



# Manitoba Association of Community Health

## Community Health 101

- NOT-FOR-PROFIT, PUBLICLY FUNDED, PRIMARY HEALTHCARE ORGANIZATIONS
- TAKE A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO CARE, USING INTERPROFESSIONAL CARE TEAMS
- INTEGRATE PRIMARY CARE, HEALTH PROMOTION AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT, PLACING EMPHASIS ON KEEPING PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES HEALTHY
- MADE RELEVANT TO LOCAL NEEDS AND PRIORITIES THROUGH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND PARTICIPATION

Community Health Centres (CHCs) come in many shapes and sizes. Across North America, CHCs are traditionally located in lower-income neighbourhoods and/or serve specific marginalized populations<sup>1</sup>. Within the health care delivery system in Canada, CHCs are integrated, front-line healthcare, and social support centres that seek to provide the right care, by the right providers, at the right time.

### **PUBLICLY-FUNDED**

Community Health Centres across Canada are funded and staffed through Canada's publicly-funded and administered health insurance system — Medicare. A large number of CHCs also receive other sources of revenue for particular programs and services.

*Klinik's Teen Talk is a youth health education program that provides services from a harm reduction, prevention education perspective and receives regional, provincial and federal funding.*

### **TEAM-BASED PRIMARY CARE**

In contrast to solo practitioner models, Community Health Centres offer high-quality primary care through a collaborative team approach. Professionals with diverse experience and expertise provide services in a team environment, based on patient needs.

*Main Street Project uniquely integrates paramedics, nurses and physicians in the intake, assessment and primary care management of Winnipeg's most marginalized homeless population. This client-centred approach reduces the strain on overcrowded emergency rooms and other health services. Our integrated health team provides specialized care to those living with chronic illness, addictions, mental health issues and homelessness.*

*Women's Health Clinic's eating disorders program is a prime example of team-based care. Dietitians, nurse practitioners, counselors and workshop facilitators provide individual and group-based services, based on a comprehensive and holistic model of care.*

### **INTEGRATED CARE & SUPPORT**

Community Health Centres integrate team-based primary care with health promotion outreach, illness prevention programs and community development initiatives, in keeping with the World Health Organization's definition of primary health care. As part of this integrated, comprehensive approach, CHCs support

communities and residents to achieve health by actively addressing social determinants of health such as poverty, access to shelter/housing, safety, education, language barriers and other factors that have a direct impact on wellbeing.

*Klinic's integrated care approach goes beyond team-based primary care and counselling to include client growth and skill development. Our care providers can refer clients to yoga, mindfulness and coping groups that promote life skills and healthy behaviours, all at no cost.*

## COMMUNITY ORIENTED

Factors affecting health and healthcare vary from community to community. That's why CHCs focus on the most appropriate services and programs for the community they serve — whether that means a geographical catchment or a community of individuals with common characteristics. CHCs engage members of the community in helping to identify priorities and strategies for services.

*Youville Centre operates a community health agency providing services to the residents of St. Vital. One of our roles is to bring together community agencies and partners to share our ideas, plans and success with one another. The advantage of this effort is coordinated services for our clients and a reduction in service duplication.*

*The Manitoba Federation of Labour Occupational Health Centre trains and supports newcomers transitioning to work and life in Manitoba. Our Cross Cultural Community Advisory Committee, made up of community leaders and service providers from a variety of cultural communities, oversees our programming with newcomers and ensures we are meeting their most important needs, while building the capacity of newcomer communities. In the case where newcomers experience injury at work, our physicians, nurses and social workers collaborate in providing medical assessment, treatment and resource support that moves them towards recovery, healing and inclusion.*

## EVIDENCE AND IMPACT

Research from many jurisdictions demonstrates that Community Health Centres provide effective and cost-effective care, achieving important outcomes in improving health and reducing health system costs. Add examples of evidence of impact and calls to invest in CHCs across Canada.

*The national, four-year research project **At Home Chez Sois**, provided a unique opportunity for Winnipeg to engage a research study on homelessness and housing with real time housing action initiatives. The research and resulting work demonstrated that a Housing First Model saves the Manitoba health system money, while ensuring Winnipeg's most vulnerable populations are housed in a safe and supportive way. It allowed agencies like Main Street Project to partner with other Community Health Centres and serve the best interest of clients.*

## COMMUNITY BOARD

Each CHC in Manitoba is governed by a community-based Boards of Directors to ensure focus on the scope of the care delivered resulting in higher quality care, lower cost services, and better procedures for client complaints<sup>2</sup>.

*Nine Circles Community Health Centre has expanded on internationally acknowledged GIPA Principles (Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS) to recognize and encourage meaningful participation of all clients and members in every aspect of the organization. Engagement opportunities at Nine Circles include governance, program evaluation, communications and strategic planning, while integrating community voice within the structure of the agency and working to operationalize the community's call of "Nothing About Us Without Us."*

1 Collins, R., Resendes, S. & Dunn, J. (2014) The Untold Story: Examining Ontario's Community Health Centres' Initiatives to Address Upstream Determinants of Health. *Healthcare Policy*, 10(1): 14-29.

2 Crampton P, et al (2005) "Does Community-Governed Nonprofit Primary Care Improve Access to Services?" *International Journal of Health Services* 35(3): 465-78.

\* Adapted from <http://www.cachc.ca/about-chcs/>