

# 2021-22

## Annual Report

### Rebounding & Coming Back Strong

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Grand Bend Area  
Community Health Centre



# Joint Board Chair and CEO Report

Since the COVID-19 pandemic arrived in the spring of 2020, everything changed for Canadians and the healthcare system. However, the expectations for care did not change and the Grand Bend Area Community Centre (GBACHC) staff stepped up when the community needed them most. Not only did the GBACHC remain open virtually and in-person, it also supported the community by operating a COVID-19 Assessment Centre and administering vaccines.

The GBACHC team pulled together to deliver extraordinary care in the face of this unprecedented time in healthcare. Staff worked tirelessly to slow the spread of infection, care for those infected by the virus, and remained a constant support to each other.

At the same time, the GBACHC looked to the future by engaging the community, staff, and stakeholders in developing a three-year strategic plan. This plan focuses on meeting the needs of a rapidly growing community through increased programming and the pursuit of funding for more physical space.

Significant technology advancements and innovations were also implemented to enhance access to virtual care, which will remain a focus moving forward. In March 2022, online appointment booking launched, while work is continuing on secure access to personal health information on mobile devices.

By the end of 2022, the GBACHC will complete another round of accreditation with the Canadian Centre for Accreditation. Policy and procedure renewal is currently underway encompassing operational areas and board governance.

Integration and partnership building continues with the Huron Perth and Area Ontario Health Team (HPA-OHT). The HPA-OHT is responsible for the coordination of services to support better patient care. The GBACHC is actively participating in the region-wide endeavours working cooperatively with partner healthcare agencies and institutions to achieve the HPA-OHT's goals.

As the impact of the pandemic fades, sincere gratitude is extended to the Grand Bend area community for the tremendous support received in 2021-22. The kindness shown

to staff, the donations, use of equipment and clothing, and words of encouragement are valued beyond measure!

Additionally, a sincere thank you is extended to the Grand Bend Area Health Services Foundation for its financial support to help keep the GBACHC fully operational with replacement technology, equipment, and tools.



**Ron Sapsford**  
Board Chair



**Chris Harris**  
CEO

“

Thank you to the Board, staff and the community for the support and encouragement, and we are looking forward to the upcoming year at the GBACHC!

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# Welcome New Team Members



## **Tara Oke** - Primary Care & Chronic Disease Manager

Tara graduated from nursing in 2001 and has many years of experience including previous employment at the South Huron Hospital and the London Health Sciences Centre. With a combination of front-line management, strategic planning, and accreditation experience, Tara is an excellent addition to the team.



## **Danielle Thurtell** - RN, CDE, Clinical Care Coordinator

Danielle is an experienced clinical nurse who most recently worked at the Rapids Family Health Team, Sarnia. Danielle supports the development of coordinated care plans through comprehensive nursing assessments and ensures timely communication using a patient- and family-centered approach. Danielle works to link patients with community partners such as the Alzheimer's Society, community paramedicine, Lambton Housing, and the Red Cross. Danielle is a welcome addition to the GBACHC team.

## Staff Transitions

### **Retirement Congratulations!**

Cate Melito, May 2021

Aileen Knip, March 2022

Sandra Kriess, March 2022

### **New Position Congratulations!**

Dr. Sakshi Babbar, June 2021

Candace Blanchard, September, 2021

Nicole White, October 2021

Samantha Ball, February 2022

Nicol McColl, March 2022

Lesley Jarvis, March 2022

**BEST** *Wishes*

## COVID-19 Assessment Centre

The GBACHC COVID-19 Assessment Centre (AC) performed over 13,200 tests between May 2020 and March 31, 2022. The AC has responded to numerous Ontario Health directives and changes throughout the pandemic. Following a peak in testing in December 2021, the AC has pivoted to adopt reduced testing eligibility and has added client assessments aligned with Ontario Health West.

The AC team includes a registered respiratory therapist, a registered practical nurse, and a nurse practitioner. The team's work is of great help to the healthcare system by diverting patient flow from hospital emergency departments. The AC team also supports the local agricultural sector by administering migrant farm worker testing when needed.

Test appointments are booked through online appointment booking, as well as, offered as part of primary care.

The AC thanks the community for their generous support over the past two years. The donations and assistance are greatly appreciated!

# Huron Perth Area Ontario Health Team Update



The Grand Bend Area Community Health Centre (GBACHC) continues to work with the Huron Perth Area Ontario Health Team (HPA-OHT). The GBACHC is considered a respected partner in transforming patient care by supporting priority populations and the following areas of improvement:

**Congestive Heart Failure (CHF):** Tara Oke, the GBACHC Manager of Allied Health and Chronic Disease, participates on the CHF working group. The group is working to improve system navigation and routing of patients who need more intensive treatment. The model developed will be used in the future as a template for more chronic diseases.

**Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC):** A GBACHC registered practical nurse is a member of the IPAC working group, which led to the GBACHC becoming a signatory to shared policies and procedures.

**Mental Health and Addictions:** The GBACHC social work team collaborates with the HPA-OHT's grief counselling work. At both the Grand Bend and Hensall sites, social workers provide virtual and in-person support to people grieving.

**Digital Advisory Committee (DAG):** Heather Klopp, the GBACHC Director of Health Support Services, co-chairs the DAG. The committee is implementing Hypercare, a secure text message system for primary care providers; online appointment booking (OAB); and Ocean e-Referral, an online referral hub of specialists and therapies. The GBACHC has been using Ocean e-Referral to speed up external referrals for the past year, and implemented OAB in March 2022 – check it out at <https://gbachc.ca/oab/>

**Cybersecurity and Data Quality:** The HPA-OHT cybersecurity committee is working to ensure member organizations have the basic policies and procedures in place to protect their computer networks from hackers. Additionally, the GBACHC's data management lead sits on the integrated decision-making committee, which is driving the effort to share data among all HPA-OHT partners.

## Accreditation

Accredited by  
Canadian Centre  
for Accreditation



Agréé par  
Centre canadien  
de l'agrément

The GBACHC is preparing for an accreditation with the Canadian Centre for Accreditation (CCA) in December 2022. The CCA is a national, not-for-profit organization offering accreditation specifically tailored to community-based health and social services across Canada.

Accreditation is a four-year modular process that supports the GBACHC's quality management, by reviewing policies,

procedures, and practices. An accreditation strengthens and fosters organizational growth and development through accountability in governance, quality risk management and performance, and primary healthcare standards. As an accredited facility, the GBACHC is committed to continuous improvement of the services offered.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GBACHC's 2020 accreditation date was postponed to December 2022 and will be conducted virtually. The GBACHC is currently in the second of six stages of the preparation process. The management team is gathering documentation, reviewing policies and practices, and preparing for interviews and engagement sessions with the accreditation reviewers.



# Community Advisory Council Report

**Submitted by Co-Chairs, Sherry Seelen and Tara Oke**



The shared goal and common purpose of the Community Advisory Council (CAC) is to advance patient/client engagement and patient/client-centered care in all services provided at the GBACHC. Using the community health centre model of health and wellbeing as a guide, the CAC takes pride in successfully collaborating with management and staff on behalf of patients/clients.

Despite the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, the CAC has remained active and keen in advancing practices and communication materials to benefit patients/clients. In 2021-22, the CAC reviewed and provided suggestions on the following:

- Policies and procedures affecting patients/clients
- Primary care patient intake package
- Patient/Client relations brochure
- Patient/Client satisfaction survey
- Annual demographics request letter
- Strategic plan
- Accreditation
- Telephone answering system messaging
- Virtual care opportunities
- Website content
- Program development

To better understand job roles at the GBACHC, the CAC invited staff members as guest speakers to monthly meetings. The speakers provided insight into patient/client care and

services. The CAC in turn offered ways they could support staff with program recommendations and patient/client-focused communications. The information exchange was so successful, more presentations are planned for the upcoming year.

Also in the upcoming year, the CAC will participate in the GBACHC's quality improvement plan (QIP). The QIP is a public commitment to meet quality improvement goals. After a two-year pause on QIP submissions due to the pandemic, the GBACHC will work on priority indicators related to interprofessional primary care including the patient/client experience with their involvement in care decisions.

Lastly, several CAC members have further engaged with healthcare partner organizations including the Huron Perth Area Ontario Health Team and community service groups. Their involvement facilitates necessary networking to provide excellent regional patient/client-centered care.

Community Advisory Council co-chairs, Sherry and Tara, sincerely appreciate the dedication and efforts of the CAC members, and the cooperation and partnership of the GBACHC staff. These qualities have ensured that good care and engagement have been achieved for patients/clients.

“People working in a strong community with a shared goal and a common purpose can make the impossible, possible.”

-Tom Vilsak

# Health Equity



The Grand Bend Area Community Health Centre (GBACHC) strives for health equity for all groups of people, particularly those who experience health disparities caused by less access to healthy food, good housing and education, and safe neighbourhoods. In 2021-22 the GBACHC focused on five areas to promote health equity.

## Food Insecurity

To address food insecurity issues in Huron and Lambton counties, the GBACHC successfully advocated for a "Right to Food" resolution at the 2021 Alliance For Healthier Communities annual general meeting.

In the fall of 2021, the GBACHC worked with Huron County's Poverty to Prosperity organization on a food insecurity awareness campaign focused on basic income, the Canadian Disability Benefit, and the Universal School Food Program.

As well, health promoter, Miranda Burgess, worked with local community garden coordinators to obtain a grant to expand and increase access to community gardens in Grand Bend, Hensall, Huron Park, Parkhill, and Forest.

## Social Prescribing

Social prescribing helps patients/clients improve their health, wellbeing, and social welfare by connecting them to existing community services and programs.

In partnership with the Gateway Centre of Excellence in Rural Health, the GBACHC developed and launched training for volunteer community social connectors. The training included resources volunteers can use to connect GBACHC patients/clients to local options when a healthcare provider prescribes social interaction to improve health and wellbeing.

For more information, contact Cindy Maxfield [cmaxfield@gbchc.com](mailto:cmaxfield@gbchc.com), 519-238-2362 x231, or Miranda Burgess [mburgess@gbchc.com](mailto:mburgess@gbchc.com), 519-238-2362 x222.

## Virtual and In-Person Programs

The 2021-22 GBACHC Patient/Client Satisfaction Survey revealed that people equally enjoyed attending virtual and in-person programs including exercise, persistent pain management, and mindfulness. As the pandemic continues, and beyond, the GBACHC will maintain both program attendance options to ensure equity for people with transportation and access issues.

## Age-Friendly Lambton Older Adult Pathway Project

Health promoter, Cindy Maxfield, participated in this project, which obtained an Inclusive Communities grant from the Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility to study access needs of individuals over 55. The grant also funded development of <https://www.agefriendlysarnialambton.ca/> and an age-friendly helpline, 1-888-347-8737, for those who cannot access a computer or the internet.

## HPA-OHT Equity Diversity and Inclusion Working Group

The GBACHC is providing guidance and knowledge in developing an equity, inclusion, and diversity framework for the Huron Perth Area Ontario Health Team (HPA-OHT). A survey was sent to HPA-OHT partners to determine their stage of development and capacity to enable equity, diversity, and inclusion. Survey results will be used to develop a plan that can be adopted by all HPA-OHT partners.

# Health Equity

With the GBACHC being fully staffed since June 2021, more new patients have been onboarded than ever before. Using a controlled intake process, practitioner time is optimized to ensure both new and existing patients have adequate access to care. Many thanks to the Community Advisory Council (CAC) for their support and advice in updating the patient intake package.

# 2021-22 Patient Client Satisfaction Survey

99% said the overall experience with reception staff was good to excellent.

98% said the overall sense of feeling welcomed and safe at the GBACHC was good to excellent.

98% said the overall experience accessing an appointment was good to excellent.

97% said their healthcare provider listened to their concerns and answered questions satisfactorily.

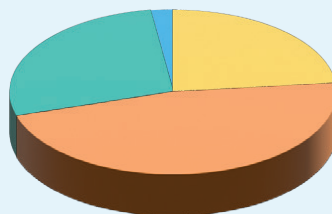
96% said their healthcare provider involved them in care and treatment decisions.

88% received an appointment in a timely manner when they were sick or concerned about their health.

84% felt comfortable and safe having a virtual appointment.

49% would be interested in receiving some aspects of care virtually (e.g., test results and prescription renewals) when the pandemic ends.

“  
Staff is very knowledgeable and take their time to ensure you understand.  
”



The last time you needed urgent care, how many days did it take from appointment request to the appointment day?

Same Day: 58      2-19 Days: 115  
Next Day: 68      20+ Days: 5

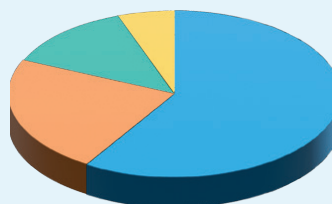


In the past year, with which healthcare provider or program did you have an appointment or session?

Nurse Practitioner: 204      Physiotherapist: 40  
Respiratory Therapist: 8      Social Worker: 37  
Specialist Through OTN: 4      Physician: 275  
Dietitian: 36      Exercise Program: 25  
Diabetes Educator: 36      Education Program: 9

“  
It's been good learning about diabetes and keeping mine under control. I really appreciate the staff at the GBACHC, really caring people.  
”

“  
Virtual care implementation was awesome. Responding to the pandemic was outstanding.  
”



The last time you needed urgent care, how many days did it take from appointment request to the appointment day?

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## Strategic Plan

Beginning in November 2021, the GBACHC Board of Directors led a comprehensive strategic planning process including an environmental scan, and gathering of feedback from patients/clients, volunteers, staff, community partners and Grand Bend area residents. This feedback was compiled into a planning discovery report, which was used to develop a set of three-year strategic directions.

It was clear from the data and feedback, plus the changes to the healthcare sector brought on by the pandemic, that the strategic directions must include a strong access to care action plan. Plan directions will also focus on optimizing team-based care; strengthening, and growing partnerships; and investing in staff, facilities, and resources. Watch for the new strategic plan to be published in May 2022.

## Vision

Health and wellbeing for all.

## Mission

Empower the health and wellbeing for the people in our communities – together.

## Our Core Values

### People Centred

Individuals are empowered to be in control of their health.

### Respect and Inclusion

### Compassionate Care

Individuals are empowered to be in control of their health.

### Interconnectedness

Building connections at all levels to provide comprehensive care.

### Integrity and Responsibility

Accountable for what we say and do.



**Grand Bend Area  
Community Health Centre**

### Grand Bend

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Grand Bend, ON N0M 1T0

### Hensall

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