



**Saskatoon
Community
Clinic**

"Your Health Care Co-op"

FOCUS

NEWSLETTER

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Community Health Services (Saskatoon) Association Ltd.

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Saskatoon Community Clinic leads innovative medication adherence pilot project



Dr. Larissa Kiesman

With Saskatoon's rate of HIV infection nine times the national average and infections continuing to rise, hope can sometimes be hard to find.

But the team at Saskatoon Community Clinic's Westside location has developed a care model for HIV patients that offers more than a glimmer of hope and has already shown it can help.

"We have been able to demonstrate how effective medication adherence technology can be, along with the help of outreach and nursing staff, to support some of those with HIV most at risk of dying," says Dr. Larissa Kiesman, Medical Director at Westside and the physician lead on this project.

'Spencer' is the medication adherence technology to which Kiesman is referring, a countertop machine used to support patients to take their medications at home and on time.

HIV in 2024 is a manageable chronic disease, but patients need to stick to a care plan and take medication every day in order to suppress the virus in their bodies for their own health and to stop the spread of the infection to others.

"If a patient misses a dose of their anti-retroviral medication, it can complicate things and the virus can mutate and become stronger; but it can be a challenge for patients to take their medications every day when they face homelessness, live with addictions and have complex social needs," says Kiesman.

"We saw there was a gap in care for these patients, even if they had a caseworker supporting them. They still needed to get to the pharmacy every single day because we had no way to get these medications into the home and taken safely," she explains.

When Kiesman learned about the Spencer technology and how it was being used for geriatric patients and those living with dementia, she was excited to think about how it could be used for HIV patients.

"If a patient misses a dose of their anti-retroviral medication, it can complicate things and the virus can mutate and become stronger."

– Dr. Larissa Kiesman

"When we heard about Spencer, we thought, 'This is great! It encourages patients to take their medications and we can monitor adherence.' We had been looking for a solution like this and wanted to figure out how we could make it happen," she says.

The team at Westside led a year-long pilot project which included some of their most vulnerable patients, those who normally would not engage in treatment and whose health status put them most at risk of death. They also had to be housed.

Once individuals were identified and consented to participate, Spencer units were filled and placed in their homes. The countertop units were linked to telehealth support, offering real time data reporting and monitoring to track medication adherence, and sending friendly reminders and prompts to participants.

The pilot project was in partnership with Willowgrove Pharmacy, Custom Health and ViiV Healthcare. Willowgrove Pharmacy dispensed and delivered the specially-packaged medications, Custom Health provided the machines in-kind and ViiV Healthcare provided funding for a nurse and an outreach worker to support the project. The technology was great, but the support staff were also critical to making this project a success, says Kiesman.

This was the first time these Spencer units have been used specifically for the HIV positive patient population and the results were promising.

Continued on page 2...

"It likely saved several people's lives helping them to get and stay on their life-saving HIV medications. We were also able to successfully treat people's Hepatitis C and some participants came into the clinic for chronic disease management for HIV because they had Spencer and were supported to come in. This project improved care for a normally very isolated population," says Kiesman.

Between 85 and 90 per cent of the participants achieved suppression of their HIV viral load within one to four weeks of using Spencer. One hundred per cent of those who had the unit for at least three months were treated for other health conditions including Hepatitis C and sexually transmitted infections and were connected to the mental health team. Four patients were able to establish a stabilized medication routine and no longer needed the unit.

Although the project wrapped up at the end of 2023, the

work continues in smaller measure with units still in several patients' homes. At the moment, there are no new clients starting, but Kiesman is optimistic about the future of this model of care for HIV positive clients and other vulnerable individuals who have illnesses like Hepatitis C and Syphilis.

"The SHA (Saskatchewan Health Authority) has taken notice and wants to continue this work and potentially grow it," says Kiesman.

The family physician says she is glad to be a part of an organization like the Saskatoon Community Clinic that is always looking for better ways to support those it serves.

"This project speaks to our values as a co-operative and exemplifies our team-based model of care. We listen to the needs of our patients and find ways to innovate and build partnerships."

Why regular doctor visits are important for your child's health

By Dr. Reem Abdul Hadi, Physician

Even if your child seems healthy, regular visits to the doctor are crucial for their overall well-being and development. Your family doctor or nurse practitioner plays a vital role in keeping your child healthy by providing various types of care:

Comprehensive Care:

Your doctor helps coordinate all aspects of your child's health, including physical growth, mental well-being, preventive care, managing chronic conditions, and even dental and vision health.

Growth Monitoring:

Regular check-ups track your child's growth patterns like height, weight, and head circumference. Any deviations from expected growth can be spotted early and addressed.

Developmental Screening:

Doctors assess your child's developmental milestones such as speech and motor skills. Detecting delays early means starting interventions sooner, which greatly helps in improving outcomes.

Immunizations:

Keeping up with scheduled vaccinations during regular visits protects your child from serious diseases.

Preventive Care:

Doctors offer guidance on nutrition, exercise, sleep, and overall healthy habits, helping prevent illnesses.

Mental Health:

Visits help identify mental health issues like anxiety or behavioral problems. Early detection leads to better treatments and improved quality of life.

Teen Health:

Adolescents undergo significant changes, and regular visits can help manage these changes, provide sexual health education, and screen for substance use issues.

Building Trust:

Regular visits build trust between your child, you, and the doctor, making it easier to discuss sensitive topics and ensure appropriate care.

Education and Guidance:

Doctors educate on health and safety topics relevant to your child's age, like injury prevention and healthy habits.

Early Problem Detection:

Regular visits can catch potential health problems early, including high blood pressure, obesity, and vision or hearing issues.

Dental and Vision Care:

Doctors remind you of dental check-ups and can perform basic vision screenings, ensuring these crucial aspects of health are not overlooked.

Chronic Disease Management:

For children with ongoing conditions like asthma or diabetes, regular visits are essential for managing their health and preventing complications.

Educational Support:

Doctors can identify learning issues early, leading to

interventions like specialized education services or referrals to specialists.

Regular visits to the doctor help ensure your child grows up healthy and happy, addressing all aspects of their well-being from physical health to educational needs, overall well-being and development.

Pharmacists can prescribe more than you think



As one of the most accessible members of your healthcare team, you can turn to Saskatoon Community Clinic (SCC) pharmacists for timely help with many minor ailments.

“Pharmacists in Saskatchewan are trained to prescribe medications to help you with everything from acid reflux to urinary tract infections and many things in-between,” says Meagan Turgeon-Walters, SCC’s Director of Pharmacy.

A minor ailment is generally a condition that is less serious for which you can look after yourself and may not need to see your doctor. For some ailments, your pharmacist can provide you with a limited course of treatment with a prescription drug that may be more effective than an over-the-counter medication.

Examples of minor ailments:

- ▶ acid reflux
- ▶ athlete’s foot, ring worm, jock itch
- ▶ atopic dermatitis
- ▶ bacterial skin infections
- ▶ canker sores
- ▶ cold sores
- ▶ conjunctivitis (inflammation of the eye)
- ▶ diaper rash
- ▶ emergency contraception
- ▶ erectile dysfunction
- ▶ hay fever, seasonal allergies
- ▶ headaches
- ▶ hemorrhoids
- ▶ hormonal contraception
- ▶ influenza
- ▶ insect bites
- ▶ mild acne
- ▶ muscle strains and sprains
- ▶ nail fungus infection
- ▶ nausea and vomiting in pregnancy
- ▶ nicotine cessation
- ▶ oral thrush
- ▶ painful periods
- ▶ recurrent genital herpes
- ▶ shingles
- ▶ urinary tract infection



“Next time you need advice or hope to initiate treatment, give us a call because an appointment with a doctor or nurse practitioner may not be necessary,” explains Turgeon-Walters.

Unlike other services at the SCC, you do not have to be a patient at the clinic to receive this care from SCC pharmacists or to fill prescriptions here.

You can reach the SCC pharmacies at **306-664-4277** (Downtown) or **306-664-4349** (Westside).

A co-op near you: Steep Hill Food Co-op

Steep Hill Food Co-op has been a fixture on Broadway Avenue since it opened in 1978 when organic farming was just getting started in Canada and, thanks to some re-vitalizing efforts last year, it plans to remain there for many years to come.

“We’re making the effort to run a store that’s going to be there for people. We’ve been here for 45 years and want to stay and keep serving the community,” says Steep Hill president Cathy Holtslander.

Steep Hill began when its founding members came together and formed this co-operative to buy organic whole foods in bulk when they could not find the food they wanted in stores.

The co-op started out run entirely by volunteers, but eventually it grew into a store with employees and a volunteer board elected by the membership to guide its operation. Members could work a monthly shift in the store or help in other ways for a higher discount, and non-members could also shop there but with no reduction.

Steep Hill still operates on this original model. The co-op encourages people to buy an annual membership so they can participate in the co-op and get the reduced prices, but membership is not required to shop there.

“Everybody is welcome. Come in and check things out, buy what you need. You don’t have to be a member to shop here,” explains Holtslander.

“We are putting co-operative values into action in the store and that’s all benefiting the community and the individual shopper.”

Last year, the co-operative ran into a bump in the road where closure looked imminent, but members rallied to ensure that would not happen.

“There was just a groundswell of support for people saying, ‘Whoa, we want to keep Steep Hill happening,’” says Holtslander.



After a couple meetings where members talked about the situation and how they might still be able to keep the doors open, they elected an interim board and began to build a plan.

“We got ourselves back on track,” she says.

If you have not visited the modest store in awhile, you would notice some changes.

“It’s easier to find things and just some of the improved organization of the store has made it feel brighter and livelier,” she says.

The co-op is working on increasing the number of customers going through its doors to secure its financial position and to further improve the space and the experience for shoppers. They went to their members to ask them what they would like to see in the store to help them achieve these ends.

“We got lots of support for the things that we have been selling and also got a range of different ideas that people wanted in terms of additional products,” says Holtslander.

The closure of the nearby Extra Foods in 2022 meant low-cost basic pantry items were no longer available in the Broadway neighbourhood. Members indicated they wanted Steep Hill to stock some of these products so people in the area did not have to take the bus or a taxi or have a long walk to one of the bigger grocery stores.

“We have started supplying some of these as well as the organic and local traditional products that have been



History and memorabilia on display at the 45th anniversary party



Live music and stories were shared at the 45th anniversary party

offered for over 45 years now. We carry products that are aligned with what our members want,” says Holtslander.

These include products wherever possible that meet a set of standards members have prioritized including foods that are: nourishing; minimally processed, and free from artificial flavours, colours and preservatives; certified organic; local to our bioregion; fair trade, non-GMO (genetically modified organisms); and sourced from companies with ethical business practices .

As an organization that, from its beginning, was a solely bulk-food store, they have looked for ways to minimize waste. For example, they do not sell or supply grocery bags; they look for suppliers who minimize packaging and they compost all their food waste and reuse or recycle packaging as much as possible.

Aside from providing food that people can feel good about purchasing, there are other reasons to support Steep Hill.

“Our commitment to serve the community goes much deeper than our commercial store. As a non-profit, local co-op, we’re not taking anything extra out of your grocery dollar. We’re sourcing the kinds of foods that people want locally, as much as we can. We’re contributing to the livelihoods of local farmers who are our suppliers, including Indigenous suppliers.

“We are helping to ensure there is a market for organic producers so those good practices are supported economically. We pay our staff fair wages and have good jobs for the people that work for us,” says Holtslander.

“We are putting co-operative values into action in the store and that’s all benefiting the community and the individual shopper.”

To learn more, check out Steep Hill Food Co-ops website at www.steepphillfood.ca

NEW FEATURE IN FOCUS: A co-op near you

Co-operatives are an integral part of our lives in Saskatchewan, providing everything from housing to healthcare to financial services to groceries and everything in-between.

Our province is home to approximately 750 co-operatives, including your healthcare co-op, the Community Health Services (Saskatoon) Association.

You are in good company as part of the 56 per cent of Saskatchewan residents who are members of at least one co-operative.

A co-operative, as defined by the International Co-operative Alliance is “an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations through a jointly-owned and democratically-controlled enterprise.”

One of the ways co-operatives differ from other business models is our commitment to embody cooperative values and principles.

Cooperatives are based on the values of self-help, self-responsibility, democracy, equality, equity and solidarity.

There are seven co-operative principles which serve as guidelines for co-ops to put their values into practice: Voluntary and open membership, democratic member control, member economic participation, autonomy and independence, education, training and information; cooperation among co-operatives; and concern for community.

We are excited to introduce you to a different Saskatchewan co-op in each edition of Focus in a new feature called ‘A co-op near you.’

If there is a co-op with which you are involved that you would like us to highlight, please get in touch with Danielle at member.relations@communityclinic.ca or 306-664-4243.

Highlights from the semi-annual members' meeting

The Community Health Services (Saskatoon) Association Inc. (CHSA) held its Semi-Annual Meeting Wednesday, January 17 over Zoom with 53 members and 4 guests registered and Board President Frank Quennell chairing.

Elections

Evan Thompson was acclaimed to the CHSA's board in a residual term ending at the AGM in 2024. A big thanks to Chasity Head-Stoneland for her service to our co-operative. Kimberly Schmidt was acclaimed to the Communications Committee with her term ending at the AGM in 2025.

Resolutions

Members passed a resolution changing the voting age in the CHSA bylaws from 18 to 16 and defining the word 'dependant' as it relates to joint/family memberships.

Members defeated a resolution asking that the new 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Council (Q+) be chaired by a member of the Q+ older adult community and that the council prioritize older adults while still being open to and consisting of all SCC members from the Q+ community.

Awards

Nominated by the Seniors Advisory Council (SAC) for their participation in the Council's research projects, students Sabryna McCrea, Rayan Shafi, Noor Rehman and Sian Shahab were honoured with the Outstanding Volunteer Services Award.

The students' research covered several topics including aging in place, the role of seniors advocates in Canada, long-term care in western Canada and the unique needs of seniors who are members of the LGBTQ+ community. These intergenerational research projects began in 2019 to meet the needs of SAC members who wanted to become better informed on issues impacting seniors in our community. The project connected students with seniors to study seniors' health issues and develop evidence-based recommendations to share with the clinic's board, staff and members.

Outstanding Volunteer Services Award Winners



Sabryna McCrea



Rayan Shafi



Noor Rehman



Sian Shahab

Presentation

Members heard from Josephine Forest, Curriculum Developer in Indigenization, University of Regina, in a presentation on land acknowledgements to help support the CHSA's work this year developing our own land acknowledgement.

Elder Florence Highway began the meeting in a good way with a blessing but also provided heartfelt remarks prior to Josephine's presentation.

Next members' meeting

We look forward to seeing you in-person for the first time since 2020 at the CHSA's annual general meeting on Wednesday, June 19!



**Saskatoon
Community
Clinic**

Save the Date

Annual General Meeting

Community Health Services (Saskatoon) Association Ltd.

Wednesday, June 19, 2024

Open Area, Langer Building
424 1st Avenue North, Saskatoon, SK

More information and registration details in May

Occupational Therapy

Upcoming Programs

Stand Tall - Prevent a Fall

Falling in the home? Afraid to get in and out of the shower? Tripping over your own feet? This group program might be a good fit for you! This is a falls prevention group focusing on older adults who are at risk of falling in their home or caregivers interested in keeping their loved ones safe. This group will provide fun and interactive education on falls risk factors and prevention strategies, including easy changes that can be made to your lifestyle and your home.

When: Thursday, May 16 from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Where: 424 1st Ave North (Please use the blue door at the back)

**To register, please contact the Occupational Therapy department
at 306-664-4235 or janstey@communityclinic.ca**

Counselling and Community Services

Happy Gang Silver Threads Group (65+)

This group's goal is to provide an opportunity for connection, playfulness and learning together for older adults who are community clinic patients. It offers a diversity of programming and is organized around general themes of health and wellness, building social connections, entertainment, games and fun activities and guest speakers on health, historical and community topics.

When: Two Thursday afternoons a month from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Dates: April 11 & 25, May 9 & 23, June 6 & 20

Where: 424 1st Ave North (Please use the blue door at the back)

Women & Words Talking Group (55+)

This group is a safe, confidential space to share and have your experiences and feelings validated by others. Conflict is a normal part of all relationships and can be a healthy way for people to express their emotions or identify an issue. However, conflict is not always healthy. A relationship with unhealthy conflict can involve non-physical behaviours that belittle the other person and can include: silent treatments, insults, put downs, verbal threats or other tactics that make the other person feel threatened, inferior, ashamed or degraded.

When: One Tuesday afternoon a month from 1:30 – 3:30 p.m.

Dates: April 16, May 14 & June 11

Where: 424 1st Ave North (Please use the blue door at the back)

**To register, please contact Counselling Reception at 306-664-4283.
If transportation is a concern, please indicate when registering.**



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In honour of Paula Paley from Irene Danaher

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