



# LAYING THE FOUNDATION

ADVANCING HEALTH, EQUITY, AND COMMUNITY

2024-2025





# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

We would like to acknowledge that Durham Community Health Centre (DCHC) operates within the shared ancestral homelands of the Anishinabek, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat Peoples. This area is located within the Dish With One Spoon treaty lands, a living agreement between the Anishinabek and Haudenosaunee Peoples that bound them together to share and protect these lands, based on the values of harmony, respect, and reciprocity.

We also respectfully acknowledge that the work of DCHC takes place on the treaty lands of the Alderville First Nation, Beausoleil First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, and Rama First Nation, which are covered by the Williams Treaty of 1923. However, it wasn't until 2018 that inherent rights to hunt, fish, and harvest were recognized under the Williams Treaty, rights that had been wrongfully denied and had a direct impact on the health of the communities.

At Durham Community Health Centre, we recognize the profound impact of colonization, and we identify it is our responsibility to take the necessary steps to support healing, uphold Indigenous cultural values, and help create an equitable health system where Indigenous communities feel safe, valued, and cared for.

Durham Region continues to be home for many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.

We are all Treaty people. Many of us have come here as settlers, immigrants, or newcomers in this generation and generations past.

We encourage you to reflect on your connection to this land, the privileges it offers, and your role in reconciliation, including the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Thank you. Miigwetch.



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# LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR AND CEO



**Aleem Sufi**  
Board Chair



**Francis Garwe,**  
B.Sc., MAOM, CCMP, ICD.D  
Chief Executive Officer

This past fiscal year was a pivotal one for Durham Community Health Centre (DCHC), as we continued to build on the momentum of our 2023–2026 Strategic Plan. The theme of this year’s Impact Report—“Laying the Foundation: Advancing Health, Equity, and Community,” reflects the evolution of our work to date and the intentional groundwork we have laid to accomplish our strategic goals with strength and purpose.

Our efforts this year were focused on deepening impact, expanding access, and refining our organizational foundation to better meet the diverse and growing needs of our community. From the formal launch of The Learning Hub to the continued expansion of our East Region Virtual Care Clinic and Primary Care Mobile Clinic, we took significant strides to remove barriers to care and improve client outcomes - especially for those facing systemic inequities.

This year also marked a full realization of our Integrated Care and Experience (ICE) model, enabling our Equity-Based Programs to work more cohesively and collaboratively across care teams. These programs (i.e., 2SLGBTQI, Black, Indigenous, Newcomer, Children, Youth & Family, Seniors, and Unsheltered Health & Wellness) are helping us deliver culturally-affirming care that is not only inclusive, but also informed by lived experience and cultural context.

Our progress was not limited to service delivery. We also invested in relationships, learning, and innovation - cornerstones that will support our organization as we enter the final year of our strategic cycle. Whether it was through affirming care models, new collaborative partnerships, or culturally responsive programming, every step we took this year was designed to ensure we finish strong in 2025–2026.

As we look ahead, we do so with deep appreciation for our staff, volunteers, partners, donors, and, most importantly, our clients and community members. Together, we are not only building healthier communities and addressing health inequities, but actively shaping a more connected, compassionate, and equitable Durham Region.

# ABOUT DURHAM COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

05



Integrated Clinical &  
Wellness Care Services



Equity-based Programs



Knowledge Mobilization  
& Advocacy

Durham Community Health Centre (DCHC) is a registered charitable organization that makes health and wellness care easier to access for our community members—especially those who might be facing multiple challenges when it comes to getting the care they need.

At DCHC, we focus on your overall health, whether that means seeing a doctor or nurse, talking to a mental health counselor, getting support to manage a chronic condition like diabetes, or participating in programming designed to educate you, further your well-being, and foster a sense of community. We also believe that this type of holistic approach is incredibly important to not only achieving good health, but preventing illness and disease in the first place.



We also believe that health isn't one-size-fits-all. That's why, along with our core services—like clinical care, mental health support, wellness programs, chronic disease management and prevention, and health education—we also offer seven Equity-based Programs designed for groups in our community who often face extra barriers to care. These are:



### 2SLGBTQI HEALTH & WELLNESS



### BLACK HEALTH & WELLNESS



### CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY HEALTH & WELLNESS



### INDIGENOUS HEALTH & WELLNESS



### NEWCOMERS HEALTH & WELLNESS



### SENIORS HEALTH & WELLNESS



### UNSHELTERED HEALTH & WELLNESS

We have an incredibly diverse team made up of doctors, nurse practitioners, nurses, counselors, dietitians, outreach workers, administration staff, and more. We work together, closely with you, to build a care plan that fits your life. At DCHC, our clients are always at the centre of everything we do. We're here to listen, support, and walk with you on your path to better health—no matter where you're starting from.

## Our Vision

# BUILDING HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

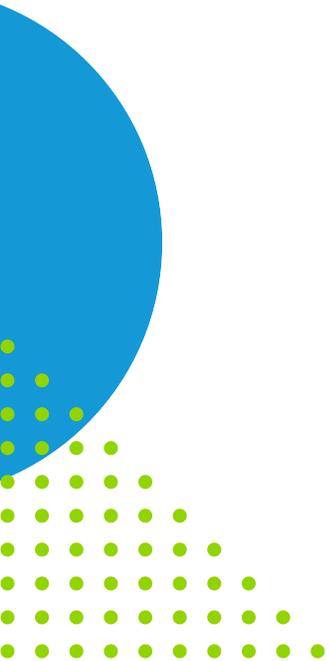
## Our Mission

Partnering to provide **integrated**, **accessible**, and **equitable care** to enhance health and social well-being in our communities.

## Our Values

- Trustworthy
- Inclusive
- Compassionate
- Collaborative
- Innovative

# ADVANCING HEALTH, EQUITY AND COMMUNITY



## EXPANDING ACCESS, DEEPENING IMPACT:

# THE EVOLUTION OF THE EAST REGION VIRTUAL CARE CLINIC

Since its launch on August 1, 2023, the East Region Virtual Care Clinic (ERVCC), led by Durham Community Health Centre and funded by the Ministry of Health, has grown beyond its initial vision—expanding both in reach and impact across Ontario. Originally developed to offer timely, Nurse Practitioner-led virtual care for communities throughout Ontario Health East, the ERVCC has become a lifeline for thousands of patients in underserved and remote areas, enabling them to access quality care without the burden of travel.

27,000

approximate clinic visits across the East, North East, and North West regions of Ontario

### REGIONAL EXPANSION AND STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

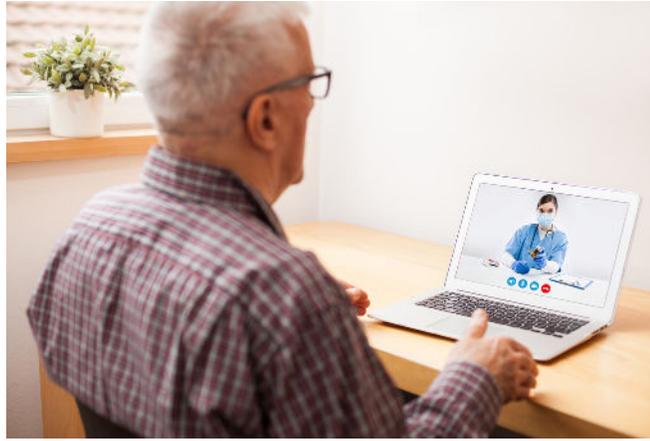
Building on our strong foundation, the ERVCC formally welcomed **Maamwesying Community Health Centre** as a spoke site in the North East. This expansion builds on our original spoke site relationship with **Centre de santé communautaire de l'Estrie**, a partnership that remains deeply collaborative and integral to our mission. Together, these partnerships ensure continuity of care across vast regions, breaking down barriers and strengthening ties with local service providers.



## REAL LIVES, REAL IMPACT

Beyond the numbers, the ERVCC's evolution is best illustrated through the stories of the individuals we've served.

One such story is that of a medically complex diabetic patient in the East Region. Discharged from the Emergency Department without a clear diagnosis or treatment plan, this patient was later diagnosed with diabetes through the ERVCC. Thanks to the diligent follow-up and clinical care of Stacey, our newly onboarded RN, the patient received insulin therapy, was closely monitored, and ultimately transitioned successfully to a local endocrinologist. Stacey's work on this case—her very first at the clinic—exemplifies the power of proactive virtual care.



Another patient, Mr. C, a 67-year-old man referred through Health811, came to the ERVCC seeking prescription renewals. Initially reluctant to complete lab work, he eventually complied at the urging of Nurse Practitioner Leslie. The results revealed a dangerously low white blood cell count, which led to a diagnosis of Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (AML). Thanks to Leslie's clinical instincts and persistence, Mr. C received an urgent referral to hematology, enabling an early diagnosis and immediate treatment. Mr. C later shared that "the best thing [he] had done was have a visit with the Virtual Care Clinic," crediting the team with saving his life.

## LOOKING AHEAD

The East Region Virtual Care Clinic was built to reimagine access—and in just one year, it has evolved into a model of connected, compassionate, and community-informed care. Through deepening partnerships, a growing care team, and stories that highlight real outcomes, the ERVCC continues to transform how, where, and when care happens across the province.

[www.virtualcareontario.ca](http://www.virtualcareontario.ca)

# PRIMARY CARE MOBILE CLINIC

Launched in 2023, our Primary Care Mobile Clinic began as an ambitious initiative to bridge critical healthcare gaps in the priority neighbourhoods of Durham Region. Designed to meet residents where they are—both geographically and culturally—the mobile clinic offers comprehensive primary care services led by Nurse Practitioners. In just its first year, it has proven to be more than a mobile unit; it's a vital connector between vulnerable communities and the care they urgently need.

Building on last year's foundation, the mobile clinic has significantly expanded both its reach and scope. Originally deployed in three high-priority neighborhoods, the initiative now includes focused partnerships that directly address the unique barriers faced by newcomers, refugees, and unsheltered individuals—populations often left on the margins of the healthcare system.



## REACHING NEW POPULATIONS THROUGH STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

A key learning from the past year was the complex intersection between healthcare access and settlement challenges faced by newcomers and refugees. These individuals frequently encounter:

- Limited attachment to a regular primary care provider
- Language barriers
- The need for culturally sensitive, trauma-informed care

In response, the mobile clinic team forged new partnerships with trusted community organizations, including **The Neighbourhood Organization** in Oshawa, the **Ismaili Centre's "Future Ready Initiative"** in Ajax, the **Ajax Welcome Centre (CDCD)**, and **CFOC Whitby and Ajax**. These collaborations have not only enhanced access but also created opportunities for integrated care models where health and settlement services work hand-in-hand.

By embedding services directly into settlement agencies and shelter sites, the clinic ensures that clients receive immediate and culturally competent primary care in environments they already trust. Follow-up appointments are now routinely booked at these crossover locations, enabling continuity of care and strengthening the link between healthcare and community support systems.

### LEARNING AND ADAPTING FOR GREATER IMPACT

This expansion also brought new insights. The absence of localized data and the limited integration between health and settlement services initially posed challenges. These gaps informed important program refinements, including:

- Adjusting administrative practices to better accommodate language and cultural needs
- Identifying clients requiring urgent healthcare attachment
- Mapping out priority areas for further intervention

Through this work, the Primary Care Mobile Clinic has become not just a provider of services but also a source of intelligence that guides broader regional health planning and coordination.



### Looking Ahead

As the program grows, we remain committed to refining our model based on community feedback and frontline learnings. Plans are underway to expand our fleet and reach, with a continued focus on high-risk populations, including students in collaboration with the Durham District School Board and individuals experiencing homelessness.

The evolution of the Primary Care Mobile Clinic is a testament to what can be achieved when health services go beyond the traditional clinic walls—meeting people where they are, recognizing who they are, and responding to what they need most. Through compassion, adaptability, and strong community partnerships, we are bringing equitable healthcare access to life, one neighborhood at a time.



# THE LEARNING HUB

The Learning Hub at DCHC launched on October 1, 2024, as a key initiative supporting our mission to foster healthier communities through inclusive education, empowerment, and engagement. In its first six months of activity, the Hub delivered a variety of learning opportunities designed to mobilize knowledge, build capacity, and support personal and professional growth.

Programming was offered to DCHC staff, health professionals, and community members across Durham Region—supporting preventative health practices, wellness strategies, and skill development. The Learning Hub also served as a platform to engage and empower the next generation of community and healthcare leaders.

**Workshop Delivery:** We delivered five interactive workshops on topics such as digital skills, peer support, and conversational English. These sessions were offered in partnership with **GraceWins** and **Durham College**, ensuring relevant, accessible, and community-informed content.

**Community Engagement:** We hosted a Community Health & Wellness Fair in collaboration with the Alzheimer Society of Durham Region—providing resources, screenings, and wellness activities to promote healthy living.

**Staff Development:** We launched a Lunch & Learn Series for DCHC staff to encourage peer learning and cross-functional collaboration with partners such as **AIDS Committee of Durham Region**.

**Knowledge Mobilization:** We partnered with **York University** to deliver the first Knowledge Mobilization Capacity Building Workshop, equipping DCHC staff with tools to translate evidence into practice.



# THE LEARNING HUB LOOKING AHEAD

## 02

Launching targeted wellness workshops (e.g., nutrition, mental health, stress management, yoga, tai chi) through collaboration with Equity-Based Programs.



## 03

Engaging established and emerging leaders in the community and healthcare sectors by providing opportunities to design and lead workshops.



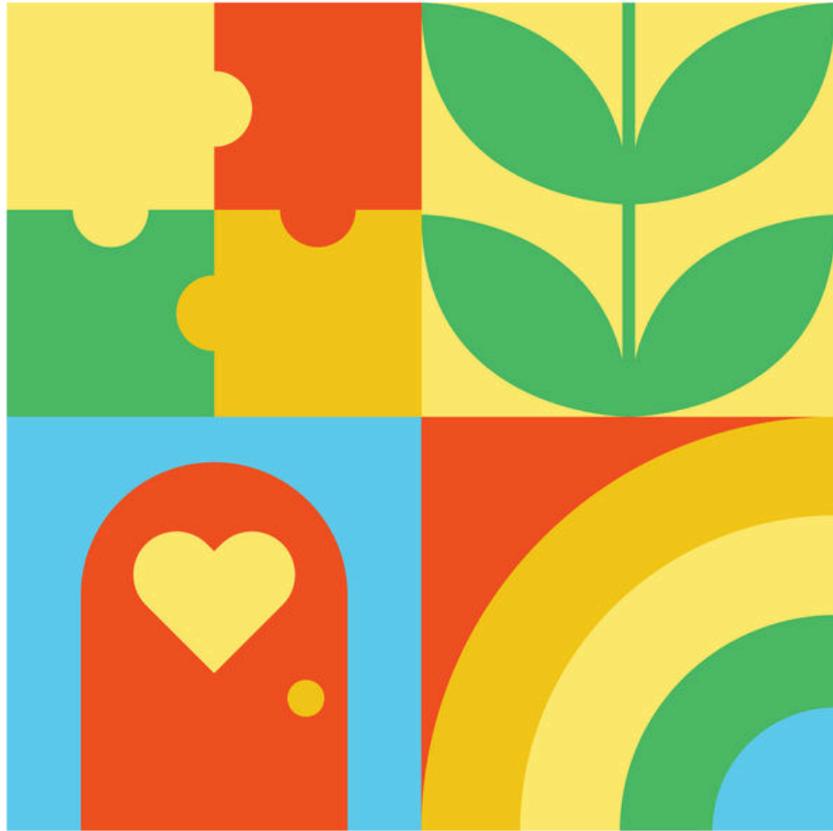
## 01

Expanding partnerships with community agencies and local employers to broaden access and reach.



## 04

Creating safe, inclusive spaces for self-expression, healing, and cultural exchange across diverse community groups.



**CYAC**  
**DURHAM**

## WELCOMING

# THE CHILD AND YOUTH ADVOCACY CENTRE

In a powerful step toward strengthening trauma-informed care and community collaboration, Durham Community Health Centre (DCHC) is proud to welcome the Child and Youth Advocacy Centre (CYAC) to our Oshawa South location.

The CYAC is a multidisciplinary initiative that brings together key community partners, including **Victim Services of Durham Region (VSDR)**, **Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS)**, **Durham Children's Aid Society (DCAS)**, **Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services (DBCFS)**, **Lakeridge Health Oshawa - Child Youth and Family Program (CYFP)** and **Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Care Centre (DVSACC)**, and **DCHC**. The CYAC provides a safe, compassionate space where young people can access trauma-informed interviews, medical examinations, advocacy, and integrated supports, all under one roof. This kind of care is the realization of a long-standing vision to provide these critical services outside of traditional police station or CAS environments, in a setting that is welcoming, community-based, and designed with the needs of children and youth at its core.

By joining us at DCHC, the CYAC is now positioned within a broader ecosystem of care, just steps away from our Youth Hub, and embedded within an organization grounded in health equity, access, and holistic wellness. This alignment ensures that every young person served through the CYAC will also have direct access to wraparound supports—from mental health services and medical care to culturally responsive programs and community navigation.

This move is deeply aligned with DCHC's mission to advance health, equity, and community. Our Equity-Based Programs and Integrated Care and Experience model recognize that trauma, systemic barriers, and social determinants of health are inseparable from the well-being of children, youth, and families. The addition of the CYAC reinforces our commitment to creating safe, affirming, and supportive environments for the most vulnerable members of our community.

We are honoured to be part of this next chapter for the CYAC and grateful for the trust placed in us by our partners and community. Together, we are building a future where children and youth in Durham can heal, grow, and thrive—surrounded by care, compassion, and community.



# 2SLGBTQI HEALTH & WELLNESS

At Durham Community Health Centre, we remain deeply committed to providing compassionate care, meaningful support, and essential resources that empower individuals to lead healthy, fulfilling lives. We stand in strong solidarity with the 2SLGBTQI community, fostering a welcoming and inclusive space where everyone is valued and can thrive. Our holistic approach goes beyond medical services, offering community events and initiatives that bring people together and work to break down harmful stigmas.

## EXPANDING ACCESS TO GENDER-AFFIRMING CARE

The Gender Care Team at DCHC continues to provide safe, inclusive, and affirming support for trans, gender expansive, gender non-conforming, non-binary, and questioning individuals across Durham Region. With a focus on holistic, client-centered care, the team offers tailored support for social, legal, and medical transition, hormone therapy, surgical referrals, and health system navigation, as well as resources for families and caregivers.

This year, the Gender Care Team made significant strides in improving access. The following improvements to access to care were made possible through strategic initiatives like telephone consultation pathways, supportive programming like our Gender Affirming Chats, and added staffing, including a part-time Nurse Practitioner and a full-time System Navigator.

## WAIT TIME REDUCTIONS



## ADDRESSING THE 2SLGBTQI COMMUNITY HEALTH IN DURHAM HEALTH REGION REPORT

Two surveys were undertaken to understand the experience of 2SLGBTQI people who access healthcare in the Durham Region of Ontario. The first survey invited 2SLGBTQI folks and caregivers of 2SLGBTQI youth to participate in the survey. The second survey invited healthcare providers and community service providers to participate. A total of 558 respondents participated in the online survey and in-person focus groups.

The surveys aimed to identify this population's unique health needs and provide insight into the gaps that 2SLGBTQI people experience while receiving services in the Durham Region.

The survey results directly highlight the issues that 2SLGBTQI people and their providers face, including the need for enhanced community support, timely access to mental health support and provision of gender-affirming care.

*To read the full report, please visit [www.durhamchc.ca](http://www.durhamchc.ca), or scan this QR code:*



### AFFIRMING CARE ACROSS EVERY STEP OF THE JOURNEY

When Avery (name changed for privacy), a trans adult, was referred to DCHC's Gender Care Program in spring 2023, she was seeking consistent, affirming support. After starting hormone therapy (HT) through another clinic (which later privatized and thus became unaffordable) her Primary Care Provider (PCP) took over HT management but felt uncertain about the medication. That's when Avery was referred to DCHC's Gender Care Team.

In the fall of 2023, she connected with Declan Frampton (the Systems Navigator on DCHC's Gender Care Team) who connected Avery to internal services and assisted her with receiving gender-affirming clothing, sexual health resources, and system navigation support. Nurse Practitioner Mellanie Kant also collaborated with Avery's PCP to strengthen their comfort and capacity in managing HT.

By November, Avery had begun counselling with our Registered Psychotherapist Melanie Schranz, working on trauma, emotional regulation, and her gender journey. She completed this phase of therapy in summer 2024 and was then referred to a specialized trauma program at another organization.

Avery's journey reflects DCHC's commitment to holistic, affirming care. Through counselling, medical coordination, and system navigation, Avery was supported at every step — empowered to move forward in her transition with confidence and dignity.



# BLACK HEALTH & WELLNESS

## INTRODUCING KLINIKI, DCHC'S BLACK HEALTH AND WELLNESS CLINIC

The Kliniki Clinic at Durham Community Health Centre provides access for Durham community members of all ages who identify as African, Caribbean, or Black (ACB) to receive full spectrum primary care support and culturally affirming care for matters like:

- Diabetes
- High blood pressure
- Chronic disease management and prevention prescription renewals
- Women's health matters
- Mental health counselling



**KLINIKI**  
DCHC'S BLACK HEALTH  
& WELLNESS CLINIC

## BLACK HEALTH & WELLNESS DAY



On March 1, 2025, the Black Health and Wellness team at DCHC made history with an official proclamation of Durham Region's Black Health and Wellness Day.

Hosted by DCHC's Black Health and Wellness Team, in collaboration with several incredible community partners, the day focused on addressing health and wellness inequities impacting black communities, while also celebrating the tireless efforts of local organizations and leaders driving change.

DCHC CEO Francis Garwe proposed a collaborative path forward. "Together, we build a community that cares, a community that loves, a community that embraces, but above all, a community that allows us to carry one voice across the region, together."

The inaugural Black Health and Wellness Day set the foundation for relationships and collaborations that can help us build healthier communities, together. Thank you to everyone who made this historic day possible. We look forward to the work ahead.

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: SOLOMON LOME – HEALTH PROMOTER, BLACK HEALTH & WELLNESS PROGRAM

“I am grateful for the opportunity Durham Community Health Centre has given me to connect with the community.”

This heartfelt statement is one you’ll often hear from Solomon Lome, a passionate and dedicated Health Promoter serving the ACB community members of Durham Region.

Since joining DCHC in the summer of 2024, Solomon has worked tirelessly to build bridges between the community and healthcare services. Drawing from his Ethiopian heritage and extensive experience in community welfare, Solomon connects with members of the Black Diaspora on both an individual and population level. His advocacy ensures that the work DCHC does reflects the community’s real needs, while his health education initiatives empower individuals and families alike.

One of Solomon’s proudest achievements is his role in the success of Kliniki – DCHC’s Black Health & Wellness Clinic and Durham Region’s first culturally affirming full-spectrum clinic for Black community members. Thanks to his efforts, approximately 140 individuals have accessed this critical resource, since Kliniki’s inception.

“Having a Health Promoter to connect with the community in a direct and compassionate way optimizes the effectiveness of healthcare provided to community members,” says Dr. Kirk Stewart, family medicine physician and Executive Lead for DCHC’s Black Health and Wellness Team. He adds, “Patients speak about the relatability, compassion, and care Solomon has in working with them as they access healthcare and other services through DCHC.”

In a region home to approximately 67,000 Black residents, with the largest concentrations in Ajax and Pickering, addressing health inequities is critical. Solomon’s role is a direct response to combating anti-Black racism and advocating for health equity, integral to DCHC’s mission of building healthier communities together.



**#StaffSpotlight**





# CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY HEALTH & WELLNESS

This year, our Children, Youth & Family Health & Wellness Program made significant strides in expanding access to critical supports for families across Durham Region. From early years development and after-school enrichment to youth mental health and primary care services, our growing team delivered innovative, community-rooted programs that reflect our commitment to whole-family wellness.

## EARLY YEARS

This year, the Early Years team has expanded its programming to reach more families in North Oshawa, building on its historically strong presence in South Oshawa. Key initiatives include the launch of “Ready 4 School” at **St. Anne's Catholic School** and “Parent Relief” at **Queen Elizabeth Public School**, allowing us to serve a broader community of children and families. Additionally, we introduced our play-based activity “Comfort, Play, Connect” at **St. Anne's Catholic School**, in collaboration with **The YMCA's Family and Community Action Program (FCAP)**. This initiative gives parents of young children the opportunity to connect; learn about healthy development in areas like the body, brain, and emotions; and access valuable community resources and parenting information.

## AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Our after-school offerings have expanded to include more structured, hands-on activities, with a special focus on STEM education. We've introduced engaging projects led by a dedicated STEM instructor, giving children the chance to explore fun and educational topics.

## CHILD & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH (CYMH)

This year, we've expanded the CYMH program through a partnership with the Thrive Program at the **Abilities Centre** - a day program designed for individuals with developmental disabilities. To date, we've successfully delivered two 12-week sessions focused on building healthy relationships and promoting overall well-being. In addition, we've partnered with the **APPLE Schools initiative**, a new healthy schools program aimed at transforming the culture of health and wellness in six priority schools. As part of this initiative, we are delivering stress management presentations to students in grades 4-6 across these schools. Our goal is to equip students with valuable coping skills while also creating a sustainable "train the trainer" model, empowering these students and teachers to share their knowledge and foster a lasting impact on their peers and school communities.

## EXPANSION OF OUR CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILY TEAM

This year, we've enhanced our CYFC team with an additional Nurse Practitioner, which has allowed us to increase our capacity and serve more clients and families throughout Durham Region.



Additionally, we launched our Breastfeeding Clinic where our Lactation Consultant offers specialized support to

new moms in achieving their breastfeeding goals. This includes assistance with key techniques like latching and positioning to ensure a successful breastfeeding experience.

### FROM CRISIS TO CONFIDENCE: HOW WRAPAROUND CARE ENABLED A NEW START

For three years, Shelley and her three young children were active participants in several of DCHC's Early Years programming from Comfort, Play, Connect; to Ready for School; and Summer Park Pals. Living nearby, the family could easily access services, which quickly became part of their routine and a vital source of social connection. Over time, Shelley also became involved in the Food Security Program, helping to stretch resources during challenging months.

In late 2024, Shelley quietly shared with a DCHC Early Years Facilitator that her family was on the verge of losing their home. Without support, she feared she'd have to leave the community entirely, in search of shelter. DCHC team members immediately mobilized. Through Comfort, Play, Connect, Shelley found a safe space to voice her concerns and explore next steps. She was connected to emergency food support, invited to the Winter Bundle program, and welcomed at the DCHC Family Holiday Dinner. These small but meaningful acts helped her family feel supported during a bleak season.

As winter continued, Shelley began exploring employment, but lack of childcare seemed like an immovable barrier. DCHC facilitators shared resources and encouraged her to visit a local employment support hub. With each step, her confidence grew. A friend lent her a laptop, a family member offered to help with childcare, and in March of 2025, Shelley secured a fully remote job. By spring, she had already received a promotion.

This transformation was possible because of the wraparound care that DCHC team members and programming provided: the emotional support, resource navigation, addressing of basic needs, and peer connection. Today, Shelley is thriving, and so are her children.



# INDIGENOUS HEALTH & WELLNESS

## CELEBRATING THE GROWTH OF OUR INDIGENOUS PROGRAM

Over the past year, our Indigenous Health & Wellness Program has seen significant growth, marked by deeper community engagement, enriched cultural programming, and expanded youth participation. Guided by Indigenous leadership and rooted in traditional knowledge, the program now features regular drumming and singing circles, land-based learning, and seasonal cultural gatherings.

Key enhancements included the introduction of youth-led initiatives, collaborative workshops with Elders, and stronger partnerships with local Indigenous organizations. These changes have fostered a greater sense of identity, belonging, and cultural pride among participants, while creating a more inclusive and empowering space for Indigenous voices to be heard and celebrated.

The Indigenous Team hosted a wide array of events, workshops, and gatherings for community members, including:

- Anishinaabemowin Bingo
- Baashkaakodin Giizis (Freezing Moon) Full Moon Ceremony
- Beany John is Hoop Dancing at DCHC
- Big Drum Ceremonies
- Big Thunder Traditional Men's Learning Circles
- Gichimanidoo-Giizis (Great Spirit Moon) Full Moon Ceremony
- Indigenous Dental Health Presentation
- Indigenous Family Night
- Indigenous Harm Reduction Drop-In
- Indigenous Women's Healing Circle
- Indigenous Youth Back to School
- Indigenous Youth Basketball Game
- Indigenous Youth Leadership Circle
- Indigenous Youth Matter Program Night
- Indigenous Youth Recreation Night
- Jeopardy Clan Version
- Land Back Speaker Series (Featuring: Kelly Lavallee, Bomgiizhik Isaax Murdoch and Anthony Latsithyokwas Nicholas, Tekarontake, Six Nations of the Grand River, and Wet'suwet'en and the Yinta
- Magic Mondays
- Manidoo-giizisoons (Little Spirit Moon) Full Moon Ceremony
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Peoples Gathering
- Movie Night Hosted by 2Spirit Circle
- Moving Beyond Land Acknowledgements
- Nalaxone and Opioid Poisoning Training
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- National Indigenous People's Day
- N'ginaajiw Dance Fitness and Zumba
- Ode' Mashkiki
- Ojibwe Language Classes
- Sitting Turtle Traditional Healing
- Summer Harvesting of Sweetgrass and Sage
- Traditional Healer Series with James Carpenter
- What is Indigenous Harm Reduction
- Women's Circles With Sitting Turtle
- Zisbaakdoke-Giizis (Sugar Making Moon) Full Moon Ceremony

## MOVING BEYOND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

On March 27, 2025, members of the Indigenous Team at DCHC hosted an exceptionally important event at the Oshawa Public Library. The event, called “Moving Beyond Land Acknowledgements,” was a learning session focused on Indigenous relational protocols, treaty responsibilities, and the enduring impacts of settler colonialism. The session aimed to deepen participants’ understanding of Indigenous knowledge systems and explore actions that move beyond performative land acknowledgements.

### Key Themes Explored:

- **Land Acknowledgements as Commitments:** These should reflect an ongoing, informed relationship with Indigenous Nations and the lands we occupy—not a symbolic gesture.
- **Treaty Responsibilities:** Everyone is part of treaty relationships like the Dish with One Spoon, which emphasize shared responsibility, respect, and sustainability.
- **Indigenous Protocols:** Cultural practices are legal and ethical frameworks for respectful relationships with people, land, and more-than-human beings.
- **Settler Colonialism:** It remains a current force shaping institutions and social norms, requiring active dismantling.
- **Decolonizing Relationships:** Calls for humility, consent-based engagement, and centering Indigenous sovereignty and knowledge.

### Participants were challenged to move from awareness to action by:

- Learning local treaties and protocols
- Building relationships with Indigenous communities through humility and respect
- Reviewing and changing institutional policies rooted in colonial systems
- Embedding Indigenous values in programs
- Supporting Indigenous-led initiatives through resources and advocacy
- Continuing education through workshops and cultural learning

This session encouraged deeper reflection and tangible steps toward ethical engagement, reconciliation, and justice.

We would like to thank Dr. Adam Barker, Dr. Emma Battell Lowman, Caroline VanEvery-Albert (Karenniyo), James Carpenter, and Jode Kecheho for joining us to carry out this incredibly enlightening and important conversation.





# NEWCOMERS HEALTH & WELLNESS

## SPOTLIGHT ON OUR DURHAM NEWCOMER WELLNESS NEEDS ASSESSMENT

*Done in collaboration with **TNO – The Neighbourhood Organization***

Durham Region is home to a rapidly growing newcomer population. According to Statistics Canada, between 2011 and 2021, Durham’s immigrant population increased by over 26%, which is a significantly higher rate than the provincial (7%) and national (11%) averages. As the region becomes increasingly diverse, understanding and addressing the unique health and wellness needs of newcomers is more important than ever.

In response to this growing need, **DCHC** partnered with **TNO – The Neighbourhood Organization** to launch a comprehensive Newcomer Wellness Needs Assessment. This joint initiative aimed to identify and better understand the wellness priorities of newcomers settling in the Durham Region.

In April 2024, DCHC brought together a broad coalition of community partners to kick off the project and begin mapping a collaborative path forward. Partners in attendance included **Durham Local Immigration Partnership (LIP)**, **Durham Regional Police Service (DRPS)**, **The Region of Durham**, **Durham Community Legal Clinic**, **Pickering Public Library**, **Clarington Public Library**, **Durham College (Academic Upgrading)**, **Lakeridge Health**, **Ajax Welcome Centre (CDCD)**, **Brock Community Health Centre**, and **The United Way**. This session marked an important milestone in our ongoing commitment to improving settlement and wellness services for our newcomer community. Through continued collaboration, we will analyze findings from the Needs Assessment and use this insight to design and deliver tailored programming as part of the Newcomer Health & Wellness Program.

Next, we conducted an extensive survey and outreach effort, successfully engaging 287 newcomer individuals through online surveys and focus groups. In addition, we held in-depth informational interviews with 18 local service providers who work closely with the newcomer community. These efforts gave us a clearer picture of the most pressing health and wellness concerns newcomers face—from access to primary care and mental health support, to language barriers and navigating local health systems.

Together, with our partners and community members, we are working to ensure that all newcomers to Durham feel welcomed, supported and cared for, and empowered to thrive.

## **EXPANDING OUR PRIMARY CARE MOBILE CLINIC TO MEET OUR NEWCOMER POPULATION WHERE THEY'RE AT**

As Durham Region continues to grow as a destination for newcomers to Canada, the need for accessible, culturally-sensitive health care has become increasingly urgent. Durham Community Health Centre recognizes that health is a key component of successful settlement, and we are proud to highlight how our Newcomer Health & Wellness Program is woven into the fabric of our Primary Care Mobile Clinic strategy.

### **CONNECTING THROUGH COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS**

We work closely with organizations that have established trust with newcomer populations. These include **The Neighbourhood Organization** in Oshawa, the **Ismaili Centre's "Future Ready Initiative" in Ajax**, and the **Ajax Welcome Centre**. These collaborations provide direct access points for care and ensure newcomers receive holistic support beyond the clinic visit.

### **DELIVERING CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE CARE**

Our mobile clinic teams are trained in cultural competency to better understand and respect diverse backgrounds. We've implemented multilingual registration processes, offer medical interpretation, and advocate for clients navigating complex health and social systems. This helps bridge gaps in health literacy and builds stronger provider-patient relationships.

### **HEALTH ACCESS FOR ALL**

Recognizing that many newcomers are not yet covered by OHIP, we work with other Programs and have developed processes that enable us to provide care and services even to those who are not insured.

### **FOCUSED ON PREVENTION AND EDUCATION**

In addition to primary care, we provide referrals to specialists, cancer screenings, prenatal and pediatric care, immunizations, and health education—tailored to the needs of newcomer communities.

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

By integrating the needs of newcomers into our Mobile Clinic strategy, DCHC is helping build a healthier, more inclusive Durham Region. We remain committed to expanding this work by leveraging strong community partnerships and equity-informed care to ensure that all residents, regardless of where they're from or what stage of settlement they're in, have a chance to thrive.



# SENIORS HEALTH & WELLNESS

At the heart of our mission to support vulnerable populations, the Geriatric Assessment and Intervention Network (GAIN) team continues to make a profound difference in the lives of frail seniors across our community. Focused on older adults living at home or in retirement settings who are navigating multiple complex health and social challenges, the DCHC GAIN team delivers specialized, person-centred care with compassion and expertise.

Whether clients are experiencing cognitive decline, mobility issues, falls, incontinence, or managing a complicated medication regimen, the GAIN team is there to assess, intervene, and connect them to the care they need. Drawing on the collective knowledge of Nurse Practitioners, Occupational Therapists, Pharmacists, Dietitians, Home & Community Care Coordinators, and a Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) clinician—alongside consulting Geriatricians—our interdisciplinary approach ensures that each client receives holistic and coordinated support.

This year marked a turning point in our ability to improve access and outcomes for seniors. Through targeted waitlist management strategies, the team reduced wait times dramatically—from over two years to just 4–6 weeks. Internal process improvements also ensured that clients and families received guidance and support while waiting, with many being linked to essential community resources early in their journey.

## GAIN TEAM ACCESS WAIT TIME REDUCTIONS

2 years → 4-6 weeks

With a current caseload of approximately 500 active clients, the demand for our services remains high—but so does our capacity to respond. In a major step forward, we expanded into Pickering by seconding two Care of the Elderly Physicians, increasing both our reach and the number of seniors served. In addition, our new partnership with **Regional GAIN** and **Lakeridge Health** has helped relieve system pressures by transferring over 300 referrals to DCHC GAIN from LHO, further reducing wait times and improving care continuity.

Every senior deserves to age with dignity, and thanks to the tireless efforts of our GAIN team, more individuals and families are getting the support they need, when they need it most.

1,898

interactions with individuals by members of our GAIN Team

1,080

older adults were provided care by members of our GAIN Team

27

### **A NEW CHAPTER THROUGH COLLABORATIVE, HOLISTIC SUPPORT**

When James (name has been changed to protect client privacy) was first referred to our GAIN Team in August 2024, his daughter was deeply concerned. She feared that the significant changes she was noticing (e.g., his confusion, reduced function, and increasing withdrawal) were the early signs of dementia. Adding to the concern were growing mood-related issues, which had begun to impact his quality of life and their relationship.

Following a comprehensive initial assessment with one of our GAIN geriatricians, James was diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment, and treatment was started to support his mood. It was soon evident that this was a turning point. After the introduction of mood medication, James began to show marked improvements as his thoughts became clearer, and he became more engaged with his surroundings.

In October 2024, James required surgery, which brought with it a difficult and emotionally taxing recovery period. His mood and sleep deteriorated, and his family once again found themselves needing support. During this time, the GAIN Team provided ongoing education, guidance, and encouragement to James's family while they awaited follow-up care.

By January 2025, James was seen again by the GAIN geriatrician, who adjusted his treatment plan. The results were significant. James began sleeping well again, and his overall mood and outlook improved. His daughter shared that he was now happy more often, socially present, and even beginning to manage aspects of his own care (e.g., scheduling appointments and maintaining personal hygiene) without prompting. His cognition and function, which had been a source of major concern, were also improving.

Most notably, his daughter expressed how her understanding of James's condition had changed. Through the guidance and assessments of the GAIN Team, she came to understand that what she initially feared was dementia, was actually rooted in long-standing, untreated ADHD and mood disorders. With the right support in place, she now describes her father as "a totally new person with substantially improved quality of life."

She shared her deep gratitude for the compassionate and coordinated support they received through the GAIN Clinic. James's story stands as a powerful reminder that proper wraparound care can uncover the true root of complex issues and provide a pathway to renewed well-being. Not just for clients, but for their families as well.



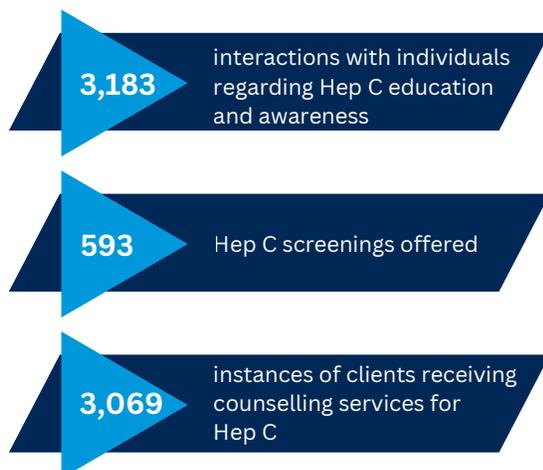
# UNSHELTERED HEALTH & WELLNESS

Durham Community Health Centre is dedicated to supporting the health and well-being of individuals experiencing homelessness in the Durham region. Through initiatives like our Welcoming Streets program, which follows a housing-first approach, and our long-standing Mobile Clinics that offer Hepatitis C screening, harm reduction education, and outreach, we work collaboratively across medical and outreach teams to enhance the daily lives and health outcomes of unsheltered community members.

## TEAM FEATURES

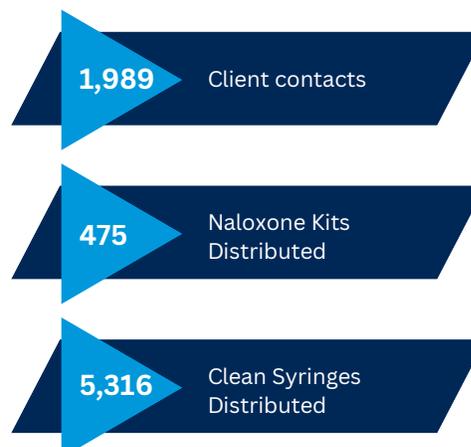
### HEPATITIS C TEAM

Working collaboratively to provide seamless multidisciplinary care and treatment for HCV (viral Hepatitis C) and offering support to clients at risk of acquiring, living with, or who may be affected by HCV. The team also offers post-treatment for Hep C, and comprehensive medical-and psychosocial support and treatment, in collaboration and consultation with the team-treating physician.



### HARM REDUCTION TEAM

Providing confidential and anonymous support for people who use substances by supplying sanitary injection and inhalation drug tools, Naloxone (Narcan), and overdose prevention training to help reduce the harm and risks associated with substance use disorder. The team can also offer testing for other Sexually Transmitted and Blood Borne Infections (STBBI's), addiction services, counselling, and primary care.



## COLLABORATIVE CARE GIVES DCHC CLIENT “NEW BASH AT LIFE”

“I’m going to use until I die. Liquidate all my money and die.” That was 36-year-old Michael Dover’s mindset over eight years ago. Today, he’s clean, healthy, and an advocate for the same community-based care that, he says, gave him “a new bash at life.”

Originally from England, Dover came to Canada hoping to leave substance use behind—but when it followed him, he didn’t know where to turn. That changed when he found the Pinewood Centre of Lakeridge Health. “I didn’t know there was help. I felt shunned from society,” he recalls. “They took me in and saved my life.”

Through Pinewood, Dover was referred to Durham Community Health Centre (DCHC) for long-overdue bloodwork. He feared the worst. “I thought I had HIV,” he said. “But I wanted to do things the right way.”

He met with Linda Simmons, a Registered Nurse at DCHC. The tests came back: no HIV, but he did have Hepatitis C. As a permanent resident, Dover didn’t believe he could access treatment. But Linda assured him there was help—and arranged for him to receive the expensive treatment free of charge.

Before starting treatment, Dover relapsed. “I called Linda and said I can’t start. I don’t trust myself.” She reassured him the treatment would still be there when he was ready.

After being kicked out of a friend’s home, Dover hit a turning point. “Sleeping outside [a withdrawal facility], I realized I was sick and tired of being sick and tired,” he said. “Knowing there was a plan gave me hope. I’ve never used drugs again.”

He returned to Pinewood and began treatment in Kingston, with Linda coordinating his Hep C care throughout. Today, Dover is thriving—clean, studying engineering at Durham College, and active in a men’s Narcotics Anonymous group.

His message to others? “Jump in and trust the process. Take the advice. It’s not easy, but it’s worth it.”

To those who helped him recover: “Thank you,” he says. “I couldn’t have this life without you. Now, I stay clean not just for me—but for everyone who believed in me.”

*This is a truncated version of Michael’s story.  
To read the full version, visit:*





# STAFF MILESTONE AWARDS



**Jacqueline Siu**

Lead,  
Integrated Care and Experience



**Thomas Pang**

Nurse Practitioner



**Sameem Shah**

Nurse Practitioner



**Melanie Anne Graham**

Therapist

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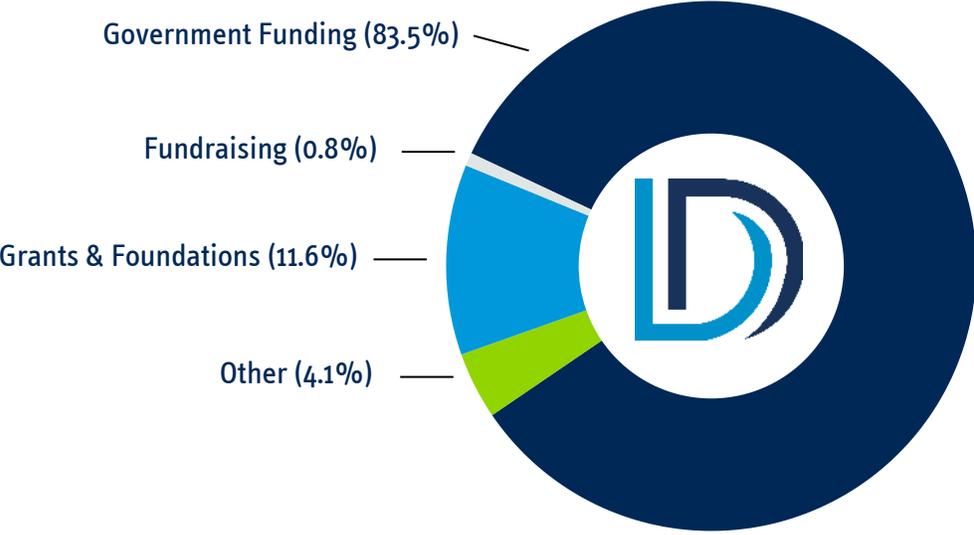
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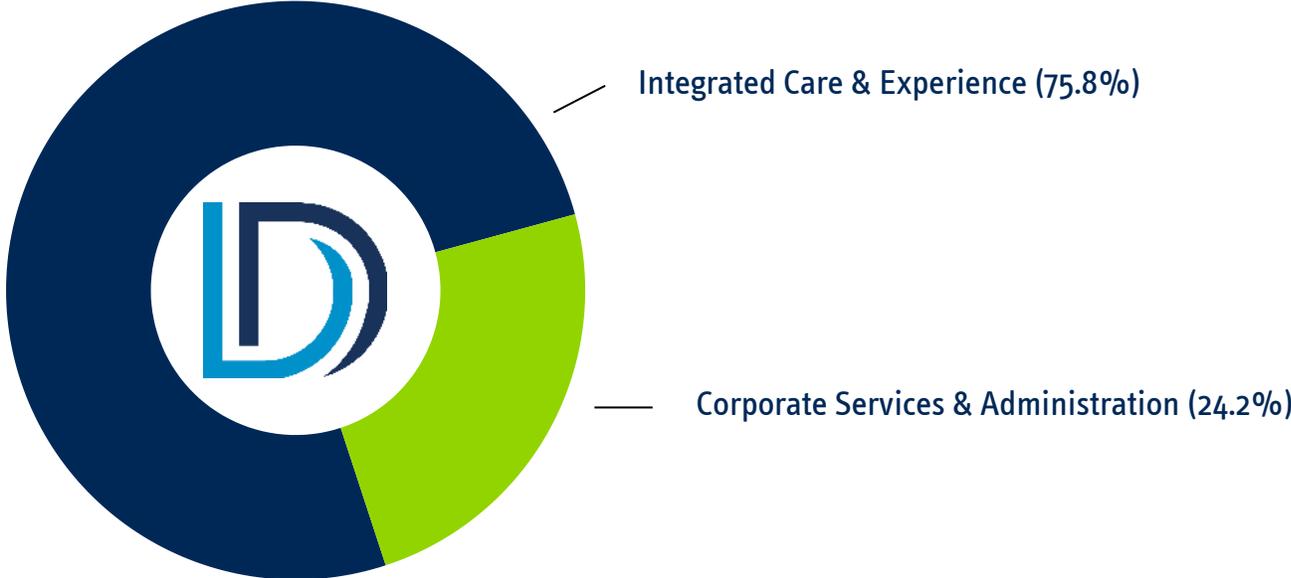


# OUR FINANCIALS

## REVENUE



## EXPENSES



# OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Abilities Centre  
Agilec  
AIDS Committee of Durham Region  
Ajax High School  
Ajax Public Library  
Ajax Welcome Centre  
Alzheimer's Society of Durham Region  
APPLE Schools  
Back Door Mission  
Bawaajigewin Aboriginal Community Circle  
Best Start Network  
BETTER HEALTH: Durham  
Black Physicians Association of Ontario  
Black Scientist Task Force  
Bobby Orr Public School  
Boys and Girls Club of Durham Region  
Brain Injury Association of Durham Region  
Brock Community Health Centre  
C.O.P.E. Mental Health Services  
Canadian Mental Health Association Durham  
Catholic Family Services of Durham  
Christian Faith Outreach Centre  
City of Oshawa  
City of Pickering  
Clarington Community Services Department  
Community Care Durham  
Community Connections (White Oaks)  
Community Development Council Durham  
Cornerstone Community Association  
DARS  
David Bouchard Public School  
Diabetes Canada  
Dnaagdawenmag Binnoojiiyag Child & Family Services  
Dr. C. F. Cannon Public School  
Dunbarton High School  
Durham Alternative Secondary School  
Durham Black Educators' Network  
Durham Catholic District School Board  
Durham Children and Youth Planning Network  
Durham College  
Durham District School Board  
Durham Family Services  
Durham Infant Development  
Durham Mental Health Services  
Durham Region Aboriginal Advisory Circle  
Durham Region Public Health Department  
Durham Regional Police Services  
Durham Tamil Association  
Durham Youth Services  
DurhamONE  
EarlyON Child and Family Centres  
École Élémentaire Ronald-Marion  
École Secondaire Catholique Saint-Charles-Garnier  
Enaahdig Healing Lodge and Learning Centre  
Entité 4  
Faith Place  
Family & Community Action Program  
Family Services Durham  
Feed the Need Durham  
Fleming College  
Frontenac Youth Services  
Future Ready Institute  
G.L. Roberts C.V.I.  
Gate 3:16  
Girls Inc.  
Glen Street Public School  
GOVAXX  
GraceWins

Grandview Children's Centre  
Habitat for Humanity Durham  
Health Commons Solutions Lab  
Healthy Babies/Healthy Children  
Henry Street High School  
Holy Trinity Catholic Secondary School  
Home and Community Care Support Services - Central East  
J. Clarke Richardson Collegiate  
John Howard Society of Durham  
Kedron United Church  
Kennedy House  
Kinark Child and Family Services  
Kujenga Family Wellness Project  
Lakeridge Health  
Lakeview Harbourside Complex  
Lester B Pearson Public School  
Métis Nation of Ontario  
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services  
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
Ministry of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries  
Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation  
Miziwe Biik Development Corporation  
Monsignor John Pereyma Catholic Secondary School  
Municipality of Clarington  
Muslim Welfare Home  
Northstar  
Notre Dame Catholic Secondary School  
Ontario Early Years Centres  
Ontario Health East  
Ontario Power Generation  
Ontario Tech University  
Ontario Works Program  
Oshawa and Durham Region Métis Council  
Oshawa Public Library  
Oshawa Senior Community Centres +55  
Oshawa YMCA  
Ottawa Model for Smoking Cessation Division of Prevention & Rehabilitation  
PARN  
PFLAG Durham Region  
Pickering Anti-Black Racism Task Force  
Pickering High School  
Pickering Public Library  
Pine Ridge Secondary School  
Pinewood Centre of Lakeridge Health  
Queen Elizabeth Public School  
Regional Municipality of Durham  
Resources for Exceptional Children & Youth – Durham Region  
Rose of Durham Young Parents Support Services  
Salvation Army  
Schlegel Villages  
South Asian Health Network  
Southern Ontario Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative  
St. Anne Catholic School  
St. Mary's Catholic Secondary School  
Strides Toronto  
TAIBU Community Health Centre  
Terry Fox Public School  
The Refuge  
TNO - The Neighbourhood Organization  
Town of Ajax  
Town of Whitby  
Transgender Connection  
Unemployed Help Centre  
University of Ottawa Heart Institute  
Victim Services  
Walters Rx  
Waverly Public School  
We Grow Food  
Welcome Centre Immigration Services  
Whitby Public Library  
Women's Multicultural Resources and Counselling Centre of Durham  
YMCA Employment and Community Services  
YMCA of Greater Toronto  
York University  
YWCA Durham

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 Ontario Health  
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 The Regional Municipality of Durham

## Partners

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 Durham Children's Aid Society  
 Enahtig Healing Lodge and Learning Centre  
 Lakeridge Health  
 Miziwe Biik Development Corporation  
 Oshawa Senior Community Centres (OSCC55+)  
 Right to Play  
 TAIBU Community Health Centre  
 Women's College Hospital

# HOW YOU CAN HELP DCHC

1

## DONATE

Scan this QR code to donate through our website:



2

## VOLUNTEER

Scan this QR code to see our current Volunteer Opportunities:



3

## SPREAD THE WORD

Scan this QR code to learn more about DCHC and the programs and services we offer:



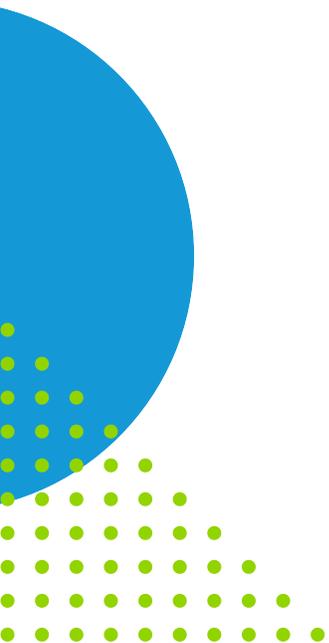


# THANK YOU

Thank you to all who contributed to the efforts and impact detailed in this report. We commit to continuing to work closely with our staff, funders, donors, community partners, and stakeholders as we strive to improve our health and social systems so they can better support our clients.

A note to our valued clients: your well-being remains at the heart of everything we do. At Durham Community Health Centre, we believe in continuously improving our services to better meet your needs. We are committed to enhancing your experience and ensuring that you receive the highest quality care and support.

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## Oshawa South

115 Grassmere Ave  
Oshawa, ON L1H 3X7

## Oshawa North

1320 Airport Blvd  
Oshawa, ON L1J 0C6

## Pickering

17-1450 Kingston Road  
Pickering, ON L1V 1C1