



CEO Report to the Board

April 24, 2024



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1.0 Strategy in Action

Reaching Out to Our Community

Advancing inclusivity in Ontario's health care workforce

St. Joseph's will be one of 10 champion organizations participating in a Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital collaborative called the Inspire, Hire, Train, Retain initiative. Funded by the Government of Ontario's EnAbling Change Program, this year-long project focuses on the co-design of resources with and for Ontario health care organizations to promote inclusive workforces. The goal is to prepare health care managers to hire, engage and retain workers with disabilities by increasing knowledge on accessibility and confidence for inclusion. The project will see participating hospitals collaborate on the following:

- Develop training-in-a-box materials with and for Ontario health care organizations based on needs identified by sector representatives and information adapted from existing resources and/or the creation of new resources
- Train internal "champions" in collaborating health care organizations to deliver prototype training within their organizations and collect feedback from trainers and participants to improve the prototype
- Share training-in-a-box resources with health care organizations across the province

St. Joseph's was invited to participate in this project as a result of the organization's work with Project SEARCH. By participating, St. Joseph's anticipates several benefits for our own organization such as: advancing our inclusive human resources practices including hiring, training and retaining employees with diverse abilities; expanding our capacity to engage workers with disabilities; and be recognized as leaders and advocates in our community in supporting a broader culture of inclusion.

Eclipse safety – sharing our expertise

With the April 8 solar eclipse generating much excitement across North America for months leading up to the day, St. Joseph's Ivey Eye Institute took the opportunity to educate the public on safety. In a [media release](#) and through social media, ophthalmologist Dr. Phil Hooper, who is also President of the Canadian Ophthalmological Society, shared his expertise about eye and vision safety, which generated several interviews locally, regionally and nationally. This important information was also shared internally across our organization for the safety of our staff, physicians, volunteers and learners.

Parkinson's Education Program relaunches

St. Joseph's Parkinson's Education Program has relaunched to be accessible both in-person and virtually. This 10-week educational program is led by the interdisciplinary Day Hospital staff at Parkwood Institute Main Building, in partnership with the Parkinson's Society of Southwestern Ontario. Geared to people living with Parkinson's disease and those supporting a loved one with the condition, the weekly program has shifted to a hybrid model from a fully virtual format, which was initiated during the pandemic. The series provides education delivered by health care professionals on various topics such as:

- Signs and symptoms of Parkinson's disease
- Disease progression and management
- Medication management
- Mobility issues
- Speech and swallowing issues, nutrition
- Adaptive equipment for self-care
- Energy conservation and relaxation

- Health benefits of leisure and overcoming barriers to leisure
- Social and emotional aspects of the disease and adjustment process

A research component will validate the effectiveness of the new hybrid format of the program, which is believed to be the only interdisciplinary program for Parkinson's in Ontario.

Earth Day road show

Environmental Services (EVS) coordinated an Earth Day “road show” at all main sites leading up to Earth Day on April 22 with displays featuring St. Joseph’s implementation of the re-usable Sharpsmart containers for the disposal of sharps, results of the organization’s organic waste diversion to bio fuel, and environmentally-friendly practices all can do at home. EVS again collaborated with the City of London to raise awareness about fats, oils and grease (FOG) in city sewers and provided free FOG collection cups at the displays.

The Earth Day road show also included an Indigenous-led water ceremony conducted at Parkwood Institute Mental Health Care Building on April 18 by Tracey Whiteye, Executive Director of the Can-Am Indian Friendship Centre in Windsor and visiting Knowledge Keeper with Biigajiiskaan: Indigenous Pathways to Mental Wellness. A water ceremony honours the spirit and life-force of water and the life it creates and sustains.

Also included in the road show were displays by Food and Nutrition Services to highlight the latest results and successes of the ongoing Nourish Project, which aims to address and find solutions around diverse issues related to health, food, community, and our impact on the environment. Information was shared on local purchasing data, waste reduction strategies, the pilot garden at Parkwood Institute, Coolfood pledge and food prescriptions.

Advancing Excellence in Care Together

New central referral for cataract surgery

St. Joseph’s, in collaboration with hospitals across Southwestern Ontario, has implemented a new cataract surgery referral system called the Cataract Central Intake program. This new program provides a central location for health care providers to send referrals to a hospital-based ophthalmologist in the South West and Erie St. Clair regions for a cataract surgery consult.

The goal of the program is to improve patient outcomes through quicker referrals, improved communication, easy access to care options and a standardized referral process. Other regions using this system are seeing reduced wait times for patients, which is key to improving the patient experience and outcomes.

The centralized referral program in the South West and Erie St. Clair regions is built around patient choice, which includes options for a preferred provider, preferred region/location or a preference for the shortest wait time for cataract surgery. Coming soon, wait times for each ophthalmologist will be provided on the Cataract Central Intake webpage.

OceanMD, which provides integrated solutions for digital health care and centralized, secure data exchange, is the online platform for all referrals to the program. Health providers can send an e-Referral or fax a referral form with all data captured through Ocean. Referrals are reviewed for completeness and sent to the appropriate ophthalmologist.

Leading in Research and Innovation

Harm reduction research improving patient care

Research from Lawson Health Research Institute is helping to advance harm reduction strategies in hospitals for people who use substances.

Lawson research has found patients who use methamphetamine reported stigma and a lack of understanding about addiction among health care providers and hospital staff. This can sometimes result in patients not seeking care, experiencing withdrawal while receiving care or leaving hospital against medical advice. Building on these findings, a team led by Lawson scientists Cheryl Forchuk (PhD) and Dr. Michael Silverman has been working to implement and study harm reduction strategies at LHSC and St. Joseph's, including those aimed at facilitating changes in attitude, knowledge, organizational support and safety approaches. As part of the research project, Darren Scott, a Peer Harm Reduction Worker with the Regional HIV/AIDS Connection who has lived experience with substance use, and Tammy Fischer, a clinical nursing educator in LHSC's Mental Health and Addictions Program, have been working to educate health care workers about harm reduction practices.

On March 25, 2024, Member of Parliament Arielle Kayabaga, London West, announced \$72,768 in funding from Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program to support this work at St. Joseph's and LHSC. Read more on [Lawson's website](#).

Seeing the invisible

Early results of pre-clinical studies at Lawson Health Research Institute have found positron emission tomography-magnetic resonance (PET/MR) imaging could allow the tracking and identification of bacteria inside the body and lead to more targeted use of antibiotic treatments. The researchers used PET/MR to track the movement of bacteria labelled with an isotope called Zirconium-89 (89Zr) through the gut.

Imaging of bacteria is a new application for PET/MR technology and new imaging research could be a gamechanger for treating bacterial infections by targeting the bacteria with specific therapies. Accurate targeting of antibiotic treatments can prevent antimicrobial resistance – when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites no longer respond to medication. According to a United Nations report, it's estimated that by 2050, antimicrobial resistance could result in 10 million deaths each year – more than cancer. Read more on [St. Joseph's website](#).

Health research advocacy

Dr. Lisa Porter, Vice President, Research and Scientific Director at St. Joseph's, was among entrepreneurs in life sciences who gathered at a roundtable in March 2024 to discuss opportunities and ideas for innovation in the region. The event was hosted by Member of Parliament Filomena Tassi, Minister responsible for Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario, and supported by TechAlliance. As part of the Research & Innovation Committee of the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA), Dr. Porter engaged in discussions about strategic visioning for research within the OHA, as well as the future vision of a Community of Practice for coordination of research among Ontario hospitals.

Leveraging technology

Physician champions recruited to support OneChart

Six physician champions have been recruited to support the implementation of OneChart Phase 2. These individuals will play a key role in leading and supporting physicians throughout the organization during the development and implementation phases. Supported by the Physician

Professional Practice Consultant, this group will collaborate with the OneChart information technology team and clinical programs to advise on implementation and engage with their colleagues to facilitate a seamless adoption of the new system.

Additionally, the physician champions form the cornerstone of a dynamic OneChart community of practice. This forum will provide a platform for physicians throughout our organization to exchange concerns, share best practices and review strategies that may impact clinical activity and patient care delivery. Through collaboration and knowledge-sharing, the goal is to optimize the implementation process and maximize the benefits of OneChart.

The recent kick-off meeting for the Physician Community of Practice, held on March 27, 2024, was met with enthusiasm and strong engagement from all participants. This group is highly motivated to ensure the success of the OneChart implementation, highlighting their commitment to advancing patient care through innovation.

Enhancing access to virtual care

Two developments are making it easier for patients to access virtual care at St. Joseph's:

- **Digital navigator support:** As previously reported, a citywide virtual care navigator role was created as part of the permanent Virtual Care Program of St. Joseph's and London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC). The digital navigator is available to help with training and orientation to video visit solutions, technical support, troubleshooting and barriers to accessing virtual care. As an update, patients can now self-refer to the digital navigator for support before a virtual care appointment. They can reach out directly via the public websites of St. Joseph's and LHSC and book an appointment with the digital navigator through a self-serve booking system. Support is available for OTN, Webex and OneChart Video Webex appointments.
- **Real time translation:** Real time translation is now available through Webex for group appointments. Real time translation is a tool that allows for the automatic translation of closed captions in a Webex group virtual care appointment. This feature is available in 100 languages and patients can turn it on and off as needed. Staff can request to have this tool added to their Webex account. For individual appointments, interpretation services are still being used.

Empowering people

Emerging Leader Development Program

To support staff with leadership potential and aspirations, St. Joseph's has launched the Emerging Leaders Development Program. Twenty-four emerging leaders from across the organization, both clinical and non-clinical, are being supported to participate in the 12-month development initiative. The program includes: the new LEADS Learning Series (20 hours of classroom learning based on the LEADS framework); two leadership focused psychometric assessments with one-on-one debriefing; a change project aimed at increasing participants' understanding of leading and facilitating change and project management; coaching and mentoring; and structured self-directed learning.

Throughout the year, the emerging leaders will be collaborating on various discussion posts, reflections and supplemental learning within an online community of practice structure intended to enhance their learning experience.

In addition to providing participants with a broad set of valuable leadership skills, the program, which launched March 26, 2024, with a full-day workshop, also aims to support the organization in terms of: succession planning; talent retention; enhanced employee skills; adaptability to change

within the health care environment; improved patient care; building a leadership culture; and increased organizational performance.

Reducing musculoskeletal injuries

Occupational Health and Safety Services at St. Joseph's is partnering with the Advanced Ergonomics Studies program at Fanshawe College to develop tactics to reduce musculoskeletal injuries at Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care. Mount Hope experiences a high incidence of musculoskeletal injuries primarily resulting from resident positioning and transfers.

The Fanshawe program, now in its eighth year, was developed in consultation with professional ergonomists, the Association of Canadian Ergonomists and the Canadian College for the Certification of Professional Ergonomists. Students in the program are drawn from kinesiology, human kinetics, and health science programs from across Ontario and beyond. An eight-week student placement at Mount Hope will begin in May 2024. The goal of the student placement is to conduct an ergonomic assessment of the staff, environment and equipment, and determine a course of action to reduce the incidence of musculoskeletal injuries among the staff.

Volunteer opinion survey

The annual Standardized Volunteer Opinion Survey conducted by the Professional Association of Volunteer Leaders Ontario resumed in 2023 after a hiatus since 2019. This survey provides a comprehensive view of volunteer engagement, seeks feedback from volunteers, and compares survey results to hospitals/health care organizations across the province. From St. Joseph's, 19 per cent of registered volunteers completed the survey, with results received in March 2024. Top responses were on questions pertaining to the following:

- **Patient safety:** St. Joseph's ranked in the top three of 20 responding hospital sites (15 organizations) on patient safety with a positive response rate of 90.4 per cent, an increase of 14.4 per cent from the 2019 survey. Questions related to patient safety asked volunteers about their understanding and comfort level in reporting a patient safety concern and their confidence that it would be addressed.
- **Recommending St. Joseph's as a place to volunteer:** 92.6 per cent answered yes, an increase of 2.9 per cent from the 2019 survey.
- **Welcoming environment:** St. Joseph's had a positive response rate of 90.4 per cent, ranking third among the 20 hospital sites, in how well the organization makes all people feel welcome regardless of culture, race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and ability.
- **Recognition:** St. Joseph's positive response rate was 91.7 per cent, an increase of 10.5 per cent from 2019, to questions about the respect volunteers receive within the organization.
- **Teamwork:** St. Joseph's positive response rate was 78.9 per cent, an increase of 4.7 per cent. Questions related to teamwork asked volunteers about their interactions with hospital staff that delve into the approachability of staff and the support, direction and feedback provided.
- **Orientation and training:** St. Joseph's positive response rate was 76.9 per cent, up 6.1 per cent from 2019.

Volunteers Services is reviewing areas identified as needing improvement to enhance the volunteer experience.

2.0 Operational Updates

Ongoing outbreak monitoring

The Occupational Health and Infection Safety teams at St. Joseph's continue to support the clinical programs in monitoring cases and exposures of COVID-19, influenza and RSV (respiratory syncytial virus) for physicians, staff, learners and residents/patients. There was one declared Corona virus (not COVID-19) outbreak, one parainfluenza outbreak and one rhino/enterovirus outbreak in March 2024.

3.0 Recognition

Recognizing our volunteers and care partners

During National Volunteer Week April 14-20, St. Joseph's recognized more than 800 volunteers and care partners who have contributed more than 50,000 volunteer hours to the organization over the last year. Leading up to the week, Volunteer Services staff circulated sites with a coffee cart, serving free coffee, hot chocolate, tea and cookies to thank the volunteers and departments/programs that have volunteers placed in their areas, and to raise the profile of Volunteer Services. Special note cards were created this year showcasing photos of staff and leaders holding 'thank you volunteers' signs, which were distributed to staff during the coffee cart days. Staff were encouraged to share a card of thanks with the volunteer(s) in their program area.

Volunteers and care partners were also treated to a hot lunch, a gift and words of thanks from leaders across the organization at five special events held at various sites. New this year were events held in March 2024 to accommodate student volunteers who have routinely missed out on the April celebrations due to exams or leaving the city for the summer.

Outstanding dedication to spiritual care

Congratulations to Stephen Yeo, spiritual care practitioner at St. Joseph's, who has received the Excellence Professional Practice Award presented by the Canadian Association for Spiritual Care (CASC) to a member who goes above and beyond in their role. This national award is given to one individual each year who is nominated by peers and selected from the CASC community.

Stephen was chosen for his dedication to spiritual care at Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care over the past two decades with peers highlighting his attention to ethics and spiritual care practice, tireless patient-centred care, creative inclusion of practice such as the labyrinth and spirituality groups, and teaching the next generation of spiritual care providers.

CASC is committed to the professional education and certification of people involved in spiritual care, psychospiritual therapy, education and research with a mission to promote excellence in those areas and advance the profession of spiritual care and psychospiritual therapy in Canada. The award was presented at the CASC National Conference held in London on April 14-17. St. Joseph's provided leadership in hosting the conference.

A leader in sustainability

Every year, the London Environmental Network and Green Economy London present the Green Economy Leader Awards and the Environmental Network Awards to recognize businesses and community leaders who are working to make London a greener and more resilient city for all.

Congratulations to Michelle Stranges, Process Improvement Specialist with Food and Nutrition Services at St. Joseph's, who is the recipient of the 2024 Community Choice Award in the

Environmental Network category. This award recognizes an individual who demonstrates outstanding environmental leadership and a commitment to sustainability – in their personal lives or workplace, or elsewhere in the community.

Michelle is St. Joseph's Nourish Project Lead and was nominated for her commitment and dedication to reducing the environmental impact of food within a health care setting. She collaborated with Urban Roots London to create an onsite garden at Parkwood Institute and spearheaded efforts to minimize single-use plastic items within our organization. Additionally, Michelle has developed partnerships with other organizations interested in onsite cultivation and sustainable food practices, including Atlohsa Family Healing Services.

4.0 CEO Activity

Finding solutions in health care

I was pleased participate as one of six judges in the Schulich-Ivey Quality in Healthcare Consultancy: Capstone Presentations. The Schulich-Ivey Quality in Healthcare Consultancy is a partnership education initiative of Western University's Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry and Ivey Business School. It is a ground-breaking course that brings together health care providers and Honours Business Administration students in a co-learning environment to jointly investigate complex health care problems. Participants work in teams addressing a care gap in a clinical setting and apply quality improvement methodology and health care economics to sustainably improve an aspect of the health care system. On April 2, seven teams presented their quality improvement projects and shared their results. I was a judge for one of the projects, which involved evaluating and scoring the work within various categories.

Catholic Health Association of Ontario Board of Directors meeting

On April 5, I was pleased to attend my first Catholic Health Association of Ontario (CHAO) Board of Directors meeting as new board member. In addition to board business, the April meeting provided an opportunity to discuss the status of health system transformation and opportunities for Catholic health care.

Enhancing our understanding of Indigenous-informed health care

On April 24, I joined members of our Senior Leadership Team on a tour of the new Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC) location on Dundas Street. SOAHAC is part of a group of Aboriginal Health Access Centres that provide innovative, Indigenous-informed health care to First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities through a combination of health and social services. The care model recognizes Indigenous rights to determination in health and Indigenous traditional healers and healing approaches, and blends them with culturally competent western clinical practices. We were invited to tour the centre by David Remy, Director of Client Care, to enhance our understanding of Indigenous-informed health, the services provided, and potential opportunities for partnership.

Capital master planning

St. Joseph's capital master planning team, along with our consultants KPMG, Preyra Solutions Group (data and analytics) and Resource Planning Group (service delivery and spaces), will be presenting our Clinical Services Plan to Ontario Health and the Ministry of Health, Capital Branch, on April 26. The Clinical Services Plan has been developed as part of phase 1 of our capital master planning project. I will be taking part in the presentation along with Jodi Younger, Vice President, Patient Care and Quality, and capital master planning project leads Theresa Reynolds and Manny Paiva. The meeting is also an opportunity to share an overview of our capital master planning work to date, including stakeholder engagement and our evidence-driven approach.

5.0 Federal/Provincial Updates

2024 Ontario Budget

On March 26, 2024, Minister of Finance Peter Bethlenfalvy tabled the [2024 Ontario Budget](#).

Highlights of health sector investments include:

- An expected increase of four per cent (\$965 million) in base funding for hospitals. While not explicitly referenced in the budget, as planned there will be a separate process to finalize the annualization of Bill 124-related funding distinct from the overall four per cent increase
- Addressing health human resource challenges, including \$743 million to make permanent both the Extern Program and Supervised Practice Experience Partnership Program to increase nursing enrolment and training programs, and \$50 million to help northern and rural communities attract and retain health care workers
- Investments in primary care, including \$546 million over three years for primary care teams
- Enhancing access to care for northern Ontarians through a \$45 million increase of the Northern Health Travel Grant program over three years.
- Over the next 10 years, investing \$50 billion in health infrastructure, including \$36 billion in capital grants and \$620 million over 10 years to address urgent infrastructure renewal needs
- A commitment to create new medical school with York University focused on family medicine.
- Investment of \$12 million to establish a new Health Technology Accelerator Fund, enabling health care service providers to purchase and leverage technology to enhance patient care

2024 federal budget

On April 17, the Government of Canada introduced the [2024 federal budget](#), which included significant [new investments in research](#). Some of the key research investments include:

- \$1.8 billion over five years starting in 2024-2025, with \$748.3 million per year ongoing, to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research to increase core research grant funding and support Canadian researchers
- \$825 million over five years starting in 2024-2025, with \$199.8 million per year ongoing, to increase the annual value of master's and doctoral student scholarships and post-doctoral fellowships
- \$30 million over three years starting in 2024-2025 to support Indigenous participation in research, with \$10 million each for First Nation, Métis, and Inuit partners.
- An increase in targeted AI support of \$2.4 billion
- Creation of a new advisory Council on Science and Innovation responsible for a national science and innovation strategy to guide priority setting and increase the impact of these significant federal investments
- \$26.9 million over five years starting in 2024-2025 to the granting councils to establish an improved and harmonized grant management system

6.0 St. Joseph's in the News

[Guelph student receives Ontario volunteer award for supporting students with ADHD](#), Guelph Today, March 20, 2024

[London hospitals working to provide more compassionate care to drug users](#), London Free Press, March 25, 2024

[London Health Sciences Centre, St. Joseph's expanding harm reduction training](#), Global News/980 CPFL, (also published in the Daily Guardian), March 25, 2024

[Helping hospital staff with harm reduction strategies](#), CTV London, March 25, 2024

[Supporting health care providers through Lawson Health Research Institute](#), Nation Talk, March 25, 2024

[Don't burn your eyes: Special glasses needed for solar eclipse](#), CTV London, March 26, 2024

[MRI wait times among the longest in the province for London, Ont. area patients](#), CTV London, March 27, 2024

[Next-generation 3D imaging can guide surgeons' hands](#), Hospital News, April 2024

[Staring at the solar eclipse without proper eyewear will damage your eyes](#), London Morning (interview with Dr. Phil Hooper), CBC London, April 4, 2024

[Neighbours pushing back against proposal for a third homeless hub along the same street](#), CTV London, April 5, 2024

[Property owner hopes to make a 'positive' difference with White Oaks homeless hub plan](#), CBC London, April 5, 2024

[Staring at the sun during solar eclipse can cause permanent damage, local doctor warns](#), CBC London (also published by Canada News Media), April 6, 2024

[Neighbours complain not enough information from city staff about proposed rezoning for homeless hub](#), CTV London, April 6, 2024

[Private clinics charge thousands in extra fees for OHIP-covered surgery: Ontario Health Coalition](#), CBC London, April 16, 2024

7.0 Environmental Scan

[Support 'hub' for Black doctors aims to bridge gaps in London health care, rebuild patient trust](#), CBC London, March 20, 2024

[Half a million seniors had trouble getting specialized health services: StatCan](#), CTV News, March 20, 2024

[Nearly 300 Ontario patients moved to LTC homes they didn't choose](#), CTV Toronto, March 20, 2024

[New data shows 84,000 residents in London area without family doctor](#), Global News, March 20, 2024

[Canada ranks last in primary health care access among 10 wealthy countries: report](#), Canadian Press, March 21, 2024

[Medical students saying 'no thanks' to family medicine as primary care crisis worsens, doctors say](#), Ottawa Citizen, March 22, 2024

[Doctors are working less than they did 30 years ago, with married men putting in fewer hours, study says](#), Globe and Mail, March 25, 2024

[Ontario announces new medical school focused on family doctors](#), Global News, March 26, 2024

[More family physicians in Canada provide specialty care as national health care worker vacancies continue to increase](#), Canadian Institute for Health Information, March 26, 2024

[London-made HIV injection has potential to cure millions worldwide](#), London Free Press, March 26, 2024

['Clear pathway' to 600 highly supportive housing units for London after council endorses plan](#), CBC London, April 3, 2024

[Canadians waiting longer for priority surgeries and diagnostic imaging compared with pre-pandemic period](#), Canadian Institute for Health Information, April 4, 2024

[Advocates say end of funding for HIV self-tests creates barrier to care](#), CBC London, April 9, 2024

[Federal government to launch \\$500M fund for youth mental health](#), CBC News, April 9, 2024

[Ontario weighing nurse practitioner funding options amid extra billing concerns](#), Global News, April 15, 2024

[\\$500,000 for London's Health and Homelessness Fund for Change](#), CTV London, April 15, 2024

[Ontario may not meet LTC direct care target due to staff shortages: document](#), CTV News, April 16, 2024

[Ontario connecting over 23,000 people to primary care teams in London area, Lambton, and Chatham-Kent](#), Ministry of Health, April 18, 2024

[Ontario hospital workers awarded 6% pay increase, new agreement on agency nurses](#), Global News, April 19, 2024