

NORTH END COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

2021/22

Annual REPORT



North End
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE





Marie-France LeBlanc
Executive Director



Fred MacGillivray
Board Chair

A message from our Board Chair and Executive Director...

The Annual Report gives an opportunity to look back on what we have accomplished and look forward to what we want to do next.

This past year, NECHC has experienced incredible growth. It happened very quickly, because it had to, given what was occurring within our community. In these times of crisis, not rising to the occasion was not an option. As such, we raised and will continue to raise our hand to offer whatever services are needed. As an organization, our mission is to support the health and well-being of our community as informed by the social determinates of health and while treating all with respect and dignity. We also prioritize equitable access to services and programs. There has never been a time where this approach is needed more.

The numbers of people experiencing homelessness and poverty in our City and Province are at an unprecedented high, with no indication of any change in the future. Having been around for over 50 years, NECHC has a deep history of adapting, growing and shifting to meet the needs of the HRM Community experiencing poverty and homelessness. In the last year, we have become an anchor for housing and supports for housing those most in need.

While we are all tempted to think it is behind us, the pandemic grinds on, continuing to threaten the well-being of the most vulnerable members of our community. The NECHC teams have risen to every occasion. We have added staff to meet client and patient demands and programming to address mental health, addictions, and food insecurity.

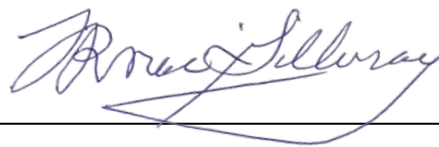
In the sections that follow, you will see the daily focus of each of our teams. As caregivers, our daily work and rhythms are profoundly affected by the precautions and challenges that come with the COVID pandemic. It has been a year filled with business as usual and pandemic as unusual.

This year has seen ongoing growth in our commitment to harm reduction and to culturally appropriate and sensitive care. With the support of partners and funders, we have continued to refine all aspects of our work in poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, and mental health and addictions. We still have a lot of work to do, but this past year has seen us move the needle that much more.

In closing, we would like to say how proud we are to be part of this organization that welcomes everyone who walks through our doors. To its core, this organization is composed of change-makers – people who are dedicated to moving clients and patients from crisis to wellness and from challenge to stability.



Marie-France LeBlanc
Executive Director



Fred MacGillivray
Board Chair

Mission

We support health and well-being in our community through quality primary health care, education and advocacy in an environment in which people are treated with respect and dignity and there is equitable access to services and programs.

Vision

Strong community,
healthy people.

Values

Respect
Community
Innovation
Compassion
Excellence



North End
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE



North End
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE
Managed Alcohol Program



North End
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE
Programs



North End
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE
MOSH Housing First



North End
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE
Pause Mental Health



North End
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE
Dental Clinic



North End
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE
Clinic



North End
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE
MOSH



North End
COMMUNITY
HEALTH CENTRE
Safe Supply

COVID RESPONSE

Over this past year, the only thing that remained constant was change. Our teams repeatedly had to come together to make new plans, change plans or come up with better solutions.

Should we buy a building to house those sleeping rough? Should we buy a second one and a third? Should we be the service provider for an innovative supportive housing initiative that is based on harm reduction and nurse led? Should we move Managed Alcohol Program (MAP) from an emergency program to an ongoing one? Should we undertake a vaccine awareness program for those experiencing homelessness? We said yes to all of these questions.

We purchased (or started the process of purchasing) 3 buildings and started building a fourth. We launched The Overlook, an ambitious harm reduction, peer supported housing initiative owned by our partner and landlord AHANS.

MAP is now a full 7 day a week program supporting those afflicted with Severe Alcohol Use disorder.

We partnered with the Public Health Agency of Canada to vaccinate and provide awareness of vaccination to the populations we serve.

Throughout these times, we also provided additional sick days for staff who had COVID and we developed a four-day week summer program to allow staff additional days for self-care. It has been a trying time for everyone from staff to patients and clients. We hope we have seen the worst of it but we may not. Either way, as leaders we will continue to say yes to what is needed for our community.



HOW WE DO WHAT WE DO

Keeping on top of shifting guidelines, overcoming obstacles, adapting old programs and building new ones, maintaining our scopes of practice, keeping our teams safe – this has been the focus of NECHC throughout the pandemic.

Virtual appointments, telephone mental health supports, cell phone distribution, curbside care, mobile clinics and Zoom meetings have been the backbone of how we have operated these past two years. Making use of our network of donors and partners, we distributed take-out meals and gift cards so that community members could safely access healthy food. This also allowed us to check in on people and stay connected.

We reached out for more laptops and tablets, enabling our staff to safely conduct outreach and mobile care to those who could not access technology for virtual care or come to us. All of our programs stayed open and accessible to our community, addressing the medical and social factors affecting people including housing instability, addiction and mental health.

We continue to pivot as the pandemic ebbs, flows and morphs. We hope we are heading towards a new and reliable normal. It is reassuring, however, to know that we have been pressure tested for change. If needed, we can and will react quickly to meet the needs of our community. This would not be possible without our donors and partners in the community. We are thankful for all of them.

OUR PARTNERS & DONORS



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNITY HEALTH CLINIC

The North End Community Health Clinic is part of a model of care known as Community Health Centres (CHCs). Our clinic has been around for over 50 years and has been a leader in inter-professional primary health care, ensuring that people receive comprehensive care from the right provider, at the right time, at the right place. This makes best use of resources and helps to overcome gaps in timely and equitable access to health care.

Our independent model of integrated medical and social supports gives our staff at the Community Health Centre incredible flexibility and a full range of tools to address community members' needs. Currently only funded as a primary care facility under the Nova Scotia Health Authority, NECHC relies on donors and partnerships to support additional programming. Our hope would be to get core funding from the Province to provide stability to all our programming including social work, dietetics, trusteeships, food security and community social supports.

This past year has seen much change in the Clinic. Several long-standing team members retired or are gearing up to retire. As such, we have welcomed new team members who are adding their own lens to the work. We undertook a Vaccination Awareness project that significantly increased the vaccine uptake in our clinic. We have also begun to really delve into our data to get a better understanding of our community and its needs. Through all this, of course, we continued to provide quality collaborative primary care to all who needed it.



Good Food Box Client Success Story

Thanks so much for reaching out. I will always have love for the North End Community Health Centre. When I first came to your facility I was preparing to be homeless for a second time. I am so excited to tell you that I was offered a full-time, permanent job that pays a living wage and started on July 18th and I have been working regular office hours, so I can no longer pick up food due to time constraints. I would love to donate now that I am able to! My next paycheck comes on the 15th. Do you take e-transfer?

PAUSE MENTAL HEALTH CLINIC

The NECHC Pause Mental Health Clinic is a low-barrier mental health walk-in or call-in support service for individuals experiencing stress related to a variety of issues. Folks experiencing challenges around the following, but not limited to: grief and loss, anxiety, depression, isolation, workplace stress, childhood trauma, addiction and family and relationship problems.

This program, like so many, started as a pilot project and quickly became a lifeline for our community. Even through COVID, where we mostly provided supports through our Call-in service, the program grew. In the past year, we have added a full-time clinician to manage the program. We also started the process of providing additional locations for the in-person component. Our plan is to continue to grow this service so as to meet the needs of the community in a fuller and more consistent manner.



MOBILE OUTREACH STREET HEALTH (MOSH)

Despite accessible health care being a core Canadian value, those experiencing homelessness face multiple, complex barriers to obtaining appropriate services. This can lead to unmanaged chronic health issues, poor general health, and strains on emergency departments and services. For these folk, there is a need for an integrated approach to healthcare.

Our MOSH Mobile Clinic functions as a clinic on wheels providing full-service care to those experiencing homelessness or living in shelters or encampments. Staffed by physicians, a nurse practitioner, nurses, a health case manager and an occupational therapist, the MOSH “van” can be seen supporting those most in need throughout HRM.

This past year, we also added significant clinical hours to the MOSH roster. We worked closely with the Clinic and our health case manager to provide safe and accessible spaces to allow patients to come into the clinic for more thorough care. We were also pleased to have two new physicians with Harm-reduction expertise join the team.



DENTISTRY

In Canada, an estimated 2.26 million school days are missed each year due to dental-related illness and recent findings suggest that oral diseases account for over \$1 billion per year in productivity losses. Canadians with lower incomes and lower socio-economic status, those without dental insurance, older Canadians, Indigenous and Black Canadians experience worse overall health outcomes than the general population. These are the facts as we have known them for over 50 years. This is why we started our free dental program.

NECHC Dental Clinic, in conjunction with Dalhousie University Dental School and volunteer dentists, provides preventative and restorative dental care free of charge. Without this clinic, those experiencing poverty or homelessness would end up at the emergency room looking for care. Through our work, we alleviate the barrier to getting oral dental care both as a preventative measure and in emergency situations.

Over the years, our hours of operation have not been as consistent as we have always relied on donated funds to keep the program going. This year, we secured funding from the Murphy Foundation that allows us to be open 5 days a week. We are grateful to the Murphy Family for the commitment to support us for three years.



MANAGED ALCOHOL PROGRAM (MAP)

Our Managed Alcohol Program is a medicalized harm reduction, nurse-led program that began as an emergency program in response to COVID in June 2020. A consistent, safe supply of alcohol is prescribed by a physician.

Through daily outreach, and supportive, non-judgmental settings, we support close to 30 community members to reduce harms and stigma associated with severe Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD), and support clients with their primary health goals to live safer, healthier lives. This includes a growing partnership with Shelter Nova Scotia Herring Cove apartments.

This year, we formalized the program and moved it from an emergency response to being part of our permanent supports. The team will not only support their own clients but their expertise and support will be instrumental in the care provided to our Housing clients as well as The Overlook residents.



HOUSING FIRST

NECHC's Supported Housing Department is guided by Housing First principles and includes the provision of both housing and housing support/intensive case management.

The MOSH Housing First program (HF) provides intensive supports to individuals who reside in both private modular units and our own non-profit houses. This collaborative, community-based program places the person at the centre and provides supports that sustain tenancy while building independence. The four Intensive Case Managers, 2 Case Managers, Occupational Therapist and manager support about 120 folks at any given time.

Some HF clients live in one of four buildings that NECHC has purchased over the past year. Some HF clients are housed in master-leased units across the HRM that we operate in partnership with a private landlord. Some HF clients live in one of the two recently opened houses dedicated to supporting African Nova Scotian men. The "Blue Houses" strive to strengthen these men's connection to community and culture through our staffing model and various "spokes of support" within community.

The Overlook (opening end of 2022) will provide on-demand 24/7 peer based harm reduction supports to 64 individuals and couples who actively and problematically use drugs and/or alcohol (problematically as defined by the individual, not the program).



Staff and residents at the Overlook will work together to create a 'community of caring' where everyone is encouraged and supported to look out for one another. The staffing complement will also allow for the provision of wraparound supports that include tenants on-site access to: doctors, nurses, OT, continuing care, harm reduction counselor, indigenous cultural support coordinator and a variety of peer support.

The Overlook will also incorporate up to nine units for individuals who are palliative as well as those requiring respite, so long as they meet our overall intake criteria. To support this work, our team will also include an end of life care coordinator, LPN's and a volunteer program coordinator.

As HRM is in a housing crisis, we will continue to take every opportunity to own or manage spaces that can house our clients in safe and dignified ways.



Darren Fisher & Minister Ahmed Hussen, announcing a \$6.5 million investment for supportive housing.



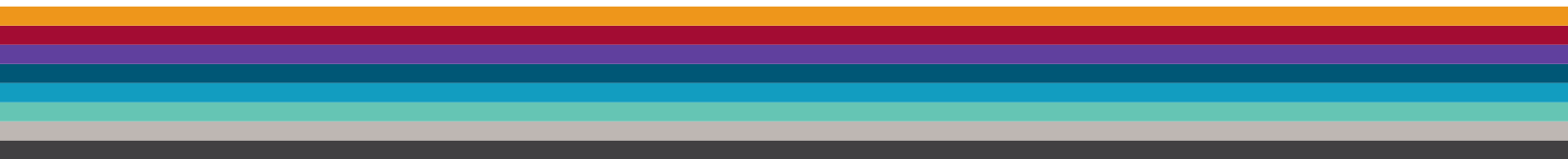
The Overlook team



OUR ADVOCACY

During 2021-2022, NECHC has endeavored to be a positive and practical influencer in policy, economic and social decisions for the homeless issues that individuals have been consistently experiencing in HRM. We have been an advocate for people living rough by purchasing houses where individuals can live with dignity.

Our Supported Housing Department prioritized Halifax community's most vulnerable chronically homeless individuals. Individuals accepted into the programs receive individualized support and case planning. They prioritize individuals and couples with multiple barriers (struggles with substance use, chronic health and mental health) who are African Nova Scotian, Indigenous and/or Transgender and gender diverse.



DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

NECHC was founded 51 years ago on the principle that everyone deserves appropriate and accessible health care. At the time, the founding physicians located the clinic on Gottingen Street to primarily serve the African Nova Scotian community located in Uniacke Square. NECHC continues to prioritize this community while also including Indigenous, LGBTQ+ and all those experiencing poverty and homelessness.

This past year, NECHC started the process of developing a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) framework to more strategically incorporate our principles into the work we do. This framework will be a renewal of commitment to make the North End Community Health Centre a safe, fair, and inclusive place for patients, clients and employees.

To this end, we have added a full-time DEI Advisor and worked to secure funds to allow us to engage as needed. This is work that is on-going. At this time we are beginning the process of formalizing our DEI approach. For so many years we relied on our instincts and community focus. This served us well, however we are now looking to be more intentional.

Our framework will integrate DEI into our hiring, training, and professional development. It will also inform our approach to community engagement and provide additional support to our community partners.

Through this process, NECHC is committing to making DEI an organizational priority. We will hold ourselves accountable for the execution and the results. We commit to weave DEI into the fabric of our culture. We look forward to reporting back on our progress next year.

NECHC & ADSUM PRIDE EVENT 2022

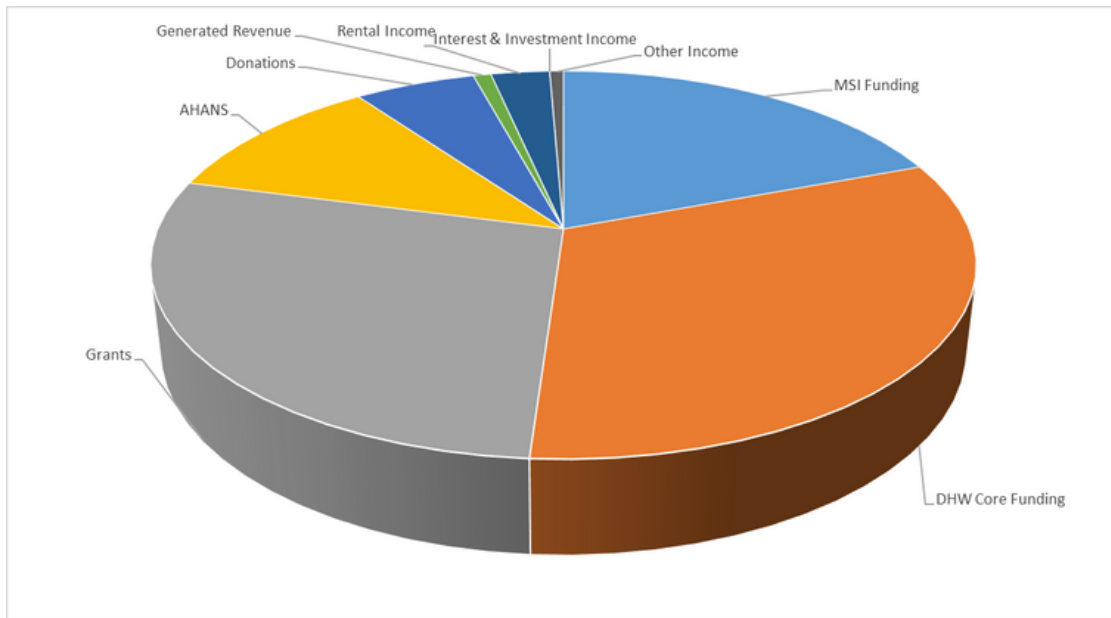


A YEAR IN PICTURES



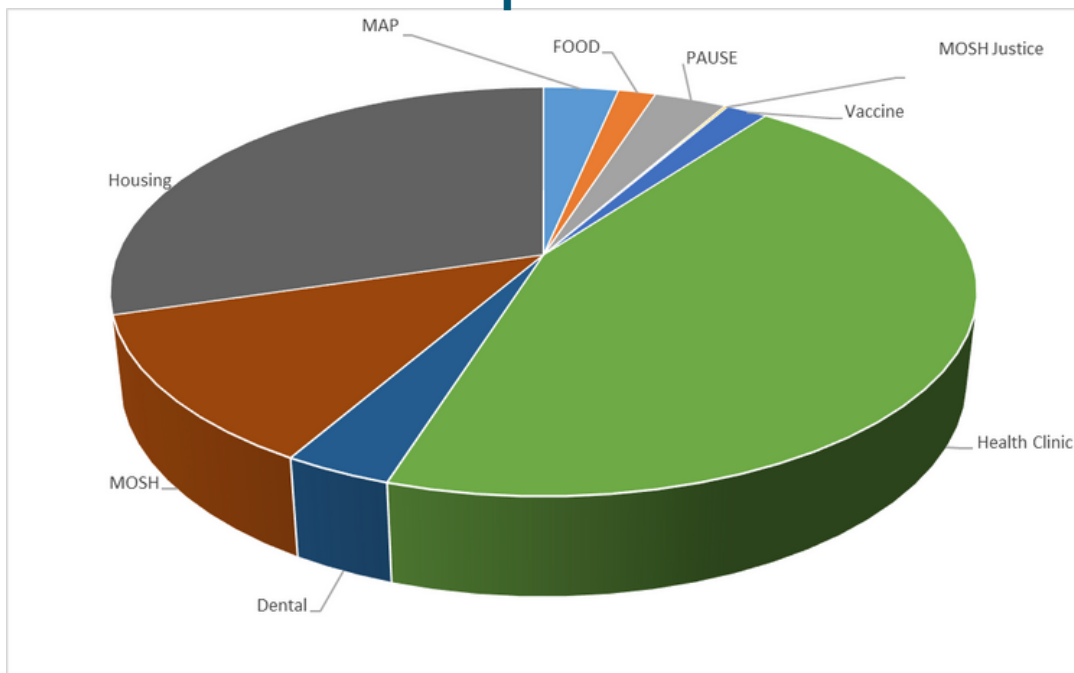
NECHC Financials

Revenue



Total = \$6,522,099.00

Expenses



Total = \$6,363,162.00