plans to undertake postdoctoral studies in the fall.

We are pleased to be welcoming a new cohort of eight MSc and four PhD students in September 2024, including our first psychiatry resident, Dr. Jasmyn Cunningham, in the PhD program. Incoming students have been successful in securing external funding with four students fully- and six partially- externally funded in the coming year.



In September 2023, the department welcomed its new class of graduate students. Back row: Dr. Sherry Stewart, Nicole Basso, Holly Carbyn, Colby Price, Steve Jackson, and Andem Effiong. Front row: Mikaela Ethier-Gagnon, Julia Fraiha, and Dr. Kim Good. Missing from photo: Morteza Fattahi.

## Curriculum development and scholarly work

Department faculty and staff received \$25,724 in grant funding for three scholarly medical education projects. The funding was awarded by the Dalhousie Psychiatry Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychiatry grant, Dalhousie Psychiatry Research Fund, and Dalhousie's Continuing Professional Development & Medical Education Living Lab grant.

- “Development of an Eastern Canada ‘The Essentials of Neuropsychiatry’ Teaching program for trainees in Neurology and Psychiatry.” (Paramlall M, Hazelton L, Rigby H, Chu E, Fraunbauer E) for \$5,000.

- “Research and scholarship in clinical psychiatry services: Barriers and facilitators.” (Good KP, Tibbo P, Hazelton, L, Eskes GA, Chorney J, Crocker C) for \$14,976.
- “Exploring ‘Teacher’ as Part of Professional Identity in the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry.” (Murphy C, Esliger M, MacDonald M) for \$5,748.

Seventeen faculty, learner, and staff medical education projects were disseminated via conferences and annual meetings including:

- Psychiatry Research Day
- Dalhousie Faculty of Medicine's Medical Education Research and Innovations Showcase (MERIS)
- Canadian Psychiatric Association
- International Congress on Academic Medicine (ICAM)
- Association for Academic Psychiatry
- International Association for Health Professions Education (AMEE)
- Council of Psychiatric Continuing Education (COPCE)
- University of Toronto Department of Psychiatry
- Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada (AFMC) Distributed Medical Education Research Day
- Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada Continuing Professional Development Research Symposium

Three medical education projects were published in various journals:

- BMC Medical Education
- *International Medical Education*
- *Journal of Medical Education and Curricular Development*

Eight learner scholarly projects were supervised by faculty and staff. Projects included archival research, learner wellness, mentorship, and curriculum development and innovation.

## Continuing professional development

Rounds continue to be delivered virtually with excellent attendance and will be held virtually for the foreseeable future.

A rounds blueprint was developed in 2022 by the CPD Committee and was fully implemented for the 2023/24 academic year. It allows for a dedicated number of rounds spots for each of the five clinical academic sections/division, with each clinical section/division being invited to suggest at least one University Rounds speaker per academic year. There are additional spots for education, humanities, residents, psychotherapy, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, social policy & advocacy, and wellness.

The annual W.O. McCormick Academic Day conference was held on April 26, 2024 and welcomed over 100 attendees. This year's theme was Alcohol Use Disorders and Mental Health: An Update. Thank you to the event speakers: Dr. Ronald Fraser, Dr. J.J. Rasimas, Scott Janssen, Dr. Pamela Arenella, Tasha Taylor, and Jeff Garrison.



A panel of the day's speakers concluded the 2024 W.O. McCormick Academic Day. From left to right: Dr. Cheryl Murphy, conference chair, and speakers: Dr. Pamela Arenella, lived experience panelists Tasha Taylor and Jeff Garrison, Dr. Ronald Fraser, and Dr. J.J. Rasimas. Missing from photo: Scott Janssen.

## Global mental health

In spring 2024, the department launched two global mental health initiatives. In May, the department launched the Dalhousie Global Mental Health Guest Lecture Series in collaboration with the Nova Scotia Health Innovation Hub, IWK Health, and the Office of Community Partnerships and Global Health, Faculty of

Medicine, Dalhousie University. The lecture series invites local, national, and international global mental health experts to present current research, and topical and contemporary issues related to global mental health.

In March, the department launched the Dalhousie Special Interest Forum for Global Mental Health and Leadership Development. The special interest forum is focused on training and preparing faculty, medical residents, fellows, and graduate students to become Global Mental Health practitioners and leaders, supporting the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs that expand access, improve the quality of mental health care, and address mental health inequities.

The department established a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Dalhousie University and two academic institutions in Ghana — The University of Ghana Medical School and the Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons. The MOU will provide training opportunities at Dalhousie University for Ghanaian Psychiatrists in subspecialty areas including Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Geriatric Psychiatry, Forensic Psychiatry, Neuropsychiatry, and Concurrent Disorders Psychiatry, and at the University of Ghana Medical School for psychiatry residents from Dalhousie University in Transcultural Psychiatry.



The Dalhousie Global Mental Health Series launched on May 3, 2024. From left to right: Drs. David Anderson, dean, Dal Faculty of Medicine; Vincent Agyapong, head, Department of Psychiatry; Shekhar Saxena, inaugural guest lecture series speaker; and, Joshua Edward, manager, research development, research, innovation & discovery, NS Health.

## Masters in Global Clinical Psychiatry

An application is underway to launch a Masters in Global Clinical Psychiatry (formerly named International Masters in Clinical Psychiatry), which will help extend the global reach of the department. This masters program is intended for generalist medical doctors, nurse practitioners, nursing specialists, and licensed medical practitioners throughout the Americas, Caribbean Islands, Europe/Middle East, Africa, and other members of the global community who would like to improve their care of patients with mental health conditions.

## International Fellowship Program

Launched in April 2022, the International Fellowship Program at Dalhousie University has rapidly gained international acclaim, attracting applications from the Gulf region and developing countries. This initiative aligns with Dalhousie's mission to bridge gaps in mental health care locally and globally, facilitating the dissemination of knowledge and expertise to learners from both high- and low-income countries.

The program welcomes international fellows in a variety of subspecialties, including Mood Disorders, Forensic Psychiatry, Geriatric Psychiatry, Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (IWK and northern zone), Nova Scotia Operational Stress Injury Clinic, Reproductive Mental Health, the Centre for Emotions & Health, Neuropsychiatry, and Psychotherapy. Recently, the department has expanded its offerings to include

Addiction Psychiatry and Transcultural Psychiatry, leading to a surge in applications for training in these areas.

The International Fellowship Program remains dedicated to its mission of disseminating knowledge and expertise to bridge gaps in mental health services worldwide.

## Medical Humanities

The department welcomed Dr. Leigh Meldum as the new medical humanities coordinator after Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick stepped down from the role at the end of his five-year term.

The Medical Humanities program continued its activities effectively, including the annual student writing competition for medical students and resident trainees across Canada



International fellows Dr. Tariq Alotaibi and Dr. Awateif Alsupiany pose with members of their teams. In August 2023, the mood disorders team welcomed international fellow Dr. Tariq Alotaibi. Dr. Alotaibi completed a fellowship with the team at the end of July 2024 (Dr. Alotaibi is pictured left with the team). In October 2023, the reproductive mental health team welcomed Dr. Awateif Alsupiany, an international fellow from Saudi Arabia, for a one-year fellowship (Dr. Alsupiany is pictured middle and right with members of the team).





Cedric Fauntleroy photo/Pexels

# New national program supports mental health of doctors and trainees with daily messages

**A NEW NATIONAL PROGRAM SPEARHEADED BY DALHOUSIE'S DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY WILL OFFER MENTAL-HEALTH SUPPORT TO PHYSICIANS, RESIDENTS, AND MEDICAL STUDENTS ACROSS CANADA.**

Wellness4MDs delivers daily supportive text messages in English or French to subscribers for six months at no cost. The program aims to significantly reduce levels of stress, anxiety, burnout, and depression commonly experienced by physicians, residents, and medical students.

"I've been involved in physician panel studies that suggest there are high levels of burnout in physicians, residents, and medical students," says Dr. Vincent Agyapong, head of psychiatry at Dal, chief of psychiatry for Nova Scotia Health's central zone, and the program's lead researcher.

"We also know doctors typically don't use traditional mental-health services until sometimes it's too late, which means many people suffer in isolation without really reaching out to seek the supports they need."

This could be due to stigma associated with mental health, or physicians may be too busy for self-care, which is unfortunate, he says.

Dr. Agyapong's Global Mental Health Research Group based at Dalhousie and the University of Alberta designed Wellness4MDs. The service's text messages are based on cognitive behavioural therapy principles and were developed by psychiatrists, mental health therapists, clinical psychologists, and mental health service users.

Wellness4MDs is funded by the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada Foundation, the Global Psychological eHealth Foundation, Mental Health Foundation in Alberta, the Royal Bank of Canada Foundation with support from Dal's Department of

*Interested? Sign up now by texting "WELLMD" for English access or "BIENMD" for French access to 1-855-947-4673. Subscribers can opt in to participate in the program evaluation by completing surveys when they begin the program and at designated follow-up times.*

*"We also know doctors typically don't use traditional mental-health services until sometimes it's too late, which means many people suffer in isolation without really reaching out to seek the supports they need."*

Psychiatry, the Division of Community Psychiatry at the University of Alberta, and in partnership with Alberta Health Services.

**A growing problem**

With increasing levels of burnout, anxiety, and depression negatively impacting the healthcare workforce, the need to support physician mental health and well-being is great.

"The mental health of our doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals are a priority," says DeAnn Hunter, chair of the Mental Health Foundation in Alberta's Board of Trustees. "They are on the front lines every day, providing care and comfort to those in need, often at the expense of their own well-being."

"Contributing to Wellness4MDs' launch and success in support of the mental health and well-being of Canadian physicians, postgraduate medical trainees, and medical students is important to us and we look forward to the program's growth in the short-and long-term," says Craig Ceppetelli, executive director of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada's Office of International Collaboration and Advancement and chief operating officer of Royal College Canada International.

Messages will also include links to mental health resources that could help improve their resilience and mental well-being, says Dr. Agyapong.

Another plus is how easily the program will fit within the busy lives of participants. The program is anonymous and doesn't require much effort from physicians, he says.

"Physicians across Canada work hard to keep Canadians healthy, and it is right that we have an intervention that helps support their psychological well-being," says Belinda Agyapong, president and CEO of the Global Psychological eHealth Foundation.

## A proven model

Wellness4MDs builds on the success of the researchers' other text message-based mental health programs which have been shown to improve clinical symptoms and have a high user satisfaction.

The program is powered by ResilienceNHope software, an online application that delivers the suite of supportive text and e-mail messaging programs developed by Dr. Agyapong's research group and is operated by the Global Psychological eHealth Foundation.

Dr. Agyapong's group specializes in designing, implementing, and evaluating e-mental health programs that support global efforts at closing the mental health literacy and psychological treatment gaps for mental disorders.

"There's evidence from our other programs such as the Text4Hope program, the Text4PTSI program, and the MoreGoodDays program, that this is an intervention that actually works," says Dr. Agyapong.

Subscribers will be asked to complete voluntary surveys so researchers can measure the program's effectiveness. After six months, participants can resubscribe to continue receiving the text messages.

*"The vision is to reach as many physicians, residents, and medical students across the country as possible to offer support."*

## Reaching as many in need as possible

A key aspect of Wellness4MDs is that it's available in both of Canada's official languages. Although the program is not the first the research group has made available in multiple languages, it is the first delivered on a national scale.

"The vision is to reach as many physicians, residents, and medical students across the country as possible to offer support," says Dr. Agyapong.

While requiring only a small investment of resources, the program's impact could be massive. Not only does Wellness4MDs have potential to reach thousands of

physicians, residents, and medical students across Canada, the program is scalable and can be adapted to reach the health workforce globally, including nurses and other allied health professionals.

"It's a feel-good effect that you can be able to use very minimal resources to achieve so much impact. It speaks to the power of innovation, the power of technology," says Dr. Agyapong.





# Research in Psychiatry

The sectional/division research directors have each been moving forward with engaging frontline clinicians on research ideas specific to their areas of work. There have been unprecedented new research projects initiated or involving frontline clinical faculty. Section/division research assistants aid with this work and have been hired for all five sections/division.

The Director of Research continues to build engagement with NS and NB zonal research leads and Dr. Agyapong has implemented a zonal seed funding grant to help foster research from the department's distributed sites.

Department researchers continue to be successful with research grants being awarded at varying levels of granting agencies, and with publications in leading peer reviewed journals. Of note is the success of our early career and new faculty with research grants awarded.

## Departmental research funding

### 2023 Department of Psychiatry Research Fund (DPRF) Summer Students

The Psychiatry Summer Studentship Program is designed to provide qualified undergraduate students with an opportunity to become involved in research in the Department of Psychiatry over the summer. This program offers students an opportunity to learn new research techniques as they acquire hands on experience in running experiments and analyzing data. In 2023, summer studentships were awarded to four learners:

- Nicole Ponto (supervisor: Dr. Candice Crocker) — *Impact of Cannabis use on brain white matter in females with Early Phase Psychosis use*
- Shizza Hassan (supervisor: Dr. Rudolf Uher) — *Open Clinical Experience for Adolescents in Neuroscience (OCEAN)*
- Sana Sheikh (supervisor: Dr. Sandra Meier) — *Paying attention to the right clues in social interactions*
- Sarah-Jeanne Trottier (supervisor: Dr. Sherry Stewart) — *Neural correlates of reward and relief cannabis craving in cannabis users with trauma histories*

The department provided funding to the following research projects through the Department of Psychiatry Research Fund (DPRF).

### Spring 2023 DPRF research awards:

- Dr. Candice Crocker: *Pilot examination of alcohol impacts on neuroinflammation in FEP*
- Dr. Raegan Mazurka, Postdoctoral Research Fellow: *Psychotherapy Frequency and Depression Outcomes*
- Dr. Sandra Meier: *Sexting behaviours, motivations, and outcomes: a longitudinal study*

### Fall 2023 DPRF research awards:

- Dr. Aaron Keshen and Anastasia Harris (MSc in Psychiatry Research second-year student): *The acceptability of brief integrated psychotherapy for comorbid eating disorder and posttraumatic stress disorder: A case series and qualitative analysis*
- Dr. Sherry Stewart and Mikaela Ethier-Gagnon (MSc in Psychiatry Research first-year student): *Examining the pharmacological and non-pharmacological effects of cannabidiol (CBD) on stress-related responses in healthy men and women*
- Dr. George Robertson: *Nanoparticle drug delivery to treat psychiatric disorders by protecting and repairing the brain*
- Dr. Kim Good: *Research and scholarship in clinical psychiatry services: Barriers and facilitators*

### Zonal seed funding grant

The zonal seed funding grant is a one-time funding opportunity available to each zone for seed funding for mental health research/quality improvement.

The first seed funding grant was awarded to:

- Dr. Theveshen Padayachee (Fredericton): *The Impact of Patient Education Interventions during hospitalization on Benzodiazepine deprescribing: A Quality Improvement Initiative*

## 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Research Day

The department's 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Research Day was held on Oct. 27, 2023. The event was again successful with a record number of abstracts submitted and 173 attendees.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Tomas Paus, Professor of Psychiatry and Neuroscience at the University of Montreal, and Scientist at the Research Centre of the Centre Hospitalier Universitaire Sainte-Justine. Dr. Paus' presentation "Population Neuroscience of the Growing Brain" opened the event.

In addition to 11 oral presentations and 52 poster presentations, this year also included a new feature focusing on a research group. The inaugural group was the Eating Disorders Research Group presented by Dr. Aaron Keshen.



Research Day 2023 award winners with the Director of Research. From left to right: Dr. Phil Tibbo (Director of Research, Department of Psychiatry, and event chair), Anastasia Harris (Best Presentation Award Graduate Student), and Dr. Aditya Nidumolu (Best Presentation Award Psychiatry Resident). Missing from photo: Nicole Ponto (Best Presentation Award Undergraduate Student).



Panelists at the public panel discussion "Environment, brain development, and mental health" on Oct. 26, 2023. From left to right: Drs. David Lovas, Phil Tibbo (Research Director and event chair), Sandra Meier, Sabina Abidi (moderator), and Tomas Paus.

## A public panel discussion: Environment, brain development, and mental health

The annual public panel discussion (formerly Café Scientifique) was held the evening prior to Research Day on Oct. 26, 2023. Attendees heard from panelists: Dr. Sabina Abidi (moderator), associate professor, and associate head, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University; and, child and adolescent psychiatrist, IWK Health; Dr. Tomas Paus, Research Day keynote speaker; Dr. Sandra Meier, associate professor, and Canada Research Chair in Developmental Psychopathology and Youth Mental Health, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University and IWK Health; and, Dr. David Lovas, assistant professor, Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University; and, child and adolescent psychiatrist, IWK Health. The panelists took questions from an engaged audience. Topics raised included diet, environment, and disease management.

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



The Canada Research Chair in Addictions and Mental Health, Dr. Stewart, focuses on underlying mechanisms and effective interventions for concurrent mental health-addictive disorders. Dr. Stewart finished up her sabbatical at l'Université de Montréal with Dr. Patricia Conrod adapting their personality-targeted interventions for opioid agonist therapy clients (CIHR-funded 'OpiVenture').

Dr. Stewart is director of a \$2.5 million SSHRC grant testing an adaptation of her personality-targeted prevention program to address undergraduates' mental health/substance misuse. 'UniVenture' is taking place at five universities, in collaboration with 20+ methodological/knowledge translation partners. This fall, the adapted intervention was delivered to the final cohort. Dr. Stewart organized and delivered a symposium on UniVenture findings at the Society for the Study of Emerging Adulthood (San Diego, June 2023).

Dr. Stewart is NS Lead on the Canadian Underage Substance Prevention trial (\$1.7 million CIHR-funded), to disseminate her personality-targeted substance use prevention program to Canadian high-schools. This year, they have supervised SchoolsPlus staff as facilitators, run surveys in schools, and delivered interventions.

Dr. Stewart studied effects of COVID-19 pandemic-related restrictions on romantic couples'/families' mental health/addictive behaviours. Her team's published paper in *Journal of Family Psychology* on mandatory homeschooling's impacts on couples' conflict was featured by the Vanier Institute of the Family.

Dr. Stewart's lab continues to disseminate their research on mechanisms to help explain PTSD-addictions comorbidity with five papers published/accepted this year. Her ancillary collaborative work with Dr. Simon Gadbois on PTSD service dogs' ability to detect trauma cue exposure in breath samples, published in a *Frontiers* in Allergy special issue, received substantial press coverage (e.g., CBC's *Quirks & Quarks*) and garnered additional funding (New Frontiers Research Fund grant).

Dr. Stewart's team is making good progress in their Gambling Awareness NS-funded research on couples' conflict and gambling. They published the first study in a *Frontiers in Psychology* special issue and have run 54/60 couples in the lab-based experiment. Dr. Stewart received a CIHR grant with Dr. Sandra Meier on gambling-related cyberloafing.

Dr. Stewart is the NPI of the fifth node of CRISM (\$2.4 million, CIHR-funded). This year they funded five research development program (RDP) grants, launched their second RDP call, published three newsletters, and hosted the first CRISM Atlantic Executive meeting and an Indigenous research conference. The Node led the training component of a CIHR funding application for a CRISM national coordinating core. Dr. Stewart presented on CRISM at the CIHR Pan-Canadian Network for HIV/AIDS & SSTBI Clinical Trials workshop.



# Canada Research Chair in Developmental Psychopathology and Youth Mental Health: **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 have been working on leveraging mobile technology to improve the mental health care of youth and families. To date, nearly 8,000 participants (30% patients) have participated in Dr.

Meier's research. Given this success, the chair has just been renewed for five more years.

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 an innovative mobile sensing app that has now been downloaded by more than 3,000 users, with more than 2,000 providing data for at least 14 days. The app is currently used in a SSHRC-funded project to predict new onsets of mental disorders in youth as well as in a CIHR-funded project to identify youth with anxiety disorders who will likely not respond well to CBT. In April 2024, the team further received funding to extend their research to infants exploring the impact of parental smartphone use on children's psychosocial development. The team will also collaborate with Dr. Stewart using the app to measure gambling behaviour in a CIHR-funded Catalyst grant. Data collected by the app has already provided valuable insights, highlighting that objectively measured screen time is associated with mental health problems and bullying victimization, which was partially explained by a reduction in sleep and in-person social interactions. However, not only the amount of screen time was observed to be important, but also the motives for screen time. Motives for screen time were found to substantially moderate the association of screen time with mental health outcomes. In addition, racial, gender, and sexual minorities were found to use screens differently. Translating these observational findings to clinical care, the lab has co-designed a mental health app called SMILE that provides personalized, just-in-time interventions

to youth based on their mobile-sensing profiles. The first 60 youths have just completed the study with the intervention group showing a significant improvement in their anxiety symptoms. The lab also completed a clinical trial of another mental health app called GIA involving 120 youth. Compared to the control group the app significantly improved the mental health of youth with an effect size of 0.7.

Together with Drs. Blais, Chorney, Rosen, and Stewart, the chair has started to explore sexting behaviours, motivations, and outcomes in 500 emerging adults. The first results revealed that sexting motivations strongly mediate the associations of sexting behaviour with varying outcomes; participants who endorsed intrinsic motivation for sexting experienced more positive outcomes, while participants who endorsed extrinsic motives experienced more negative outcomes. Dr. Meier has also formed a national consortium for genetics in child psychiatry. The consortium focuses on the Genetic Architecture of Youth Anxiety (GAYA) and aims to recruit nearly 13,000 youth in the next three years. The work has garnered substantial interest and was included in a media pitch by CIHR.

Regarding KT, the lab's research is continuously included in the exhibition at the Discovery Centre, and lab members attended conferences and meetings of patient organizations. Dr. Meier further supervised 13 students and two postdocs in the last year across disciplines and authored 12 publications, four more are in review and five are close to submission.

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



Dr. Rudolf Uher leads a clinical research program focused on reducing the burden of depression, bipolar disorder, and psychosis through early risk identification, targeted prevention, and personalized treatment.

The Families Overcoming Risks and Building Opportunities for Wellbeing (FORBOW) project is following over

600 youth participants at sites in Halifax and in New Glasgow. FORBOW uses interviews, speech analysis, activity tracking, brain scans, and genetic testing to optimize early identification of risk for mental illness. These tools enable targeting early interventions to those who need them to avoid major forms of mental illness.

In the last year, the FORBOW team have completed a synthesis of knowledge on the familial risk and early precursors of mental illness. This work led to the conclusion that most risk is not specific to a particular diagnosis, but rather general, concerning disposition to multiple forms of mental illness. The result of this work is the recommendation that early intervention needs to be broadly transdiagnostic.

The Skills for Wellness project, integrated with FORBOW, is testing whether early transdiagnostic interventions involving psychological coaching reduce the long-term risk of mental illness in youth.

Even with prevention in place, some youth will end up developing serious mental disorders, with major depressive disorder being the most common one. The right choice of first treatment can make a huge difference for a young person experiencing depression for the first time. The Treatment Interrupts Depression Early (TIDE) project is the first study to examine personalized treatment for the first episode of depression in youth. With support from the Waverley House, Hewitt Foundation, and Medavie Health Foundation, TIDE uses an innovative combination of activity tracking, brain wave recording, and voice

analysis to find out who will benefit from psychological treatment and who requires medication to overcome depression. TIDE follows youth for several years to monitor them reengaging with education, work and social activities.

The Open Clinical Experience for Adolescents in Neuroscience (OCEAN) project gave 50 young people age 12-24 the opportunity to experience cutting edge clinical neuroscience first-hand from participant, researcher, and expert perspectives. The graduates of the OCEAN program have become champions for the prevention and early treatment of depression.

In addition to his work with youth, Dr. Uher is leading projects to improve the treatment of depression for all Canadians. The Optimized Predictive Treatment In Medications for Unipolar Major Depression (OPTIMUM-D), a multi-site project supported by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Canadian Biomarker Integration Network in Depression (CAN-BIND) is testing whether a biomarker-based personalized selection of antidepressant and adjunctive medication improves the outcomes of major depressive disorder. Over 600 Canadians will receive high quality treatment for depression while participating, making OPTIMUM-D the largest clinical trial of depression treatment in Canada to date.

To ensure equitable treatment of depression across Canada, Dr. Uher and colleagues from the Canadian Network for Mood and Anxiety Treatment (CANMAT) have completed an update of clinical guidelines for depression that becomes available in spring 2024 to help ensure consistent quality of depression treatment across Canada.

## Dr. Paul Janssen Chair in Psychotic Disorders: 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. His research focus has remained in the field of early intervention for psychosis, covering neuroimaging to service delivery and novel treatment options.

Over the last year, research continued into the understating of the effects of cannabis on psychosis development and outcomes. Data from a two-site 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) is currently being analyzed with manuscripts from this novel data set planning to be submitted for publication in the upcoming months. 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 is actively recruiting non-help seeking adolescents (15–16-year-olds) to investigate neuroinflammation, neuronal connectivity and function with adolescent exposure to cannabis via neuroimaging. Two MSc students are attached to this particular project. A CCSA funded collaborative project with members of the Department of Emergency Medicine is examining physical and mental health cannabis related presentations to the emergency department. Manuscripts from this work have been submitted for publication. In collaboration with colleagues in Quebec, studies wrapped up in this reporting period with respect to an app-based harm reduction approach to cannabis use in early phase psychosis. Also completed in this reporting period is another CIHR funded study examining the use of cognitive enhancement therapy for problematic alcohol use in early phase psychosis,

complementing the recently completed TRIC funded psychotherapy study for those with past adverse events, substance use and psychosis (manuscripts submitted). A newly awarded grant will be examining engagement to care, which follows from two publications in the last year of our work in this area.

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, treatment of this comorbidity, and other important research areas related to early psychosis understanding and care. Ongoing EPP collaborations include investigations of ERP markers in high-risk populations, neuroimaging markers of clozapine eligibility in EPP and problematic gambling in EPP. In the last year with collaborators, investigations continued including standardizing approaches to transitions in care in EPP programming (CIHR), development of standards for a Canadian rapid learning health system (CIHR), strengthening the delivery of integrated care in specialized mental health settings (CIHR), cross-validation of outcome prediction models in Early Intervention Services in Psychosis Programs internationally (VPRIISF), characterizing the neural profiles of Bipolar Disorder with and without auditory hallucinations (CIHR), how NS Central Intake data could be used to inform service delivery, and how the use of FitBit data could be used in prediction models. The Chair continues with supervision and being a committee member for MSc/PhD students, many attached to the above projects.

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



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 2023/24 academic year. Dr. Alda completed his sabbatical in the summer of 2023. During the sabbatical he focused on data analyses and on initiation of two projects funded by CIHR and by the Czech

Agency for Medical Research. The first study aims to link sleep changes in patients with the clinical stage of their illness. The latter project focuses on digital monitoring in people with bipolar disorder and the genetic characteristics of the underlying physiological regulations.

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

Continuing work with several international consortia, Dr. Alda and colleagues reported a number of findings from molecular genetic studies. As part of the Psychiatric Genomics Consortium, they contributed to the largest genome-wide association studies of suicide and most recently the fourth wave of the genomewide association analysis of bipolar disorder.





The RASP team in April 2023. From left to right: Dr. Vincent Agyapong, department head; Dr. Sherry James, former RASP team member; Dr. Sanjana Sridharan, head, Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry; Dr. Barani Sambandan, Dr. Shiloh Gossen, former RASP team member; Dr. Anthony Pianosi, Dr. Ngozi Ezeanzie, RASP's clinical academic leader; Dr. Jason Morrison; and Matt White, Co-Director, MHAP central zone.

# One year later: Rapid Access and Stabilization Program improves direct access to psychiatric care by over 1,000 per cent

## **ONE YEAR SINCE ITS LAUNCH IN APRIL 2023, THE RAPID ACCESS AND STABILIZATION PROGRAM (RASP) CONTINUES TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO PSYCHIATRIC CARE FOR ADULTS IN NOVA SCOTIA'S CENTRAL ZONE**

RASP is an innovative mental health care delivery model. Patients are referred to the program via the Mental Health and Addiction Program Central Intake System by primary care providers for diagnostic clarification, medication consult, and treatment plan formation, and assessed by a psychiatrist. After the comprehensive assessment, which includes the use of eight standardized rating scales, patients are either returned to the care of the primary care provider with a detailed treatment plan or referred to another clinical service if needed. A limited number of follow-up appointments and telephone consultations with primary care providers are also offered as part of the program based on need.

The program is a partnership between the Department of Psychiatry and Nova Scotia Health's central zone Mental Health and Addiction Program.

"Prevention through early intervention is at the program's core," says Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Dal's head of Psychiatry and chief of Psychiatry for Nova Scotia Health's central zone. "If we can reduce wait times and see patients sooner, we have the potential to address their mental health concerns before they deteriorate, and treatment becomes more intensive and expensive."

Support in the form of text messages is also available. All patients attending RASP have the option to subscribe to the Text4Support program — an evidence-based e-mental health intervention that offers six months of diagnosis-specific Cognitive Behavioural Therapy-based supportive text messages and follow-up mental health assessments. Text4Support is funded by the QEII Foundation.

With 960 unique clients assessed by psychiatrists within the program's first year, RASP is making strides in achieving its goal to reduce wait times for psychiatric care in the central zone to four weeks. There was a 1,226.67 per cent adjusted increase in the number of new unique patients who gained direct access to psychiatrists after being referred by a primary care provider in the central zone in the 2023/24 fiscal year (RASP implementation year) compared to the 2022/23 fiscal year (pre-RASP implementation). The program also saw a 102 per cent adjusted increase in the number of unique patients who gained access to psychiatrists through either a transfer of care from a mental health clinician or referral from a primary care provider.

*"Prevention through early intervention is at the program's core. If we can reduce wait times and see patients sooner, we have the potential to address their mental health concerns before they deteriorate, and treatment becomes more intensive and expensive."*

One-year data shows a high level of satisfaction. On average, 435 people who accessed the program and completed the satisfaction survey rated their overall satisfaction of the services received as a 9.31 out of 10.

Patient feedback from the satisfaction survey includes appreciation for the timely access to care as well as gratitude and hope:

"Access to RASP was incredibly amazing and fast. Personalized, looked at my entire situation not just today's problems. Didn't make me feel bad for wanting to self-harm, made me feel that there may be a way to get better."

"I have been dealing with the mental health system for a long time in Nova Scotia, this is the first time I've ever been seen in a timely manner and connected with the person who would be helping me. I found solutions and hope for the first time, and I think that is incredibly valuable. I hope others feel the same with this program!"

"The severity of my current depressive episode/suicidality was addressed w/ both seriousness and compassion, which can be rare when our (mental) healthcare services stretched so thin. I genuinely believe that being assessed and then seen promptly by a CMH psychiatrist (all in the same week) was incredible harm reduction. I genuinely cannot say if a trip to the ER would have been enough to keep me alive. RASP is an unbelievable program, and I really, really hope it remains funded and operational."

"A good number of the patients we saw in RASP had been waiting to be assessed by psychiatrists for about one to three years," says Dr. Ngozi Ezeanzie, RASP's clinical academic leader. "The vast majority of the patients we saw were very grateful and appreciative of



the detailed, efficient, and empathetic psychiatric care that they got from us. Through RASP, a lot of patients that had not previously had access to quality psychiatric care now have access to it. These are wonderful outcomes and a massive encouragement to the entire RASP team that we're definitely on the right track."

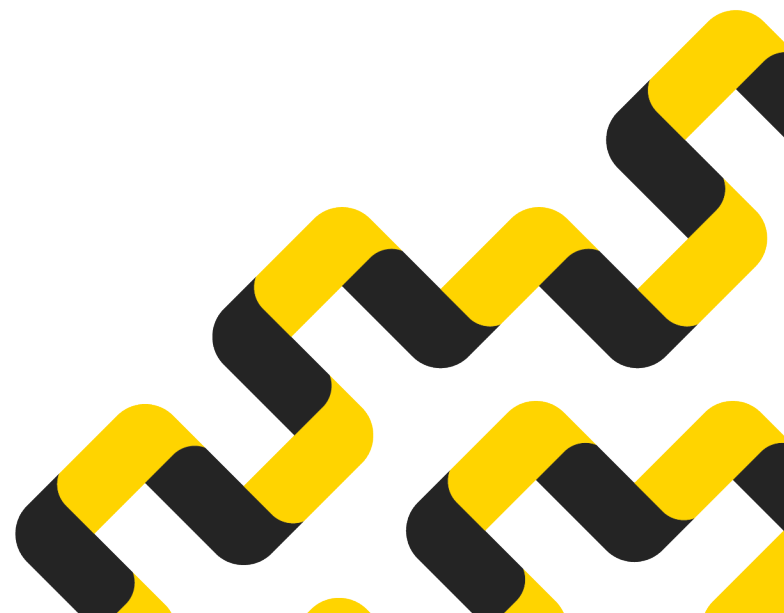
Working in RASP has also been well-received by the psychiatrists.

"It's been fun working in RASP and doing general psychiatry again after several years of doing only schizophrenia care," says Dr. Jason Morrison. "It's making me update my knowledge in areas I haven't thought about for several years, and with four consults a day, it is sharpening my efficiency in interviewing and documentation. Most of the people we see have had symptoms and disability for years but have never seen a psychiatrist or been offered mental health care. It is gratifying when my intervention with them can move the needle on their wellness."

The program is also providing opportunities for medical learners. The undergraduate psychiatry program is expanding its educational offerings by adding RASP as an outpatient site. RASP is slated to supervise clerks starting September 2024.

"RASP continues to evolve positively and I'm happy to be a part of it," says Dr. Ezeanozie. "It's been a great journey so far and it's only going to get better and better over the coming years."

*"Through RASP, a lot of patients that had not previously had access to quality psychiatric care now have access to it."*



# Excellence in **Patient Care**

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## **Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry**

The Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry has been working to fill vacancies, has increased patient capacity through the Day Hospital program, and has begun several research projects.

The section recruited a Neuropsychiatrist and established the Neuropsychiatry Clinical Academic program. It also recruited a new staff psychiatrist for the Rapid Access and Stabilization Program (RASP).

RASP launched in April 2023 and has been successful in improving access to psychiatric care for adults in the central zone. There has been over a 1,000 per cent increase in the number of new unique patients who gained direct access to psychiatrists after being referred by a primary care provider in the central zone in the 2023/24 fiscal year (RASP implementation year) compared to the 2022/23 fiscal year (pre-RASP implementation). RASP is a partnership between the Mental Health and Addictions Program, NS Health, and the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry.

## **Section of Community Psychiatry**

The appointment of clinical academic leaders across all Community Mental Health Teams (CMHTs) has significantly enhanced team decision-making and leadership. This initiative has also fostered more effective collaboration with higher management in implementing innovative clinical practices and policies.

In an effort to improve service provision and enhance training opportunities, we are hiring new doctors for CMHTs, including two psychiatrists with subspecialties in Transcultural Psychiatry (serving marginalized populations) and Addiction Psychiatry/Concurrent Disorders (establishing the Concurrent Disorder Clinical Academic program).

Our research assistant plays a pivotal role in supporting our research initiatives. Their focus on securing grants and fostering academic partnerships is key to elevating our community psychiatry research profile and impact.

We have launched comprehensive initiatives to address service gaps in community psychiatry. Our focus includes exploring the potential to advocate for a care model that incorporates physician assistants and case managers for patients requiring such services.

The Nova Scotia Operational Stress Injury (OSI) Clinic report highlights notable advancements, including extending mental health services to the western zone and providing ongoing support for the PEI OSI clinic. Research efforts have intensified, leading to significant output, including a highly recognized publication in 2022.

## **Section of Forensic Psychiatry**

The section's Patient Care Needs Assessment (PCNA) has been completed, and the results were shared at many levels. This will guide resource allocation within the service and patient flow.

Dr. Harry Kennedy visited the East Coast Forensic Hospital in January 2024 and spent a week with the team at ECFH to continue the development of the Model of Care. Dr. Kennedy is a clinical professor of Forensic Psychiatry at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland and is one of the doctors involved in reviewing and reporting on the forensic service. The section is starting elements from the new Model of Care that involve qualitative measures and measured based care (MBC).

The section is working on developing a database that would help facilitate research within the section.

In fulfilling the education mandate, the section continues to offer training opportunities to clerks in core and elective rotations. It also restarted an elective international residency for senior residents.

The section prepared to welcome an international fellow in May 2024 for one year and is preparing to welcome two more.

## Section of Geriatric Psychiatry

The section developed a new triage process, such that all referrals directed to geriatric psychiatry are reviewed by a single individual, who collaborates with other key stakeholders (including Central Intake and Geriatric Medicine) to ensure referrals are appropriately triaged.

Dr. Kathleen Singh started a collaboration with the North End Health Clinic and Mobile Outreach Street Health to facilitate easier access to geriatric psychiatry consultation for marginalized individuals.

The Geriatric Psychiatry Web Education Series, delivered monthly to physicians and allied health professionals in Nova Scotia, has undergone redevelopment under the direction of Dr. Meagan MacNeil. The series now has a 24-month blueprint to ensure core topics are routinely presented and is being recorded to ensure access for those who cannot attend live sessions. Recordings can

now be accessed via the Atlantic Seniors Mental Health Network website, providing broader access to clinicians in other Atlantic provinces.

The section is represented nationally with members chairing or participating in the Geri-COPE Committee representing Canadian Geriatric Psychiatry program directors, the Royal College Geriatric Psychiatry Specialty Committee, the Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry, and the Canadian Coalition for Seniors Mental Health.

### DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

#### MISSION

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

#### VISION

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

#### VALUES

Integrity  
Creativity  
Professionalism  
Accountability  
Collaboration  
Compassion  
Inclusivity



# Division of **Child and Adolescent Psychiatry**

The Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry has had a very productive year and made great strides in strategic directions identified in 2023 across our clinical and academic pillars. Our faculty welcomed new child and adolescent psychiatrists from UK and France and celebrated the amazing half century career of Dr. Herb Orlik who retired in June 2023. We have had three strong subspecialty Child and Adolescent Psychiatry residents in our program in this academic year, and all are interested in remaining in Nova Scotia. Our distributed learning sites in the province expanded with the Cape Breton site established in March 2024, and the program now has a training site in every zone. We are also excited about our new international fellowship establishment this year and welcoming our first Child and Adolescent Psychiatry fellow from Ghana in fall 2024.

Leadership and succession planning have been a key focus within our division over the past several years. This year had six of our early career faculty stepping into leadership roles clinically and academically. Dr. Celia Robichaud was selected as the new Child and Adolescent Psychiatry residency program director starting in November 2023. Dr. Sarah Fancy became the acute inpatient psychiatry co-lead in fall 2023. Dr. Chelcie Soroka accepted the physician co-lead role for Halifax clinic in November 2023 and Dr. Alexandra Manning accepted the physician co-lead role for Sackville clinic starting in April 2024. Dr. Katie Radchuck became the new physician co-lead for Emergency Mental Health and Addictions Service in fall 2023. Dr. Jennifer Cumming stepped into the role of pediatric resident coordinator for the division in 2024. Many of our more senior leaders have also taken on health centre, provincial and national leadership roles. Dr. Sabina Abidi is the IWK psychiatry lead for One Person One Record in the province and joined by Dr. Jose Mejia, Dr. Chelcie Soroka and Dr. Sarah Fancy in their significant contributions to the working groups in child and adolescent mental health and addictions to ensure the new provincial electronic medical record meets the needs of patients and physicians. Dr. Alexa Bagnell has been President of national heads of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (Association of Professors Child and Adolescent Psychiatry of Canada) and supporting ongoing advocacy work for child and youth mental health at the federal level.

Our scholarly work has had increased support and focus with our first research director, Dr. Jill Chorney



After 50 years of dedicated service to the Department of Psychiatry and children, youth, and families at the IWK Health Centre, Dr. Herb Orlik retired on June 30, 2023. A dinner was held in celebration and recognition of his service on June 29. From left to right: Dr. David Lovas, Dr. Chelcie Soroka, Dr. Sarah Fancy, Dr. Celia Robichaud, Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Ms. Phyllis Orlik, Dr. Herb Orlik, Dr. Alexa Bagnell, Ms. Maureen Brennan, Ms. Michelle LeBlanc, Dr. Katie Radchuck, Dr. Suzanne Zinck, Dr. Alexandra Manning, Dr. Sabina Abidi, Dr. Aidan Stokes, and Dr. Normand Carrey.

in 2022, and our first integrated research assistant, Jeremy Smith, joining in 2023. This has helped all faculty see their work reflected and increased potential for projects in improving access and care outcomes through research and continuous quality improvement in psychiatric care and system innovation. Our faculty has done tremendous work to support capacity building in skills and knowledge for treatment of child and adolescent mental health and addictions disorders in the region. Dr. Selene Etches hosted the first Youth Addictions Conference in the province in 2023. Dr. Lukas Propper and Michelle Leblanc surveyed primary care physicians to assess learning needs for Child and Adolescent Psychiatry CME sessions in 2023/24. Dr. Suzanne Zinck led provincial work to establish updated Gender Care guidelines for children and youth. Dr. Celia Robichaud co-led the CME initiative for Maritime pediatricians in child and youth mental health.

Our faculty have also been leaders through innovative community-based partnerships with a goal to reach equity-deserving groups in supporting increased access to care. Two of these initiatives established this year through funded business cases were the IWK African Nova Scotian Service and the Integrated Youth Services-Nova Scotia. We are very proud of our IWK Child and Adolescent faculty who are leaders in their fields and have provided leadership in provincial and national work in improving child and youth mental health, including considerations of access, quality and equity in care.



# Department convenes for academic leadership retreat

**ON MAY 10, 2024, DALHOUSIE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY LEADERS CONVENED FOR AN ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP RETREAT ABOUT STRATEGIC PLANNING.** Participants comprised members of the executive team, chiefs of psychiatry from other health zones, clinical academic leaders including those from distributed learning sites, and staff operations leadership.

The retreat included a special focus on social policy & advocacy, a new pillar of the department's strategic plan, and with it the areas of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA) and wellness.

Leaders were given an orientation package with information and resources about these topics and how they could support them in their areas of oversight. A survey about integrating EDIA into department activities was also sent to invited participants before the event.

Participants heard presentations about EDIA and why it matters, microaggressions, barriers and facilitators to distributed education and research in NS, and current distributed education and research models, and reflections on EDIA within the department. The format also included group work about incorporating EDIA into department activities, and large group discussion about barriers and facilitators to distributed education and research, and zonal updates and brainstorming.

Thank you to the speakers for their insightful presentations, to the planning group for organizing an impactful event, and to all the participants for reflecting on these important topics as we plan future strategic directions for the department.

# Supporting our community: Social Policy & Advocacy, Wellness, and EDIA

## Social Policy & Advocacy

The Social Policy & Advocacy (SP&A) Committee welcomed two lived-experience representatives to its membership, bringing vital perspective to the committee's work that is aligned with its guiding principles. One lived-experience representative is an Indigenous Elder. Representation of the Indigenous community on a departmental committee is a history first for the department. In 2023, Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy, director of SP&A, served as departmental liaison for Wije'winen Health Centre, the first primary care clinic to serve the urban Indigenous population in Kijipuktuk (Halifax).

The SP&A Committee developed a "Policy Document" and "Strategic Action Plan." Together, these documents define and guide implementation of the committee's mandate. Working groups are being formed to help the committee implement its Action Plan.

A summary of the Action Plan was presented at the department's spring biannual meeting. The presentation highlighted the new SP&A fund available to members of the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry. The fund supports initiatives by department members to reduce or eliminate marginalization of equity-deserving groups. More information about the fund is available on the department's website.

In preparation for the Academic Leadership Retreat held on May 10, 2024, the director of SP&A worked closely with department directors of equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, and wellness.

## Wellness

To facilitate the work of the Wellness Committee, the position of committee chair was changed to director of Wellness in November 2023. The director of Wellness is a member of the department's Executive Committee. This change is in line with the department's commitment to wellness and the value it places on it as a component

of its strategic plan. Dr. Zenovia Ursuliak, previously wellness chair, was appointed director of Wellness.

The Solutions for Wellness survey was completed in summer 2023 with about an 80 per cent response rate. Wellness Committee members are working with their local leaders to action wellness solutions from the survey.

A retirement survey distributed to faculty and staff was completed in January 2024 and this data has been used to draft guidelines for celebrating our retiring faculty and staff.

Wellness events like the monthly wellness hike will be offered again from April to October 2024, and the department's second Summer Celebration event is being planned for Sept. 6, 2024 at the Discovery Centre.

## Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

The Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee continues to incorporate EDIA into the clinical, academic, and research activities in the department. The EDIA Committee has representation on all departmental committees.

The EDIA Committee is developing an orientation package for Newcomers, such as international medical graduates, entering the department as faculty, residents, or staff.

Workshops around EDIA and research are also being planned.

Members of the committee attend the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Nova Scotia's Welcome Collaborative multiple times per year. In March 2024, members of the committee presented at a Dalhousie Mental Health Awareness Week event for international students. Discussions covered various topics such as stress reactions, depression, substance use, and culture shock, offering practical advice and fostering supportive conversations.



# Awards & Honours

## PROMOTIONS

Dr. Sabina Abidi  
Professor  
Effective July 1, 2024

Dr. Selene Etches  
Associate professor  
Effective July 1, 2024

Dr. Aaron Keshen  
Associate professor  
Effective July 1, 2024

## RETIREMENTS

Janet Bardon  
Effective Jan. 31, 2024

Dr. Miroslaw Bilski-Piotrowski  
Effective March 31, 2024

Dr. Normand Carrey  
Effective April 30, 2024

## AWARDS & HONOURS

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

Atlantic Business Magazine 2024 Top 50 CEO Winner  
*Dr. Patricia Lingley-Pottie (Strongest Families Institute)*

Appointment as Editor-in-Chief of the Canadian Journal of Physician Leadership  
*Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick*

Award of the Czech Neuropsychopharmacological Society for original research in clinical psychopharmacology  
*Dr. Tomas Hajek*

Canadian Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry's Certificate of Special Recognition  
*Fundy Peace Foundation (Dr. Pippa Moss for her dedication to the foundation)*

Canadian Psychology, the journal of the Canadian Psychological Association, named four Dalhousie clinical psychology professors among the country's most productive

*Dr. Sherry Stewart*  
*Dr. Christine Chambers*

*Dr. Jill Chorney*  
*Dr. Simon Sherry*

Canadian Psychiatric Association's C.A. Roberts Award for Clinical Leadership  
*Dr. Claire O'Donovan*

Clarivate Highly Cited Researcher  
*Dr. Rudolf Uher*

Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine Award for Excellence in Research Mentorship – Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion  
*Dr. Sandra Meier*

Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine Award of Excellence in Education  
*Dr. David Gardner*

Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine Excellence in Clinical Research Award  
*Dr. Rudolf Uher*

Dalhousie University Faculty of Medicine Excellence in Research Award  
*Nick Murray (MSc level)*  
*Ashley Francis (PhD level)*

Doctors Nova Scotia Senior Membership Award  
*Dr. James Chandler*

Journal of Exploratory Research in Clinical and Social Pharmacy 2023 Best Paper Award  
*Dr. David Gardner*  
*Dr. Andrea Murphy*  
*Dr. Malgorzata Rajda*

Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia's Outstanding Advocates Award  
*Dr. David Gardner*  
*Dr. Andrea Murphy*

Physician Lead for Psychiatry/Mental Health for the One Person One Record Program  
*Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick*  
*Dr. Sabina Abidi*

Nova Scotia College of Social Workers 2023 Social Justice Ally Award  
*Dr. Suzanne Zinck*

Nova Scotia Health Quality Awards 2024 Award of Excellence in Mental Health and Addictions Quality Improvement  
*Dynamic attachment-focused Relational Therapy (DaRT) program (Dr. Jackie Kinley)*

Re-elected as chair of the Education Committee of the Canadian Psychiatric Association  
*Dr. Joseph Sadek*

## DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY AWARDS

2023 Outstanding Clinician Award  
*Dr. Laura Downing*

2023 Dr. Larry Buffett Outstanding Teacher Award  
*Dr. Kathleen Singh*

2023 Distributed Site Outstanding Teacher Award  
*Dr. Ahmed Saleh*

2023 Educator of the Year Award  
*Dr. Katharine Black*

2024 Dr. Aidan Stokes Mentorship Award  
*Dr. Sanjana Sridharan*

Dedicated Service Award  
*Dr. Emmanuel Aquino  
Janet Bardon  
Dr. Sherry James  
Dr. Normand Carrey  
Dr. Amy Bombay  
Dr. Miroslaw Bilski-Piotrowski*

Leadership Award  
*Dr. Terry Chisholm  
Dr. Nicole Herschenhous  
Dr. David Lovas  
Dr. Abraham Rudnick  
Dr. Lourdes Soto-Moreno  
Dr. Jonathan Brake  
Dr. David Lovas  
Dr. Andrew Harris*

Special Recognition Award  
*Theresa Halliday*

## Research Day 2023 Award Winners

Best Presentation Award Undergraduate Student  
*Nicole Ponto*

Best Presentation Award Graduate Student  
*Anastasia Harris*

Best Presentation Award Psychiatry Resident  
*Dr. Aditya Nidumolu*

## Residents' Choice Awards

Teacher of the Year Award  
*Dr. Kathleen Singh*

Above and Beyond Award  
*Elle Waychesko*

PGY-5 Excellence Award  
*Dr. Selene Etches*

Junior Mentorship Award  
*Dr. Jason Morrison*

Senior Mentorship Award  
*Dr. Mahmoud Awara*

Junior Resident Professionalism Award  
*Dr. Joe Saunders*

Senior Resident Professionalism Award  
*Dr. Natasa Zatezalo*

## Resident Awards

Clerks' Choice  
*Dr. Julie Munich*

Horizon Health Network Saint John Zone PGY-1 Resident of the Year Award  
*Dr. Anthony Hinde*

Dr. Charles J. David Memorial Prize in Psychiatry  
*Dr. Natasha Glover*

Alexander H. Leighton Resident of the Year Award  
*Dr. Niamh Campbell  
Dr. Julia LeBlanc*

Dr. Herb Orlik Child & Adolescent Psychiatry Resident Award  
*Dr. Kara Yeung*

Geriatric Psychiatry Resident Award  
*Dr. Alec Watts*

Dr. Harris Lee Barton Scholarship  
*Dr. Alison Toron*

Dr. Robert and Stella Weil Fund in Psychiatry Prize  
*Dr. Anastasia McCarvill  
Dr. Jared Allman  
Dr. LeAnne Revell*

Dr. W.O. McCormick Award  
*Dr. Nadine Nejati  
Dr. Madeline Ferracuti*

# LEADERSHIP

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## LEADERSHIP

Dr. Vincent Agyapong  
Head

Dr. Lara Hazelton  
Director, Education

Dr. Mahmoud Awara  
Head, Community Psychiatry

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

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

Dr. Phil Tibbo  
Director, Research

Dr. Risk Kronfli  
Head, Forensic Psychiatry

Dr. Mark Bosma  
Head, Geriatric Psychiatry

Huanhong Xie  
Chief Operating Officer

Dr. Claude Botha  
Interim Head  
Dalhousie Medicine, NB

## EDUCATION

Dr. Lara Hazelton  
Director, Education

Dr. Katharine Black  
Director, Undergraduate Education

Dr. Kathleen Singh  
Director, Geriatric Subspecialty  
Residency Program

Dr. Celia Robichaud  
Director, Child and Adolescent  
Subspecialty Residency Program

Dr. Cheryl Murphy  
Director, Continuing Professional  
Development

Dr. Leigh Meldrum  
Humanities Coordinator

Dr. Alexandra Manning  
Director, Postgraduate Education

Dr. Laura Downing  
Associate Director, Postgraduate  
Education

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

Dr. Jennifer Cumming  
Pediatric Residency Coordinator

Dr. Ejemai Eboreime  
Interim Coordinator, Masters in  
Global Clinical Psychiatry

Dr. Sherry Stewart  
Graduate Program Coordinator

Dr. Mahmoud Awara  
Director of International Fellowship  
Program

## COMMUNITY PSYCHIATRY

Dr. Mahmoud Awara  
Head, Community Psychiatry

Dr. Aaron Keshen  
Associate Head, Community  
Psychiatry

## ACUTE, CONSULTATION & EMERGENCY PSYCHIATRY

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

Dr. Mark Paramlall  
Associate Head, Acute,  
Consultation & Emergency  
Psychiatry

## CHILD & ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

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

Dr. Sabina Abidi  
Associate Head, Division of 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

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## ADMINISTRATION

Huanhong Xie  
Chief Operating Officer

Parisa Abdi Sabouhi  
Undergraduate Coordinator

Anila Balakrishnan  
Research Coordinator

Jennifer Brown  
Operations Manager

Petra Corkum  
Postgraduate Education  
Coordinator

Mandy Esliger  
Evaluation & Curriculum Specialist

Linda Ford  
Administrative Assistant

Rajkumar Kanniappan  
Acting HR Coordinator

Chelsea Mantin  
Administrative Assistant to the  
Department Head

Sandra Millar  
Finance Assistant

Penney Miller  
Communications Coordinator

Neha Singh  
Physician Resource Manager

Jana Tamm  
Education Coordinator

## DIVISION OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

Vacant  
Administrative Manager

Baillie Arseneau  
Clinical Administrative Assistant

Jennifer Cunningham  
Clinical Administrative Assistant

Melissa Davis  
Clinical Administrative Assistant

Debi Follett  
Administrative Assistant to  
the Chief

Megan Lee  
Booking and Registration Clerk

Adrienne McCarthy  
Education and Research  
Coordinator

Joan Sweet  
Booking and Registration Clerk



# 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
- Forensic Clinic
- 0-5 Years Clinic
- Early Psychosis
- Autism Spectrum Disorders

## Provincial Programs

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





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