

Think outside the box.

Sign up for your **Mental Health First Aid** training today!

**Mental Health
First Aid**



Innovate, Collaborate and Celebrate

2014 - 2015 Annual Report



Ontario Shores
Centre for Mental Health Sciences

Discovery. Recovery. Hope.

Contact mhfa@ontarioshores.ca to find out more.



Resilience Spirit Difference Open
 Strength Everything Love FRIENDSHIP Peace OPPORTUNITY WILL
 Wellness Child SPIRIT LOVE AUTONOMY STRENGTH UNITY Faith Maker Giver
 Life Knowledge BRAVE Focus WELLNESS Complete KNOWLEDGE Opportunity
 EVERYTHING Acceptance Happiness FAMILY COURAGE ADVOCATE COMPLETE Family
 MAKER Listener Teacher Clarity Choice Believing CHOICE Will Perseverance
 COMMUNITY POSSIBILITY Respect DIFFERENCE Advocate HONEST Brave Honest
 FAITH Leader Steadfast Autonomy BELIEVING CHILD Empowerment Recovery
 GIVER CLARITY Courage LIFE PEACE Destiny FORWARD RESILIENCE Forward
 LEADER Friendship OPEN ACCEPTANCE Community DESTINY EMPOWERMENT
 FOCUS LISTENER TEACHER Inspiration PERSISTENCE RECOVERY
 Possibility RESPECT Unity HAPPINESS

Words Matter.



T-shirts available at Ontario Shores



Song download available on iTunes



Music video available on YouTube



Limited edition CD Available at Ontario Shores

Need Help?



Ontario Shores provides
 a range of inpatient and
 outpatient mental health
 and addictions services
 for adolescents to seniors.

Call Central Intake
877.767.9642

Data Highlights

Financial Data

Revenue by Type
\$129,494,000

Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care* **94.0%**

Patient and Ancillary
Revenue **4.1%**

Investment Income **1.9%**

Expenses by Type
\$125,534,000

Compensation **81.9%**

Other Supplies
and Expenses **16.4%**

Drugs and Medical Gases **0.8%**

Rent **0.7%**

Medical and
Surgical Supplies **0.2%**

Working Capital
(\$8,965,000)

Clinical Data

Age on Admission
13 - 18 **11.2%**

19 - 34 **33.1%**

35 - 54 **32.8%**

55 + **22.9%**

Median Length of Stay
62 Days

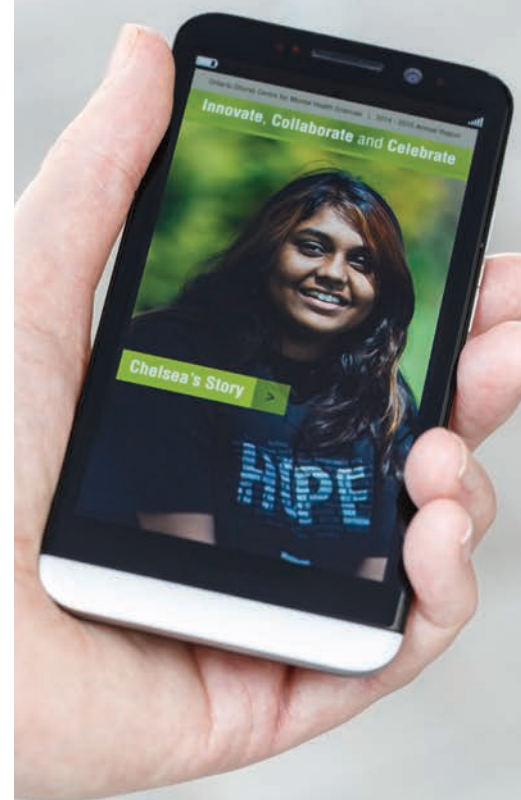
Diagnosis on Discharge
Psychotic Disorders **60.2%**

Mood Disorders **16.9%**

Cognitive Disorders **9.8%**

*Ontario Shores would like to recognize the leadership and funding support provided by the **Central East Local Health Integration Network**.

Get the full story



Check out the
interactive online
Annual Report at
ontarioshores.ca.

Table of Contents

Welcome Message
» 04

Innovate
Eating Disorders Unit » 08
Partial Hospitalization Program » 12
Peer Support Program » 14
HIMSS Stage 7 » 16
Ontario Shores' HealthCheck » 20

Collaborate
Police Simulation Training » 22
Virtual Care » 26
Patient Prom » 28
Hope - A Musician's Journey » 30

Celebrate
Angela's Story » 06
Matthew's Story » 18
Kasey's Story » 24
Chelsea's Story » 32

Data Highlights
» 34

Produced by Ontario Shores'
Communications and Public
Affairs Department.

Welcome Message



Barb Cooney, Chair (Left) and Karim Mamdani, President and CEO (Right)

I grew up in a small community and there weren't many families with 'brown faces' like mine. I started being bullied in kindergarten because I was different and being singled out for my differences has never stopped.

The pressure I felt at school has always been intense. I was always terrified of what word or action was coming at me next.

I was 11 years old when the symptoms of my depression, anxiety and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder became noticeable to my classmates. Even then, I experienced hallucinations and voices, which are triggered when my anxiety is heightened.

Because I was viewed by many of my peers as different, I was pushed down a flight of stairs, thrown into a creek and punched in the face. In the last few years, with the popularity of social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Tumblr, the bullying moved online. At one point there was an 'I hate Chelsea' Facebook page out there and a Twitter account that took a poll on whether or not I should kill myself.

By the time I was 12, I was experiencing suicidal ideation and started self-harming. At that point, my anxiety was getting worse every day because of bullying. By Grade 9

I began missing a lot of school and had attempted suicide.

I was seeing a psychiatrist who told me I needed to be at Ontario Shores, but I was too scared. As this was happening, things were getting worse at school and I was having homicidal thoughts. As my illnesses were getting worse, I felt like I was going to hurt someone.

Eventually an incident at home took the decision to go to Ontario Shores out of my hands.


I was in a deep and dark place when I first came to Ontario Shores. But now, after months as an inpatient, I am thankful that I walked through the doors when I did.

The staff I have worked with care about me and they are teaching skills I can use to help manage my illness and symptoms and now I want to help others who might be in the same place I was.

I also want teachers, principals, parents and all adults to know the impact bullying and social media bullying can have on kids. We need adults to take our complaints seriously. We need adults to teach us when to seek help. And, sometimes, we need adults to speak for us when we can't.

By **Chelsea, Patient**

Celebrate



32

Chelsea, Patient

While often associated with technological advancement, innovation is more than just a buzz word at Ontario Shores. It is embedded in everything we do.

We have certainly used technology to enhance care in 2014 - 2015, but true innovation exists in a mindset and a commitment to leading the evolution of care for the betterment of our patients. Our commitment to deliver efficient and exemplary care to our patients has propelled us to achieving great things.

Our new Eating Disorders Unit is a one-of-its-kind program in Ontario. Our province's young people can now benefit from an interprofessional model of care that includes individual, family and group therapy, psycho-education and meal support.

Our new Partial Hospitalization Program is a time-limited program for patients with serious and persistent mental illness who require support as they transition from hospital to community.

Patients now have the ability to be more informed about their care with the launch of HealthCheck, our new patient portal which allows patients to view their own health record, education materials and medications

We became the first specialty
mental health hospital in Canada

to receive Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Stage 7 designation, which is earned by healthcare organizations that are considered to have a completely paperless electronic health record system that supports the use of patient data to improve performance and patient safety.

This achievement is a symbol of our commitment to improve safety and enhance the quality of care for patients and their families.

This year's Annual Report highlights these accomplishments and others which speak to the organization's collective commitment to exemplary patient care.

Innovation extends beyond one project or one person. Innovation will allow us, as an organization, to challenge traditional treatment and service delivery methods.

Our leaders, staff, volunteers, patients, families and board members who bring passion, determination and dedication to their work every day will play an integral role in advancing both Ontario Shores and our mental health care system.

We look forward to building on our momentum.

By **Barb Cooney, Chair** and **Karim Mamdani, President and CEO**

Angela's Story

Celebrate



Angela, Patient

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness." – Desmond Tutu

When I was asked to be involved in writing this song, I was truly honoured. I've written many songs, but none that carries the weight that this one does. Honestly, it scared me a little, because I wanted to make sure that it not only met the criteria for the cause, but that it would resonate with all the people who would be listening to it. What I didn't know at the time, was how this journey would open my eyes to how truly amazing Ontario Shores is.

Bob Frenette (my co-writer) and I spent a day at Ontario Shores where we were involved in round table discussions with both staff and patients. The goal was to see if we could gain a better understanding of how the process of healing took place, and to see the actual results from the patients and get a better sense of the impact on families. Hope comes in many forms, but this one needed to be a bit more specific than the whole "light at the end of the tunnel" analogy. I also had an amazing phone conversation with Dr. Ian Dawe, and he opened my eyes to the process wider than they've ever been opened before. It was truly inspirational. After I hung up the phone, within minutes the chorus of the song was written. I don't think Bob and I realized how

impactful those meetings would be. And I honestly believe that the song wouldn't be half as meaningful as it is if we didn't attend them.

I always knew the Hope campaign was a worthy cause. I know how passionate my friend Andrea Marshall is about her job, and now I can clearly see why. Ontario Shores is an amazing place. But now that I've been given a glimpse into what goes on there, I can feel the love that resonates within those walls. It gave the song a life that I never expected it to have. It gave me a new found respect for the people that work there. And it gave me a chance to meet some amazing people that I will never forget. I owe them all a great deal of thanks for letting me be a small part of this amazing cause.

As Alan, one of the patients at the round table discussions said "The slogan should be Hope, Discovery and Recovery, because it always begins and ends with Hope."

By **Robert Boutcher, Co-Writer**

The song is part of our Hope for Mental Health Campaign as we do our part to create a society that is inclusive, free from stigma and supportive of those impacted by mental illness.

Hope - A Musician's Journey

Collaborate

Life for Angela has become stable and for her, that is a good thing. Having lived with ups and downs throughout the years, Angela can now say without hesitation "I'm happy!"

Her journey has not been straight forward, with many twists and turns along the way, even as her story continues. Growing up in several different locations and seeing so many places across North America, Angela continued her roaming streak well into adulthood. Now she is settled and seemingly content with her life because stability is what she had been craving.

Completely focused on her goal of being successful, gaining employment as a cook through the work program at Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Durham tops the list of priorities for Angela. She knows in order to do this; there are daily routines that she must follow as she lives with mental illness.

"I do love to cook and I love the people that I work with even more. I get to see these people every day and that is the best part," shares Angela.

It is almost the camaraderie that is seemingly the biggest draw for Angela as she participates five days a week in the program at CMHA

that helps her manage her illness. Cooking has been her passion and now it seems destined to be her career. At CMHA, Angela has gained her food handling certificate, participated in the resume clinic and is now second on the list for paid employment.

Having only been diagnosed with schizophrenia just a few years ago, Angela had often been homeless, in contact with the law and battling substance abuse.

It was her stay at Ontario Shores four years ago, that started Angela on the path of recovery. Having come to the hospital through the forensic system, Angela participated in many programs including volunteer work in the cafeteria and vocational programs.

Now as an outpatient at Ontario Shores, she works closely with the Assertive Community Treatment Team (ACTT) that helps her stay on track in the community, including ensuring that she takes her medication daily.

"When your whole life changes, it takes effort and acceptance to be able to break through the barriers," Angela says of her struggles.

Eating Disorders Unit

Innovate



08

Sara, Clinical Dietitian, EDU

Stepping into a wave of coloured, flashing lights flickering to the rhythmic boom of music was like walking back in time.

The energy of the beat, bested only by the spirit of the masses, echoed throughout this transformed gymnasium. Not to be outdone by the elegant setting, the many dressed in fine gowns and suits were eager to embrace something that had eluded them in younger years. Prom had come to Ontario Shores.

The Prom was a collaboration of many, driven by Patient Council and Peer Support, with countless hours of planning and work and community support. The community also answered the call as Hope Formal Wear graciously donated the formal wear and hosted fittings. Looking out over the floor – there was no contrast between patients, staff and family, just a sea of gowns, suits and smiling faces including Jaisri Mensinkai.

“With my high school days long behind me I never really thought I would be able to enjoy prom. I took my boyfriend to the prom... I was the one who did the asking. It was his first prom as well. There were lots of people and it was lots of fun.

It was nice to go through the process of the dress fitting and be able to keep the dress which I have been

able to use after the dance. Having a corsage and a photo taken as a keepsake made the night even more special.

I am looking forward to next year's prom and being more involved in the planning and helping out so more people can enjoy the same memories and enjoyment prom provided me.”

29



Patient Prom

Collaborate

When Sara joined Ontario Shores last fall, she was excited to be part of something new and innovative. The first-of-its-kind 12 bed Residential Adolescent Eating Disorders Unit was opening at Ontario Shores and she knew it was a place she wanted to be.

"There is still so much we don't know about eating disorders. Having this program in Ontario that combines evidence-based treatment with a strong research component will help us learn new ways to effectively treat young people impacted by these disorders."

Sara is a Registered Dietitian and believes it is important to activate the entire family to help the young person overcome their eating disorder. "Family based therapy is integral to the treatment of eating disorders. It helps families acknowledge how overpowering these eating disorders can be and how difficult it can be to engage in treatment. But we are here to help them learn how to manage symptoms, identify triggers and develop long-term strategies that support recovery."

Sara is part of a clinical team of experts who provide an interprofessional model of care that includes individual, family and group therapy, psycho-education, meal support, nutrition

and eating rehabilitation and psychopharmacologic treatment.

She dedicates most of her time to helping patients and their families fight against the eating disorder. This can range from developing strategies to restore their loved one's nutritional status to teaching intuitive eating skills (trusting our body's cues instead of following strict dietary rules) to learning how to manage the social dynamics related to food such as eating in a restaurant or on special occasions. The unit provides a safe, open and trusting environment for patients to share their challenges, setbacks and struggles and together they work on a plan to help them recover.

"Eating disorders affect all walks of life, across all demographics and cultures. Eating disorders have devastating impacts on family relationships, the adolescent's physical health and emotional well-being. With effective treatment and support, adolescents can gain more insight about the impact of their illness, re-establish positive relationships and develop the coping mechanisms to lead happy, healthy and meaningful lives."

Eating Disorders Unit Continued

Innovate

The world is changing and so too is the way we treat our patients.

Ontario Shores was an early adopter to the opportunities presented by the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN). Challenged by geography and scheduling demands of clinical experts, OTN's secure video conferencing network has proven to be a significant resource in providing links to clinical, educational and administrative events.

"We need to adapt to our patients' needs or we risk being left behind," notes Dr. Hoa Pham, Medical Director of Ontario Shores' Integrated Community Access Program.

OTN links Ontario Shores' community office locations with clinical experts located at 700 Gordon Street. The opportunity for patients to participate in psychiatric assessments and group programming eliminates travel hindrances for all parties while allowing clinicians to maximize time spent delivering services to patients.

Connecting community office locations has proven to be a valuable tool for clinicians and patients, but the next generation of OTN at Ontario Shores promises to turn traditional care on its head.

Guest Link, now available at Ontario Shores, is a new enhancement to the Personal Videoconferencing service.

In the early stages of being made available, Guest Link allows patients to use videoconferencing for initial and/or follow-up patient consultations from the convenience of a personal computer. It's changing the way mental health care is being delivered.

"It's proven to be popular for patients, especially those who face barriers like travel," says Dr. Pham.

A big proponent of Guest Link, Dr. Pham says meeting patients virtually requires some adjustment for both the clinician and patient.

"It's a different method of delivering care and there is a comfort level that needs to be reached," he says. "However, patients have responded well and the demand to provide the service in this manner has increased, from my perspective."

The Kitchen on the Eating Disorders Unit

Virtual Care

Collaborate

"What sets this unit apart from others in the Province is that we are addressing all of the aspects of the disorder. Our goals are to not only treat the medical components of the illness but through intensive treatment, help children and adolescents recover from the psychological aspects of the illnesses, develop positive eating habits, and ultimately achieve a full recovery so they can enjoy all opportunities their futures have to offer," says Dr. Leora Pinhas, Physician Lead, Eating Disorders Program.

Approximately **32,400** children and adolescents are affected by eating disorders in Ontario.

Eating disorders have the **highest mortality rate** of any mental illness for children and adolescents.

Eating disorders are the **second most chronic** illness among children and adolescents between 9 and 14 years of age.

In Ontario, it is estimated that **between 1,448 and 5,069** children and adolescents (ages 10 to 18) will develop an eating disorder each year.

Eating disorders affect approximately **18%** of adolescent girls.

Approximately **10 - 15%** of people suffering with Anorexia or Bulimia are males.

Partial Hospitalization Program

Innovate



12

Rhonda, Patient (Left) with Heather, RPN, PHP (Right)

Taking a stand for what she believes is right has always been the way Kasey lives.

"I have always considered myself an advocate and seek to stand up for others as well as for my own rights," says Kasey, who provides a voice to a number of patient-impacted initiatives at Ontario Shores.

Growing up with a learning disability in what she describes as difficult circumstances, Kasey began hearing voices and experiencing delusions in her 20s, shortly after losing her grandfather.

"I couldn't sleep and I couldn't eat," recalls Kasey.

She tried to rebound on her own, throwing herself into volunteering and this time even pursuing school at a local organization. She participated in a sleep study and discovered that she had sleep apnea and that she was living with depression. Since that time, Kasey has also been diagnosed with bipolar disorder.

"I was put on medication and gained a lot of weight," Kasey remembers. The medication also impacted her dental hygiene but it helped her psychosis she says and allowed her to be able to start getting help.

Ontario Shores provided her with the opportunity to go to school as an outpatient and also worked with Kasey to manage her anger and reduce any relapse into her illness. She also dealt with her weight gain caused by the medication through the hospital's Metabolic and Weight Management Clinic.

"I was the first person in my program to complete all my Illness Management Recovery steps," says Kasey.

Throughout her recovery Kasey has experienced both ups and downs. However, she remains positive and determined to make a difference by helping others.

"I want to share my story with as many people as I can," says Kasey. "Without hope you have nothing. I will always have mental illness, but I am learning how to cope with it and that's what makes the difference."

25

Kasey's Story

Celebrate

24

Kasey, Patient

Armed with a smile and ready to share her experiences and life lessons, Rhonda says she hasn't felt this good in a long time. Living with depression and physical mobility issues, Rhonda is now working on very specific goals at Ontario Shores through the Partial Hospitalization Program (PHP).

"I am learning to live in the moment. I can do more than I thought I could," Rhonda shares.

Working with therapists in the short-term day program, Rhonda says the staff in PHP are fantastic. "They are always smiling and that makes me feel right at home. Everyone is always encouraging me to participate and that is good," she adds. This welcoming environment is one that Rhonda believes helps her to participate and share fully in the therapy groups.

Having been an inpatient, Rhonda now participates in the program that will help her reintegrate in the community, as she continues on her recovery journey. This includes group sessions that highlight recovery strategies, relapse prevention and mindfulness.

"Just meeting new people, getting out of the house and following a routine is important to me and helps me a lot," says Rhonda who is learning a number of different

techniques in her therapy sessions, including music and art. "I am dealing with my moods better."

Busy embracing her recovery and her new way life, Rhonda is making plans for the next steps in her recovery journey. She plans to volunteer in the community and might even be spotted around Ontario Shores, where she plans to stay in touch with the good friends she has made in the program.

"I see this as a new way of life and I know that I have to keep busy. This program helps me realize that it is a good thing to show my emotions and problems and then see what I can do about it."

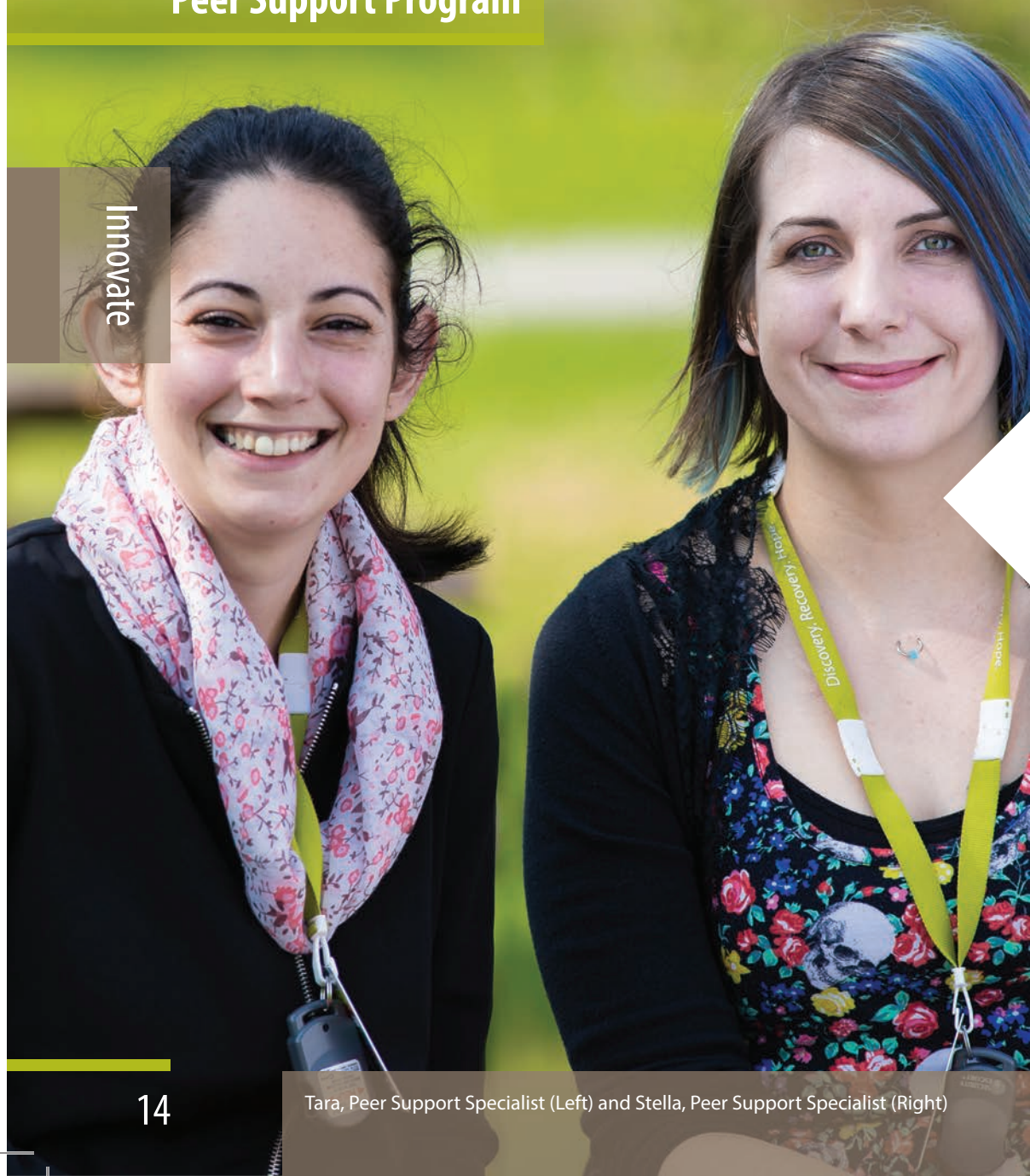
PHP supports individuals living with a serious and persistent mental illness who need support transitioning from hospital to the community. The program also facilitates patients who are ready to be discharged but may require some additional clinical supports as they progress to community living.

The success of this service is the variety of treatment and programming options available, which include assessments and consultations, individual or group therapy, music and art therapy, metabolic monitoring, family engagement and leisure and recreation groups.

13

Peer Support Program

Innovate



Tara, Peer Support Specialist (Left) and Stella, Peer Support Specialist (Right)

Christina, Sergeant, York Regional Police (Left) and Cathy, Clinical Manager, FPRU (Right)



in the United Kingdom have taken the training which has now been adopted by the Ontario Police College.

"York Regional Police has recognized that community partnerships are really important," says York Regional Police Sergeant Christina Baker. "When it comes to the training of our officers with the best tools, we work closely with Ontario Shores."

One in 20 police dispatches are for people dealing with mental health challenges. Three in 10 people with mental illness have had police involved in their care pathway. Yet almost half of those encounters with police are not related to criminal conduct.

"A partnership like this is very crucial and I know it has been a good experience for our officers on the front line and it is changing the way we do business."

Police Simulation Training

Collaborate

When someone is struggling with mental health crisis, police are often the first called and the first to respond. Having the understanding and the tools to manage those interactions is essential.

In 2006, Durham Regional Police reached out to the University of Ontario Institute of Technology to help develop training that would assist its officers to interact safely with people who may be in mental health crisis. With Ontario Shores, the

Police Simulation Training program was created to help educate officers on how to engage and appropriately and safely interact.

The result is an easy to use simulation model that supports other forms of police training and education.

The Police Simulation Training has been used by a number of police forces including York, Calgary, Brantford, Sudbury, LaSalle, Waterloo. In addition, 3,000 officers

Being able to talk to and trust someone who has first-hand experience with mental illness is invaluable.

The Peer Support Program at Ontario Shores consists of a group of dedicated people who provide support to patients, family and friends within our hospital community. These people are dedicated to self-advocacy, personal responsibility, education and above all – hope.

They are our peers because they have each walked in our shoes. Each has, or still does, suffer from mental illness – and are not afraid to tell their stories to anyone concerned enough to ask.

I know from a personal standpoint how invaluable they have been. Sometimes I can't wait for the next appointment with my Peer Support Specialist when I just need someone to talk to. Whenever I have gone to their office unexpectedly, I have been greeted warmly and made to feel important. They make time for me.

They are wonderful listeners and can empathize with whatever it is I need to talk about. Peer Support is not meant to take the place of your mental health professionals but rather, they are there to help you gainfully travel through your

personal wellness experience by providing you with education or a better understanding of your journey. They are there when you are looking for support out in our community. They were there for me when I was looking for a place to volunteer; they provided me with a list of agencies that need and value volunteers.

Seemingly, they are always there to give encouragement each day and assist us in becoming productive members of the community.

I would like to thank our Peer Support Specialists and let them know they are not only needed but also appreciated by those whose lives they have touched.

As patients, we feel fortunate to have the opportunity to chat with them on units, in hallways and in their offices when we need to.

By **Joanne, Patient**

HIMSS Stage 7

Innovate



Now both inpatients and outpatients can manage their own health information through our newly launched patient portal, called HealthCheck.

Available through an internet connection, patients of Ontario Shores now have timely and secure access to their own health record online. Currently, users are able to view appointments and medications and access discharge instructions and educational materials.

"A tremendous sense of autonomy over your own recovery," is how Roxanna Bennett describes her experience with HealthCheck.

Having used the online portal which allows access to her complete health information in a private and secure way, Roxanna fully supports the tool.

"I am so excited about this portal because it allows me so much flexibility and freedom," she shares.

Roxanna explains that she can contact her doctor about her prescription renewals at any time over the Internet.

"I don't have to worry about tracking my doctor down; my request is simply logged in to the system when I need it to be."

"Having access to this information about my visits and being able to make my own notes is very helpful in managing my own care. I can make notes about side effects that I am having from specific medications and my doctors will be able to see that and track it. I won't have to rely on my memory when I go in for my next visit and I won't forget things, as it is right there documented for me," she adds.

"If I may not be feeling well enough to leave the house on a particular day, I can log on to HealthCheck and get any information I may need."

As a tool that helps you track your health, Roxanna believes that HealthCheck helps individuals see the whole picture in their care plan.

"Everything is located in one place – my medications, my therapy notes, my lab reports will all be available. I am therefore able to see the bigger picture and can discuss this openly with all my doctors."

On navigating the portal, Lorraine, a patient in our Partial Hospitalization Program, says it is quite easy.

"It is simple and basic and anyone should be able to figure it out quite quickly even if you are not very computer savvy."



Ontario Shores' HealthCheck

Innovate

20

Roxanna, Patient

Imagine having to tell your story to one nurse. Then the shift changes, a float nurse arrives on the scene and they are asking some of the same questions. You tell it again. Later, you are admitted to a different hospital. You are asked to tell your story yet again, and again.

It's frustrating for both the patients and the people trying to help them.

When Ontario Shores set out to achieve Healthcare Information and Management Systems Society (HIMSS) Stage 7 in the Electronic Medical Record Adoption Model (EMRAM) things seemed to be happening fast in the units.

Monitors replaced our white boards in our meeting rooms and information around patient and medication scanning was coming steadily.

As a hospital, I always thought we were ahead of a lot of other organizations in terms of a striving toward a paperless environment. But achieving Stage 7 and being completely paperless, has, in my opinion improved safety for both patients and staff.

Prior to Stage 7, assisting a patient meant having to look up both their electronic record on Meditech and any associated hard copies. As a nurse, you would have to search

through a medication book prior to administering medication. It could take time to find the medication, especially if a doctor's handwriting was difficult to decipher.

Now, we operate in a more efficient and consistent manner.

When I am treating a patient I now have instant access to their plan of care, which I can be confident is complete, and a full catalogue of medications which I can easily search through. If I am a float nurse unfamiliar with a patient, I can review their health information to gain a better understanding of a patient's treatment, history and triggers.

I was working with a recently admitted patient who had spent time at a hospital in Toronto. In a Stage 7 environment I was able to access their health information and concentrate on treatment and getting them acquainted to Ontario Shores instead of asking a series of questions they had undoubtedly been asked on more than one occasion.

A few months after achieving Stage 7, I believe staff across the hospital are seeing the benefits of an Electronic Medical Record (EMR) that provides complete information in a consistent place.

By **Matthew, RN, ASU**

17

Matthew's Story

Celebrate



Matthew, Patient

"I have experienced a lot of things," says Matthew in a knowing way.

It is the voice that first surprises you with its depth and warmth and then the unexpected British accent makes you lean in to hear more. After which, the words of wisdom begin to sink in and you are captivated.

Matthew is a bright, intelligent and charming man who is able to eloquently share his story, with the intention of helping others, he is sure to mention.

For him, it is family that seemingly matters the most and all those he has met become an extended part of his family. He therefore feels a sense of responsibility to help them in any way he can.

Having being diagnosed as living with schizophrenia and schizoaffective disorder, Matthew is now well enough to share his story of recovery and rehabilitation.

"The team at Ontario Shores genuinely seems to care about what you are going through and your recovery journey," shares Matthew.

The journey began when Matthew, who grew up in Britain, moved to Canada to start a new life with his wife and young daughter and began noticing symptoms of his mental illness such as hearing voices, being

delusional and having false beliefs.

"Being here has really helped me to be well," acknowledges Matthew, who was admitted through the forensic mental health system. "My doctors were able to get my medication right from early on and that has done wonders for me. I am a full advocate of mental health psychiatric drugs. We should let the professionals do what they do."

His life at Ontario Shores has put him in the centre of a large family.

"I see here as being one big family, with everyone being my brother and sister. I am happy to share any insight with others on the importance of family, my values, my culture or my illness," says Matthew.

He shares with anyone from patients to the doctors and nurses and it is engaging with other people that makes it interesting for him.

Matthew's journey shows that mental illness is only one part of his life and he is really hopeful for the future.

"When you have a mental illness, it may seem like doom and gloom and it always seem like a long journey ahead of you, but this journey can be fruitful and have positive outcomes."