

HEADLINES

From Cape Breton to Jamaica to Lagos.

Master of Clinical Psychiatry
and Global Mental Health

Study online, deliver on-site.



**NEW DAL MASTER'S PROGRAM RESPONDS
TO GLOBAL NEED FOR BETTER MENTAL
HEALTH-CARE ACCESS**



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

Department of Psychiatry

IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURES

NEW DAL MASTER'S PROGRAM RESPONDS TO GLOBAL NEED FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH-CARE ACCESS *page 5*

DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY LAUNCHES 2026-2031 STRATEGIC PLAN *page 7*

MEET THE DAL PSYCHIATRY OPERATIONS TEAM *page 21*

CONTENTS

- 3** Message from the Department Head
- 8** Research Report
- 11** Education Report
- 14** Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
- 18** Section of Geriatric Psychiatry
- 18** One Person One Record
- 19** Virtual service helps patient care with peer-to-peer consults across Nova Scotia
- 19** RASP Transforms Mental Health Access – 3,500+ Patients Served with Rapid, Inclusive Care
- 26** Serving and Engaging Society
- 27** Department News
- 27** Faculty & Staff Changes
- 28** Awards & Honours
- 30** Ukrainian Connections
- 32** Holiday Party 2025
- 34** Photo Feature

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

Message from the Department Head



Welcome to the first issue of Headlines in 2026. As we entered this new year, we also embarked on a new chapter for our department. In January we released our [2026-2031 Strategic Plan](#). Building on our transformational agenda of the previous plan, this new framework will guide our work for the next five years. I want to thank all department members, partners, and stakeholders who contributed to its development. Our next step will be to develop an operational plan that will move the strategic actions forward.

We reached another exciting milestone in January when applications opened for our new graduate program, the [Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health](#). Developed through an innovative collaboration of academic psychiatrists, global mental health experts, and lived-experience educators, this program is the result of four years of effort.

The program is designed specifically for licensed healthcare professionals, such as family doctors and nurse practitioners, looking to build their expertise within their current practice and communities. Since the program is

part-time, online and course-based with no thesis requirements, it provides a flexible option for these professionals. We are accepting applications for our first cohort in September 2026 and invite you to share this educational opportunity with healthcare providers in your network. You can read more about the program in this issue of Headlines.

A new course is being offered to Department of Psychiatry faculty members this spring. The *“Building Cultural Competence for Mental Health Equity”* course is co-created with the Black/African Nova Scotia Community. This important new course builds on the Faculty of Medicine’s “Anti-Oppression Course” and is aligned with goals of our new strategic plan. The course is offered in two sessions this spring (Grand Rounds on April 8) and in person on May 1 (registration required). I encourage all faculty to attend the course and to watch for details and how to register via email.

Preparations are underway for departmental annual events we look forward to each year. Save the dates for these events and watch for registration details.

- W.O. McCormick Academic Day, Friday, April 24, 2026
- Year-End Celebration, Friday, June 19, 2026
- Summer Celebration, Sunday, July 19, 2026
- Research Day, Friday, Oct. 30, 2026

The Centre for Global Mental Health is hosting its inaugural conference Mental Health Responses in a Changing World 2026: Innovative Responses to Humanitarian Emergencies on Friday, July 10,

2026. Inspired by the World Health Organization’s 2025 World Mental Health Day theme, this conference responds to the urgent global need for effective, evidence-informed, and community-based mental health and psychosocial supports in humanitarian emergencies. Watch for a call for abstracts and registration details.

Several department researchers were successful in obtaining departmental, CIHR grants, and other external funding. Congratulations to **Bronwyn Inness**, **Ashley Francis**, Dr. **Elena Koning**, Dr. **Kim Good**, Dr. **Anthony Pianosi**, Dr. **Deborah Parker**, Dr. **Charles Kelderhouse**, Dr. **Ejemai Eboeime**, Dr. **Phil Tibbo**, Dr. **Candice Crocker**, Dr. **Alexandra Manning**, and Dr. **Lori Wozney**.

We also congratulate the following members on their recent publications: Dr. **Linda Liebenberg**, Dr. **Ejemai Eboeime**, Dr. **Jasmyn Cunningham**, Dr. **Abraham Nunes**, Dr. **Rudolf Uher**, **Andem Effiong**, **Bala Harri**, Dr. **Benjamin Rusak**, and Dr. **Selene Etches**.

CaRMS was held at the end of January and in early February. Thank you to all the faculty, residents, and staff who were involved in this important annual recruitment process.

We extend a warm welcome to the following new faculty members: Drs. **Scott Bishop**, **Megan Thomas**, **Maha Eltayebani**, and **Kyle Godden**. We also welcome **Sarah Scholl** to the department’s operations team as the new postgraduate education coordinator. In welcoming these new department members, we also said farewell and best wishes to Dr. **Mark Paramlall**, who resigned from the department in February.

In this issue of Headlines, we are also re-introducing the department's operations team and highlighting the role each staff member fulfills.

Department members continue to contribute at local, regional, and national levels and are recognized for their outstanding work.

Congratulations to Dr. **Ian Mackay** for joining the Board of Directors of the Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry; to physician co-leaders Drs. **Alexa Bagnell** and **Sabina Abidi** (IWK MHA CQI and senior leadership team) for receiving the Most Innovative MBC Implementation

Award from the 2025 Measurement Based Care Awards from Greenspace Health; to Dr. **Lourdes Soto-Moreno** (one of the Children's Intensive Services Team co-leaders) for receiving the IWK 2025 Quality Improvement Award; to Dr. **Abraham (Rami) Rudnick** for receiving the Bravo Zulu Award from Veterans Affairs Canada and for joining the Board of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment Nova Scotia Chapter; to Dr. **Mutiati Sulyman** for receiving the employee and physician EDIRA Making Waves Award from Nova Scotia Health; to **Somtoo Henry** for

receiving a DIVERT fellowship; to Dr. **Joseph Sadek** for being appointed Associate Editor of the Journal of *Brain Sciences*; and, to Drs. **Jason Morrison, Greg MacMullin,** and **Grainne Neilson** for receiving the department's Extra Mile Award.

Dr. Vincent Agyapong
Head, Department of Psychiatry,
Dalhousie University
Head, Department of Psychiatry,
Nova Scotia Health Central Zone

Save the Date | Mental Health Responses in a Changing World 2026

Save the date for the inaugural conference of Dalhousie University's Centre for Global Mental Health (CGMH):

Mental Health Responses in a Changing World 2026: Innovative Responses to Humanitarian Emergencies

Location: The Marion McCain Arts & Social Sciences Building, Dalhousie University, Halifax, NS, Canada

Date: Friday, July 10, 2026

Time: 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. (Atlantic Standard Time)

Format: One-day hybrid event (in-person and virtual attendance available)

Inspired by the World Health Organization's 2025 World Mental Health Day theme, this conference responds to the urgent global need for effective, evidence-informed, and community-based mental health and psychosocial supports in humanitarian emergencies.

The CGMH inaugural conference will bring together practitioners, researchers, policy makers, students, and community members. Through keynote presentations, panel discussions, posters, and interactive breakouts, participants will explore innovative mental health responses and technological supports that strengthen community resilience across changing global contexts.

Who Should Attend?

- Mental health practitioners and researchers
- Policy makers and service providers
- Students
- Community members, including those with lived experience and those supporting loved ones

Watch for the call for abstracts and further details, including keynote speakers and registration information. Join us for this important conversation shaping the future of mental health responses in humanitarian emergencies.

New Dal master's program responds to global need for better mental health-care access

By Penney Miller, Communications Coordinator

A new online, course-based program from Dalhousie offers licensed health-care professionals around the world a flexible option for expanding the skills they need to provide better care for patients with mental health concerns.

The [Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health](#), a two-year, part-time program launching this fall, will enable care providers the opportunity to enhance their clinical psychiatry skills without ever having to leave the communities they serve.

“Globally, one billion people are affected by mental health conditions, yet there's a profound shortage of trained mental health professionals, particularly in low- and middle-income countries,” says Dr. **Ejemai Eboeime**, the program's director.

Dr. Eboeime says the program will empower health-care providers already embedded in communities — such as family doctors, nurse practitioners, and clinical nurses — to deliver high-quality mental health care. The program centres around graduate-level training in transcultural evidence-based diagnosis, treatment planning, and psychopharmacology. And because it is delivered fully online with no thesis requirement, it offers flexibility for learners whatever their circumstances.

“Whether you're a licensed health-care professional from rural Nova Scotia, the Caribbean, or Africa, this program can help you make a difference in your community's

mental health,” says Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, head of the Department of Psychiatry for Dalhousie and Nova Scotia Health's Central Zone. “We can start closing some of these treatment gaps so access to mental health care doesn't remain out of reach for these communities in Nova Scotia, elsewhere in Canada, or globally.”

Centering clinical excellence, cultures, and communities

Developing the program was a collaborative journey. It began as a diploma concept in 2022 and evolved into a master's program based on feedback from extensive consultations with stakeholders such as family physicians in West Africa and nurse practitioners in Nova Scotia.

“What emerged was a clear and urgent need: practicing clinicians need upskilled psychiatric training that doesn't require them to leave their communities or abandon their patients,” says Dr. Eboeime.

The program integrates clinical excellence with cross-cultural and person-centered approaches, preparing health workers to lead in diverse mental-health settings around the world.

“The program centers people by placing patients, learners, and communities at the heart of the curriculum,” says Dr. **Margaret (Leigh) Meldrum**, the program's associate director. “We've intentionally created a space where clinical excellence, reflection, and global perspective coexist.”

There will be weekly sessions offered in real time (synchronous) as well as a self-study component at learners' own pace and time (asynchronous).

A culturally-responsive curriculum

One of the complexities of developing a program applicable to global learners is meeting the needs of different health-care contexts. Not all countries use the same tools to diagnose mental health conditions, for example.

As it prepares graduates to deliver evidence-based care in vastly different health-care contexts, a diverse faculty team has been working to create a culturally-responsive curriculum that integrates both DSM-5 (The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition) and ICD-11 (International Classification of Diseases, 11th Revision) frameworks, honours Indigenous and non-Western healing traditions, and includes decolonized approaches to mental health education by allowing space for diverse healing traditions to inform evidence-based practice.

“Mental health challenges don't exist in isolation — they're shaped by culture, history, systems, and access to care,” says Dr. Meldrum. “This program was designed to help clinicians think beyond diagnostic checklists and develop the skills needed to deliver thoughtful, ethical, and culturally-responsive care in diverse settings, both locally and globally.”

The Department of Psychiatry has committed to fund a limited number of scholarships, ensuring communities most affected by mental health workforce shortages can access this training, says Dr. Eboime.

The ripple effect

Empowering health-care providers in their communities and investing in their education benefits individual patients and entire health systems.

“This program creates a ripple effect,” says Dr. Eboime. “When a family physician in northern Nigeria or rural Nova Scotia completes this program, they return to their practice with

enhanced skills in psychiatric assessment, culturally-adapted treatment planning, and evidence-based psychopharmacology. That means better care for their patients, reduced unnecessary referrals to overburdened specialist services, and improved capacity to manage complex mental health presentations.”

Graduates also return as leaders on their teams, in quality improvement initiatives, and in integrating research evidence into practice, adds Dr. Eboime.

“Globally, we’re building a network of practitioners who can lead mental health initiatives in their communities while contributing to

the global knowledge base through culturally-grounded research and innovation.”

The Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health is accepting applications for its first cohort in September 2026.

[Learn more about the program and apply today.](#)

The Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health is designed for eligible healthcare professionals who already hold an active license to practice clinically in their jurisdiction and does not qualify graduates for professional licensing.

From Cape Breton to Jamaica to Lagos.

Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health

Expand your expertise—and your community’s mental health outcomes—with Dalhousie University’s one-of-a-kind program.

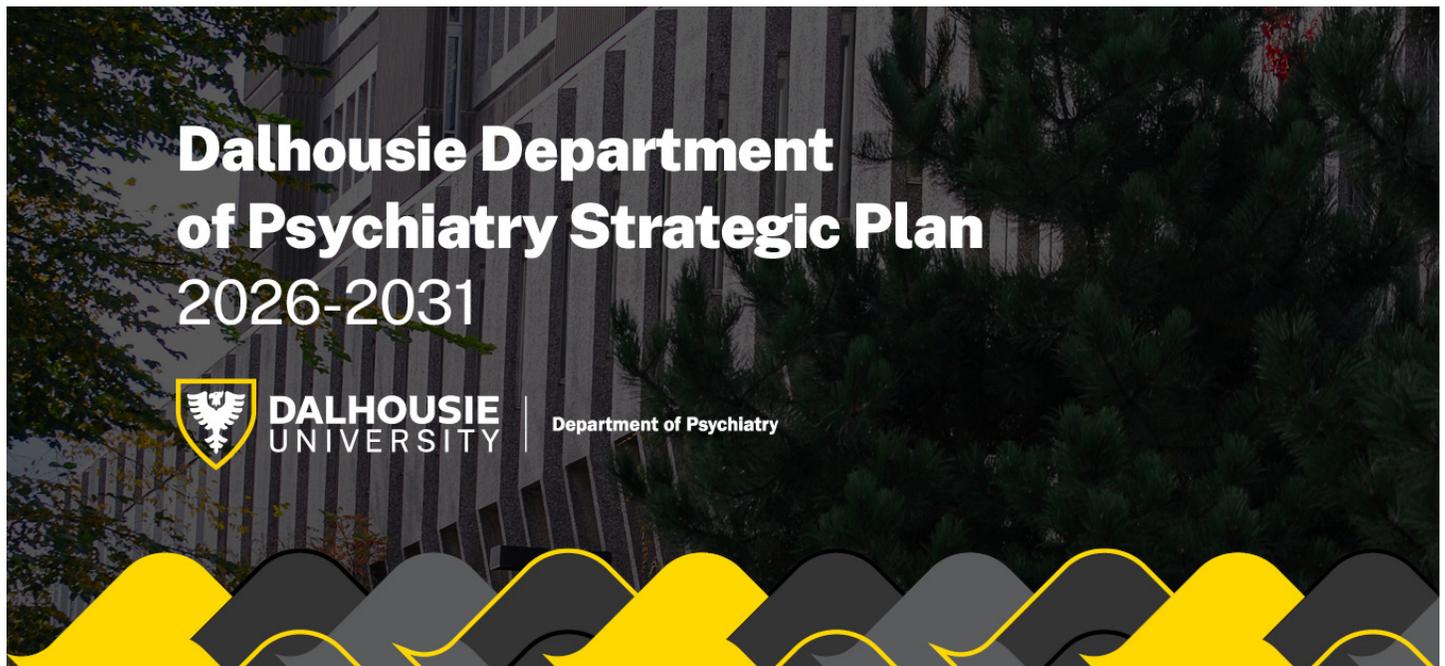
Study online, deliver on-site.



DALHOUSIE
UNIVERSITY

Learn more at
dal.ca/clinical-psychiatry-global

Department of Psychiatry launches 2026-2031 Strategic Plan



In January 2026, the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry proudly introduced its strategic plan for 2026-2031. This new framework, with updated vision, mission, strategic priorities, and goals, will guide its work for the next five years.

“The plan reflects our shared priorities, values, and guiding principles as a clinical and academic community,” says Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, head of Psychiatry. “Building on the bold and transformational agenda of our previous strategic plan, this framework reaffirms our commitment to excellence in education, high-impact research, and outstanding clinical care, while placing renewed and deliberate emphasis on our people, our partners, and the communities we serve.”

While the new plan continues to focus on our foundational areas of education, research, and clinical care, it also includes Serving and Engaging Society (formerly named Social Policy & Advocacy), and adds Valuing People as a priority area. The five guiding principles, co-developed

with community and the Social Policy and Advocacy Committee, now inform our equity work across all streams so our values and our actions are aligned.

Serving and Engaging Society focuses on the department’s external-facing community engagement and allyship to equity-denied groups. It is informed by our departmental values, five guiding principles, and prioritized equity-denied groups. Also new in this plan are definitions of key equity terms and a list of equity-denied groups of focus for mental health and addictions services.

Our new strategic priority area Valuing People focuses internally on EDIRA and Wellness, fostering an inclusive and responsive department where all members feel valued, empowered, and a sense of belonging.

As we embark on this next chapter, the plan provides a clear roadmap to consolidate our gains, address emerging challenges, and expand the frontiers of our department.

Many individuals — faculty, learners, staff, community partners, and collaborators — contributed generously to the development of this strategic plan. Their commitment, creativity, and dedication have been invaluable. As we move from planning to implementation, continued collaboration, shared ownership, and collective accountability will be essential to translating this vision into meaningful impact.

“I am excited to work alongside all of you as we implement this plan and build an even stronger, more inclusive, and more impactful department,” says Dr. Agyapong.

“Together, we will bring this strategic plan to life — shaping the future of mental health care locally and globally.”

Explore the highlights in this [short video](#) and view the full plan [here](#).

Research Report

Implementing the Department of Psychiatry's Research strategy

The Research Management Team is actively working on implementing the following three research objectives from the department's new 2026-2031 Strategic Plan:

High-Impact Research Objectives (2026-2031 Strategic Plan):

1. Support and build the capacity of departmental researchers
2. Strategically recruit and attract researchers new to the department
3. Build and sustain partnerships to support and enhance departmental research activities and strengthen knowledge translation

Research Day 2026

Work is underway to organize Research Day, taking place on **Friday, Oct. 30, 2026** at the Atlantica Hotel. A keynote speaker is confirmed – watch for more details!

GRANTS

Departmental research funding

Congratulations to fall 2025 Department of Psychiatry Research Fund (DPRF) recipients:

- **Bronwyn Inness** (MSc. in Psychiatry Research student)
From Envy to Gratitude: Emotional Responses Linking Social Media Comparisons to Relationship Quality
- **Ashley Francis** (PhD in Psychiatry Research student)
Understanding the role of sex in the neural implications of cannabis use on inhibitory functions in early psychosis: A multimodal neuroimaging study
- **Dr. Elena Koning** (Killam Postdoctoral Research Fellow)
Stimulating research on Psychedelic Treatments for Eating Disorders: Evaluating Patients' Perspectives to Inform a Novel Treatment Protocol and Clinical Trial
- **Dr. Kim Good**
Vaping Cue Reactivity in patients with early phase psychosis: a pilot study
- **Dr. Anthony Pianosi**
Assessment of the Use of Clozapine in a Day Hospital Setting
- **Dr. Deborah Parker**
Impact of Dialectical Behaviour Therapy and Treatment Length on Mental Health Service Utilization
- **Dr. Charles Kelderhouse**
Evaluation of the Use of Decision-Support Tools in Adolescent Youth Accessing Intensive Services

The spring 2026 intake for the DPRF is now open!

The deadline to apply is **April 6, 2026.**

CIHR Project Grants, fall 2025 competition

Congratulations to the fall 2025 CIHR Project Grant recipients:

- **Dr. Ejemai Eboeime (Nominated Principal Applicant)**
“Rebuilding Emotional Stability and Strength Through Therapeutic and Life-Skills Education for Internally Displaced Adolescents and Early Adults in Nigeria (RESETTLE-IDAs): A Post-Pilot Pragmatic Hybrid Effectiveness-Implementation Study”
- **Dr. Philip Tibbo (Principal Applicant); Dr. Candice Crocker (Co-Applicant)**
“Reducing Cannabis Use in Young Adults With Psychosis Using iCanChange, a Mobile Health App: a Clinical Trial (ReCAPiCC)”; NSH as a funded site; NPA: Dr. Didier Jutras--Aswad, Centre hospitalier de l'Université de Montréal (CHUM)

- **Dr. Tomas Hajek (Co-Applicant)**
“Trajectories of Neurobiology in Schizophrenia spectrum disorders informing Functional Outcomes and Related Metabolic outcomes (TraNSFORM)”; NPA: Dr. Nicholas Neufeld, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
- **Drs. Ejemai Eboeime and Vincent Agyapong (Co-Applicants)**
“Trauma- focused Responsive AI Using MIRA (TRAUMIRA): Development and Evaluation of a Trauma- Focused AI Conversational Agent for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Care”; Dal/NSH as a funded site; NPA: Dr. Venka Bhat, Unity Health Toronto

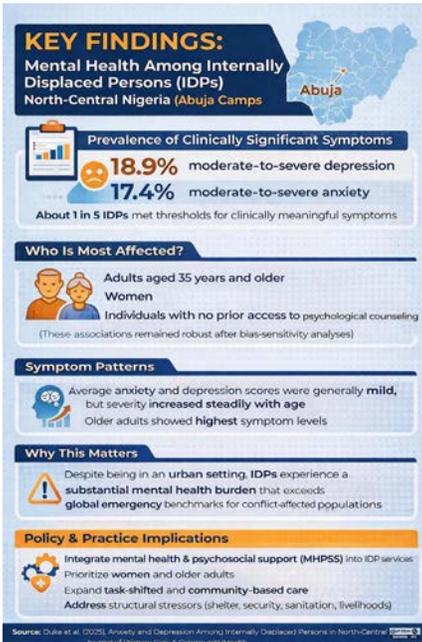
Other external grants/funding

- **Drs. Vincent Agyapong and Alexandra Manning**
“Strengthening Dalhousie–Ghana partnership to train psychiatrists and close care gaps,” International Development, Aid, and Collaboration (IDAC) program; Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada.

Congratulations!

PUBLICATIONS

- **Liebenberg, L.**, Sanders, J., & Mercier, J. (2025). Validation of a reduced version of the Child and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM-28) for public health use in Aotearoa New Zealand. *Discover Mental Health*, 5(201), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s44192-025-00325-z>
- Kristina, B., Furukawa, L. Y., Ferrador, A., Pessoa, A., & **Liebenberg, L.** (2025). Facing the Violence, a Virus and a President: Notes on Successful Practices in Combating Violence Against Women and Femicides in Brazil during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Physis Revista de Saúde Coletiva*, 35(1). <https://doi.org/10.1590/S0103-73312025350101en>
- **Liebenberg, L.**, Jefferies, T., & Eboeime, E. (2025). The Role of Participatory Action Research and Photovoice in Global Mental Health Research and Promotion. In P. Liamputtong (Ed.), *Handbook of concepts in health, health behaviour and environmental health* (pp. 1-20). Springer Publications. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-97-0821-5_130-1
- **Eboeime, Ejemai** et al. (2026). Implementation science in Africa – whose epistemology counts? *The Lancet Global Health*, Volume 14, Issue 2, e286–e290. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X\(25\)00414-0](https://doi.org/10.1016/S2214-109X(25)00414-0)
- Tonon, A. C., Nexha, A., **Cunningham, J. E. A.**, d'Eon, J., Chakrabarty, T., Farzan, F., Foster, J.A., Harkness, K. L., Hassel, S., Ho, K., Lam, R.W., Milev, R., Minuzzi, L., Mueller, D. J., **Nunes, A.**, Parikh, S. V., Quilty, L. C., Rotzinger, S., Soares, C. N., Taylor, V. H., Turecki, G., **Uher, R.**, Kennedy, S. H., & Frey, B. N. (2026). [One-year Actigraphy Study of Sleep and Rest-Activity Rhythms as Markers of Relapse in Depression](https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2025.4453). *JAMA Psychiatry*, published online February 11, 2026. doi: 10.1001/jamapsychiatry.2025.4453



Duke AEE, Harri BI, Iyamu I, et al. Anxiety and Depression Among Internally Displaced Persons in North Central Nigeria: Prevalence, Correlates, and Policy Implications. *Journal of Primary Care & Community Health*. 2025;16. doi:[10.1177/21501319251406840](https://doi.org/10.1177/21501319251406840)

Dr. Benjamin Rusak publishes book “The Science of Sleep”

Congratulations to Dr. **Benjamin Rusak** whose book “The Science of Sleep” was published by the Oxford University Press.

Rusak, Benjamin, *The Science of Sleep* (2025; online edn, Oxford Academic, 1 Nov. 2025), <https://doi.org/10.1093/med/9781605352978.001.0001>

Diversity in Leadership Fund

Open to Faculty and Staff across Faculty of Medicine campuses and sites who have a position in the Faculty and belong to one or more of the designated groups:

- African Nova Scotian / Black
- Indigenous / Métis / Inuit
- Racialized
- Persons with disabilities
- Women
- Individuals of minority sexual orientations and/or gender identities
- Other equity-seeking individuals

This fund provides financial assistance for leadership training, including conferences, between April 1, 2026 and March 31, 2027

Submissions deadline is March 6, 2026, with applicants notified by March 31, 2026.





Education Report

POSTGRADUATE EDUCATION NEWS

CaRMS

Interviews for our incoming cohort of psychiatry residents began in January. They continue to be conducted virtually, in keeping with the CaRMS process. Interviews were held on January 20, 26, 30 and February 3.

We have nine seats for the incoming 2026 cohort. Match day is March 3, 2026.

Thank you to all the faculty, residents, and staff who participated.

Career evening



On the evening of Dec. 5, 2025, the PGME office hosted a Career Evening at the Dalhousie Medical School, aimed at providing medical students with information about a career in Psychiatry.

Resident mid-year oral exams

The PGY-2s and 3s completed their mid-year formative oral exam, and the PGY-4s completed their first summative oral exams in person

in December. Thank you to the dedicated group of faculty who regularly take time out of their week to act as examiners.

Royal College exam

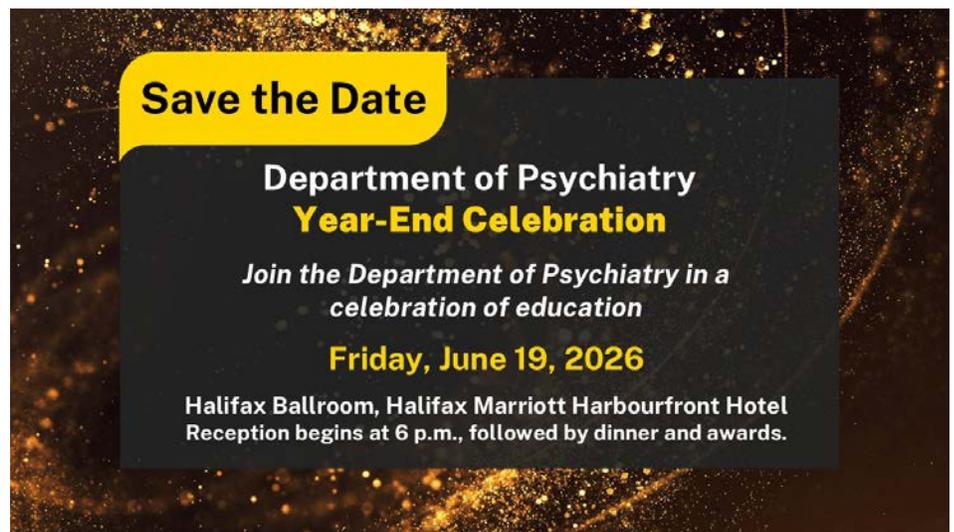
The Royal College Specialty Exam is scheduled for March 11, 2026, and June 10 to June 12, 2026. We wish all our residents sitting the exam this year the best of luck!

Welcome Sarah Scholl — New Postgraduate Education Coordinator

We are pleased to welcome **Sarah Scholl**, who joined as the new Program Administrator on Feb. 2, 2026. We look forward to working with her in this role. You can reach her at **Psych.Postgrad@dal.ca**

Save the date — Year-End Celebration

Our year-end celebration offers a time to celebrate our postgraduate learners, teachers and staff. This year, our celebration will be held at the Marriott Harbourfront Halifax on **Friday, June 19, 2026**.



GRADUATE PROGRAM NEWS

Psychiatry Research Graduate Programs represented at Dalhousie's Graduate and Professional Program Fair

Faculty and students represented the MSc. and PhD in Psychiatry Research Programs at Dalhousie's Graduate and Professional Program Fair on Jan. 23, 2026.



Dr. Sherry Stewart, graduate program coordinator (left) and Lilith Nosko, MSc. in Psychiatry Research student (right).



Chelsea Ingham (left) and Lilith Nsoko (right), MSc in Psychiatry Research students.

Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health accepting applications for its first cohort

Expand your expertise — and your community’s mental health outcomes — with Dalhousie University’s one-of-a-kind program.

Dalhousie University has launched an exciting, one-of-a-kind, new graduate program for licensed healthcare professionals. The [Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health](#) is an online, part-time, two-year program designed to enhance skills in clinical psychiatry and improve patient care.

If you are a healthcare professional looking to build your expertise, the **Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health** will provide a graduate-level education in transcultural evidence-based diagnosis, treatment planning, and

psychopharmacology for improved management of patients presenting with mental health issues.

By enhancing mental healthcare capacity and skills among eligible healthcare professionals globally, this program addresses gaps in specialized psychiatric care, particularly in underserved regions. You’ll learn in a program that emphasizes cultural competence, evidence-based practice, and practical skills development.

[Explore the program in this video.](#)

Applications are open and the deadline to apply is May 1, 2026.

The program will start in September 2026.

To learn more and to apply, visit dal.ca/clinical-psychiatry-global

Note: *The Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health is designed for eligible healthcare professionals who already hold an active license to practice clinically in their jurisdiction and does not qualify graduates for professional licensing.*

If you have any questions, email Global.Psychiatry@dal.ca



Save the Date

SUMMER CELEBRATION

Sunday, July 19, 2026
2 to 7 p.m.
St. Mary’s Boat Club, Halifax, NS

Watch for details on event activities and how to register.

This event is for all members of the Department of Psychiatry.

 **DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY** | Department of Psychiatry



SAVE THE DATE

W.O. McCORMICK ACADEMIC DAY

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Friday, April 24, 2026

8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. **times approximate*

Westin Nova Scotian Hotel, Halifax, NS (in person)

Topic: Care of individuals with severe and persistent mental illness (SPMI)

Keynote speaker: Dr. Lena Palaniyappan

Registration opens March 1.
Watch for details.

Questions?
Email Psych.Education@dal.ca

Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry

AWARDS/RECOGNITION

Dr. **Alexa Bagnell** was interviewed by CTV News Atlantic, “Universal Mental Health Care for Nova Scotia” on Nov. 18, 2025.

Congratulations to **IWK MHA CQI and senior leadership team** (physician co-leaders Dr. **Alexa Bagnell** and Dr. **Sabina Abidi**) on receiving the “Most Innovative MBC implementation Award” in the 2025 Measurement Based Care Awards from Greenspace Health.

Congratulations to Children’s Intensive Services Team Co-Leaders Dr. **Lourdes Soto-Moreno** and Manager Lynn MacDonald for receiving “IWK’s 2025 Quality Improvement Award” on Dec. 11, 2025.

Congratulations to Dr. **Chelcie Soroka** on being selected in November 2025 as the “Outpatient Physician Lead”. She will take over this leadership role from Dr. **Sabina Abidi** from April 1, 2026.

Dr. **Alexa Bagnell** was interviewed on Bell Let’s Talk Day by CTV Your Morning Atlantic “Child and Youth Mental Health Supports” on Jan. 21, 2026. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1XhvSFE-vDs>

Congratulations to Dr. **Courtney Handford** on the birth of her daughter Sloane Ryan Handford-Murley on Jan. 21, 2026.

CAP CLINICAL HIGHLIGHTS

Intensive Services

On Jan. 28, 2026, the transformation plan for IWK MHA intensive services, catalyzed by the 2024 Garron donation of 25 million dollars, was announced by IWK MHA Leadership. The Mental Health & Addictions program's Adolescent Intensive Services (AIS) and Children Intensive Services (CIS) (physician co-leaders Dr. **Charlie Kelderhouse** and Dr. **Lourdes Soto-Moreno**) are transforming how they provide care to better meet the needs of children, youth, and caregivers in our province. After a year of collaboration with experts, families, community partners, and staff, it's clear that youth and

families benefit most when care is flexible, responsive, and rooted in their community or day-to-day environments.

Moving forward, supports will be tailored to the unique needs of each youth, with services delivered in the environment that best supports lasting impact – and as much as possible closer to home. This transformation is grounded in evidence, experience, and equity.

This transformation is about building a stronger, more effective system that connects youth to the right care, in the right place, at the

right time. AIS/CIS will be better equipped to support a wider range of mental health and substance use presentations. Future state Intensive Services will include: subacute inpatient unit, structured outpatient intensive programming, and intensive community outreach. Children's Intensive Services have been involved in service transformation and redesign for over a year and the first stage for Adolescent Intensive Services transformation will take place in April 2026.

OPOR Launch at IWK

IWK was the first site in Nova Scotia to launch the new Clinical Information System for Nova Scotia (OPOR) on Dec. 6, 2025. There have been some significant challenges encountered in the build of the system, but they are being worked through. The psychiatry faculty and residents have done a tremendous job working to address challenges, learn a new system and continue

to provide excellent care. At IWK, OPOR weekly learnings are sent out to all faculty and residents each week to share issues, workflows and supports as well as tips to help in efficiency and use. Coordinated communication by our psychiatry manager, **Supriya d'Penha**, including centralizing and tracking issues has helped in not duplicating work and identifying system issues.

We would like to say a sincere thank you to all our residents providing care through OPOR, either on service or on call. You have been fantastic and so very patient through the launch and the ongoing implementation. Thank you for always putting patient care first!

CAP PRESENTATIONS

- Dr. **Lori Wozney** presented at the Dalhousie Department of Community Health & Epidemiology Research Day, "Modelling Therapeutic Alliance Trajectories in Youth Community Mental Health and Addictions at the IWK" Oct. 3, 2025.
- Dr. **Lori Wozney** Co-hosted Atlantic Convening on Integrated Youth Services

Research, Evaluation and Data Conference in Moncton, NB on Oct. 8-10, 2025.

- Dr. **Alexa Bagnell** presented at the OCD Specific Care Clinic Lunch and Learn session for NS OCD clinicians on "PANS/PANDAS" Oct. 14, 2025.
- Dr. **Lori Wozney** hosted international consensus meeting

on practice principles for goal-oriented practice conference at WhitePoint, NS on Oct. 15-17, 2025.

- Dr. **Selene Etches** presented a workshop at the Canadian Society of Addiction Medicine annual conference, "Navigating Adolescent Withdrawal Management in Hospital Settings" Oct. 16, 2025.

- Dr. **Kate Stymiest** presented at NS College of Family Physicians Family Medicine Conference, in Halifax, “Adolescent Mental Health” Oct. 17, 2025.
- Dr. **Lori Wozney** presented at Lunch & Learn: Site tour given to Lumenus Health Central Toronto Integrated Youth Service Hub, Oct. 24, 2025.
- Dr. **Lori Wozney** was a panelist at the DIVERT Annual Conference, York University, ON, “Research, Practice, and Policy: Intersecting Sectors to Improve Digital Mental Health in Children and Youth” on Nov. 18, 2025.
- Dr. **Lori Wozney** was the invited delegate/presenter at eMental Health International Collaborative, Toronto, ON, “From Fragmentation to Connected Care: a global perspective on the future of help seeking” on Nov. 19, 2025.
- Dr. **Sophie Church** Presented at Department of Pediatrics Rounds, “Promoting Person-Centered Care in Canada: The Autism Health Passport” on Dec. 3, 2025.
- Dr. **Chelcie Soroka** presented for the Dal CPDME Family Physician group, “Family Physicians Managing ADHD in Youth” on Dec. 3, 2025.
- Dr. **Celia Robichaud** presented at Dalhousie Department of Pediatrics Grand Rounds, “Promoting Person-Centered Care in Canada: The Autism Health Passport” on Dec. 3, 2025.
- Dr. **Sue Zinck** presented at Coordinated CPD rounds at Western University, “Gender Affirming Care Myths and Controversies: A Look of the Case Report Systematic Reviews” on Dec. 8, 2025.
- Dr. **Jill Chorney** virtually presented to the Canadian College of Health Leaders webinar series “From Data to Impact: Building Learning Health Systems in Practice” on Dec. 16, 2025.
- Dr. **Jill Chorney** co-presented virtually with Stephanie Snow and Amos Hundert, to the Learning Health System Collaborative of the Maritime SPOR Support Unit “From Data to Impact: Building Learning Health Systems in Practice” on Dec. 17, 2025.



Dr. **Selene Etches** presented at CCSA's Issues of Substance conference, Halifax, NS, “Supporting systems of care for youth substance use and concurrent disorders -Youth priorities, measurement-based care, & clinician supports” on Nov. 17, 2025.

CAP GRANTS

Dr. **Lori Wozney** (Co-applicant)
 "Together towards bright futures: Strengthening network(s) to support Indigenous youth and communities through advancing, sharing and learning from wise practices, data and stories," CIHR grant award.
 \$10,798,948 for five years; 2025-2029 received on October 2025.

CAP EDUCATION

Nova Scotia CAP Academic Retreat

An academic retreat for all Nova Scotia child and adolescent psychiatrists was held on Nov. 14, 2025. The hybrid retreat was well attended both in-person and virtually.

Presentations included:

- Beyond the Apnea-Hypopnea Index: A Clinical Approach to Pediatric Sleep-Disordered Breathing, presented by Dr. Florence Birru
- Resident Assessment: Overview for Faculty, presented by Dr. **Holly Greer**



CAP subspecialty program updates



Congratulations to Dr. **Kyle Godden** who graduated from the CAP subspecialty program in December 2025. He joined as faculty on Feb. 9, 2026 and will be working at the Garron Centre.



The CAP residents held a mid-year retreat on Dec. 18, 2025, where they provided feedback on the program, and took time to enjoy a team building activity painting pottery.

CAP PUBLICATIONS

Mahdi A, Alfadhli L, Chadi N, **Etches S**, Ignaszewski M, Panesar B, Porath A, Desclouds P, Constantakis S, Samaan Z, Hatcher S, Brouwers M, Rosic T. "Evaluating practices in the management of youth nicotine vaping in hospital-based child and

youth mental health and addictions settings in Canada: protocol for a mixed-methods study". BMJ Open. 2025 Oct 10;15(10):e109023. [doi: 10.1136/bmjopen-2025-109023](https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2025-109023). Published on October 10, 2025.

Section of Geriatric Psychiatry

Dr. Ian Mackay joins Board of Directors of the Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry

Dr. **Ian Mackay** was nominated to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Academy of Geriatric Psychiatry for a two-year term at the CAGP-CCSMH Annual Scientific Meeting in Calgary, Oct. 18-19, 2025. He has joined the CAGP Membership Committee and is co-chair of the Communications Committee.

One Person **One Record**



OPOR Training Registration now open for Central Zone

As the OPOR team prepares for the launch of Wave Two across Central Zone on May 9, [registration for training is now open](#). Training will officially begin on February 17, and will include a blend of in-person, virtual and asynchronous learning.

Wave Two training builds on lessons learned from the OPOR implementation at IWK Health and incorporates feedback and improvements to support a smoother learning experience. We are actively engaged with IWK Health teams to learn from their implementation experiences to ensure we are applying lessons learned to future Waves.

NS Health providers (physicians, nurse practitioners, residents and fellows) can register themselves or can delegate their registration to an administrative support person. Providers need to attend a classroom course **and** a scenario

lab — both can be registered for through the Registration Form on the [OPOR Education & Learning Registration Portal](#) (NS Health or IWK Health network access is required). Course spaces are limited and will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis. Training is mandatory and must be completed before login credentials are assigned. It is one part of the learning pathway for all future users of the clinical information system (CIS). Other activities such as Practice Labs will provide added learning and skill-sharpening opportunities.

More information can be found at [Provider Corner](#) or the [OPOR Hub](#) (Nova Scotia Health or IWK network access is required).

Virtual service helps patient care with peer-to-peer consults across Nova Scotia

By: Remo Zaccagna, Senior Communications Advisor, Mental Health and Addictions Program, Nova Scotia Health

For doctors managing patients with complex concerns, especially around mental health, getting timely advice from a specialist can feel nearly impossible. But a Nova Scotia-born service has changed that.

[Virtual Hallway](#) is a peer-to-peer consultation service where specialists offer advice to doctors and nurse practitioners in as little as a day. This means no more phone-tag and fewer patients waiting months for answers through referrals.

The idea came from three Nova Scotia psychiatrists who noticed many of the patients referred to them could be managed in a community practice setting with accessible specialist guidance.

“All of us had these long wait lists, a year after the referral we’d see a patient and all the referring clinician really wanted was some information that could have been managed in a phone call,” said Dr. Luke Napier, one of the founding members of Virtual Hallway. “So, we put our heads together to figure out what could we build to make it more efficient for

those two clinicians to engage in a phone call about the patient’s care.”

Since launching nearly six years ago, Virtual Hallway has grown beyond Nova Scotia’s borders and is now available in six provinces. In Nova Scotia, the service includes 275 specialists in 50 different specialties, from gynecology

to pediatrics. Of those, 25 are psychiatrists.

How it works: when a doctor is looking for advice, they can book a conversation directly through Virtual Hallway, browsing through a list of specialists who fit what they’re looking for and then a call

Continued on page 20

RASP Transforms Mental Health Access — 3,500+ Patients Served with Rapid, Inclusive Care

By Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Head of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University and Nova Scotia Health Central Zone

The **Rapid Access and Stabilization Program (RASP)** continues to expand timely access to psychiatric and mental health support across Nova Scotia’s Central Zone, surpassing **3,500 patients seen** since its launch. Designed to bridge gaps between primary care and specialized mental health services, RASP delivers rapid, patient-centered care with **wait-times under two weeks** from the point of referral by a primary healthcare provider — dramatically reducing delays that traditionally extend for months.

RASP reflects a commitment to *equitable, transcultural care*, drawing a diverse patient population. The demographic profile shows meaningful engagement from groups that often face barriers in mental health care access. Of patients seen to date: a mix of cultural identities has been served, including individuals of Indigenous

(3.1%) and Black heritage (3.1%), alongside a broad array of other ethnic backgrounds. Gender diversity is similarly represented, with patients identifying across female (62.5%), male (35.4%), and other gender identities (1.9%). These trends demonstrate the program’s reach across cultures and lived experiences — core to its inclusive service model.

Patient satisfaction with RASP has been overwhelmingly positive. In a recent evaluation of nearly 500 respondents, the average satisfaction rating was **9.3 out of 10**. A strong majority — **80.5%** — said they would return for another assessment if needed, and an impressive **97.3%** would recommend the program to others, underscoring widespread confidence in the quality and responsiveness of care.

RASP’s success stems from its streamlined *direct referral pathway*

Continued on page 20



Four founders of Virtual Hallway: Dr. Daniel Rasic, Dr. Jacob Cooke, Dr. Luke Napier, Justin Hartlen. Credit: Virtual Hallway (photo of founders).

is arranged. Specialists on the platform can offer as little or as much time as fits their schedule.

“One of the things that people love about it is that they’re not paging somebody that is in the middle of their own patient situation, or they’re not in the operating or emergency room. The model self-selects for specialists that want to make themselves available for their primary care and specialty colleagues and they’re happy to make the call,” Dr. Napier said.

“Sometimes you just need to get on the phone and talk through a case, especially in psychiatry, when patients are on multiple medications. Virtual Hallway makes it easy to connect with a psychiatrist, get clarity, and move forward with a plan,” said Dr. Saroj Premsagar, a family physician in Bedford, N.S.

The impact is on improved care and reduced wait times, with Virtual Hallway consults preventing referrals in 84 per cent of all calls across all specialties, with that number jumping to 90 per cent for psychiatric related consults. That means family doctors are getting what they need to continue treating patients themselves.

Reducing wait times for psychiatric care is why Nova Scotia Health’s Mental Health and Addictions Program (MHAP) introduced the Rapid Access Pathway (RAP) last year, which allows family doctors to refer their patients for a one-time consult with a psychiatrist.

Dr. **Andrew Harris**, senior medical director for the MHAP, said almost 80 per cent of mental health and addictions disorders can be managed at the primary care level without a referral, with many simply needing information on medication.

“Giving primary care providers an opportunity to just touch base with a psychiatrist is often going to be enough for them, so this is

for primary healthcare providers (PHPs), eliminating traditional barriers and enabling rapid access to psychiatric consultation and stabilization strategies. The integration of **virtual consultations** further enhances accessibility, removing geographical and transportation hurdles and enabling more equitable reach across the region.

In addition to clinical care, many RASP patients benefit from enrollment in **Text4Support**, a daily supportive text-messaging program grounded in cognitive-behavioural principles. While research on Text4Support continues to evolve, early findings from similar text-based interventions show that patients generally rate such messaging services highly for *support, encouragement, and perceived impact on coping and mental well-being*.

Together, RASP and Text4Support offer a model of **integrated, culturally responsive mental**

what Virtual Hallway provides,” he said. “We would always encourage if the primary care provider felt comfortable in managing a mental health disorder that they would begin with Virtual Hallway. If they require a little more direction, then they can go to a single visit with the RAP.”

Managing patients with mental health and addictions concerns can be daunting, particularly when specialist support has traditionally been hard to access. But Dr. Napier, who has been a psychiatrist for more than 35 years, says Virtual Hallway provides a collegial experience that will benefit both the family physician and patient.

“Clinicians can be nervous about asking a question and we really want them to know it’s always a friendly interaction and there are no inappropriate questions,” he

health care that supports individuals where they are — in their communities, on their devices, and at the earliest point of need. Through these services, Nova Scotia Health is advancing a vision of accessible, inclusive, and person-centered mental health care across the province.

You can learn more about the early impacts of RASP and Text4Support from here:

- [Frontiers | Expanding patient access to psychiatry and mental health supports: early impacts of the Nova Scotia health rapid access and stabilization program](#)
- [JMIR Human Factors - Evaluating User Engagement and Satisfaction With Digital Mental Health Interventions: Randomized Controlled Trial of a Text Messaging Program and e-Mental Health Resources](#)

said. “We’re all in this together, supporting each other and caring for patients.”

Family doctors can also learn about the latest updates in mental health, among other topics, through Virtual Hallway’s free Continuing Medical Education program and earn credits while doing so.



Dr. Andrew Harris, Senior Medical Director, Mental Health and Addictions Program, Nova Scotia Health. Credit: Mental Health and Addictions Program (Dr. Andrew Harris’ photo).

Meet the Dal Psychiatry Operations Team

With new additions to our team and some restructuring of roles, we want to highlight and re-introduce our team.

THE OPERATIONS TEAM

The Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry Operations Team provides day-to-day operational and administrative support that enables the department to function effectively. As an academic department, our work focuses on supporting psychiatric education locally and globally, facilitating research activities, and managing

core administrative functions. This includes support for undergraduate, postgraduate, and subspecialty education; continuing professional development; global mental health initiatives; curriculum development and medical education scholarly projects; and, research activities. The team is also responsible for physician resource

management, including recruitment, compensation, and wellness, as well as core financial, human resources, communications, academic, and governance functions. Through this work, the Operations Team ensures the department's strategic priorities are supported in a coordinated, sustainable, and people-centred manner.

OPERATIONS

Hong Xie Chief Operating Officer

Hong joined the department in April 2024 as its Chief Operating Officer. As a senior member of the department's leadership team, Hong leads financial and operational management of the department, including annual budgeting, forecasting, cash flow oversight, audit coordination, GAAP compliance, and comprehensive financial reporting. She oversees all government reporting requirements under the Academic Funding

Plan, ensuring accurate, timely submission of deliverables and compliance with provincial funding agreements.

In her role, Hong develops and administers physician compensation models, ensures accurate payments, and manages endowments and research funds. She oversees faculty FTE allocation in alignment with funding agreements, advising on recruitment capacity

and financial impact. Hong also provides HR leadership in workforce planning, organizational structure, and collective agreement compliance. She directs administrative operations across education, research, IT, communications, and space planning, while supporting strategic planning, policy development, governance, and funding negotiations. Hong can be reached at Huanhong.Xie@nshealth.ca

Note: We are currently recruiting an accountant. In the meantime, for all account payable and account receivable inquiries, email PsychFin@dal.ca

Aleya MacNeil Physician Resource Manager

Aleya joined the department in October 2025 as Physician Resource Manager. She is responsible for the management of departmental physician resource processes, including recruitment of faculty (physician and non-physician), orientation and exiting processes,

welcome and retirement guidelines, faculty appointments and vacancies, physician probationary process, and the Individual Practice Profile (IPP) process for physician and non-physician faculty. Aleya is also responsible for supporting the Valuing People Committee and

providing professional advice and direction to senior management in the development of all human resource processes and manages their implementation. She can be reached at Aleya.Macneil@nshealth.ca

Chelsea Mantin
HR Coordinator

Chelsea joined the department in September 2024 and since April 2025, as HR Coordinator, Chelsea assists with various HR activities including onboarding, welcome and retirement celebrations, adjunct and cross-appointments, elements of the physician hiring process, and supports the HR Committee.

She supports the International Fellowship Program. Her duties consist of tracking fellowship data,

working with PGME to deliver certificates, monitoring application submissions and coordinating interviews, supporting evaluations, responding to questions, and general administrative duties. She also supports program-related committees and seminar series.

Chelsea also supports the Centre for Global Mental Health and its various initiatives including the Guest Lecture Series, the Special

Interest Forum, the “Mental Health Responses in a Changing World” Conference, and other special events (e.g. delegation visits, policy dialogues, and celebratory events). She is responsible for supporting the centre’s International Advisory Board and the centre’s Executive and General membership meetings. Chelsea can be reached at **Chelsea.Mantin@nshealth.ca**

Eleanor Kumahia
Administrative Assistant to the Department Head

Eleanor joined the Department of Psychiatry Operations Team in July 2025 as Administrative Assistant to the Department Head. In this role, she provides comprehensive administrative support that keeps our department running smoothly. Her responsibilities include managing the Department Head’s calendar, scheduling and coordinating meetings and events, such as the bi-annual meeting, handling correspondence, and

serving as a key liaison between the Department Head and faculty, staff, students, and external partners.

Eleanor works to ensure our department’s administrative processes are efficient and effective, from organizing committee meetings to supporting strategic initiatives. She supports the department’s Executive, Finance, and Serving and Engaging Society Committees, and the

clinical faculty monthly meetings. Each day brings variety – whether she’s preparing briefing materials, managing travel arrangements, or coordinating information for the Department Head. Eleanor is proud to support our team’s important work.

Feel free to reach out anytime:
Eleanor.Kumahia@dal.ca /
Eleanor.Kumahia@nshealth.ca

Jen Brown
Operations Manager

As Operations Manager, since December 2022, Jen provides essential leadership in overseeing the administrative, research, and education operations of the Department of Psychiatry. Since joining the department in June 2008, in various roles she has ensured that daily activities, workflows, and priorities remain well coordinated and aligned with departmental goals.

Jen leads the education and research team, supporting effective onboarding, enhancing operational processes, and coordinating departmental events, such as the year-end celebration. She serves as a key resource for administrative and technical inquiries, working closely with departmental leadership to support planning, decision making, and implementation.

She also manages core administrative tools, including the department’s SharePoint site, and is the first approver for Dalhousie UGME and PGME expenses. Jen can be reached at **Jen.Brown@dal.ca**

Linda Ford
HR Assistant/Reception

Linda joined the department in August 1999 as an Administrative Assistant. She assists with various HR activities including onboarding documents, processing faculty appointments, booking IPP meetings on an annual basis, processing

sabbatical packages, processing medical staff reappointments, affiliated scientist appointments, advertising job postings, processing vacancy requests, ECT billing, and supporting the Promotions and Tenures Committee.

With reception duties, Linda meets and greets visitors to the department. She also processes maintenance work orders, orders keys, and looks after mail and couriers. Linda can be reached at **Linda.Ford@nshealth.ca**

Mandy Eslinger
Curriculum and Evaluation Specialist

Mandy joined the department in January 2012. Since July 2018, in her role as Curriculum and Evaluation Specialist, she collaborates with faculty and learners on curriculum design, education research, and program evaluation. This work involves advising on instructional design, developing e-learning modules for learners and faculty

development, writing grant proposals and ethics applications, collecting and analyzing data, and advising on survey design and building surveys. She contributes to academic dissemination by writing manuscripts and presenting scholarly work at conferences. She also supervises and guides residents on scholarly projects that

have a medical education focus. She is a member of the Education Management Team and Research Committee. She is also a member of the Canadian Association of Medical Education (CAME) and is an abstract reviewer for medical education conferences. She can be reached at **Mandy.Eslinger@nshealth.ca**

Penney Miller
Communications Coordinator

Penney joined the department in July 2022 as Communications Coordinator. She manages and executes the department's communications strategy, award process, and is involved with special projects. In alignment with the strategic plan and department goals, Penney coordinates and provides strategic internal and external communications and

provides advice, writing, and editing expertise for all communications projects. Penney works closely with department leadership to contribute to its positive positioning as a leader in research, education, clinical care, serving and engaging society, and valuing people, and to promote a sense of pride and unity within the department. She produces the newsletter, annual report and other

department reports, promotes events, organizes the annual holiday party, develops promotional materials, prepares announcements, and manages the department's public online presence. Penney has played an integral role in initiatives such as the 75th anniversary commemorations and launch of the Centre for Global Mental Health. She can be reached at **Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca**

EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

Jana Tamm
Education Coordinator

Jana joined the department in May 2024. As Education Coordinator, she is responsible for and administers the Geriatric Psychiatry Subspecialty Training Program while providing comprehensive support to the Psychiatry General Residency Postgraduate Program

and Continuing Professional Development initiatives. Jana works closely with the Director of Education on a wide range of education-related activities, organizing programs for medical trainees, faculty, and allied mental health professionals, and supporting

the Education Management Team Committee. Jana is the principal contact for PGY-6 Geriatric Psychiatry residents and organizes Department of Psychiatry Rounds and the Annual W.O. McCormick Academic Day conference. Jana can be reached at **Jana.Tamm@nshealth.ca**

Minh Nguyen
Administrative Coordinator

Minh joined the Department of Psychiatry in March 2025 as an Administrative Coordinator. Minh provides essential administrative, financial, and operational support to the Director of Research and faculty researchers. He serves as the primary contact for financial administration for Dalhousie and Nova Scotia Health research accounts, ensuring accurate

monitoring, reporting, procurement, and compliance with institutional and granting agency requirements. He processes and approves research financial transactions, conducts monthly research account reconciliations, and supports the setup and closure of research accounts. Minh also supports the Research Management Team Committee.

Minh coordinates human resource processes for grant-funded research staff, advising on hiring practices, preparing postings, arranging interviews, completing personnel documentation, and managing timesheets and system access. Minh can be reached at **Minh.Nguyen@dal.ca**

Parisa Abdi Sabouhi
Undergraduate Education Coordinator

Parisa is the Undergraduate Education Coordinator for the Department of Psychiatry. She joined the department in September 2023 and is responsible for all aspects of undergraduate education (years 1–4), serving as the primary point of contact for medical students rotating through psychiatry. Working closely with

the Director of Undergraduate Education, Parisa's role includes curriculum delivery, clinical assignments, preceptor recruitment, supervision evaluations, data management, communication, and managing elective requests from local and external students. Parisa also coordinates scheduling for Master of Physician Assistant

Studies (MPAS) students completing psychiatry rotations. In addition, she actively contributes to various departmental and Faculty of Medicine education committees. If you're interested in teaching, clinical supervision, or have any undergraduate-related questions, please reach out to Parisa at **Psych.Undergrad@dal.ca**

Petra Corkum
Graduate Education Coordinator

Petra joined the department in July 2023 and, since November 2025, keeps our Psychiatry graduate programs running efficiently as the Graduate Education Coordinator. She supports the MSc. and PhD in Psychiatry Research and Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health programs by managing applications, organizing course schedules, updating calendars, and coordinating key academic processes such as progress reviews, defenses, and

scholarship administration, ensuring each step is completed accurately and on time. Petra also supports the Graduate Program Committee and the Master of Clinical Psychiatry and Global Mental Health Graduate Program Committee.

Petra serves as the main point of contact for students, faculty, and staff, ensuring information is clear, accessible, and consistently communicated. In addition to program coordination, she is

responsible for Research Day and the annual public panel, handling logistics such as venues, registration, and onsite requirements.

Her work ensures that our graduate programs and research events stay well organized, effectively managed, and on track throughout the entire academic year.

You can reach Petra at **Psych.Research@dal.ca**

Sarah Scholl
Postgraduate Education Coordinator

Sarah serves as the Postgraduate Education Coordinator and plays a central role in supporting the effective operation of the Psychiatry residency program. Joining the department in February 2026, she provides comprehensive administrative support to residents and faculty, ensuring the coordinated management of all components of postgraduate education.

Working closely with the Director of Postgraduate Education, Sarah's responsibilities include coordinating rotation schedules, evaluations, accreditation requirements, and key processes such as resident recruitment, CaRMS interviews, and orientation. Sarah is the primary point of contact for residency-related inquiries, supporting clear communication and well organized program activities.

In addition, she supports PGME-related committee work, maintains program resources and learning platforms, and contributes to ongoing quality improvement initiatives. Sarah can be reached at **Psych.Postgrad@dal.ca**

DIVISION OF CHILD AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

Supriya D'Penha
Administrative Manager, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Supriya D'Penha joined the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry in the Department of Psychiatry, Dalhousie University as Administrative Manager in February 2025.

As the Administrative Manager she has a multi-dimensional role. She is directly responsible for managing, overseeing, and coordinating administrative, academic, financial, clinical, facilities and research-

related aspects of work conducted within the Dalhousie University Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, located at the IWK Health Centre. You can contact her at **Supriya.DPenha@iwk.nshealth.ca**

Adrienne McCarthy
Education and Research Coordinator, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Adrienne McCarthy is the Education and Research Coordinator for the Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry; she joined the department in April 2022.

Adrienne is responsible for the administration and coordination of all medical learners in the Division of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry, including subspecialty residents, Psychiatry and Pediatrics residents,

medical students, international fellows, and physician assistant students. She also has responsibility for continuing professional development activities for the division. She can be reached at **Adrienne.McCarthy@iwk.nshealth.ca**

Deb Follet
Administrative Assistant for the Chief of Psychiatry, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Deb Follett joined the IWK, Department of Psychiatry in August 2014 as Administrative Assistant for the Chief of Psychiatry.

Administrative Manager, and the Executive Committee for non-clinical related matters. She can be reached at **Debi.Follett@iwk.nshealth.ca**

Deb provides direct support to the IWK Chief of Psychiatry,

Serving and Engaging Society

Serving and Engaging Society: A NEW Name!

In our Department of Psychiatry's new Strategic Plan for 2026-2031, the Social Policy and Advocacy pillar was renamed "**Serving and Engaging Society**." This new

direction promotes our department's external-facing community engagement and allyship to equity-denied groups. Strategic actions are informed by departmental

Values, five Guiding Principles, and prioritized equity-denied groups.

[Learn more about Serving and Engaging Society.](#)

A NEW Course this spring: "**Building Cultural Competence for Mental Health Equity**" – Co-Created with the Black/African NS Community

"**Building Cultural Competence for Mental Health Equity**" is an innovative course to fulfill the anti-oppression objectives of the **Serving and Engaging Society** stream. Co-developed and co-delivered with Black and African NS community partners, this exciting course offers a framework to promote mental health equity in clinical practice. The "**Building Cultural Competence for Mental Health Equity**" course was introduced at the Department of Psychiatry's Grand Rounds on Jan. 7, 2026 and is intended for all faculty. [View the course introduction.](#)

Format: For our faculty's convenience, the "**Building Cultural Competence for Mental Health Equity**" course will be offered in two brief sessions in spring 2026. All Department of Psychiatry faculty are encouraged to attend:

Part 1: Foundation Session on Wednesday, April 8, 2026 at Grand Rounds (8:30-9:30 a.m. -Recorded) *Please save the date! This session is a pre-requisite for Part 2.*

Part 2: Experiential Session – Friday, May 1, 2026 (in person) at Atlantica Hotel

(1:00 to 4:00 p.m. –lunch from Noon to 1 p.m. Not recorded) *Registration is required-see below!*

[Learn more about the Building Cultural Competence for Mental Health Equity course.](#)

A NEW Fund: The "Serving and Engaging Society Fund" renews March 31 for the next fiscal year. This fund offers \$1000 grants for academic initiatives that help to close gaps in serving equity-denied groups. Learn more and review the fund requirements below:

Serving and Engaging Society Fund

Funding is available for academic initiatives, in collaboration with community partners, in the areas of education, clinical care, or research to close gaps in serving and engaging equity-denied populations and to become a more trusted partner with community.

The Serving and Engaging Society Fund is available to all members of the Dalhousie Department of Psychiatry.

[LEARN MORE & APPLY](#)

DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY
Department of Psychiatry

Department News

FACULTY & STAFF CHANGES

Arrivals

- Dr. **Scott Bishop** joined the department as an adjunct effective Nov. 24, 2025. Dr. Bishop is located at Crux Psychology in Halifax. He can be reached at drbishop@drscottbishop.com
- Dr. **Megan Thomas** joined the department as a cross-appointment effective Nov. 24, 2025. Dr. Thomas is located at the IWK in the Department of Pediatrics and can be reached at Megan.Thomas@iwk.nshealth.ca
- Dr. **Maha Eltayebani** joined the department as an assistant professor effective Dec. 1, 2025. Dr. Eltayebani is located at Dartmouth Community Mental Health and Connections Dartmouth. She can be reached at Maha.Eltayebani@nshealth.ca
- **Sarah Scholl** joined the department's Operations Team as Postgraduate Education Coordinator on Feb. 2, 2026. She can be reached at Psych.Postgrad@dal.ca
- Dr. **Kyle Godden** joined the department as an assistant professor effective Feb. 9, 2026. Dr. Godden is located in the Garron Centre at the IWK. He can be reached at Kyle.Godden@iwk.nshealth.ca

Departures

- Dr. **Mark Paramlall** resigned from the department effective Feb. 1, 2026. Dr. Paramlall will maintain an adjunct appointment effective Feb. 2, 2026.



BIOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT OF DEPRESSION/TRAUMA AND SUPPORTING SELF ADVOCACY 8 WEEK EDUCATION PROGRAM

This Program is free and open to individuals /families anywhere in Nova Scotia.

Spring Sessions available on a first come first serve basis:

REGISTER now for our sessions that begin in April/May 2026

All sessions run from 10am - 11:20am weekly.

If you are interested in participating please use the QR code below to register, visit our website to register under the programs tab or call us and we can help.

Topics Covered:

- **Module 1:** Is an exploration of the biology of emotions
- **Module 2:** Is an exploration how the emotional and thinking systems of the brain work together
- **Module 3:** Is learning how to use self-talk to manage emotional events
- **Module 4:** Explores how the mind and body work in tandem
- **Module 5:** Is learning how self-awareness is self-confidence building
- **Module 6:** Is learning emotional resiliency skills
- **Module 7:** Is learning interpersonal communication skills
- **Module 8:** Explores how to support self-advocacy for self and loved ones.



SCAN HERE

[Hope4mentalhealth.ca](https://www.hope4mentalhealth.ca)
Ph: 902-333-2003

DAL NEWS

- [Ask an expert: Atlantic Canada has high rates of sedative use. How do we combat that?](#) (with Dr. **David Gardner**)
 - [Global study highlights the genetic roots of anxiety](#) (with Dr. **Sandra Meier**)
-

AWARDS & HONOURS

Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick receives Bravo Zulu Award from Veterans Affairs Canada

Congratulations to Dr. **Abraham (Rami) Rudnick** who received the Bravo Zulu Award from Veterans Affairs Canada. The award

recognizes excellence of service for and with clients of the Nova Scotia Operational Stress Injury Clinic (NSOSIC). Three Nova Scotia Health

staff of the NSOSIC also received the award.

Dr. Mutiat Sulyman receives Nova Scotia Health's 2025 Making Waves — Employee and Physician EDIRA Award

Congratulations to Dr. **Mutiat Sulyman** who received Nova Scotia Health's 2025 Making Waves — Employee and Physician Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Reconciliation, and Accessibility (EDIRA) Award.

The Making Waves Awards program recognizes individuals and groups who have made outstanding contributions to the health and well-being of Nova Scotians and are designed to celebrate exemplary

efforts and contributions made by employees, physicians, researchers, and volunteers that advance Nova Scotia Health's vision, mission, values, and strategic directions.

MSc. student Somtoo Henry accepted into DIVERT fellowship

Congratulations to **Somtoo Henry**, a MSc. Psychiatry Research student under the supervision of Dr. Ejemai Eboime. for being accepted to the DIVERT fellowship. The fellowship is part of the CIHR Research Training Platform aimed at creating a more

equitable and accessible mental health system for children, youth, and their families. Somtoo's project is titled "Addressing Supply Side Barriers for Black Communities in Nova Scotia through Salus-bridge AI." Salus Bridge AI is a virtual

care platform that uses a provider and client algorithm to promote health equity by improving access to culturally safe mental health services for Black communities in Nova Scotia.

Dr. Joseph Sadek appointed Associate Editor of the Journal *Brain Sciences*

Congratulations to Dr. **Joseph Sadek** for his appointment as Associate Editor of the Journal *Brain Sciences*.

Dr. Abraham (Rami) Rudnick appointed as member-at-large to the Board of Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment Nova Scotia chapter

Congratulations to Dr. **Abraham (Rami) Rudnick** for his appointment as member-at-large to the Board of Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment Nova Scotia chapter.

Congratulations to the Extra Mile Award recipients!

Recipient: Dr. Jason Morrison

Dr. Morrison has gone the ‘extra mile’ to build a trusting bond over the past three years with our son who lives with SMI. His relationship with our son has been a key factor in his ongoing recovery. Dr. Morrison also goes the extra mile to collaborate with us, his parents. He is compassionate and skilled. Dr. Morrison has also gone the extra mile to support our grass roots advocacy group, the NS Moms.

Recipient: Dr. Greg MacMullin

Dr. Greg MacMullin has been a pillar of excellence at the Hants MHOPD for the past several years. Although he now divides his time between the Bedford/Sackville clinic and Connections in Halifax, he was an extraordinary colleague to work alongside during his time with the Hants team, and he is deeply missed. Dr. MacMullin was not only fully engaged as

a member of the team, but he consistently provided guidance, expertise, and support that were nothing short of remarkable. His case conceptualizations and the teachings he integrated into each consultation meaningfully enhanced outcomes for both clients and clinicians. His leadership qualities were further demonstrated through his role as Clinical Academic Leader (CAL) for both the Hants and Bedford/Sackville clinics, where he has shown innovation, advocacy, and a commitment to improving academic and clinical practice across sites. He has also gone above and beyond in his teaching and mentorship responsibilities, taking on preceptorship and various educational roles with enthusiasm and dedication. His contributions have had a lasting and positive impact on all who have had the privilege of working with him. Words really cannot express how wonderful a psychiatrist and colleague he is.

Recipient: Dr. Grainne Neilson

Amidst her remarkably busy schedule, Dr. Neilson repeatedly went out of her way to provide didactic teaching, involve learners in patient encounters, and assist allied staff whenever applicable. It was genuinely inspiring to see the way she handled her workload with such grace, never compromising in how well she treated those around her. Despite her busyness, she was always approachable and would take time to answer questions or provide teaching on a topic. Dr. Neilson set up multiple opportunities for me to meet specific learning goals I had and provided helpful feedback as applicable.

She provided invaluable mentorship and leadership, and her disposition is one I wish to emulate in my own future practice.

EXTRA MILE AWARD

**Do you have a colleague who deserves to be recognized for going “the extra mile?”
Consider nominating them for the Extra Mile Award!**

The Department of Psychiatry’s Extra Mile Award recognizes exceptional contributions by faculty and staff who have truly gone “the extra mile” in service to the department by advancing its mission in the areas of education, research, clinical care, advocacy, wellness, and EDIA.

LEARN MORE & MAKE A NOMINATION [HERE](#).

Ukrainian Connections

By Dr. Scott Milligan, Psychiatrist and Assistant Professor

It was May 23, 2025, the end of our two weeks in Kyiv. My son, who was brushing his teeth on the balcony of our hotel, called me out to witness the “fireworks.” It was the first night of intensive Russian attacks in Kyiv which have only grown worse. It looked like fireworks, but without the innocuous explosions in the end. The sound of whizzing and gunfire continued through the night, interspersed with loud explosions and car alarms. It was a small taste of what millions of Ukrainians experience each day. We watched from the balcony for a time and then through the windows in our room before, carelessly perhaps, going to bed.

We had come from Canada to Ukraine just a short time before, having flown to Krakow and then having taken the train to the capital, Kyiv. We had hoped to stay at the Holiday Inn, where we had lodged the year before, but it had recently been hit by Russian drones and was no longer habitable.

We ended in a new hotel across the river where, each night around 2 AM, the loudspeakers would blare out instructions in Ukrainian and English for staff and guests to move to the parkade for safety from Russian attacks. Like most people, we stayed in our room and ignored the warnings.

This was our second time in Kyiv since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in the spring of 2022. I wanted to utilize my two decades’ experience working in what a colleague once described as the “Vietnam of psychiatry” i.e. Cape Breton, Nova Scotia. I had come in the hopes of supporting the soldiers and civilians of Ukraine. But like the first time, it wasn’t easy. Both times, I pursued the traditional routes of entry, but my disability proved a barrier.



At the “Returning” conference.

When I was twenty-one years old, working construction in the summer after my third year of university, I fell through a roof and broke four vertebrae in my neck, leaving me a C8-T1 quadriplegic. Long story short, I finished my degree, went to seminary, married, finished medical school in Edmonton, psychiatry residency in Halifax, and spent twenty-two years practicing psychiatry in Cape Breton where my wife and I raised our three children and were founding members of a Christian school in 2009.

Back to the traditional routes: Médecins Sans Frontières. I had a rather disorienting video interview with a woman from MSF who kept her camera off while mine was on, making meaningful connection untenable. After detailing my disability, (but also outlining what I do on a regular day, my past international travel, etc.) the response to my offer of on-the-ground help in Ukraine was to suggest I provide online help to (actual) workers in the field.

It is not an uncommon experience as a disabled person to encounter institutions and organizations espousing the value of inclusivity and accessibility while offering far less in actuality. Whether it is booking an accessible train compartment in Europe, receiving accommodations in training or even the very low bar of having a zero-grade entrance to a hospital, the self-awarded accolades are often undeserved. The notable exception, in my experience, is Japan, with an honourable mention to Iceland.

Through an internet search, I reached out to an organization in the US, Global Care Force, who put me in contact with a rehabilitation specialist in Kyiv who invited me to her clinic. I accepted the invitation to visit in May 2024 with my son. I saw one (highly traumatized) veteran in his early fifties and made some recommendations. He was not dissimilar to many Canadian veterans, just with more recent combat trauma and less access to psychiatric support.

Back in Canada, I began working with a veteran whose case worker was from Ukraine. After her contract ended with Veterans Affairs, she travelled back to Kyiv to visit her father and made inquiries on my behalf. She connected me with a psychiatrist running private clinics to treat veterans and their families, Dr. Yana Ukrainka, who put me in touch with the Victor Pinchuk Foundation, a philanthropic organization developing rehabilitation centres for wounded soldiers across Ukraine. The Pinchuk Foundation was planning a conference on trauma for psychologists and psychiatrists from around Ukraine and I was invited to speak about my experience working with Canadian veterans.

The 2025 conference was memorable. The welcome and accommodation we received were moving. Although my son and I were the only English speakers, live translation was provided for the first day and a personal translator for the second. Security was intense, as the First Lady, Elena Zelenska, and other political figures spoke. Most powerfully, there were many veterans there, several were multiple amputees. Unlike most of my experiences in Canada and elsewhere, the organizers were acutely aware of accessibility issues. When I spoke, they removed the standing podium and set up a low table beside me. The platform had a useable ramp at both ends, clearly planned for, not an afterthought.

After the conference, a driver took us to meet Mykola Kuleba, another Ukrainian philanthropist, who founded Save Ukraine, an NGO doing rescue missions to return Ukrainian children deported to Russia or from the occupied territories. We toured one of their centres, which included a specialized facility for children who suffered sexual violence and a recreation centre with a built-in

bomb shelter. Again, accessibility was a priority.

On our last week in Kyiv, we toured a private psychiatric clinic founded by Dr. Ukrainka, and one of the Pinchuk Rehabilitation Centres where we met several wounded veterans. One recent amputee from Poland, speaking excellent English, told me he was keen to get his prosthesis fitted so he could return to fight with his colleagues. "I can still drive," he said.

Recently, Mykola Kuleba posted a video from the room in which my son and I met him and his team and shared tea. It had been struck by a Russian drone. It was heartbreaking to see the ceiling tiles hanging down in a room where we so recently had felt such hope and warmth. We had spoken about some of the needs the staff at Save Ukraine expressed, including training for the staff working with the children and families. They

wanted to be trained to Canadian standards.

In the summer of 2025, my wife and I purchased an old home in North Sydney. Last week, I reached out to Mykola Kuleba to offer the home as a place where the staff could come for a couple of weeks of training, rest and respite. I had initially hoped to bring a group of psychiatrists to Kyiv to train local staff, but the ongoing attacks make recruitment challenging. I also felt the Ukrainian staff would appreciate a break from the relentless bombings and sounds of drones. We are currently in discussion about how we can collaborate.

I long for the day there is peace in Ukraine, when I can show this most beautiful city and introduce these precious friends to my wife. In the meantime, it is important for the people enduring the daily attacks to know they are not forgotten and that the world wants to support them.



Mykola Kuleba, centre, with his wife (in white) and staff at one of his centres for Save Ukraine. Dr. Milligan's son, Evan, is second from left..

Holiday Party 2025

The Department of Psychiatry hosted its holiday party on Friday, Dec. 5, 2025 at the Prince George Hotel. As in past, we asked attendees to provide a donation to the selected charity, which was the Healthy Minds Cooperative.

Service milestones and special recognitions

During the event, Drs. **Joseph Sadek**, **Sherry Stewart**, and **Suzanne Zinck**, were recognized for 20 years of service; and **Linda Ford** was recognized for 25 years of service.

Special Recognition Awards for unwavering reliability and

professional service were presented to **Jen Brown** and **Mandy Eslinger**.

Congratulations!

Trivia

Attendees competed in two rounds of trivia to win prizes for their team. The competition was fierce with the time to answer the questions down to 20 seconds each and going to a tie-breaker in the second round.

Special thanks

Special thanks to speakers Dr. **Vincent Agyapong**, department head; Dr. David Anderson, dean of the Faculty of Medicine; and, Dorothy Edem, director of the

Mental Health and Addictions Program Central Zone; to Dr. **Linda Liebenberg** for emceeding the service milestones and award presentations; to Dr. **Sanjana Sridharan**, Dr. **Keri-Leigh Cassidy**, Dr. **Sabina Abidi**, Dr. **Lara Hazelton**, and **Hong Xie** for helping to present the milestone recognitions and awards; and to Dr. **Zenovia Ursuliak** for hosting the trivia.

And thank you to everyone who came out to connect, spread some cheer, and posed for photos in the photo booth!



Top left photo: Service milestone recipients and presenters at the holiday party. From left to right, Hong Xie, Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Linda Ford, Dr. Sherry Stewart, Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy, Dr. Suzanne Zinck, and Dr. Sabina Abidi.

Top right photo: Dr. Joe Sadek receives service milestone recognition at the holiday party. From left to right, Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Dr. Joe Sadek, and Dr. Sanjana Sridharan.

Bottom left photo: Special Recognition Award recipients and presenters at the holiday party. From left to right: Dr. Vincent Agyapong, Dr. Lara Hazelton, Mandy Eslinger, Jen Brown, and Hong Xie.

Photo credits: Zuya Production or submitted. Photo booth by True North Events.

Holiday Party 2025



Photo Feature



Young peregrine falcon visiting Rami Rudnick's balcony in Dartmouth, Jan. 18, 2026.

Photo by Dr. **Rami Rudnick**.

All are welcome to submit their picture of nature for the newsletter to **Penney Miller** at Penney.Miller@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 **April 2026**.

Please send all submissions to **Penney.Miller@nshealth.ca**



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