

mosaic news

May 2020 Special Edition:
Stories from the frontline of the COVID-19 pandemic

Welcome to Mosaic News, Sherbourne Health's newsletter. This special digital edition features stories of Sherbourne staff leading on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. [Subscribe](#) to receive biannual updates on our diverse programs and services.

Sherbourne stays open to serve communities throughout COVID-19

in this issue



Members of Sherbourne's Family Health Team and healthcare providers across our programs and services meet on a virtual call every day for clinical morning rounds to review staff working on site and from home, and to discuss updates on client care processes.

- 2 Sherbourne stays open to serve clients amid COVID-19 pandemic
- 3 Health Bus supports COVID-19 testing at shelters / Bolstering street outreach to the community
- 4 SOY goes online for youth participants / RHO cancels 2020 Conference / A catering collective delivers meals in St. James Town / A COVID-19 community supports guide

From primary care to community supports, Sherbourne Health's doors continue to remain open to offer care to service users amid the COVID-19 pandemic. As of mid-March, [programs and services were adapted](#) in response to the virus in order to align our operations to Toronto Public Health guidelines and to protect the health and safety of our staff and Sherbourne communities. **(Continued on page 2)**



sherbourne HEALTH

A note from our President & CEO...



Hello and I hope this finds you safe and well. In this time of unprecedented global uncertainty, now more than ever, taking care of each other and our communities is extremely important. I'm proud to share this special edition of Mosaic News which highlights the remarkable work of our staff, who continue to work hard on the frontlines to ensure our service users safely receive the support they need throughout the current pandemic. We have come together quickly to maintain our clinical services through in-person and virtual care. We're also driving street outreach in the downtown east community, employing the Health Bus to support COVID-19 testing at shelters, supporting meal delivery in St. James Town, and more. It is thanks to our dedicated, courageous and resilient team at Sherbourne that we continue to care for the wellbeing of our service users and communities. For ongoing COVID-19 updates, visit [our website](#). Please keep safe and take care!

– Hazelle

'Sherbourne stays open throughout COVID-19' continued...

Our adjusted clinical service hours are Monday–Friday from 9 am–5 pm. With three physicians and three nurses in-house each day, our **Family Health Team** continues to provide care and support through pre-booked appointments to control social distancing and onsite client numbers at any given time. Clients can access ongoing essential services like blood work, hormone injections, and well-baby and prenatal care. **Virtual care and support** via video and/or audio appointments are also available with **Primary Care Providers, Mental Health Counsellors, Dietitians** and **SOY Youth Resource Workers**. Clients may further call in for questions related to COVID-19 and be assessed by a medical professional over the phone. Our 24/7 [Acute Respite Care \(ARC\) program](#) also continues to admit clients experiencing homelessness who need a safe place to recover from illness or injury.

Staff greet visitors at our front doors, and then **actively screen** them for travel history and symptoms prior to entering. Those cleared receive a date-stamped “I’ve been screened” sticker and check in with our **Medical Secretaries**. Anyone with symptoms are directed to a private room for a further assessment and to discuss next steps with a clinician. Our **Community Engagement and Safety Workers (CESWs)** provide all-round support at the Info desk. They give masks to staff before shifts, redirect visitors to extra community resources, receive deliveries and monitor indoor and outdoor building spaces for safety measures.



[From top to bottom, left to right] The Hep C team at the screening table; A medical secretary and screeners stationed at the entrance; The ARC team posing together; ARC staff in the nurses' station; Screeners greeting visitors; A CESW receiving a delivery; An 'I've been screened' sticker.

We continue to keep our building safe for all visitors through **Housekeeping** and **Facilities** maintenance, and the installation of physical distancing floor markers and sneeze guards in common staff/client interaction areas. Thanks to **The Echo Foundation** for its financial support of COVID relief efforts. The funds will go towards ongoing emergency and safety equipment such as masks, hand sanitizers, and communication devices for staff to facilitate secured virtual care with service users.

Health Bus supports COVID-19 testing at shelters



Sherbourne's Health Bus and IPC staff and a group from St. Mike's Hospital provide COVID-19 mobile testing at Seaton House shelter on April 23rd.

With Sherbourne's [The Rotary Club of Toronto Health Bus](#) at the helm, we led a new initiative with **St. Michael's Hospital** to bring COVID-19 testing to congregate shelter settings. This initiative reaches vulnerable populations who are often unable to access assessment centres, while providing wraparound healthcare support. The mobile testing rolled out on April 23rd at **Seaton House**, a homeless men's shelter, and **Dixon Hall Respite** on April 30th.

As a clean and controlled setting, the Health Bus serves as a "command centre" to store testing equipment and specimens, and allows for team members to safely don and doff personal protective equipment. The mobile clinic's WiFi

capability also enables a computer workstation for data entry and registering clients for testing.

St. Michael's Hospital staff administer the tests, while members of Sherbourne's **daytime Health Bus program and Interprofessional Primary Care (IPC) team** provide adjunct support by handing out harm reduction and hygiene supplies, clothing and Tim Hortons gift cards. Familiar working with this client population, our team also helps people come forward to test, manages social distancing measures and offers calm reassurance and a friendly face during the four to five-hour visit. **Dynacare** lab services pick up the tests on site after the clinic is complete.

"This collaboration underlines the importance of combining the expertise of each organization to build capacity and share knowledge across the healthcare system," says **Chantel Marshall**, Programs & Services Director, Urban Communities. "It shows our community's strength and what we can accomplish when we come together quickly in a time of great need."

The partnership plans to test in future downtown east congregate locations at the direction of **Toronto Public Health**.

Bolstering street outreach to the community

As part of Sherbourne's COVID-19 response efforts, in late March, our [Hep C team](#) began increasing daily street outreach services to maintain connections to clients in the downtown east community.

For two hours each (week) day, the Hep C team, alongside the **Health Bus** and **Interprofessional Primary Care (IPC) teams**, walk the streets from east to west between Yonge and Parliament, and north to south between Wellesley and Queen, offering harm reduction and overdose prevention supplies, sandwiches and socks to roughly 30 folks per day. Staff also do check-ins around peoples' well-being as added support.

This initiative is a direct response to service changes at Sherbourne and other agencies,

such as the temporary pausing of community groups and drop-ins, which directly impact people experiencing homelessness and/or people who use drugs, who now have fewer places to go to access food, safety and a sense of community. The street outreach activities aim to lessen the impact of the crisis by bringing healthcare services to where folks are at.

"COVID-19 has increased the impact of both the systemic housing and overdose crises on homeless, under-housed and drug using folks. Street outreach is a flexible way to get supplies to people and stay connected to the community while maintaining physical distance."

Amanda Leo, Hep C Community Coordinator
Sherbourne Health

SOY goes online to support youth participants

With community groups and drop-ins on hold until further notice, [SOY](#) is finding fresh, creative ways to engage online with program participants. **Patrick Salvani**, Group Facilitator, LGBT2SQ Community Programs, launched a 'Staying Connected' video series, with tips on how to be socially connected online. The videos are emailed directly to SOY participants, and cover mindfulness activities, stories and other fun resources to help youth stay connected.

Sherbourne is also looking at exploring group participants' needs, and the option of taking



A [highlight reel](#) of SOY's 'Staying Connected' series with Patrick Salvani.

SOY online with weekly community check-ins and running select LGBT2SQ community programming groups virtually.

Rainbow Health Ontario cancels 2020 Conference

[Rainbow Health Ontario \(RHO\)](#) made the difficult but necessary decision to cancel the RHO 2020 Conference scheduled for April 2020 to protect the health and safety of attendees in light of COVID-19.

RHO is thankful to every speaker, registrant, community member, sponsor and conference organizer for their contributions to the

conference and support for RHO's work in LGBT2SQ health.

RHO continues to work on new and innovative ways to provide training and learning opportunities in LGBT2SQ health. Keep an eye out for RHO's new website as well as its first-ever online learning platform, both slated to be released in summer 2020.

A catering collective delivers meals to help combat food insecurity

Food insecurity is a major issue during the pandemic. Social isolation, a lack of supports and physical or mental health challenges are barriers to getting a healthy meal.

As part of its Health Access work, Sherbourne Health, along with **The Corner**, **Progress Place** and **The Neighbourhood Organization**, is supporting '[Flavours from our Neighbours](#),' a St. James Town catering collective run by newcomer women to give free, healthy meals to those experiencing food insecurity, such as homebound residents, seniors and people with

physical and/or mental health and addictions.

Each week, 150 meals are cooked and packaged with care. Sherbourne's **Newcomer Health Team** dietitian **Christina Tran** ensures the meals are nutritious and balanced, and community volunteers help with meal delivery.

Further funded by the **Govind Patel Estate**, this initiative launched the last week of March to support food access and social connections, and will continue to serve the St. James Town community throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

CHECK OUT OUR COVID-19 COMMUNITY SUPPORTS RESOURCE GUIDE!

We created a 'live guide' on [Financial and Economic Supports during COVID-19](#) to help address anxiety and confusion during the pandemic. The guide includes government announcements (at all levels) on financial reprieve, extensions, deferrals, tenant and landlord issues, EI/CERB, OW/ODSP, new funds and more. This resource was created by Sherbourne's health promotion & systems specialists **Chris Veldhoven** and **Sehr Athar**, and continues to be updated as needed.

Have feedback? We love hearing from you!
Email feedback@sherbourne.on.ca

