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# HEADLINES



**RAPID ACCESS AND STABILIZATION  
PROGRAM TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR  
RESEARCHERS AND LEARNERS**



**DALHOUSIE  
UNIVERSITY**

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# HEAD LINES

# Message from the Department Head

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Spring is a busy time in the Department of Psychiatry as we are nearing the end of the academic year. Despite this, I hope you are all taking time to enjoy the sunnier weather and other signs that spring is here.

Our annual conference W.O. McCormick Academic Day is fast approaching on April 21. Registration is open until April 14, and it is sure to be an informative event on the theme of neuropsychiatry. You can view the schedule of speakers and find registration information [on the department's website](#).

The Year-End Celebration is taking place the evening of June 16 at the Prince George Hotel. We hope you can join us for this annual event celebrating postgraduate education.

For the first time, the department is hosting a Summer Recreational Event taking place the afternoon of June 23 at Hatfield Farm. We hope you and your loved ones can join us for a variety of fun activities at the farm.

More information about these June events will be communicated in the coming weeks.

As you'll read in this issue of *Headlines*, we are also looking forward to the opportunities the new Rapid Access and Stabilization program may create for our department's researchers and learners.

The Wellness Committee is organizing monthly hikes for



Dr. Vincent Agyapong

department members from April to October. The first two hikes will take place on April 30 and May 28.

The department is pleased to host Dr. Harry Kennedy, a visiting psychiatrist from Dublin, Ireland. Dr. Kennedy will be presenting a faculty development session on April 19.

Further details about both events are provided in this issue of *Headlines*.

In late February, our department was invited to give remarks at a CIHR funding announcement hosted by Dalhousie. Our thanks to Dr. **Jill Chorney** for speaking at the event. You can read more details about the announcement and the research project being led from the IWK in this issue of *Headlines*.

The department also participated in a variety of meetings including a tour of the distributed learning site in Truro and a tour of the Nova Scotia hospital with the Honourable Brian Comer, Minister, and Kathleen Trott, Associate Deputy Minister, for the Office of Addictions and Mental Health.

In this issue we note the arrival of several new faculty members: Drs. **Pierre Chue, Augustina Appau, Dilruba Rahman, Gabriel Anjorin, Christian Lepage, John Oguntade, David Olson, Gurinder Singh, Barani Sambandan, Christelle Boudreau, and Carlos Hernandez Castillo**. Welcome to you all! We also say farewell to a few departing faculty members: Drs. **Ezio Dini, Adrian Lawson, Joanne MacDonald, and Aileen Brunet**. We wish you all well.

Delightedly, more department members were honoured with the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal. Congratulations to Dr. **Alexa Bagnell**, **Maureen Brennan**, and Dr. **Jackie Kinley**! We also celebrate several student successes in research and other honours, as well as the successful grant applications, presentations, and publications of department members. Congratulations to the following department members on their accomplishments noted in this issue: Dr. **Aaron Keshen**, Dr. **Igor Yakovenko**, Dr. **Phil Tibbo**, Dr. **Jason Morrison**, Dr. **Ian Weaver**, Dr. **Tomas Hajek**, Dr. **Rudolf Uher**, Dr. **Joseph Rasimas**, Dr. **Jill Chorney**, Dr. **Lori Wozney**,

Dr. **Sabina Abidi**, Dr. **Leslie Anne Campbell**, Dr. **Alexandra Manning**, Dr. **LeAnne Revell**, Dr. **Alison Toron**, Dr. **Amy Gough**, Dr. **Beverley Cassidy**, Dr. **Mahmoud Awara**, Dr. **Donna Davis**, Dr. **Melissa Lahti**, Dr. **Joseph Sadek**, Dr. **Celia Robichaud**, Dr. **Abraham (Rami) Rudnick**, **Temi Toba-Oluboka**, **Gloria Obuobi-Donker**, **Ashley Francis**, and Dr. **Cindy Calkin**.

**Dr. Vincent Agyapong**  
Head, Department of Psychiatry,  
Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie  
University  
Chief, Department of Psychiatry,  
NSHA Central Zone

## New Department of Psychiatry Policies

The Department of Psychiatry has implemented the following two new department policies:

### 1. Faculty Development Funding

This new allocation and claim procedure was developed in response to survey results from a survey sent to faculty earlier this year. The policy is available on the department database under the "Education" tab.

### 2. Protected Time Policy

All AFP physicians in the Department of Psychiatry who have a clinical FTE of 1.0 or greater will have 0.10 of their FTE reserved as 'protected time'. The implementation of this policy is voluntary. The policy is available on the department database under the "Policies" tab and "Practice Plan Files" heading.

# Rapid Access and Stabilization Program to create opportunities for researchers and learners

A new program aimed at improving access to mental health care in Nova Scotia's central zone will also create opportunities for researchers and learners at Dalhousie University's Department of Psychiatry.

The Rapid Access and Stabilization Program (RASP) will provide timely access to psychiatry consultations, so patients are assessed sooner by a specialist.

Psychiatrists and other mental health clinicians will participate in a rotating roster to provide care that will include direct patient assessments and telephone consultations with primary care providers. Patients can continue to be cared for by their primary care provider with specialist input. The assessment and consultations will mainly focus on diagnostic clarification and treatment recommendations.

The program aims to reduce wait times for community mental health services, to provide short-term psychiatric care to patients earlier, and to lessen the burden on hospital emergency departments.

It also presents new opportunities for researchers and learners, with the goal of establishing a collaborative education, training, and research program.

All patients assessed through RASP will have the opportunity to participate in research, including clinical trials.

"I am looking forward to the new clinical research opportunities the Rapid Access and Stabilization Program will bring to the department," says Dr. Phil Tibbo, Director of Research, Department of Psychiatry. "This program will provide unique quality improvement and quality assurance opportunities, administrative data analyses, as well other research avenues that can be explored, expanding and complementing the already existing research excellence of our department."

Currently, patients can opt to enroll in the [Text4Support](#) research study which has received NS Health ethics approval and funding from the QEII Foundation.

Patients may also be asked to consent to their data being used for health services research and evaluation purposes with no identifying information.

Other research programs within the RASP initiative are under development.

It is anticipated the Rapid Access and Stabilization program will provide opportunities for residents and other learners to

receive training in mental health assessments and management.

"We are looking forward to exploring what educational opportunities the program may present for learners in our department," says Dr. Lara Hazelton, Director of Education, Department of Psychiatry.

# Research Report

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## DEPARTMENT FUNDING

### UPCOMING DEADLINES

#### Department of Psychiatry Research Fund (DPRF) – April 2023 intake

**Deadline:** April 14, 2023

To apply for the DPRF April 2023 intake, please contact **Anila Balakrishnan** (Research Coordinator) at [anila.balakrishnan@nshealth.ca](mailto:anila.balakrishnan@nshealth.ca)

### INTERNAL FUNDING

Congratulations to the following researchers whose project was awarded funding during the October 2022 DPRF intake:

Emilie Lacroix, **Aaron Keshen**, Igor Yakovenko, Leah Boulos.

Title: Toward an integrated treatment for comorbid eating disorders and substance use disorders

Funding Sources: Dalhousie Psychiatry Research Fund (DPRF)

Total Funding: \$19,990

### EXTERNAL FUNDING

#### CIHR Grants:

Congratulations to Dr. **Phil Tibbo** (Co-PI) on the successful CIHR Catalyzt Grant:

*Engaging Stakeholders in the Development of Standards for a Canadian Rapid Learning Health System in Early Intervention Services for Psychosis*

Knowledge Users: Brittany Chisholm (EPINS Provincial Coordinator) and Dr. **Jason Morrison** (NSEPP director)

Congratulations to Dr. **Phil Tibbo** (Co-Applicant) on a successful CIHR Catalyzt Grant: Policy Research for Health System Transformation:

*Strengthening the Delivery of Integrated Care in Specialized Mental Health Settings for Adults Experiencing Serious Mental Illness*

### PUBLICATIONS

Congratulations to Dr. **Ian Weaver** and co-authors whose paper, “Noncanonical regulation of imprinted gene Igf2 by amyloid-beta 1–42 in Alzheimer’s disease,” was recently published in *Scientific Reports* and can be viewed [here](#).

Congratulations to Loriele Dietze on the publication of her first paper! Loriele is one of Dr. **Tomas Hajek**’s students. The paper, “Extended and replicated white matter changes in obesity: Voxel-based and region of interest meta-analyses of diffusion tensor imaging studies,” was published in *Frontiers in Nutrition*, Volume 10, and can be viewed [here](#).

Congratulations to Dr. **Rudolf Uher** and co-authors on the publication of their paper, “Polygenic Scores and Onset of Major Mood or Psychotic Disorders Among Offspring of Affected Parents,” in the *American Journal of Psychiatry*.

The paper’s first author, Dr. Alyson Zwicker, is a Dalhousie Medical Student, and the paper is a result of her RIM project. The paper can be viewed [here](#).

### PRESENTATIONS

*ADHD and Addiction: Scylla & Charybdis?* presented by Dr. **Joseph Rasimas** at the Atlantic Mentorship Network for Pain, Addictions, and Mental Health on March 3, 2023.

*Access to Means* presented by Dr. **Joseph Rasimas** at the American College of Medical Toxicology (ACMT) Annual Scientific Meeting & Symposia in San Diego, CA on March 30, 2023. Dr. Rasimas also helped organize the day-long symposium on March 30 entitled: *Self-Harm, Suicidality, and the Poisoned Patient: The Intersection of Toxicology and Mental Health*, and served as an expert panelist during the main meeting on April 1 in the review of cases involving repeat-self-poisoning with attention to care coordination, psychodynamics, and medical ethics.

### RESEARCH IN THE MEDIA

- [Nova Scotia psychiatrist seeing success with text-based mental health program](#)
- [Dalhousie researchers probe genetic links to mental illness](#)
- [Genetic testing could help identify youth at risk of developing mental illness, Dal study finds](#)

# Feds boost research tackling emerging youth mental health issues

By Stephanie Brown, Faculty of Health. Originally published in Dal News on March 1, 2023. Reprinted and adapted with permission.

The federal government announced nearly \$5 million in new investments Tuesday, Feb. 28, 2023 to examine existing standards, best practices, and guidelines for the delivery of mental health and substance use services for children, youth and young adults.

The investment – through the [Canadian Institutes of Health Research \(CIHR\)](#) – will fund 25 projects across the country. The Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and Associate Minister of Health, made the announcement at Dalhousie over video conference.

“The system as it’s currently functioning is not meeting the needs of Canadians,” said Bennett.

“As we work to improve Canada’s universal health care system, children, youth and young adults deserve access to the highest quality of mental health and substance use care no matter where they live in Canada. Today’s investment will ensure that the national mental health and substance use service standards that are being developed with provinces and territories are grounded in evidence.”

Fewer than 20 percent of the 1.2 million children and youth in Canada affected by mental health issues currently receive appropriate care and treatment.



Frank Harvey, Dal’s acting president, speaks at a Canadian Institutes of Health Research funding announcement at Dal. (Nick Pearce photos)



Bennett pictured above left.

## Serving underserved populations

Several of the new research projects will ensure that underserved populations such as Black, Indigenous, gender diverse and racialized youth will be represented, as they face disproportionate challenges and barriers to accessing care.

Dr. Remigius U. Agu, a professor in Dalhousie's College of Pharmacy who is on a Dal research team receiving funding from CIHR, spoke about the importance of this acknowledgment of children and youth of African descent. He said providing care that is culturally competent and sensitive is critical. He and his team will be working with grassroots organizers in Nova Scotia.

Dr. **Jill Chorney**, an associate professor of Psychiatry at Dalhousie, emphasized the need for person-centred care, in which healthcare providers really learn about the youth beyond their labels. She said it's important that healthcare providers' best intentions actually meet the needs of diverse communities and that it's not just a box-ticking exercise.

"We need to develop guidance that is flexible, and equity focused," said Dr. Chorney. "And we will be most successful in doing this when we design our work intentionally with, and for, those most affected."

Dr. Chorney is a co-applicant on a research project funded under this initiative, led by Dr. **Lori Wozney**, Scientific Lead, Mental Health and Addictions, IWK, and adjunct professor with

Dr. Lori Wozney along with a team from IWK, Dalhousie, Maritime SPOR Support Unit and youth advocate from local chapter of Jack.org were awarded a \$200,000 grant as part of the funding initiative. They will lead an international group of collaborators to develop Pan-Canadian Inclusive Practice Principles for Working With Goals in Community Mental Health Services. Dr. Jill Chorney spoke at the event on behalf of the team and the need to ensure all youth in Canada have a stronger voice in their care.

Shizza Hassan, a youth advocate on the grant agrees with Dr. Chorney:

"Unfortunately, many current interventions for youth are based on adult-focused research. Providing youth with the autonomy to voice their authentic perspectives will better inform future mental health interventions by shaping them to be based on the target population's opinions and standards. Ultimately, this will result in improved outcomes for youth and better representation of this group in research. I'm excited to see where this project goes, and although I'll be graduating this spring, I plan to remain involved and I'm certain that the future Jack.org team at Dal will continue the society's involvement!"

the Department of Psychiatry. The research team will develop Pan-Canadian Inclusive Practice Principles for Working With Goals in Community Mental Health Services. The team includes clinician scientists, youth advocates, youth-focused organizations, and emerging leaders in diversity, equity, and inclusion research. Among the team are Department of Psychiatry members, and partner organizations such as the Mental Health Commission of Canada, the Child Outcomes Research Consortium (CORC) in the UK, and the Maritime SPOR Support Unit.

"This is a task we approach with flexibility, open minds, and a commitment to both scientific evidence, and, crucially, the voice of lived experience," said Dr. Chorney during the event. "Our twin objectives of this work are to provide guidance to clinicians and health systems leaders on how to become more inclusive and culturally responsive in working with goals, and to help youth feel heard, stay engaged, and be able to realize their best hopes."

Other research projects will study standards relevant to different care settings such as



hospital emergency departments and juvenile justice settings, as well as different types of standards such as reducing wait times and delivering culturally inclusive care. They will also look at standards for specific mental health and substance use conditions such as anxiety, depression and/or eating disorders.

“Dalhousie is proud to contribute to a body of knowledge that promises to improve equity and access to mental health and substance use health care for young Canadians,” said Frank Harvey, Dalhousie’s acting president and vice-chancellor at the event. “National service standards will provide a comprehensive view of the systems that underpin the delivery of mental health in Canada, exposing gaps and opening doors with culturally inclusive care for young people from underserved communities.”

Several other members of parliament and ministers were on hand for the Dal-hosted announcement, including Andy Fillmore (MP for Halifax), Lena Diba (MP for Halifax West), Darren Fisher (MP for Dartmouth-Cole Harbour), and Marco Mendicino, minister of public safety. Faculty of Health Dean Dr. Brenda Merritt and Dr. Christine Chambers, Canada Research Chair in Children’s Pain and a professor of pediatrics at Dal, were also in attendance.



Dr. Jill Chorney speaks at the announcement.



Members of parliament, Dal leadership, and researchers at the announcement on Feb. 28, 2023.

# Education Report

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## UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

### Undergraduate Teaching Recruitment

Undergraduate teaching recruitment for 2023/24 has begun.

To learn about available teaching opportunities, please contact: **Kelly Hancock**, Undergraduate Coordinator, at [kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca](mailto:kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca)

We recommend that you make your choices early to avoid disappointment.

### Summer Internship in Psychiatry

Ten Med 1 students from both campuses of Dalhousie's Medical School are set to join us for our Summer Internship in Psychiatry (SIIP). This initiative will take place from **May 23 – 26** and will include small group didactic sessions, resident panels, site tours, and simulation. We look forward to hosting our participants and giving them a taste of what a career as a psychiatrist might be like!

### Psychiatry Student Interest Group Network Conference

Annually, the department sponsors one medical student considering psychiatry as a potential career, by providing travel costs to attend the annual Psychiatry Student Interest Group Network (PsychSIGN) conference held in conjunction each year with the American Psychiatric Association

conference. This year we would like to congratulate **Qendresa Sahiti**, a third-year medical student, on being the successful candidate. We look forward to hearing about her experience in a future issue of *Headlines*.

### Link Program Cohort

In June, we will receive our annual cohort of students from the International Medical University (IMU) in Malaysia to participate in the psychiatry block of the Link Program. Several of our faculty and residents will be involved in preparing the three students for entry into clerkship in August.

### Upcoming Contests

Please note the upcoming contests for medical students — please encourage your students to apply:

- Dalhousie Psychiatry's **Annual Humanities Writing Contest**, open to medical students and residents, is being held again this year. All submissions are to be in by **May 1, 2023**. More details and specific contest rules can be found on page 30.
- The 2023 **AAP Medical Student Essay Contest** is open for submissions until **June 1, 2023**; this year's theme is *The Art of Communication in Psychiatry: Connecting with the Patient*. The winner will receive

complimentary registration for the Annual Meeting in Vancouver, BC (September 6–9), the opportunity to present their essay as a poster at the meeting, and up to \$1,000 reimbursement for meeting-related travel costs. More information can be found here: <https://www.academicpsychiatry.org/medical-student-essay-award/>

## POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

### Patient Recruitment Help Needed

Each year, medical students and residents are given opportunities to develop and practice their interviewing skills to prepare and further educate them during their medical training. As we approach another busy oral exam season, we ask that all staff be aware of opportunities for their patients to take part. Patients often enjoy the experience and many of our regular patients consider it an integral part of their wellness.

#### *How is the patient involved?*

- A medical student or resident will conduct a psychiatric interview, either virtually or in-person
- One or two psychiatrists will observe the interview; medical trainees may also observe
- Participation in a session typically lasts one hour
- Most sessions are held at the Abbie J. Lane Building at the QEII with potential for other teaching sites in HRM
- Participants receive \$25 per session as an appreciation for their time and many choose to participate in more than one session at a time.

#### *Interested patient?*

If you have a patient who would be interested in joining our volunteer patient program, they can contact **Jen Brown** at **902-473-7122**, or by email at **jen.brown@nshealth.ca**, or

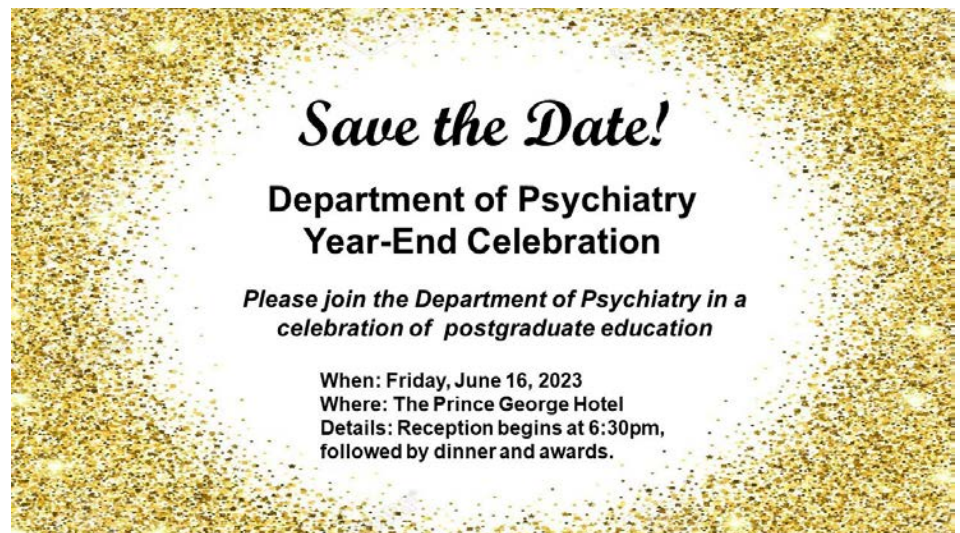
**Kelly Hancock** at **902-473-4883**, or by email at **kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca** who can answer any further questions the patient may have.

### Year-End Celebration

The annual Department of Psychiatry Year-End Celebration will be held on **June 16** at the Prince George Hotel.

The event is a celebration of postgraduate education and an opportunity to honour teachers and learners in the department.

Stay tuned to your email for more information.



# CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN PSYCHIATRY

Department of Psychiatry

**W.O. McCormick Academic Day**

**Friday, April 21, 2023**

Registration will close on April 14, 2023.



Registration is open for the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry's Annual W.O. McCormick Academic Day!

Don't forget to register by **April 14!**

**REGISTER [HERE](#)**

## Event details

**When:** 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., Friday, April 21, 2023

**Where:** The Westin Nova Scotian Hotel (in person)  
1181 Hollis Street  
Halifax, NS

**Theme:** Neuropsychiatry

Visit our webpage for the event schedule and more details:  
<https://dalpsychiatry.ca/s/womad>

## Register for the event

If you plan to attend W.O. McCormick Academic Day, you must register via the link below.

Registration will close on **April 14, 2023**. Be sure to register by this date!

Visit the registration link below

for pricing information.

**REGISTER [HERE](#)**

## Accreditation Information

*Educationally approved/  
co-sponsored by Dalhousie  
University Continuing Professional  
Development and Medical  
Education*

This one-credit-per-hour Group Learning program meets the certification criteria of the College of Family Physicians of Canada and has been certified by Dalhousie University Continuing Professional Development and Medical Education for up to **5.5** MAINPRO+ credits.

As an accredited provider, Dalhousie University Continuing Professional Development and Medical Education, designates this continuing professional development activity for up to **5.5** credit hours as an accredited group learning Section 1 activity as defined by the Maintenance of Certification Program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Through an agreement between the Royal College of Physicians

and Surgeons of Canada and the American Medical Association, physicians may convert Royal College MOC credits to AMA PRA Category 1 Credits™. Information on the process to convert Royal College MOC credit to AMA credit can be found at: <https://edhub.ama-assn.org/pages/applications>

In keeping with CMA Guidelines, program content and selection of speakers are the responsibility of the planning committee. Support is directed toward the costs of the course and not to individual speakers through an unrestricted educational grant.

## Questions?

If you have any questions about Academic Day, email Tyler Creelman at **[Tyler.Creelman@nshealth.ca](mailto:Tyler.Creelman@nshealth.ca)**

We look forward to seeing you at the event!

Continuing Professional  
Development in **Psychiatry**

## **Restrictive practices not coercive measures: Therapeutic environments and proportionality**

**When:** Wednesday, April 19, 2023 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

**Where:** On Zoom

**Presenter:** Dr. Harry Kennedy, Clinical Professor of Forensic Psychiatry  
at Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland

**This presentation is part of The Psychiatry Faculty Professional  
Development Series**

*The Psychiatry Faculty Professional Development Series is a self-approved group learning activity (Section 1) as defined by the Maintenance of Certification Program of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.*

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**A Zoom link and session objectives will be provided.**



# Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

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## CAP Strategic Direction

The Child and Adolescent Psychiatry executive leadership team reviewed the information gathered from the strategic direction faculty retreat in January 2023. The following priorities from this retreat were presented to C&A faculty at the February faculty meeting:

Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase capacity building activities (e.g. CPD, electives) to support family doctors / nurse practitioners / pediatricians to be comfortable / able to manage common child and adolescent psychiatric presentations.</li> <li>• Establish Cape Breton and Saint John rural training sites for child and adolescent subspecialty training.</li> </ul>
Research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Define the vision and expectations for child and adolescent psychiatry scholarship.</li> <li>• Define a transparent way for allocating research FTE and accountabilities.</li> </ul>
Clinical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase efforts to ensure Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion for access to child and adolescent psychiatric services.</li> <li>• Improve transition to outpatient care between acute and intensive services and psychiatry.</li> </ul>
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Succession planning for all leadership positions.</li> <li>• Advocacy and capacity building for rural Nova Scotia and PEI.</li> </ul>

Executive will continue to meet and develop processes to incorporate and develop these priorities over the next several years within our division.

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## CAP EDUCATION

### CAP Faculty Retreat

The next Atlantic Canada Child and Adolescent (faculty) retreat will be held on April 28.

## CAP RESEARCH

We are pleased to announce that the following CIHR grant was awarded:

**Wozney, L., Abidi, S.,** Boulos, L., **Chorney, J.,** Clark, S., Emberly, D., Impey, D., Jacob, J. Pillai Riddell, R.

*“Where do you want to go?”:  
Developing Practice Principles  
for Inclusive Goal-Based  
Outcome Monitoring With Youth*

*in Community Mental Health Services.*

Canadian Institutes of Health Research Standards for Children and Youth Mental Health Services Grant, \$199,642

## CAP PRESENTATIONS

The 2<sup>nd</sup> International CAPA Conference was hosted by IWK Mental Health and Addictions February 22-23, 2023.

Presentations from our faculty members included:

- *What Makes a Choice Appointment a Choice Appointment?* Presented by Emily Wildeboer, Sharon Clark & **Jill Chorney**.
- *Working with Goals – finding a direction for ways of working*

*together* presented by Sharon Clark, **Jill Chorney**, Debbie Emberly, and Duncan Law.

- *The paradox of mental health care systems – a view through a CAPA lens* presented by **Sabina Abidi** and Sharon Clark.
- *To what degree does CAPA “work,” for whom, and under what circumstances? The intersection of wait time pressures, leadership, data,*

*client, family, and system needs* presented by **Leslie Anne Campbell**, Debbie Emberly, Sharon Clark, Ann York, and Yngvild Arnesen.

- *Teaching and Learning in Psychiatry Residency Education: the intersection of the Choice and Partnership Approach and Competency-Based Medical Education* presented by **Alexandra Manning, LeAnne Revell & Alison Toron**.

## Section of Geriatric Psychiatry

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The Geriatric Psychiatry Acute Inpatient Unit (GPAIU) will be experiencing some changes in the near future. Specifically, Dr. **Meagan MacNeil** starts as the attending psychiatrist on Tuesday, April 11, while still continuing with outpatient work. She will be taking over from Dr. **Mike Flynn** and Dr. **Sameh Hassan**, who will primarily focus on outpatient work and neurostimulation (ECT and rTMS) moving forward. Our section is grateful to Drs. Flynn and Hassan for their many years of dedicated work on our inpatient unit.

Some of our future and former section members have recently won awards that deserve to be highlighted. Dr. **Amy Gough**, our subspecialty PGY-6 resident, was selected as the recipient of

the 2023 Doctors Nova Scotia Outstanding Resident Award, which is a significant and well-deserved honour. Dr. Gough was nominated for this award by Dr. **Keri-Leigh Cassidy**, and will be presented with the award during the Doctors Nova Scotia Achievement Awards Ceremony and Luncheon at the association’s 169<sup>th</sup> annual conference. Congratulations Amy!

Dr. **Beverley Cassidy**, former psychiatrist in our section, recently was selected as the recipient of the 2023 Doctors Nova Scotia Physician Health Promotion Award. Dr. Cassidy won this award for establishing Memory Café NS, an age-friendly health promotion initiative to improve the social

and emotional well-being for older adults with memory challenges. The Memory Cafés are spread through Nova Scotia communities and are providing much needed stimulation for participants. There are cafés in Wolfville, Cape Breton, Claire, Digby, Argyle/Yarmouth and most recently Lunenburg. The associated website:

<https://memorycafens.ca> has free downloadable resources in French and English to enable others in NS to launch their own memory café. Former and current subspecialty residents **Olga Yashchuck, Christelle Boudreau**, and **Alex Whynot** have been involved in running the cafés.

# Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry

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## New Clinical Academic Leaders appointed in the Department of Psychiatry

We are pleased to welcome the following new Clinical Academic Leaders in the Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry:

Dr. **Donna Davis** as the Clinical Academic Leader (CAL), Acute Psychiatric inpatient Services at the Abbie J. Lane Building (7-Lane).

Dr. **Melissa Lahti** as the Clinical Academic Leader (CAL), Acute Psychiatric inpatient Services at the Abbie J. Lane Building (6-Lane).

Dr. **Joseph Sadek** as the Clinical Academic Leader (CAL), Acute Psychiatric inpatient Services at Mt. Hope. Dr. Sadek will also have the additional responsibility of Psychopharmacology Consult Service lead for the Department of Psychiatry and the Mental Health and Addiction Program in Central Zone, Nova Scotia Health Authority.

Drs. Davis, Lahti, and Sadek began their CAL appointments on March 6, 2023 and each report to Dr. Sanjana Sridharan, Head, Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry.

In his additional role as the Psychopharmacology Consult Services lead, Dr. Sadek will report directly to the Central Zone Chief of Psychiatry and Head, Department of Psychiatry.

## Welcoming Dr. Barani Sambandan

Dr. **Barani Sambandan** joined the faculty effective Feb. 16, 2023. He is an assistant professor at Dalhousie University and is working at the Abbie J. Lane Building (6-Lane) with psychiatric emergency services (PES) and the Day Hospital.

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Dr. Sambandan.

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**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

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Department of Psychiatry  
**Bi-Annual Meeting**

**Tuesday, May 2, 2023**  
**4 to 6 p.m. | On Zoom**

Join us for an update on department activities.

**Agenda and Zoom link to follow.**



## Section of **Community Psychiatry**

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The Section of Community Psychiatry continues to provide clinical and academic services. It is also engaged in quality improvement and service development, for example, Dr. **Josh Green** is leading a collaboration with Mobile Outreach Street Health (MOSH) to address patients who are homeless or precariously housed; Dr. **Greg MacMullin** is leading a pathway initiative to address streamlining internal referrals to outpatient psychiatrists; and Dr. **Abraham (Rami) Rudnick** is leading a collaboration with

Autism Nova Scotia to address patients with ASD who do not have moderate or more severe intellectual disability (and hence are not eligible for COAST services). Recruitment and retention activities are ongoing across community psychiatry. Dr. **Abraham (Rami) Rudnick** ended his role as the section head at the end of March 2023; effective April 1, 2023, Dr. **Mahmoud Awara** has replaced him as Section Head. Dr. Rudnick thanks all and continues as the clinical director of the Nova Scotia Operational Stress Injury

Clinic and as a full time faculty member of the Department of Psychiatry.

## Section of **Forensic Psychiatry**

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ECFH is preparing for an important visit by Dr. Harry Kennedy who is one of the doctors involved in reviewing and reporting on the forensic service recently. He will be assisting in the development of the Model of Care moving forward. This was facilitated by a joint effort between the NSH MH program and the DoP.

We also welcomed a recent addition to the team. A CCRB coordinator to develop/modify the process of CCRB submissions and make it streamlined and consistent.

We are also hoping for the greenlight to develop a comprehensive database to look at quality (not quantity) outcomes and allow us to measure all the work being done here and develop benchmarks.

# Dr. Ezio Dini retires after two decades of service

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Dr. Ezio Dini.

A longtime faculty member with the Department of Psychiatry retired in March 2023. After two decades of service, we say farewell to Dr. **Ezio Dini**.

Dr. Dini joined the department in 2002 and has held positions with the Short Stay Unit (SSU), Recovery and Integration Hub at Halifax Connections, and the Sleep Clinic.

Each position was uniquely fulfilling as he worked to help patients in each area with their diverse needs.

“The patients on SSU were typically admitted in a crisis state, and that often meant there were some clearly identifiable issues that could be worked on,” says Dr. Dini. “It was therefore quite fulfilling helping the patient focus on their difficult situation and coming up with a plan to deal with it, which usually

resulted in the patient feeling better and having gained some skills to deal with their stress after a short stay on the unit.”

After eight years at the SSU, Dr. Dini joined the Recovery and Integration (R&I) Hub at Halifax Connections as its first full-time psychiatrist. He stayed with the R&I for approximately nine years and says the work was quite the opposite of that at the SSU.

“These patients naturally struggle with chronic and persistent mental illness, and what I found most fulfilling about this work was getting to know the patients over time and developing a relationship with them. What struck me most about this population was how resilient they are in general, despite the many challenges they face in life.”

Ready to take on a challenge and learn something new, Dr. Dini then joined the Sleep Clinic with Dr. Margaret Rajda where he worked until he retired.

“I found sleep medicine to be utterly fascinating and would have interesting discussions with Dr. Rajda on a frequent basis about the cases we would see,” he says.

“My time at the Sleep Clinic was probably one of the most enjoyable experiences of my psychiatric career. We spend one-third of our lives sleeping, and sleep disturbances are associated with innumerable medical and psychiatric conditions, so helping people with sleep issues can be very

fulfilling. I encourage new residents to consider a career in Sleep Medicine!”

Dr. Dini has seen departmental changes during his career but notes they have mostly involved restructuring programs and changing service delivery locations. He cites as examples moving out-patient services to Bayers Road from the Abbie Lane, the integration of two psychiatric emergency services in Halifax and Dartmouth to Halifax only, the commencement of the borderline personality disorders clinic under Dr. Parker, the consolidation of R&I services, and the shift to virtual care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Although he has seen changes in leadership with different department heads, the department has generally been “steady as she goes.” He considers the most notable change to be with the arrival of Dr. Agyapong as department head.

“He has come up with many innovative and bold changes, and I am sure this will move the department on in a very positive direction.”

Dr. Dini realized early on that medicine was a noble profession. Looking back, he says it was inevitable he would go into medicine.

Growing up, his father, a tropical disease medicine specialist, would periodically take a young Dr. Dini to his hospital on weekends in rural Tanzania.

"I remember being fascinated (and sometimes a bit shocked) by the cases I would see on the wards," says Dr. Dini. "I remember his dedication to his work, and the simple gifts that his patients would give him. It struck me that he was doing important and valued work."

But medicine was not the only career he considered.

His other interests growing up included motorbikes and art, and he thought of pursuing a career in automotive engineering.

Dr. Dini got his first motorbike at age 15 and has owned them ever since. "My most epic travel adventures have occurred on motorbikes," he says.

He also continues to enjoy art and has taken many courses at art schools. His favourite medium is painting with oils

on canvas and portraits are his preferred subject.

"It was definitely my artistic side that drew me to psychiatry," says Dr. Dini. "Without question, psychiatry is the most "artistic" of the medical specialties, and the fact that it combines elements of sociology, anthropology, philosophy, and naturally, psychology to the science of medicine was very appealing to me. I really could not have specialized in any other field."

Dr. Dini completed his psychiatry residency at the University of Pretoria in Gauteng province, South Africa, and then at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon.

He has found ways to incorporate his love of art into his work as a psychiatrist.

One of his career highlights was starting an art group, with the help of occupational therapy, for the Acute Care Unit in-patients.

He started the art group around the year 2007 where a selected group of in-patients would gather every Tuesday evening and create art.

"It was amazing to watch how art allowed the patients to become expressive, even those patients who had never painted before in their lives," he says. "The artwork would often result in the patients opening up about themselves, talking to each other, and interacting more. There was one patient, for instance, who had dementia, and on the unit, he was withdrawn and unengaged. Yet at the art group, he would come out of his shell and create art."

Dr. Dini presented a talk at Academic Rounds about his experience with the art group and had patients' art exhibited in room 4024 for the audience to appreciate.

Occupational therapy subsequently took over running the art group.

Mentorship has played a significant role in Dr. Dini's career. During his first position with the SSU, Dr. Dini says it was part of what made the experience worthwhile.

"There was a high turnover of medical learners rotating through the SSU, mostly medical students and junior psychiatry residents, and it was very satisfying for me to teach them, watch them develop their interview, diagnostic and management skills, and observe

### **Dr. Dini's team members at the Sleep Clinic reflect on their experience working with him**

Dr. Margaret Rajda, Dr. Dini's colleague, team member, and a Sleep Clinic psychiatrist, says: *"Dr. Dini's kindness, sense of humor, and incredible work ethic make him a wonderful colleague and teammate. I admire his ability to adapt to a new environment and learn new skills — a true model in life-long learning."*

Antonia Scholz, Registered Polysomnographic Technologist, says: *"Dr. Dini is always pleasant, kind, and professional with clients and staff members alike. His diligence and sense of humour will be missed. It was a pleasure to work with him during his time at the Sleep Disorders Clinic."*

Emerald White, Administrative Assistant, says: *"Dr. Dini is quick to smile and share a laugh. He was so kind and patient with me as I learned the ropes in my new position as his and Dr. Rajda's secretary in the Sleep Clinic."*

their confidence increase as the rotation progressed.”

Dr. Dini is a recipient of the department’s resident awards for Teacher of the Year and Excellence in Mentorship.

“I had never set out to be a mentor, nor thought of myself as a mentor, but after receiving the award, it made me reflect on what I might have done to receive this honour,” he says. “Mentors are typically thought of as being good listeners, flexible, non-judgmental and to value a diversity of perspectives, besides providing guidance, advice,

support, and feedback. It makes me feel honoured to be thought of in this way by some of the medical learners, and I am happy to have been able to provide mentorship to some people.”

In another act of mentorship, Dr. Dini has a few words of advice to young professionals entering the field of psychiatry.

“Love what you do, see your patients as real people and not as “cases,” and make time to balance work and play.”

## HIKING FOR HEALTH

Welcome to spring! Come celebrate and explore the natural beauty of Nova Scotia. The Wellness Committee is organizing monthly hikes for department members from April through to October. Any department member is invited, including administrative staff, graduate students, residents, research scientists, and psychiatrists. You are also welcome to bring your dog, a friend, or family.



### **APRIL HIKE** **SUNDAY, APRIL 30, 2023 AT 10:45 A.M.** **CRYSTAL CRESCENT BEACH PROVINCIAL PARK**

The first hike will be **Sunday, April 30** at **Crystal Crescent Beach Provincial Park**, 223 Sambro Creek Road, Sambro Creek. We will gather at 10:45 a.m. at the entrance to the trail in the first parking lot. We will leave for the hike at 11 a.m., stop for a picnic at noon, and hike back. Please bring your own picnic food and water.

### **MAY HIKE** **SUNDAY, MAY 28, 2023 AT 10:45 A.M.** **CROWBAR LAKE HIKING TRAILS**

May’s hike will be on **Sunday, May 28** at **Crowbar Lake Hiking Trails**. We will meet in the parking lot at 1800 Myra Road, Porter’s Lake at 10:45 a.m., ready to leave at 11 a.m.

You can email Dr. Zenovia Ursuliak at [Zenovia.Ursuliak@nshealth.ca](mailto:Zenovia.Ursuliak@nshealth.ca) with questions. She will also be checking her email on the days of the hikes.

# SAVE THE DATE

## DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY SUMMER RECREATIONAL EVENT

You're invited to the Department of Psychiatry's  
Summer Recreational Event!

We hope you and your loved ones (family, children, significant other, best friend) will join us for some fun at Hatfield Farm!

**Date:**

Friday, June 23, 2023

**Where:**

Hatfield Farm  
1840 Hammonds Plains Road  
Hammonds Plains, Nova Scotia

**Arrival at Farm:**

11:30 a.m.

**Event Time:**

12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

**Watch for registration details and more information.**



# Department **News**

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## **Minister Tours Nova Scotia Hospital**

On April 5, the Honourable Brian Comer, Minister, and Kathleen Trott, Associate Deputy Minister, Office of Addictions and Mental Health, toured the Nova Scotia Hospital and met with Department Head Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, Dr. **Andrew Harris**, **Dorothy Edem**, and **Matt White**.

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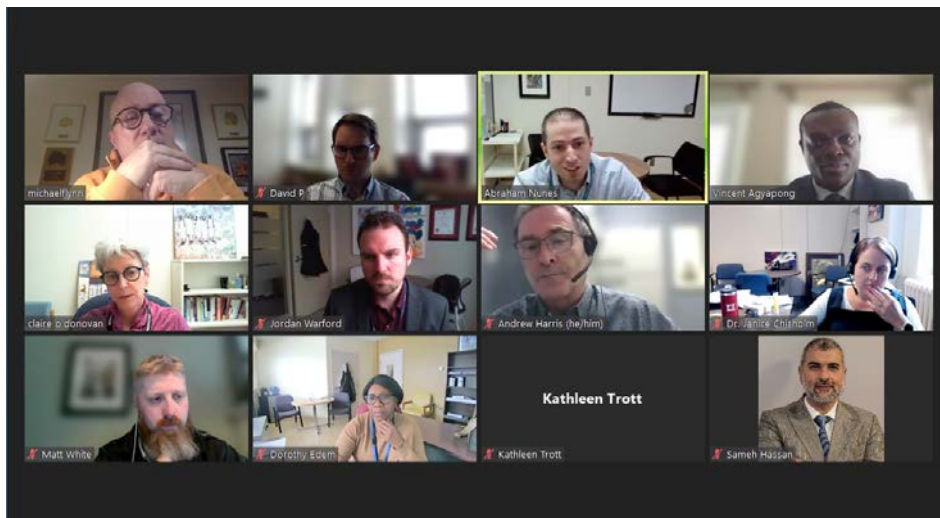
## **Dr. Agyapong tours Truro distributed learning site**

As part of his tour of the department's distributed learning sites, Department Head Dr. **Vincent Agyapong** toured the distributed learning site in Truro, NS on Feb. 23, 2023.



## Dr. Vincent Agyapong participates in Transform Project Annual Meeting

In February, Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, Head of the Department of Psychiatry, travelled to Warwick University in the UK in his role as Chair of the External Advisory Board.



## Pilot Ketamine Program Meeting

In March, Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, along with other department members, participated in a meeting about piloting a Ketamine program.

## Department welcomes new Ombudsperson

The Department of Psychiatry is pleased to announce that Dr. **Celia Robichaud** (child and adolescent psychiatrist) has accepted the role of Psychiatry Postgraduate Affairs Ombudsperson. The Ombudsperson serves as an independent, neutral, and confidential mediator when either residents or department

members feel that the usual channels of resolving conflict have not been sufficient. The department would like to extend sincere gratitude to Dr. **Donna Davis**, who previously fulfilled this role. Dr. Robichaud has been appointed for a three-year term and can be reached at [celia.robichaud@iwk.nshealth.ca](mailto:celia.robichaud@iwk.nshealth.ca). Welcome, Dr. Robichaud!



Dr. Celia Robichaud.

## Department members craft Haiku at Gold Headed Cane Awards Dinner

Department members in attendance at the Gold Headed Cane Awards Dinner on April 1, 2023, were tasked with coming up with a Haiku that contained the word “wellness.”

The following Haiku was a group effort, but **Isaiah Burton**, a MSc student in the department, presented it to the room at the end of the event.

*Wellness heart and soul  
Right brain left brain as a whole  
Medicine balanced*



Isaiah Burton, MSc student, presenting the Haiku at the end of the event.

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## FACULTY CHANGES

### ARRIVALS

Dr. **Pierre Chue** joined the department as an adjunct effective Nov. 1, 2022. Dr. Chue is located at the University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB and can be reached at [pchue@ualberta.ca](mailto:pchue@ualberta.ca)

Dr. **Augustina Appau** joined the department as an adjunct effective Nov. 1, 2022. Dr. Appau is located at the Accra Psychiatric Hospital in Accra, Ghana.

Dr. **Dilruba Rahman** joined the department as an adjunct effective Dec. 1, 2022. Dr. Rahman is located in Bridgewater, NS and can be reached at [Dilruba.Rahman@forces.gc.ca](mailto:Dilruba.Rahman@forces.gc.ca)

Dr. **Gabriel Anjorin** joined the department as an assistant professor effective, Dec. 1, 2022. Dr. Anjorin is located in Bridgewater, NS and can be reached at [gabriel.anjorin@nshealth.ca](mailto:gabriel.anjorin@nshealth.ca)

Dr. **Christian Lepage** joined the department as an adjunct effective Dec. 1, 2022. His location is Centre for Emotions

& Health, 7 Lane and he can be reached at [christian.lepage@nshealth.ca](mailto:christian.lepage@nshealth.ca)

Dr. **John Oguntade** joined the department as an assistant professor effective, Dec. 1, 2022. Dr. Oguntade is located in Yarmouth, NS and can be reached at [john.oguntade@nshealth.ca](mailto:john.oguntade@nshealth.ca)

Dr. **David Olson** joined the department as an assistant professor effective Jan. 1, 2023. Dr. Olson is located in Truro, NS and can be reached at [david.olson@nshealth.ca](mailto:david.olson@nshealth.ca)

Dr. **Gurinder Singh** has joined the department as an assistant professor effective Jan. 1, 2023. Dr. Singh is located in Truro, NS and can be reached at [gurinder.singh@nshealth.ca](mailto:gurinder.singh@nshealth.ca)

Dr. **Barani Sambandan** joined the department as an assistant professor effective Feb. 16, 2023. Dr. Sambandan is located in the Abbie Lane Building working in PES and the day hospital and can be reached at [barani.sambandan@nshealth.ca](mailto:barani.sambandan@nshealth.ca)

Dr. **Christelle Boudreau** joined the department as an assistant

professor effective March 1, 2023. Dr. Boudreau is located in Bridgewater, NS and can be reached at [christelle.boudreau@nshealth.ca](mailto:christelle.boudreau@nshealth.ca)

Dr. **Carlos Hernandez Castillo** joined the department as a cross appointment effective, March 1, 2023. Dr. Castillo is located in the Faculty of Computer Science, Dalhousie University and can be reached at [carlos.hernandez@dal.ca](mailto:carlos.hernandez@dal.ca)

Welcome to you all!

### DEPARTURES

Dr. **Ezio Dini** retired from the department effective March 1, 2023.

Dr. **Adrian Lawson** is relocating effective March 31, 2023.

Dr. **Joanne MacDonald** retired from the department effective March 31, 2023. She is keeping a post-retirement faculty appointment.

Dr. **Aileen Brunet** is relocating.

We wish you well!



## AWARDS & HONOURS

### Department members honoured with Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal



Dr. **Jackie Kinley** received the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal from Nova Scotia Health, celebrating outstanding contributions and service to Nova Scotia at Government House on February 15.

Dr. Kinley was recognized for her dedication and work to support physician and allied health care workers' health and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Queen Elizabeth II embodied selflessness and service. It was humbling and an honour to receive her Platinum Jubilee Medal. I feel grateful and am privileged to do work I love and improves people's lives," says Dr. Kinley.

Dr. **Alexa Bagnell**, Head and Chief of Psychiatry at IWK Health, and **Maureen Brennan**, director of IWK Health Mental Health and Addictions Program, were recognized with the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal on February 27, 2023.

The award presentation took place during a virtual ceremony for all IWK recipients. IWK Health were able to nominate individuals in recognition of "the contributions and services rendered by individuals throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic."

Dr. Bagnell and Ms. Brennan were nominated by IWK executive leadership in recognition of their leadership and dedication to the IWK Health Centre during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"For me the award was a complete surprise and a great honour to receive," says Dr. Bagnell. "I cannot think of anything more meaningful than to receive this award with my amazing co-lead Maureen Brennan for our mental health and addictions work in service of NS children, youth, and families through the pandemic. We are a team and "better together."

### About the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal

The Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal (Nova Scotia) was created to mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Her Majesty's Accession to the Throne as Queen of Canada.

The purpose of the medal program is to recognize individuals who have made significant contributions to the province or to a particular region, community, or field. The medal honours Queen Elizabeth II and her lifelong service to Canada, as well as those residents of Nova Scotia who, like Her Late Majesty, devoted their lives to making this province a better place.

For more information about the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal program, visit: <https://lt.gov.ns.ca/platinum-jubilee-medal/platinum-jubilee-medal-faqs>

## EPINS program recognized as a leading practice

The provincial Early Psychosis Intervention Nova Scotia (EPINS) program has been recognized as a **Leading Practice** by the Health Standards Organization, an affiliate of Accreditation Canada.

A Leading Practice is an innovative, people-centred, evidence-informed practice that has been implemented by teams in an organization. The leading practice has demonstrated a positive change related to safe and reliable care/service, accessible and appropriate care/service, and/or integrated care/service.

A quote from the notification: *“The Early Psychosis Intervention Nova Scotia (EPINS) program demonstrates innovative and dedicated approach to people-centred care that is commendable for its role in helping Nova Scotia Health achieve excellence in health, healing and learning through working together.”*

The EPINS submission has been posted to the NS Health [Leading Practice site](#), as well as the [Health Standards Organization Leading Practice Library](#). Thank you to Brittany Chisholm, the program’s provincial coordinator, for putting the submission together.

Congratulations to Dr. **Phil Tibbo** and the EPINS team!

## Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick named as member of the Royal College Health and Public Policy Committee

Congratulations to Dr. **Abraham (Rami) Rudnick** on his recent appointment to the Health and Public Policy Committee of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada!

## Dr. Amy Gough receives Doctors Nova Scotia Outstanding Resident Award

Congratulations to Dr. **Amy Gough**, recipient of the 2023 Doctors Nova Scotia Outstanding Resident Award!

This award is bestowed upon a resident who has demonstrated exemplary leadership, commitment, and dedication within and/or outside the medical community, including but not limited to research, patient care and/or medical education.

## Dr. Beverley Cassidy receives Doctors Nova Scotia Physician Health Promotion Award

Congratulations to Dr. **Beverley Cassidy**, recipient of the 2023 Doctors Nova Scotia Physician Health Promotion Award!

This award is given to a physician who has made an outstanding contribution to health promotion, safety and preventative care among Nova Scotians.

## Dr. Cindy Calkin and team receive 2023 Paul Wender Best Paper in the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry Award

The American Society of Clinical Psychopharmacology (ASCP) Awards Committee has chosen Dr. **Cindy Calkin** and team’s paper titled *“Treating Insulin Resistance With Metformin as a Strategy to Improve Clinical Outcomes in Treatment-Resistant Bipolar Depression (the TRIO-BD Study): A Randomized, Quadruple-Masked, Placebo-Controlled Clinical Trial”* to receive the 2023 Paul Wender Best Paper in the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry Award. Congratulations to Dr. Calkin and research team!

## Gloria Obuobi-Donkor, Psychiatry Research PhD student, chosen as one of Dal’s OpenThinkers

Congratulations to **Gloria Obuobi-Donkor** for being one of 13 PhD students across the university selected to join Dal’s [2023 cohort of OpenThinkers!](#) The OpenThink program gives students the opportunity to influence public discourse and policy by providing a platform for thought leadership as well as communications training.

## Ashley Francis, Psychiatry Research PhD student, receives Dal Impact Student Employee Award

Congratulations to **Ashley Francis** for receiving the Dalhousie Impact Student Employee Award! The [Dalhousie Impact Awards](#) is an annual event hosted by the DSU in collaboration with Dalhousie University, to recognize outstanding individuals and student groups that impact our community. The award was presented during a ceremony on March 23, 2023.

## Temi Toba-Oluboka, Psychiatry Research MSc student, awarded the Academic All-Canadian Distinction

On Thursday, January 19, MSc in Psychiatric Research graduate student, **Temi Toba-Oluboka**, was awarded the Academic All-Canadian Distinction which is one of the highest distinctions a university athlete can achieve. Temi has excelled with both her academic and research work, and has balanced all this as a competitive athlete in track and field. Congratulations Temi!

## Awards for Outstanding Service in the Area of Mental Health and Addictions

*Submitted by the Provincial Centre for Training, Education, and Learning*

The Provincial Centre for Training, Education, and Learning (PCTEL) would like to recognize Mr. **Chris McWilliam** for his contribution to the advancement of family-centred care in Mental Health and Addictions by awarding him one of two inaugural awards for Outstanding Service in the area of Mental Health and Addictions.



Chris McWilliam.

Mr. McWilliam is an Occupational Therapist working with Mental Health and Addictions for the past 15 years in Halifax, Spryfield, Hatchet Lake, and now in Dartmouth. He completed a kinesiology degree at Acadia which sparked his interest and love of health and fitness. He completed his Occupational Therapy degree at Dalhousie University in 2007. Since 2010, he has been a part-time instructor with the School of Occupational Therapy in their MScOT program as well as a preceptor to 30 students. He received the Fieldwork Educator Award of Excellence in 2021 after being nominated by students and the Teaching Award of Excellence in 2014 & 2017 as chosen by the graduating classes of each of those respective years. He

is completing a seven-year role as President of the Nova Scotia Society of Occupational Therapists in June. In this role, he focused on providing education through the Each One Teach One series (eOTo), networking opportunities, and advocacy for the OT profession in Nova Scotia. He has provided health and wellness workshops to various agencies across Canada such as RBC, Sport Nova Scotia, YMCA of Northern Ontario, Acadia University and through the Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists. He is one of the first cohorts who were trained in Behavioural Family Therapy and the education and support group known in Nova Scotia as Families Matter.

Mr. McWilliam grew up in Colliers, Newfoundland and is the youngest of six children. We are pleased he decided to bless our province with his fun-loving personality, knowledge, and expertise. He lives in Halifax with his husband, Mark for the past 19 years and their two rescued cats, Jimmy and Bobby. He loves to bake and cook and is known to bring baked goods to his co-workers regularly.

Mr. McWilliam is passionate about helping healthcare professionals to provide Family-Centred Care. He readily shares his lived experiences with his own family's mental health needs, making the experiences of our clients' loved ones especially salient. His insights into the personal experiences of our clients and their loved ones, provided in education

sessions to various teams throughout the provincial MHAP and in the context of the MHAP Clinical Orientation course, help our clinicians recognize and appreciate that mental illness and addictions affects more than individuals – it affects families and communities. We thank Mr. McWilliam for sharing his experiences and understanding to help us all provide more client- and family-centred mental health and addictions care.

The PCTEL would also like to recognize Miss **Taylor Hazelwood** for her contribution to the advancement of Gender Affirming Care in Mental Health and Addictions by awarding her one of two inaugural awards for Outstanding Service in the area of Mental Health and Addictions.



Taylor Hazelwood.

Miss Hazelwood is a grade 12 student from the Annapolis Valley who has been an integral part of the MHAP Orientation

session presentations on Gender-Affirming Care over the past year. She generously joins us every month providing her first-voice experience engaging with our health care system. She actively encourages new staff to ask her important questions about how to make our services more inclusive and welcoming to transgender and gender diverse clients. She responds to questions with wisdom and keen insight into how to best provide care, including how to correct mistakes and how vitally important it is to make healthcare services welcoming and affirming. She does all of this while creating a vibrant space of engagement during the MHAP orientation session and expertly weaves her sense of humour throughout, which ensures the day ends on a high note of hope and inspiration.

As a testament to Miss Hazelwood's outstanding contributions, PCTEL shares this quote from a participant in a recent MHAP Orientation session: "There was a fantastic presentation provided on gender-affirming care (GAC) in the Mental Health & Addictions Program General Orientation. It gave an impactful overview of providing GAC, flagged system challenges, provided resources for additional information, and was followed by Taylor's story. Taylor truly brought the didactic presentation to life in a way which reenergized the audience. It was very well done and extremely engaging. Taylor spoke fluently and bravely about her experience and its lasting impression. Taylor provided a thought-provoking illustration of front line and system-level

challenges that are relevant to all areas of service delivery. She walked us through her experience in a manner which enabled each of us to reflect on our individual roles to enhance GAC within the MHAP. Taylor also created a comfortable and non-judgmental environment for us to ask questions. Thank you, Taylor, for your time and leadership in making healthcare a more inclusive place for everyone."

We thank Miss Hazelwood for sharing her story and knowledge on gender-affirming care. She is a true change-maker for transgender and gender diverse clients accessing healthcare in Nova Scotia and the MHAP staff and clinicians she has connected with over the past year.

### **Research study on physician grief — seeking participants**

Participants are currently being sought for a research study entitled "Making space for physician grief: A longitudinal discourse analysis" led by researchers at NSH and Dalhousie University. We will be interviewing Nova Scotia physicians and physicians in training to better understand their experiences with grief, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has induced a grief response in many of us, however, physicians face unique challenges that can compound the burden of grief. The uncertainty of the pandemic the last few years means physicians are bearing witness to, and encountering death, dying, grief, and loss in new and unforeseen forms. Left unaddressed, emotions arising from multiple losses could worsen the experience of grief and sense of isolation some physicians are experiencing, with downstream effects on patients and the functioning of the health care system. The purpose of this research study is to gain a richer understanding of the unrecognized impact grief can have on physicians' conceptions of, and engagement with, their clinical work.

The study will involve participating in three interviews over the course of a calendar year (within 12 months). Interviews will be audio/video and last approximately 60 minutes. Your decision to participate or decline participation will neither affect your professional or academic standing, nor any existing relationships you may have with a member of the research team. If you agree to participate, we will schedule a time to meet with you either by telephone, or via MS Teams at a time convenient for you.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please contact Victoria Luong by email: [\*\*Victoria.Luong@dal.ca\*\*](mailto:Victoria.Luong@dal.ca)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Wednesday, April 19, 2023:**  
Faculty Development Session with Dr. Harry Kennedy. See page 13 for details.

**Thursday, April 20, 2023:**  
[Doc Talk - Night at the Museum: Battle of the Snooze Buttons](#)  
Nova Scotia Museum of Natural History

Dr. **Kathleen Howell** aka Dr. Sleepyhead presents a story about what happens to our bodies and brains when we sleep and the cost to physical and mental health when we don't. Inspired by true events across human history.

"Doc Talks" Series  
45 minute presentations  
7:00 pm Thursday evening in MNH auditorium

The audience is encouraged to view the [Body Worlds exhibit](#) after the presentations. Cost of the Exhibit: Adult - \$6.30

**Friday, April 21, 2023:**  
W.O. McCormick Academic Day  
The Westin Nova Scotian Hotel (in person)  
Registration deadline: April 14, 2023. See page 12 for details.

**Sunday, April 30, 2023:**  
Hike at Crystal Crescent Beach Provincial Park. See page 20 for details.

**Tuesday, May 2, 2023:**  
Department of Psychiatry Bi-Annual Full Faculty Meeting

**Sunday, May 28, 2023:**  
Hike at Crowbar Lake Hiking Trails. See page 20 for details.

**Friday, June 16, 2023:**  
Save the Date — Year End Celebration, Prince George Hotel (in person). See page 11 for details.

**Friday, June 23, 2023:**  
Save the Date — Summer Recreational Event, Hatfield Farm. See page 21 for details.

## Meet our **Members:** Dr. Barani Sambandan

*The Department of Psychiatry is home to over 200 faculty. We have expert teachers, researchers, and clinicians among them. In this issue, get to know Dr. **Barani Sambandan**, Assistant Professor with the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry.*

**My position at Dalhousie:** I recently joined Dalhousie University as an Assistant Professor of Psychiatry.

**I chose my field because:** Having worked in clinical psychiatry over the last 20 years, it is a logical career move to the formal education and research side of psychiatry.

**The aspect of my work that makes me most proud:** With about nine years of experience in Forensic Learning Disability in a high-secure hospital in United Kingdom, I am quite proud to be able to help some of the most unfortunate individuals of society. I am also quite proud that I was able to advocate for the rights and well-being of these patients.

**In my off-time, I enjoy:** In my off time I enjoy board games and card games with my family. I also enjoy playing badminton and, so far, have managed a half-marathon. Completing a full marathon is still on my bucket list.



# Medical Humanities



## Student Writing Competition 2023

### Do you enjoy writing?

Medical students and residents are invited to submit reflective essays, prose, poetry, plays, or graphic novellas exploring the intersection of mental health and the humanities to the **Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry Annual Student Writing Competition**. Other forms of creative writing may also be accepted.

One entry in each category (medical student, postgraduate trainee) will be selected to receive a cash prize.

### Contest Rules

Who is eligible? Medical students, residents, and fellows at Canadian medical schools.

**Maximum word count:** 2,000 words

**Deadline:** This year's deadline is **May 1, 2023**. Winners will be announced in June 2023.

Entries can be sent as PDF attachments to the Department of Psychiatry Undergraduate Education Coordinator, Kelly Hancock, at [kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca](mailto:kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca). Please indicate in your email whether you are a medical student or a resident/fellow.

*\*To ensure confidentiality is maintained, patients and anyone else described in essays, stories, or poems **must** be fictional or composite characters (with the exception of the narrator him/herself).*

For complete contest rules, please visit: <https://medicine.dal.ca/departments/department-sites/psychiatry/education/medical-humanities/writing-competition.html>

### Winning

Winning entries will be published in the Department of Psychiatry newsletter, *Headlines*, and on the **Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry website**.

Tel: 902.473.5633 | [kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca](mailto:kelly.hancock@nshealth.ca)



## HEADLINES **SUBMISSIONS**

**Headlines** provides 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.

The next issue of **Headlines** will be distributed in **June 2023**.

Please send all submissions to **[Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca](mailto:Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca)**

