

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



Rideau Community
Health Services



Rideau Community
Health Services

Your Community Health Centre

Merrickville Site

354 Read St.

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Michele Bellows

As we reflect on the past year, it is with immense pride and gratitude that I present the annual report for our Community Health Centre. This year has been a testament to the resilience, dedication, and collaboration that define our communities across Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville.

RCHS saw its share of challenges in 2023-2024, many of which relate to the unique difficulties faced by rural communities, including staffing challenges, scarcity of resources, and finding ways to best support the health and well-being of our clients and communities, which include some of the most complex and vulnerable individuals. However, these challenges have, and continue to bring out the best in our team and community members. We continue to be able to adapt to challenges swiftly and implement innovative solutions to ensure the continuity of care and support for all who depend on us.

Our achievements this year would not have been possible without the incredible support from our community partners, volunteers, and staff. Together, we have strengthened our network, enhancing our capacity to provide comprehensive and compassionate care. I am especially proud of the collaborative efforts that have led to the establishment of new programming, partnerships, and the development of the trans health clinic.

As we move forward, we remain committed to our mission of improving the health and well-being of our community. We will continue to advocate for increased resources and support for rural health services, recognizing the unique challenges we face. Our focus will be on further expanding access to our programs and services, integrating more technology to improve access to care, and fostering an environment of continuous learning and growth.

I extend my deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff, volunteers, board members, and community partners. Your unwavering commitment and hard work have been the cornerstone of our success. To our community members, thank you for your trust and support. It is an honor to serve you, and we are inspired by your resilience and strength. Together, we will continue to build a healthier, stronger, and more connected community.

Michele Bellows, Chief Executive Officer



REFLECTIONS FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Christopher Cummings

In 2023-2024, we welcomed three new directors to the Board – Bridget Bygrave, Sharon O'Hara, and Tim Woods. We are grateful to have them onboard! Detailed biographies on all of the board members can be viewed on the Rideau Community Health Services website.

2023-2024 Board of Directors

Chris Cummings, Chair
Sandra Shaw, Vice Chair
Juli Heney, Secretary
Irv Mazurkiewicz, Treasurer
Dorothy Thomson, Director
Jackie Lord, Director
Christine Joli-Coeur, Director
Sandy Mark, Director
Stefany Kawka, Director
Bridget Bygrave, Director
Sharon O'Hara, Director
Tim Woods, Director
Michele Bellows, CEO
Kristian Gundersen, Exec Asst.



During the year, the Board met seven times to carry out its oversight responsibilities. The Board enhanced its knowledge and understanding of community health programs and services by including an education session at each of its board meetings to learn more about the programs delivered by RCHS, and the programs delivered by community partners.

A number of board governance policies were modernized to incorporate governance best practices. Educational training opportunities were provided to board members to enhance the Board's knowledge of diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice matters. The Board held its annual retreat in April, and we welcomed Liz Weaver of The Tamarack Institute to lead us in a session with three main goals in mind.

- To increase clarity about the governance roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors.
- To engage board members in the strategic focus of RCHS and contributions of the Board to advancing strategy.
- To identify the supports required by members to effectively fulfill their roles.

We would like to thank our engaged and committed board members, volunteers, leadership team, and staff for their dedicated work over the past year. We are very grateful to staff for the quality of the services delivered to enhance the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

Christopher Cummings, Board Chair

Accountability

The Board of Rideau Community Health Services is not only accountable to itself, our staff, and our clients, but also our communities and the general public. Our Board prides itself on our ability to provide safe, accessible, and high quality programs and services in an efficient, effective, and financially responsible manner.

Statement of Operations 2023 - 2024

Year ended March 31, 2024 with comparative information for 2024

	2024	2023
Revenue:		
Ontario Health	\$ 9,778,916	\$ 9,647,617
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	151,161	206,257
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	304,530	249,946
Recoverables and other income	1,902,387	1,390,248
	12,136,994	11,494,068
Expenses:		
Compensation:		
Salaries	7,221,296	7,024,171
Benefits	1,648,113	1,577,645
Service cost:		
Rent and accommodation	783,775	725,637
Medical supplies	146,731	185,049
Contracted out	936,654	689,703
Equipment	91,737	95,936
Sundry	1,157,527	989,460
Amortization of capital assets	151,161	206,257
	12,136,994	11,493,858
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ —	\$ 210

Your Community Health Centre



Our Vision

Working together building healthy communities.



Our Mission

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



Our Values

Equity, Empathy, Respect, Collaboration, and Community

Our Care by the Numbers

2023 - 2024



38,383

Primary Care
appointments



1,816

Foot Care
appointments



110

Group nutrition
sessions



1,297

Dietitian/Nutrition
appointments



836

Pharmacy
appointments



1,633

Counselling
appointments



1,705

Client Support
appointments



1,621

Health & Wellness
appointments



3,806

Oral Health
appointments



9,839

Diabetes Education
appointments



100

Diabetes Education
group sessions



35 Volunteers

Contributing **1,360+**
hours



89

Total employees



12 Students

Totaling **1,600+**
hours



Rideau Community
Health Services

Our clients and the communities we serve are our top priority

Rideau Community Health Services (RCHS) is committed to the Model of Health and Wellbeing (MHWB) to guide the delivery of primary health care.



We are committed to service that is: anti-oppressive and culturally safe; accessible; inter-professional, integrated and coordinated; community-governed; based on the social determinants of health; grounded in a community development approach; population and needs-based; and accountable and efficient

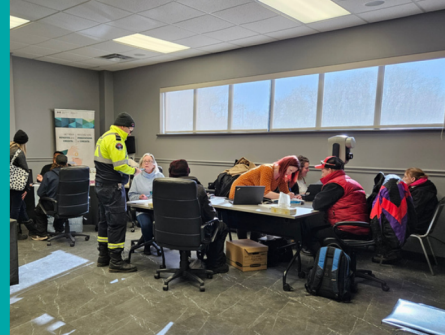
Identification Clinics

An Innovative Partnership

Making a difference in the lives of the unhoused population is crucial. RCHS recognizes and prioritizes ensuring our clients and community members' needs are met, including addressing the social determinates of health. These are the are the non-medical factors that influence health outcomes (such as income and social protection, job and food security, and housing, among many others).

As part of our mission to address the social determinates of health, this year we entered a new partnership with the Province of Ontario to waive fees related to obtaining essential identification for those experiencing homelessness or who are marginally housed. Obtaining essential identification (such as social insurances numbers, government issued photo ID, birth certificates, etc) is one of the first steps for many to get back on their feet and make positive change in their lives, however cost and access has always been a barrier.

Through our new partnership with Service Ontario, Service Canada, and the Canada Revenue Agency, RCHS has successfully piloted several Identification Clinics to assist individuals in receiving essential identification documents for healthcare, employment, and housing opportunities. Together, we will empower those in need and provide them with a pathway to a brighter more equitable future!





Therapeutic Art Program

Remember the joy of dipping your fingers into paint or filling a page with colors back in kindergarten? When was the last time you allowed yourself the time and space just to create? For the past several months, RCHS has been offering a transformative experience through our Therapeutic Art programming, aimed at helping community members reconnect with their creative spirit while building meaningful social connections. Led by dedicated Community Health Workers Cathy Taylor and Joanne Franey, alongside Community Artist Laurie Preston, our program guides participants through a series of creative projects designed to promote self-awareness, alleviate stress, and boost self-esteem. Even those with little to no artistic experience have found immense joy and fulfillment in the process.

Client Testimonial

“I was nervous about attending this group, but I am so glad that I did. I felt welcome and learned a lot about myself through the art that I made and met some really good people. I hope I get to take this program again.” – RCHS Client

Our Strategic Priorities for 2021 - 2026

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





Community Forums

2023-2024 saw the return of many community events, following the pandemic. This year, RCHS hosted several Community Forums in both Brockville and Smiths Falls where community members were invited to learn about the many health, and social services available in our communities. In addition, our team is on site to provide services such as flu and covid-19 vaccinations, providing harm reduction supplies, and assisting with ID and birth certificate applications.

The community forums aim to remove barriers for community members in accessing or finding out about the services and supports available to them by setting up in a space folks are familiar and comfortable in to increase access and information about valuable community programs and resources, to make connections, listen to some great music, and to share a meal.

Thank you to our many community partners who work with us to host community events, and support our clients and community members in countless ways.



Client Experience Survey

2023-2024 Results



Rideau Community
Health Services

Purpose of the Survey

To gather baseline data to better understand our client's experience at Rideau Community Health Services for self-reflection and quality improvement.

Total Responses



Experience with Provider

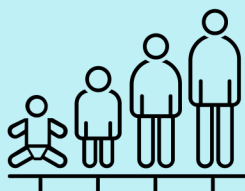


(rated excellent, very good, or good)

- **Listened** to my concerns and were **sensitive** to my needs and preferences
- **Explained** things in a way that was **easy** to understand
- Treated me with **dignity** and **respect**
- Overall **experience** with health care provider
- Overall **care** and **services**

Age Range

18 - 34 years: **5%**
35 - 49 years: **8%**
50 - 64 years: **30%**
65 and up: **57%**



RCHS programs helped improve overall health and well-being

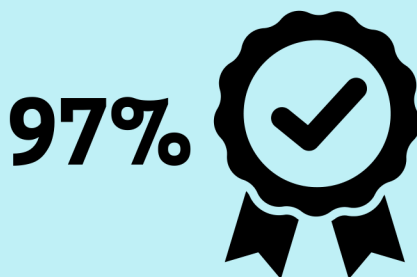


Feel Comfortable and Welcome



Quality of Care

very good or excellent



of clients agree RCHS buildings are accessible.

Thank you for participating and helping us become a better team-based collaborative health service provider.



Of clients would refer a family member or friend to RCHS.

We are committed to building a strong collaborative community of care that is focused on equity, empathy and respect for all



Rideau Community
Health Services



Community
Services

Community Health Centre

2 Gould St. Unit

Community Home Support
Franklin County

Rideau Community Health Services mission is to engage individuals, agencies, and partners to improve the health and well-being of our communities.



Merrickville Lion's Club Holiday Hamper Program 2023

RCHS had the pleasure of supporting the Lion's Club of Merrickville again this year in distributing over 70 hampers of essential supplies and food to residents of our communities this holiday season. In addition to the holiday hampers, we were able to provide generous holiday gifts to 39 children this year, which certainly put a smile on many faces.

Given the continual rise in the cost of living and cost of purchasing food, it was extremely heartwarming to witness the overwhelming generosity of the residents of Merrickville and surrounding communities this holiday season. Through the seemingly endless donations of food and essential supplies this year, many members of our community who are struggling to make ends meet were able to have all the supplies needed for their families this holiday season. From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your ongoing support.

Communities Giving Back

Rideau Community Health Services is fortunate to experience the generosity of our clients and community members every day, through generous donations. Donations provide support for our client's short term expenses through our **Client in Need Fund**, such as transportation needs, medications, housing needs, and our Food Cupboard Program. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for contributing to the health and well-being of our communities.

For more information, or to make a donation, visit www.rideauchs.ca/about/donations

THE COOPERATIVE CARE CENTRE (CCC)

The Board of Directors and staff of Rideau Community Health Services (RCHS) are pleased to announce that The Cooperative Care Centre (CCC) in Brockville is this year's recipient of our annual Community Recognition Award. This award, which was created in 2017, recognizes an individual or group who makes significant contributions to the communities we serve.

The CCC is a non-profit project of the Brockville Housing Partnership. The CCC provides a safe, welcoming, non-judgmental environment for individuals who are experiencing homelessness. The Centre is open from 4pm-8am, seven days a week. There are showers on site, guests also receive dinner, breakfast, and a lunch to go in the morning. They provide clothing/hygiene supplies that are generously donated for individuals in need. The CCC operates on a first come, first serve basis, and can accommodate 20 individuals at one time.

The CCC has been a partner in every event RCHS has facilitated in Brockville, which primarily includes Identification Clinics, Community Forums, and other weekly clinics. The CCC is one of the pioneering agencies in starting Brockville's Community Committee, including the ongoing creation of Brockville Complex Rounds.

The CCC is regularly the first point of contact for unhoused individuals and provides warm introductions to the RCHS Brockville Outreach Team. This enables shared clientele to access RCHS's services faster and ideally receive treatments, before requiring more serious interventions.

Previous recipients of the Community Recognition Award include:

- The Table Community Food Centre
- Rideau Bridge to Canada
- Adult Learning & Training Centre
- Grenville Federation of Agriculture
- Merrickville Lions Club
- Together Smiths Falls
- Merrickville Nursery School



Virtual Care Services

Telemedicine Program

This year was the beginning of change for our Telemedicine Program at RCHS. We have launched a centralized referral intake for all virtual care / telemedicine referrals within Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville.

This project brings the Telemedicine Services at ConnectWell Community Health and RCHS together to create a centralized and standardized telemedicine referral intake process, with the support of the Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville Ontario Health Team (LLG OHT). The central intake model will increase efficiencies and reduce duplication of administrative efforts across both Community Health Centres, and employs a Medical Receptionist to perform administrative tasks that were previously done by the nurses. This will allow the nurses to focus on program promotion and expansion, and providing direct client care.

By combining forces, we hope to attract more referrals from specialists, primary care providers, and community members. Our goal is to re-establish virtual health care services for all community members in LLG, thereby reducing costs associated with trips to Kingston or Ottawa, as well as supporting those in our community who lack the tools to access virtual health care from home.

Did you know?

Our team of virtual care nurses will:

- Arrange for your virtual appointment to be done at one of our sites in Lanark, Leeds, & Grenville (or even at your home or Long Term Care/Retirement Home)
- Stay with you during your visit to connect you to the specialist and help you understand the information.
- Perform any nursing assessments that the specialist requires (i.e. blood pressure).
- Connect you to local services as needed.
- Assist you with any follow up plans.





Trans Health Care at RCHS

Rideau Community Health Services is extremely proud of our partnership with Centretown Community Health Centre's Trans Health Program to offer Trans Health and Gender Affirming care in our region! The first Trans Health Clinic at RCHS took place on January 24, 2024 and was a huge success.

Centretown CHC's own Dr. Erin Hanssen is working with the Primary Care Team at RCHS to provide hands-on intensive support and coaching as we begin offering this much needed service to clients in our region. For now, all referrals to the RCHS Trans Health Clinic will come through Centretown CHC, however we hope to continue expanding our capacity in the coming months.

Pictured above: Dr. Erin Hanssen (Centretown CHC) posing with RCHS' own Nurse Practitioners, Carrie Blair and Terrilynn Stewart, in front of an "All Gender Washroom" sign at RCHS' Merrickville Site.

Client Socio-Demographic Forms

A new health equity (aka socio-demographic) questionnaire was implemented across all Community Health Centres (CHC's) in the province in January 2024, supported by the Alliance for Healthier Communities.

Health equity data has been collected by CHC's in Ontario for over 20 years. The last major update to the information being collected on the forms occurred in 2012, and they have now been refreshed again. Data collected from our clients is used for program planning and to ensure equitable access to relevant health services for all.

At RCHS, clients are asked to complete a new socio-demographic form every two years, to allow us to better understand the client population we are serving and to provide better care based on your needs.

Our team of administrative professionals have collected over 4,100 updated socio-demographic forms since January 2023 (that's a lot of data!)

Have you completed a socio-demographic form?

Online Appointment Booking for Primary Care!

Last fall, RCHS introduced online appointment booking for seasonal flu shots, and it was an overwhelming success! Thanks to our administrative team, many clients successfully booked their flu shot appointments online, making it a breeze.

Now, we're hoping to extend this convenience to primary care appointments! In the next few months, RCHS will be launching online appointment booking for primary care clients. It's as simple as a few clicks to schedule your appointments. Stay tuned for more updates as we make your healthcare experience even more accessible!



Meet Louise, our Administrative Assistant for Client Support!

Louise has worked at RCHS since 2005, and her job title is quite fitting as she has always loved supporting clients at RCHS in many ways. As part of the amazing Health Administration team at RCHS, Louise has been fortunate to have worked in many areas such as Medical Secretary for the Primary Care Program, Front Desk Reception, Complex Care, specialty programs such as the 3M Clinic (Memory, Medicine, Mental Health), the Diabetes Education Program, and now in her current role with the Health Promotion Team.

Louise is a big fan of RCHS's team approach, and priority focus on client-centered care. One of her major responsibilities is help clients navigate various health and social services, including finding and arranging transportation for those that require it so they may attend important health appointments. Much of this work includes advocating for clients who are unable do this themselves with various government agencies (such as Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program) and also to coach and transition those who are able to self manage their transportation.

Diabetes Education Program

Traditional diabetes education formats (in person appointments or classes) remain inaccessible or unappealing for some community members. A virtual option will allow people to access diabetes education on their own time, eliminating the need for travel and time off work for traditional in person diabetes classes or appointments. This can address gaps in health equity by reducing financial, transportation or other barriers to accessing traditional diabetes education.

Our team has been developing a series of 4 education modules, containing videos created in-house by our nurses and dietitians, that will be uploaded to our RCHS website. Some content will be open to public view, and some will require registration with our diabetes program. Those that register will also be able to communicate with our diabetes educators through email for questions they may have. We also continue to offer in person and phone appointments, as well as in person group programs in 10 communities throughout Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville.

We have hosted a successful series of cooking demonstrations by one of our dietitian and nurse teams in Smiths Falls, and we are looking to expand the number of cooking events in 24/25. A number of in services for staff at community agencies, as well as health fairs for the public, have been completed by our nurses and dietitians this year. Our partnerships with local agencies remain strong, such as Leeds Grenville Addictions and Mental Health, several FHTs and CHCs, Carleton Place and District Memorial Hospital and many more.



Recognizing Our Dedicated Staff Members

2023 Service Awards

Last year, RCHS implemented a new staff recognition plan which includes celebrating staff member's service milestones. In September, we held our first staff appreciation event, and recognized numerous staff members for their 5, 10, and 15 year milestones. These dedicated individuals are the backbone of our organization, embodying the core values that drive our mission forward every day.

Their unwavering dedication enhances the quality of our services and creates a supportive environment for our clients and communities. Whether through direct client interactions or behind-the-scenes efforts, their contributions are invaluable to our success.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all of our staff members for their remarkable contributions. Their dedication not only strengthens our organization, but also sets a standard of excellence for all to follow.

Thank you for your continued service and commitment to RCHS!



5 Year Service Awards



10 Year Service Awards



15 Year Service Awards

Community Dietitians & Nutrition Program

Our community dietitians continued to offer several health promotion and nutrition groups in 2023-2024 such as Craving Change, Intuitive Eating, Nutrition Drop In, Collective Kitchens, Cooking Classes, presentations to local sports teams (children and youth), as well as presentations to staff at congregate living facilities, addictions programs and prenatal and infant programs. Our team of Registered Dietitians also offers individual appointments in person, by phone, or virtually in Smiths Falls, Perth, and Merrickville.

A new initiative was started this year at both our Smiths Falls and Merrickville sites. This is a collective kitchen which brings people together to learn new cooking skills, socialize, learn about nutrition, and prepare healthy meals in bulk. The meals are then offered to participants to bring home to their families, as well as up to 50 frozen meals are provided to RCHS clients in need. This has been a cost effective and innovative way to provide some short term food security for both participants and RCHS clients, as well as share nutrition knowledge with kitchen participants.

Next year, we will continue to look for ways to expand our group program offerings and continue to innovate and respond to our community” needs.





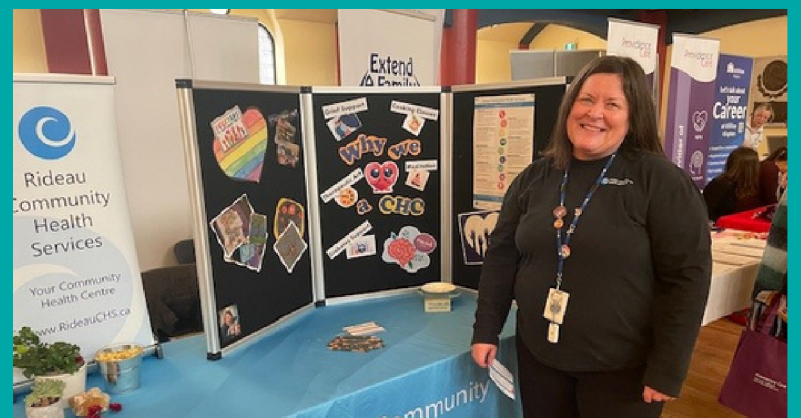
High Risk Chiropody & Foot Care

2023-2024 saw the establishment of a regional foot care working group, led by the Lanark, Leeds, and Grenville Ontario Health Team (LLG OHT). This group was initiated as a result of discussions amongst agencies that are providing publicly-funded foot care and chiropody services in our region.

Most agencies have experienced the overwhelming demand for no-cost foot care services, as well as a lack of foot ulcer management at the chiropody level.

To date, the regional group has brought together many agencies involved in amputation prevention and management, and is currently performing needs assessments, identifying service gaps and establishing some standardization across our region. This work will continue into 2024/25.

Internally at RCHS, we have been working on redefining the eligibility requirements for our foot care nursing program. This will ensure people in our community with the highest foot care needs and the least resources, are able to access our program. We anticipate this change will improve access to our high risk chiropody program as well.



Meet Crystal, our Administrative Assistant for Programs !

Crystal's journey with RCHS began at Willis College in Smiths Falls where she pursued the Medical Office Administration with Ward Clerk specialist course. Upon completing her studies, she embarked on a four week cooperative placement with RCHS in Smiths Falls. Those four weeks were transformative for Crystal, and she made it clear to the manager at the time she was eager to stay. In fact her words were, "I am never leaving here".

Within two days she found herself signing a contract for a casual position, which fairly quickly evolved into full-time employment. Initially stationed between the Merrickville and Smiths Falls office, she immersed herself in administrative tasks, becoming an integral part of both teams.

Crystal's journey continued with supporting diabetes, telemedicine, and even our virtual clinic all in reception-based roles. She then accepted the position as medical secretary at the Smiths Falls site. In January 2023 a new position of administrative assistant/scheduling clerk became available and Crystal's skills quickly had her in this role. You may see Crystal at any of the four sites as she is crossed trained everywhere. She recently celebrated her 10th anniversary with RCHS and, lucky for us, she continues to say, "I am not leaving".





Working together building healthy communities

Annual Report 2024

www.rideauchs.ca

Merrickville Site

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Smiths Falls Site

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Brockville Site

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Unit 107
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Perth Site

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Suite 105,
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