

Transformational and Strategic Plan Progress Report

2021–2023



Message from the Department Head



Dear colleagues,

September 5, 2023 marks two years since I became Head of the Department of Psychiatry. When I began this role, I had a vision to transform the department while remaining committed to its mission, values, and strategic priorities. This became known as the Transformational Plan.

My commitments were to build transformative departmental structures, to provide transparent, accountable, and inclusive leadership, to empower faculty, and to extend the global reach and leadership of the department.

We have come a long way since then, making strides in realizing our vision, and building our culture and community. In reflecting on the progress we have made during the last two years, I am inspired, and filled with gratitude for the hard work, dedication, and commitment you have shown. I also want to acknowledge our department stakeholders, and NS Health operational leaders and frontline staff who have contributed to these accomplishments.

With this milestone, I am proud to share with you a summary of all we have collectively accomplished.

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

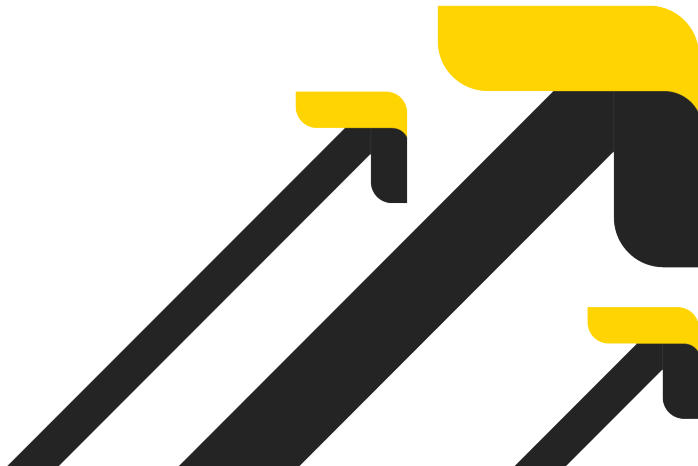
Dr. Vincent I.O. Agyapong

Head, Department of Psychiatry

Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University

Head, Department of Psychiatry, NSH Central Zone

Transformative and inclusive leadership



Transformative and inclusive leadership

Key accomplishments

- Updated the Department of Psychiatry's strategic vision to include a Transformational Plan following extensive stakeholder consultation, and positive faculty survey and feedback
- Established four new clinical/academic sections, in addition to the existing Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, as part of a plan for distributed leadership and to deepen faculty engagement. These new sections are:
 - Section of Community Psychiatry
 - Section of Forensic Psychiatry
 - Section of Geriatric Psychiatry
 - Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry
- Section Heads and Associate Section Heads have been appointed through transparent, competitive search and selection processes and have been in place since April 1, 2022
- Several Clinical Academic Leadership roles have been established within the clinical/academic sections, and across community clinics and inpatient services, as part of a distributed, inclusive, engaging, and accountable leadership strategy
- Expanded the Department of Psychiatry Executive Committee to include representation from Dalhousie Medicine New Brunswick, Saint John, New Brunswick — a distributed learning site for the Faculty of Medicine at Dalhousie University

Valuing our faculty, staff, and learners and promoting wellness and personal development



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Key accomplishments

Wellness

- Established a departmental Wellness Committee, with membership including representation from distributed learning sites in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, graduate students, psychiatry residents, administrative staff, research faculty, and clinical faculty to plan and facilitate programs to promote and enhance the wellness of faculty and staff
- A Solutions for Wellness Survey was launched in May 2023. The survey results will provide direction of how the Wellness Committee, in partnership with leadership, can promote a culture of wellness, efficiency of work, and personal resilience
- A subcommittee organized a department-wide Summer Recreational Event at Hatfield Farms on June 23, 2023 that was well attended and enjoyed

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility

- Established an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (EDIA) Committee, with membership including representation from distributed learning sites, and appointed a director for EDIA
- Established EDIA representation on department committees. The department's EDIA Director is serving on numerous committees, including the department's Executive

Committee, and search committees for leadership positions within the department. In addition, members of the EDIA Committee are representatives on the department's Awards, Wellness, and International Fellows Program Committees

- In 2021, an EDIA survey was conducted by the Continuing Professional Development Committee, and the results were presented at ground rounds on Oct. 12, 2022. A poster on the EDIA survey results, titled "Educating for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Within the Department of Psychiatry: Results of a Needs Assessment," was presented at the department's Research Day on Oct. 21, 2022

Awards, Recognition, and Engagement

- Established the Department of Psychiatry Dedicated Service Award to recognize the contribution of faculty and staff who have served the department for over 10 years and are retiring or leaving the department
 - **10** award recipients in two years
- Established the Department of Psychiatry Leadership Award to recognize the contribution of department leaders who have served for over five years and are leaving their roles
 - **12** award recipients in two years
- Established the Department of Psychiatry Extra Mile Award to recognize faculty, staff, and teams who go above and beyond the regular call to duty

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- Established the Department Head's Meet and Interact with small groups of faculty, staff, and learners in scheduled and unscheduled engagements to bring leadership closer to department members:
 - Met with several faculty at their clinical work sites
 - Lunch time meetings with small groups of staff
 - Dinner meetings with residents by year group

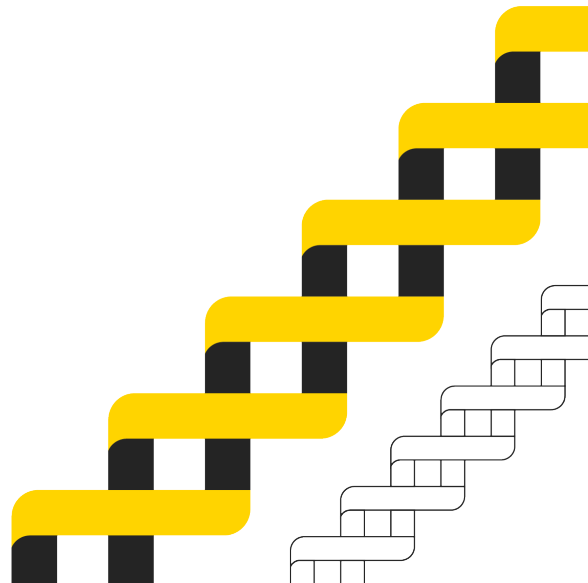
Professional Development

- Established a policy offering all full-time, clinical faculty at least 10 per cent protected time for pursuit of clinical and academic interests that align with the departmental mandate and priorities
- Overhauled the department's Faculty Development Fund, increasing the fund to over 100,000 dollars per annum from 25,000 dollars per annum, and shifting the fund allocation from a system that was inequitable and inaccessible, to one that is equitable and accessible by all faculty

Recruitment

- Recruited record numbers of graduating residents to join the department in the last three years:
 - An average of **5.33** graduating residents per year were offered appointments in the department from 2021 to 2023, compared with an average of **2.8** graduating residents per year appointed to the department in the five years leading up to the launch of the Transformational Plan

Expanded access to care and improved quality of care



Expanded access to care and improved quality of care

Key accomplishments

- Central Zone Clinical Council was established and meets monthly to improve clinical administration and co-leadership within the Mental Health and Addictions Program
- Instituted monthly leadership safety rounds to deepen the culture of quality and safety among clinical teams and improve quality of patient care across clinical programs in the Nova Scotia Health Central Zone
- Establishment of the Rapid Access and Stabilization Program (RASP) to address long-standing gaps in access to mental health support and psychiatric consultation for patients in Nova Scotia, and support for primary care providers
 - In the four months between May and August 2023, **250+** patients received direct access to a psychiatrist for a comprehensive psychiatric assessment for diagnostic clarification, medication initiation, or medication adjustment in comparison to an average of 100 patients who had direct access to a psychiatrist annually in the Central Zone
 - Early data shows a high level of satisfaction. On average, **115** people who accessed the program rated their overall satisfaction of the services received as a **9.51 out of 10**

- Established a Nova Scotia Transcultural Mental Health Program to provide mental health support for African Nova Scotians, Newcomers, and Indigenous people in Nova Scotia
 - A total of **42** clients were seen between the Newcomer Health Clinic and Nova Scotia Brotherhood Initiative between March 22, 2022 and August 30, 2023
 - Based on EMR data at the Weji'winen, there was a total of **75** psychiatric contacts within the past six months, of which 40 were indirect consultations offered on site by Dr. Keri-Leigh Cassidy, and 35 were direct consultation in the adult mental health system. On site mental health consultation for children by IWK staff has also recently begun
 - Secured new funding for a full FTE to hire Dr. Cinera States to support marginalized populations, including African Nova Scotians, Indigenous people, Newcomers, and homeless people
- Our faculty co-leading and contributing to reforms at the East Coast Forensic Hospital
- Several quality improvement projects and initiatives to expand access to psychiatric care across all sections/divisions
- Recruited a Neuropsychiatrist in preparation for the establishment of a Maritime Neuropsychiatry Clinical Academic Program

Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Clinical Initiatives

- Transforming services in ambulatory care – allocating psychiatric and non-physician clinical resources based on need/capacity data – Dr. Abidi, Dr. Sharon Clark, IWK APL CAPA, Amos Hundert, IWK Continuous Improvement Lead

Quality Improvement/Knowledge Translation

- Greenspace – launch of outcome measurement online tool for patients/clinicians across Mental Health & Addiction Program – launched with psychiatry and specialty services in 2023 – Dr. Bagnell/Dr. Abidi psychiatry, Dr. Debbie Emberly, IWK APL Research and Outcomes

Section of Community Psychiatry

- Service integration between subspecialty services and Community Mental Health teams to build skills and expertise in community services
- Redistribution of FTEs among CMHTs to correct the imbalance and shortage in psychiatry resources
- Active recruitment of psychiatrists to fill vacant FTEs and improve service provision and access to psychiatric care
- Developing the Transcultural Psychiatry Services to provide a fast-track access to mental health services to marginalized, visible minority, and Indigenous populations
- Working in collaboration with the Forensic Section to streamline the referrals from forensic services to civil community mental health services

Section of Forensic Psychiatry

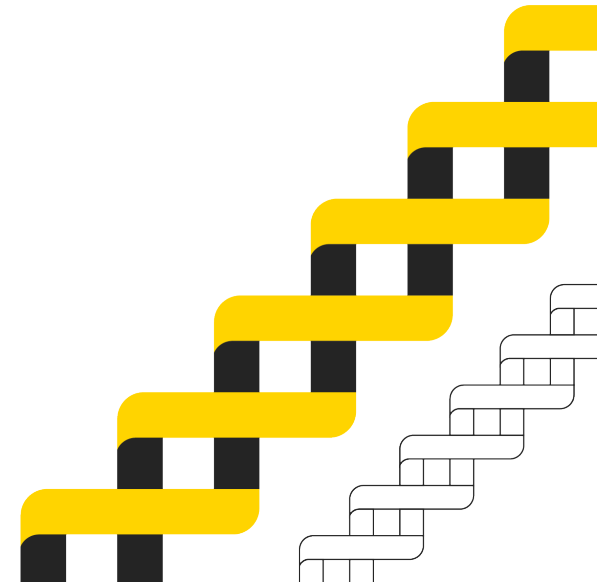
- PCNA: Major project of Patient Care Needs Assessment is completed. The data are being reviewed to impact on the Model of Care development
- Established the new Model of Care Goals and Principles after exhaustive discussion and feedback
- Although a bit delayed, we recruited a psychiatrist to work in Forensic who is anticipated to start in October 2023

Section of Geriatric Psychiatry

- Historically, the two geriatric psychiatry teams (at the Abbie Lane and NSH) had different approaches to triage, leading to inconsistent application of referral criteria. As of July 2023, the section now has an identified allied health professional who reviews all referrals prior to triage for both teams, and collaborates with Central Intake and Geriatric Medicine to ensure patient referrals are properly vetted and sent to the most appropriate clinical service for expedient care
- Several staffing changes have occurred on the Geriatric Psychiatry Acute Inpatient Unit, including addition of trained caregiver staff to increase support for patients, and moving to a model in which one psychiatrist (instead of two) provides psychiatric care to inpatients
- The Geriatric Psychiatry Residency Program continues to train and graduate highly-competent geriatric psychiatrists, with geriatric psychiatrists now available for consultation in all zones in Nova Scotia

Section of Acute, Consultation, and Emergency Psychiatry

- The Day Hospital Program has increased patient capacity and has expanded its interdisciplinary team to include an occupational therapist
- Psychiatry Emergency Services (PES) now has three dedicated psychiatrists
- The section has filled five Clinical Academic Leader (CAL) positions in 2023



Extended the department's research frontiers



Extended the department's research frontiers

Key accomplishments

- Established the Department of Psychiatry Research Management Committee
- The establishment of Research Directors for the five sections/divisions in the department. This will allow frontline clinical staff involvement in research, answer their clinical questions, and further Quality Improvement/Quality Assurance projects in their sections/division. These section/division Research Directors meet with the departmental Research Director on a regular basis
- Appointing Research Assistants for each clinical section/division to support clinical faculty engaged in clinical translational research and quality improvement initiatives. There has been success in hiring two of the five RAs (to date) specific to the section/division, that will help the section/division research directors/leadership in their research mandate
- There has been success in distributed research to include zones outside of Central Zone in Nova Scotia as well as New Brunswick. Most zones in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick now have a research lead
- Resumed in-person Department of Psychiatry Research Day Conference, with record numbers of abstracts received and conference registrants
- Great success from our early-career and established researchers with securing externally-funded research grants in the last year, and with publications in peer-reviewed journals in the last two years


Extended the frontiers of the department's education programs



Extended the frontiers of the department's education programs

Key accomplishments

- Department Head toured distributed learning sites in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick (Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton, Truro, Cape Breton, Bridgewater, the Annapolis Valley, and Yarmouth) to interact with faculty and staff as part of efforts to increase their connectedness to the department in preparation for expansion of distributed residency education to these sites
- Established the Nova Scotia and New Brunswick Academic Council as an enabler for the expansion of medical education at distributed learning sites across the two Maritime provinces. This is in preparation for the creation of a new rural psychiatry residency training stream and expansion of the International Fellowship program
- Concluded a survey for all psychiatrists at distributed learning sites in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick to assess enablers and barriers to the expansion of medical education to the sites
- Extension of residency training to Cape Breton
- Enhancing distributed medical education by including distributed site representatives on the Education Management Team and adding new training sites at the PGME and UGME levels

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- Strengthening the new education leadership structure by engaging section education leads in recruitment of teachers and other administrative tasks
 - Heading up a working group to make recommendations to the Department Head which will address issues related to Psychiatric Emergency Services as identified in the PGME internal review

Subspecialty and fellowship training

Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

- Distributed learning sites – Truro and Kentville established as core rotations in child and adolescent subspecialty residency program in 2021, Sydney site visit in fall 2023 with hopes of sites in all zones by 2024 – Dr. Lovas/Dr. Propper

International Fellowships Program

- Launching the International Fellowships Program and offering training positions to international fellows in Mood Disorders Clinic, Reproductive Mental Health, and Nova Scotia Operational Stress Injury Clinic

Global leadership and influence

Global leadership and influence

Key accomplishments

Social Policy & Advocacy

- Established a Social Policy & Advocacy Committee with representation from community-led organizations to plan and execute programs geared towards advocating for resources and the rights of patients with mental illness and their families
- The committee has advertised for and welcomed lived experience representatives to its membership
- This spring, the Social Policy & Advocacy Committee developed draft policy recommendations for Social Policy & Advocacy, as per the Terms of Reference for the committee. The document is currently under review for feedback from key stakeholders this summer. The draft document will next be shared with Dr. Agyapong for his input, and then with members of the Executive Committee this fall

Social Advocacy/Community Engagement, Division of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

- IWK MHA African Nova Scotia service – engagement and report 2021-2022, business plan funded and launched in 2023 – Dr. Bagnell & Maureen Brennan, Director, IWK MHA



Global Mental Health

- Developed a project charter for the establishment of a Centre for Global Mental Health to promote Global Mental Health education, research, and knowledge translation through:
 - International Graduate Program in Clinical Psychiatry: Program coordinator appointed, and concept paper approved by Faculty of Medicine Council and University Senate. Full application pending review submission to the University Senate
 - International Fellowship Programs: Program director appointed and Launched the Department's International Fellowship Program in September 2022 with two Fellows from the Gulf States participating
 - Global Mental Health Research – Assistant Professor of Global Mental Health has been appointed
 - Research collaborations established with institutions and researchers in Ireland, Ghana, Zambia, and Bangladesh
 - Secured an agreement with the Centre of Excellence for Neuropsychiatry at Beaumont Hospital and the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland to have a senior-year resident or recent graduate complete a no-cost, one-year training fellowship program in neuropsychiatry in Ireland
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Our mission

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

Our vision

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

Our values

Integrity

Creativity

Professionalism

Accountability

Collaboration

Compassion

Inclusivity



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Department of Psychiatry



nova scotia
health