



Rideau Community  
Health Services

Your Community Health Centre

# ANNUAL REPORT 2020-2021



*\* Photos that appear in this publication were captured with COVID-19 precautions in place.*

# Message from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

## Working together building healthy communities

It is our privilege, as Rideau Community Health Services (RCHS) Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer, to present our annual report to our members, clients, partners, and staff. The 2020-2021 year has truly been exceptional on so many fronts. RCHS faced unprecedented challenges with increasing complexities due to the COVID-19 pandemic. RCHS responded with strength, compassion, and ongoing resilience. We believe you will share our feelings of pride and admiration for our team at RCHS.

## Board Governance

RCHS successfully completed its Strategic Plan for 2021-2024. We would like to thank the board, staff, community, and many partners who contributed to its development. The highlights of the RCHS Strategic Plan for 2021-2024 are:

**Vision:** Working together building healthy communities.

**Mission:** We engage individuals, agencies, and partners to improve the health and wellbeing of our communities.

### Strategic Directions for 2021-2024:

- Working Together to Improve Health and Wellbeing.
- Working Together to Support Innovation and Community Connection.
- Working Together for Person- and Community-Centered Care.

Please visit our website for more information.  
[www.rideauchs.ca](http://www.rideauchs.ca).

As an organization, we recognized the need to be thoughtful and deliberate in understanding our role in addressing systemic racism and oppression. We continue to work to ensure that we are cultivating a culture of inclusion for our clients, staff, and community.

The Board enhanced its knowledge and understanding of health service programs by introducing an education session at each board meeting to learn more about the programs delivered by RCHS and community partners.

A new skills and competencies matrix was developed to identify the skills needed by the board over the next few years in its recruitment process. In addition, several policies were updated to reflect governance best-practices.

We would like to acknowledge the important contributions of Ian Donald, Terry Lee, and Bob Long. Ian and Terry will retire from the Board after serving for 7 years, and Bob after serving for 6. During their tenure, they have been instrumental in promoting the reputation of RCHS, and the health and well-being of the communities we serve. We would like to thank Sandy Shaw for her contributions who will be leaving the board after completing a 2 year term and we wish her all the best in her new position.

In the fall of 2020, we also welcomed Don Palmer and Dorothy Thomson as new board members. We also welcomed Jackie Lord who joined the board in a new position as Board Community Member.

The Board of Directors is pleased to recognize the Adult Learning and Training Centre as this year's recipient of the annual Community Recognition Award, for their ongoing effort to support our communities.

We would like to thank our engaged and committed board members and staff for their work over the past year. We are very grateful for their service, leadership, and guidance.

## Operational Review and New Initiatives

Over the last year, in addition to our regular day to day operations, RCHS has been privileged to have worked with system partners to ensure our ongoing programs and services support the priorities, as well as supporting the community assessment centers and vaccinations centers.

We have been successful in maintaining and improving access during COVID-19. The importance of being able to mobilize technology and adapt how we connect with our clients and our communities is evident in our ongoing access. The diabetes team made more than 9000 client connections in 2020/21 – an astounding accomplishment for a small, but mighty team.

Primary care has expanded their use of technology by integrating video with their health records platform. The team was able to roster 308 new patients bringing our rostered patients to more than 5600 primary healthcare clients, many of whom have complex needs and require supports from many of our service providers.

RCHS is in its 3rd year of our information technology strategy. Modernization, security, and collaboration have been the pillars.



Modernization and business continuity were completed in year one. 2020/21 saw the implementation of our security protocols including new encryption, backups, and the deployment of two-factor authentication. This has allowed us to deploy a fully-remote service delivery. The coming year we will turn our attention to meaningful and effective use of our new tools with a focus on collaboration.

We continued moving ahead by expanding our regional dental program (in partnership with Country Roads CHC, ConnectWell Community Health, and LLG Public Health), and now there are four dental suites in operation – three which were completed during the pandemic year! We would like to extend a big thanks to the RCHS team and contractors for their resilience and perseverance in ensuring the safety of our staff, clients, and themselves.

It was identified by community partners that there were unaddressed food security needs in Smiths Falls. We were successful in receiving funding from the Town of Smiths Falls and Lanark County that enabled RCHS to partner with the Legion in Smiths Falls to offer Brown Bag Lunches twice weekly to 150 individuals and families. We had to quickly pivot our Emergency Food Cupboard in Merrickville to curbside pick-up only. Thanks to the generosity our communities have shown, we are able to offer individuals and families access more frequently. Additionally, we hosted a working session with many community partners to brainstorm options for sustainable food security initiatives that will address present and future community needs. This work will be ongoing over the next fiscal year.

### Integrated Care at RCHS: Primary Care and Health Promotion Programs

Our community and clinical teams continue working together to activate supports, ensure access and

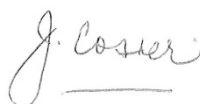
resources to our clients and families in need. This includes:

- system navigation and connecting clients to community supports,
- proactive outreach by phone or home visits,
- delivering food or other necessities,
- offering groups over zoom to help individuals feel more connected and learn about healthy eating,
- one-on-one counselling to address health and wellness challenges

### Partnerships

RCHS continues to participate in the Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville Ontario Health Team (LLG-OHT), and provides support to the many working groups and standing committees. We are committed to working with persons with lived experience and new and existing partners as we support system change. The OHT will support improvement to the experience of our clients, patients, and caregivers, while ensuring the changes are seamless and founded in quality. We look forward to continuing to build the relationships with our partners so that our communities will continue to benefit from connected health and social services.

The events of this last year have strengthened our commitment to our clients, providers, and communities and would like to say **thank you** for the collective dedication of our team which has never wavered.



**Janet Cosier**  
Chair of the Board



**Michele Bellows**  
Chief Executive Officer

***"Over the past year, I have accessed several services within RCHS on behalf of the individuals I support within Lanark County Support Services (LCSS). Each and every time, it has been a positive experience. The staff at RCHS are very professional to deal with and have all been very helpful in assisting the individuals I support. This organization continues to go above and beyond when it comes to patient care, as well as in directing individual's to the services they need. I look forward to working with RCHS in the future, and will continue to recommend this organization to others."***

***-Instructor, LCSS***

### 2020-2021 Board of Directors

Bob Long, Vice Chair  
Deb McGuire, Director  
Don Palmer, Director  
Dorothy Thomson, Director  
Ian Donald, Director  
Jackie Lord, Community Representative  
Janet Cosier, Chair  
Katie Weststrate, Director  
Michele Bellows, CEO  
Michèle LeBlanc, Treasurer  
Sandy Shaw, Director  
Terry Gilhen, Secretary  
Terry Lee, Director



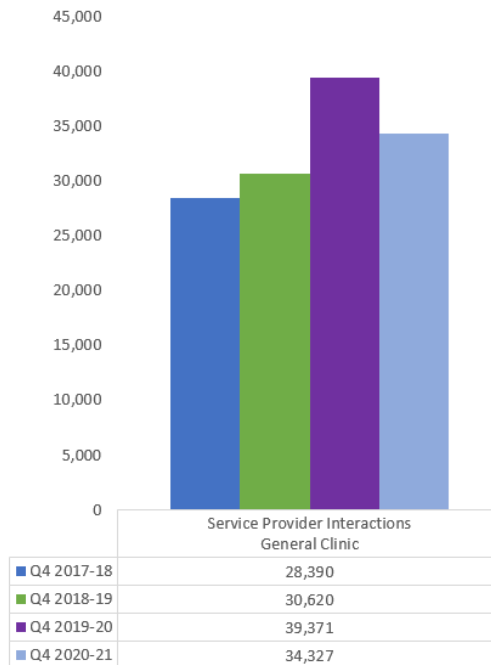
# Primary Health Care in a Community Health Centre

RCCHS has also registered **308** new primary care clients since April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020, with a total panel size of **5624**.

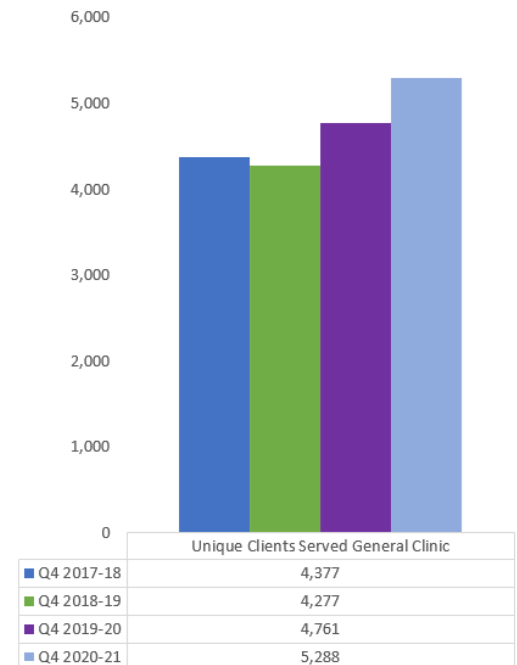
Many of these new clients have not had access to health care and often presented with multiple diagnoses, as well as other complexities that have a negative impact on a person's sense of wellness.

With the diverse set of skills represented across our teams and the ongoing ability to provide quality, compassionate care our clients report they are feeling connected and well served.

### Individual Service Interactions



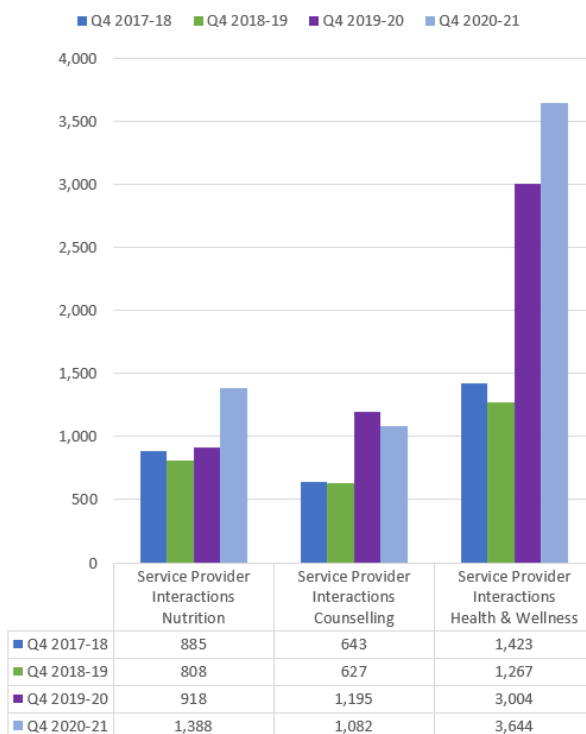
### Clients Served in One Year



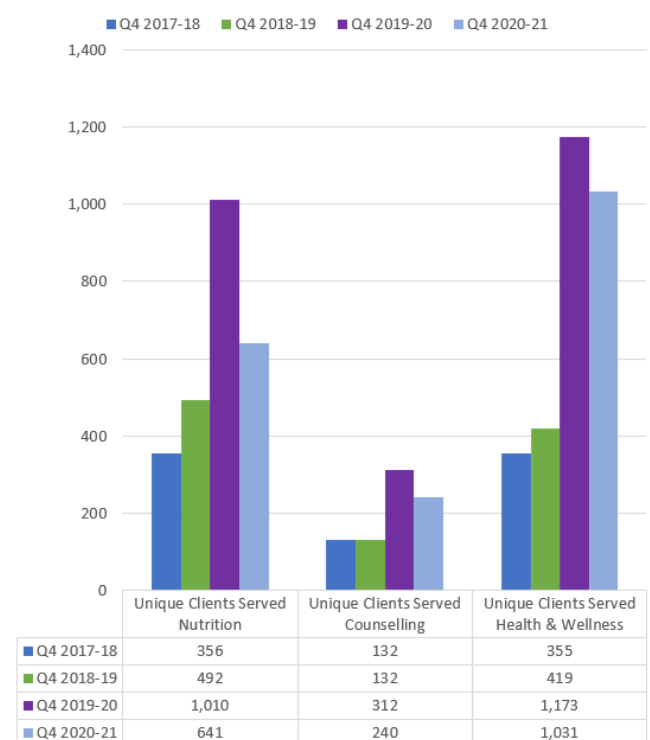
## Health and Wellness Services

As a Community Health Centre, our priority is to serve those people in our communities who face the most barriers. As we would expect, COVID-19 has had a significant impact on those people who are most vulnerable and who may have already had struggles accessing housing or food security or who are looking for support with both their physical and mental health and well being

### Individual Service Interactions



### Unique Clients Served in One Year

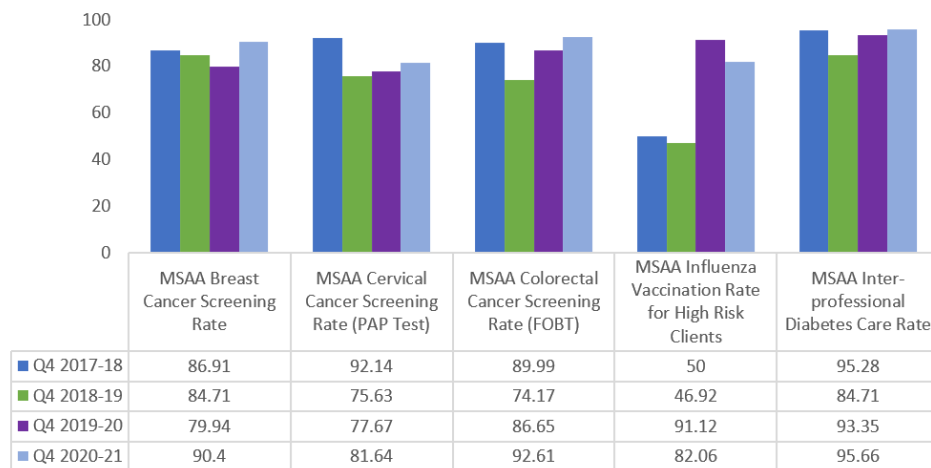




# RCHS 2020-2021 Performance

## Multi-Sector Service Accountability Agreement (MSAA)

Even with the additional pressures that came from delivering essential services during a pandemic, RCHS was able to meet and exceed our cancer screening targets, which resulted in the early detection and treatment of multiple cancer diagnoses.



## It Takes a Village

### A Community Approach to Health and Wellness

It takes a village has never been more meaningful than it is today. We have been overwhelmed by the generosity of the communities and have received over \$45,000 in donations to support our communities.

In addition to the monetary donations, RCHS continues to receive food donations from the community on a regular basis. RCHS has received a total of 9000 lbs in non-perishable foods, of which approximately 3000 lbs came from individuals and 6000 lbs was donated to the EFC by the Prescott Food Bank through our work together as United Food Banks.

From ensuring access to health services and healthy food to providing health education, counselling and support, there are countless people working hard to ensure that everyone in our community has the information, services and programs necessary to live a healthier lifestyle.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic continues to negatively impact our communities, however, at RCHS we are seeing the wonderful responses that our communities have had in response to the pandemic. We continue to have a network of partners, organizations, individuals and volunteers that are committed to the health and wellness of our community.



Mayor Doug Struthers (right) presents RCHS CEO Michele Bellows (middle) and RCHS Board member Terry Gilhen (left) with \$4,500 cheque from the Village.



The CP Holiday Train annual fundraiser helps collect food for community needs programs such as the RCHS Merrickville Emergency Food Cupboard. Donations received after the Virtual Train of 2020

# Your Voice Matters!

Highlights from the 2020 Individual Clients, Groups and Staff Surveys:

## Individual Clients

**74%**

*of clients responded that they would continue to choose virtual appointments (where appropriate) once in-person visits are more available.*

"I hope you keep this combo of virtual/in-person visits. Sometimes I have a concern that warrants a phone call and consult without needing to see someone in person. This is very convenient and I feel that I still get the same level of care. I prefer it actually because it saves time and I can access service quicker."

**98%** *of clients rated the care they received at RCHS as either good/very good, or excellent*

"I am always so pleased with how friendly, caring atmosphere. I also impressed how when you are in for an appointment (or virtual) how they take the time listen and go above and beyond to make sure that your health concerns are taking care. I truly appreciate their dedication and giving so much of themselves."

## Groups

**96.3%** *of client responded that they felt an increased sense of wellness and emotional health due to participating in the group.*

"Improved my health and physical wellbeing."

"It keeps me moving."

**100%** *of client responded that they felt they gained what they were hoping to gain from the group.*

"Helps with pain from arthritis."

"Help to maintain or increase strength mobility."

## Staff

**95%** *of staff would either recommend or somewhat recommend RCHS as a place to work*

"I feel especially lucky to be working with RCHS in these crazy times. I believe management has done an excellent job managing most of the variables that enable me to do my job safely and with ease so that I can be present for patients."

**100%** *of staff feel the occupational health and safety of staff is a priority for RCHS*

"We have a wonderful system in place to keep us safe, and RCHS is always listening to any suggestions employees have."

# Community Recognition Award

## 2021 Recipient: Adult Learning and Training Centre

The Board of Directors and Staff of Rideau Community Health Services is pleased to announce that the Adult Learning and Training Centre (ALTC) is the recipient of our annual Community Recognition Award. The ALTC enables the success of any RCHS clients who are referred to their agency.

The ALTC is a non-profit, community-based agency that provides personalized training and skills for adults. They are one of three literacy and basic skills providers in Lanark County and Smiths Falls. The ALTC helps adults gain the skills, education, or training they need to build a future, including reading and writing skills, math skills, computer skills, employment skills, and preparation for further education.

The Community Recognition Award is presented annually to an individual or group who makes significant contributions to the clients of RCHS and the community we serve.



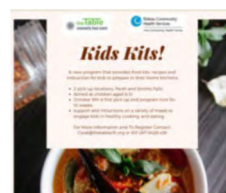
*"Pauline Levesque, Executive Director of the Adult Learning and Training Centre is presented the 2021 Community Recognition Award by Michele Bellows, CEO, and Terry Gilhen, Board Secretary"*

## Program Highlights

### Update of our Diabetes Education and Nutrition Programs

Our team of diabetes educators and CHC dietitians adapted immediately to the pandemic restrictions in March 2020. Our diabetes team has kept pace with incoming referrals, delivering service mostly by phone appointments, but also offering virtual and in person appointments as needed. Although chronic disease took a back seat to the immediate needs of the covid virus, we have noticed increased referrals for diabetes as the months have passed, and in fact, our appointment volume for 2020/2021 surpassed our previous targets. Although our group education sessions were offered virtually, there was little uptake from our clients, and we are looking at ways to improve this option for our clients in the new fiscal year. We have also supported clients who were attending our weekly exercise classes by offering weekly videos and individual exercise counselling if required.

Our CHC dietitians have been very successful with their group education offerings, and their commitment and creativity are demonstrated by the excellent uptake of their virtual groups. Education sessions on emotional eating, intuitive eating, healthy weights and cooking classes have all continued in 2020/2021, along with individual appointments by phone, video or in person as needed. Our plan for the new fiscal year is to retain what we have learned about ways to support clients, and continue to offer a variety of service options.



# Program Highlights... Continued

## A Pandemic Silver Lining

The COVID-19 pandemic has been an experience like none other for our staff and communities.

Over this past year we have learned to be creative in how we support our clients and families in need and found that virtual meetings have allowed us to work more closely with community partners who may not have otherwise been able to come together to collaborate as quickly and frequently.

We regularly are supporting people and families who are vulnerable in multiple ways such as: lack of access to finances, clothes, travel, food and other personal needs. This also includes activating other supports related to psycho-social wellness. i.e. supporting people with little to no social network, lack of access to parental modelling of healthy nurturing and care for children.

In a recent case through advocacy and attention we were able to facilitate the mobilization of ten community partners each able to provide support from their areas of expertise. This includes ongoing case conferencing, brainstorming, and collaboration on a biweekly basis.

Thanks to access to virtual care options, all players can work in-place and can access our sessions at their finger tips. As a collaborative we are able to find innovative ways to connect community members to resources like: cell phones for safety, housing, clothing, education support.

***"I'm not sure I can express how grateful I am for their services. There have been times when I've needed to use the emergency food cupboard on a regular basis. I don't know what I would have done if it wasn't available."***

***I have also received assistance with navigating government services, faxing forms and letters, but most importantly, RCHS has been safe and supportive environment for me.***

***I'm now in a position to give back, so I volunteer regularly at the emergency food cupboard. I help organize and restock supplies, and prepare boxes for clients. I have also planted and harvested for our community vegetable gardens.***

***Hopefully, these services will continue to evolve in our community as it has helped me through very difficult times."***

**- RCHS Client**

## Technology Enhancements to Improve Client Care

The Information Management/Technology accomplishments during the fiscal year 2020-21 truly allowed RCHS to continue to care for our clients during an unprecedented interruption of traditional infrastructure.

- ◆ The introduction of Office 365 ensured our staff remained collaborative remotely by using TEAMS.
- ◆ Deploying two factor authentication security tokens gave us more cyber security tools.
- ◆ The server modernization project allowed us to streamline our systems creating greater efficiency.
- ◆ RCHS launched a new fresh website that will help make our resources available to our community.

We continue to discover and pursue areas of excellence, security and efficiency recognizing that our people and systems are our most valuable RCHS assets.

