



# CEO Report to the Board

September 25, 2024



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## 1.0 Strategy in Action

### Reaching Out to Our Community

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#### **On-site cancer support booths**

A long-standing partnership between St. Joseph's and Wellspring London & Region has expanded to include monthly information booths at St. Joseph's Hospital. Starting September 17, Wellspring will be on-site in the Zone C, Level 0 lobby at Cheapside Entrance 4 every third Tuesday of the month from 10 am to 2 pm. The information booths are available to everyone – patients, caregivers, visitors, volunteers, staff and physicians.

Wellspring London & Region is part of the national Wellspring network of community-based charities that provide free programs and services for children and adults living with cancer or supporting someone with a cancer diagnosis. This includes educational workshops, therapeutic arts, financial guidance, symptom management, and physical wellness activities.

St. Joseph's Breast Care Program has worked closely with Wellspring London & Region for many years and the on-site information booths aim to enhance convenient, easy access to Wellspring support for those we serve or who work at St. Joseph's. The goal is to provide cancer support resources in a new way, strengthening the connection between St. Joseph's and community partners and increasing awareness of programs and services available.

#### **St. Joseph's hosts Access Expo**

St. Joseph's Rehabilitation Program, in partnership with Spinal Cord Injury Ontario, co-hosted a novel event for patients and families, health care providers and individuals living with a disability to learn about the latest in accessibility equipment, services and modified vehicles.

Access Expo, held September 5 at Parkwood Institute, was the first such comprehensive event in London. Exhibitors included vendors of mobility devices and medical supplies, home modification specialists and modified vehicle companies, along with sports and recreational organizations. About 150 people turned out for the expo, which was also an opportunity for participants to network and build meaningful connections with others.

#### **Appointment Assistant Volunteer Program – an update**

Volunteer Services' Appointment Volunteer Program recently expanded to Parkwood Institute Main Building and the Finch Family Mental Health Care Building. This brings this valuable program to four St. Joseph's sites, which also includes St. Joseph's Hospital and Mount Hope Centre for Long Term Care.

As previously reported, the volunteer appointment assistant role, which launched at St. Joseph's Hospital in fall 2023, was developed to provide enhanced support for patients coming for outpatient appointments. Patients or caregivers can arrange for an appointment assistant volunteer up to 10 days in advance of the appointment by completing a request form available from clinical reception staff. The appointment assistant volunteer meets the patient at the entrance, escorts the patient to their appointment, waits for the patient in the clinic waiting area, escorts the patient back to the entrance once the appointment is completed, assists with calling transportation, and sits with the patient while waiting for their ride home.

Currently, nearly 30 volunteers are trained as volunteer assistants and there have been 22 requests for patient support so far this year (from January to mid-September 2024). Social media posts and an updated story on [St. Joseph's website](#) featured the program in early September.

### **Third year launches for Project SEARCH**

Nine new interns were onboarded on September 4 with Project SEARCH for the program's third year at St. Joseph's.

Project SEARCH is a partnership program of St. Joseph's, Thames Valley District School Board and March of Dimes that helps students with intellectual disabilities gain employment skills. Each intern completes three, 10-week internships in various programs and services across the organization to explore different career options and develop various job skills. A skills trainer from Thames Valley District School Board assists the students as they learn new tasks and routines.

In another update, hospitals participating in the Inspire, Hire, Train and Retain (IHTR) initiative, including St. Joseph's, have been working over the summer to collectively develop training materials for leaders. As previously reported, St. Joseph's is one of 10 champion organizations participating in the Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital collaborative IHTR initiative. The organization was invited to participate as a result of our work with Project SEARCH. Funded by the Government of Ontario's EnAbling Change Program, the IHTR is a year-long project focused 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.

St. Joseph's will be conducting two training sessions for a focus group of leaders and others in November 2024 with the goal of making improvements to the final version of training.

### **Advancing Excellence in Care Together**

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#### **Building capacity for breast screening**

In October 2023, the Ontario government announced it is lowering the eligibility age of self-referral for publicly funded mammograms through the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP) from age 50 to 40. This change, effective October 8, 2024, is expected to increase the number of OBSP screening appointments across the region by about 18,000 per year.

There are 17 OBSP screening locations in the region and St. Joseph's Hospital manages the highest volumes, averaging about 750 OBSP appointments per month (individuals at average and high risk combined). This is due to St. Joseph's Breast Care Program being well recognized for highly specialized care in the region for breast imaging, diagnostic and surgery services.

The Breast Care Program has been working on several fronts to increase operational capacity, which will be needed to serve an influx of additional patients for screening as well as subsequent assessment when screening indicates an abnormality and follow-up is needed. It's estimated that lowering the age eligibility for OBSP screening will result in a 15 per cent increase in demand for breast assessment across the region. Planning is underway for a phased approach over the short and longer term to build capacity at St. Joseph's, which will see the following:

- An increase in technologists, physicians and clerical staff
- An increase in breast imaging operational hours
- Investments in breast imaging equipment
- The redesign and repurposing of spaces
- Improved clerical and clinical workflows
- Enhanced collaboration with regional hospitals.

As part of this work, a novel partnership with the Ivey Business School at Western University has been launched. In September, eight Ivey MBA students began a non-traditional student placement opportunity with St. Joseph's aimed enhancing breast care capacity and efficiency through predictive models and queueing theory to forecast demand, optimize resource allocation, and reduce wait times. The goal is to implement process optimization, dynamic staffing models and capacity planning with the tools they

provide. Other expected outcomes include sustainable resource management, strategic facility planning, and technology integration, ensuring we meet provincial benchmarks and maintain our high standard of care.

### **Improving care for stroke patients**

St. Joseph's Stroke Rehabilitation Program team at Parkwood Institute Main Building was chosen to receive the 2024 Gerry Cormier Communicative Access Award presented by the Aphasia Institute, a Canadian community-based centre of excellence that has pioneered programs and practices to help people with aphasia learn how to communicate in new ways. The award recognizes organizations whose work has significantly reduced barriers to enable people living with aphasia to resume a full life.

Through significant work led by the Stroke Rehabilitation Program team, St. Joseph's is the first organization to implement the Aphasia Institute's SCA™ eLearning into an institutional setting. SCA™ (Supported Conversation for Adults With Aphasia) training will be provided to staff across the rehabilitation programs, which began with the launch on September 12 of the eLearning module for stroke rehabilitation staff. Part of this initiative includes a comprehensive plan to use the Aphasia Institute's Communicative Access Measures for Stroke (CAMS) quality improvement measures to assess our organization's policies and procedures, staff attitudes and practices, as well as the satisfaction of patients with aphasia in our programs.

## **Leading in Research and Innovation**

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### **Young researcher makes waves in co-design**

Thuvaraha Jeyakumar, research coordinator and knowledge-mobilization specialist at Parkwood Institute, has become an award-winner for three different presentations at three research conferences. The latest in her three-for-three streak is receiving the early-career scholar award for her poster submission to the International Spinal Cord Society conference, which took place September 22-25 in Belgium. Her other poster presentation wins were at conferences in Atlanta and London, with the three-peat honours considered an astounding achievement.

Thuvaraha began working with the Gray Centre for Mobility and Activity as part of a work-study program at Western University and was hired in September 2023 after earning her Master of Management of Applied Science in global health systems. Her specialty is intentionally enlisting and embedding the insights of people with lived experience into research studies, from pre-grant planning through to implementation and impact. For the conference in Belgium, she submitted a poster that outlined how this co-design process helped in planning a clinical trial about the impact of intermittent fasting among people with chronic pain and depression. People with lived experience had an opportunity to plan and identify how to recruit participants and helped shape a website and app developed by students in work-study programs at Western.

Thuvaraha is among hundreds of students whose fresh perspective and experience contributes to a thriving ecosystem of research at St. Joseph's. Read more on [St. Joseph's website](#).

### **Save the date: Launch of new research institutes**

Save the date for October 16, 2024, as St. Joseph's and London Health Sciences Centre (LHSC) celebrate the launch of our new research institutes. The day will showcase the legacy and future of hospital-based research in London through open houses across our sites as we share how we will continue to achieve ground-breaking advancements and discoveries in research and unveil our new research brands. The event builds on planning over the past year to strengthen innovation by realigning our research brand and operations to each organization. Launch day includes the following:

- **Formal Presentation:** 9:30 -10 am, Parkwood Institute. A virtual option will be available to view the event kickoff.

- **Open houses:**

- 11 am to 1 pm, Parkwood Institute Main Building (Entrance C) and Finch Family Mental Health Care Building (Entrance F)
- 12:30 - 2:30 pm, LHSC's Victoria and Children's hospitals (Zone B entrance)
- 1:30 - 3:30 pm, St. Joseph's Hospital (Cheapside Entrance 4)
- 2:30 - 4:30 pm, LHSC's University Hospital (Main entrance)

## Leveraging technology

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### **OneChart – an update**

The transition to electronic documentation continues with providers supporting inpatient services at Parkwood Institute Main Building being the latest group to join OneChart Phase 2, as of September 1. Southwest Centre for Forensic Mental Health Care will follow on October 1, 2024, where super users for inpatient services are currently being trained with further staff education to follow in the coming weeks.

Future state design and build sessions are commencing in October 2024 at St. Joseph's Hospital and Parkwood Institute Main Building and will continue the journey to get us even closer to a fully digitized health record.

## Empowering people

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### **Lacing up**

St. Joseph's second annual Well-being Walking Challenge launched September 9 and will run until October 6, 2024, with more than 700 participants registered across the organization.

Walking is one the easiest and most beneficial forms of exercise. A recent study showed that just 10 minutes of brisk walking daily can improve memory and positively impact executive processes like planning and organization.

This year's challenge focuses on movement as a way to improve well-being and includes optional 'well-being challenges' to enhance the experience through additional movement, fun, companionship and personal reflection. Also part of the initiative are scheduled group walks at each site and the availability of site-specific indoor and outdoor walking routes.

### **World Suicide Prevention Day**

Every day, approximately 12 Canadians die by suicide. On World Suicide Prevention Day on September 10, all staff and physicians were reminded of the importance of talking about suicide openly and with compassion. This year's theme, "Change the Narrative," focused on starting the conversation. Leading up to the awareness day, staff and physicians were encouraged to participate in a series of educational events including a virtual webinar titled "Talking About Safety Planning," presented by Shauna Graf, former project lead for St. Joseph's the Zero Suicide Initiative. The webinar explored safety planning for those at risk for suicide.

Also promoted for staff and physicians were St. Joseph's Zero Suicide intranet page for valuable tools and education; Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST), a workshop available through LearningEdge that equips participants with skills to support individuals in crisis; and various resources focused on safe communication for suicide prevention including use of language that is neutral, non-stigmatizing, and compassionate.

### **Share the Spirit**

St. Joseph's 17th annual employee giving campaign, Share the Spirit, launched on September 17. By donating to Share the Spirit, staff and physicians have the opportunity to support St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation, United Way Elgin Middlesex, or both, to help improve the lives of people in our community.



Funds directed to the St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation support excellence in patient care by funding state-of-the-art equipment as well as special projects. Dollars contributed to United Way will be invested in programs proven to get positive results and create lasting change for individuals.

Numerous fund-raising events will be held across St. Joseph's sites throughout the four-week campaign, with a goal of raising \$150,000 in employee donations.

### **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation**

Every year on September 30, St. Joseph's joins Canadians in marking National Day for Truth and Reconciliation to recognize the tragic legacy of residential schools and honour the missing Indigenous children, families impacted and survivors of these institutions.

Reconciliation is a process of healing relationships, acknowledging the constitutional and the treaty rights of Indigenous communities, engaging in mutually respectful relationships, and taking constructive action that acknowledges and redresses past harms. It also involves addressing the ongoing legacies of colonialism through sustained public education.

Leading up to the day, various educational resources are being shared with staff, physicians and volunteers that highlight the histories and resilience of Indigenous communities and enhance understanding of the pathways to truth and reconciliation. These include videos/documentaries, podcasts, frameworks guiding reconciliation, and discussion sessions. All are invited to attend one of two discussions sessions titled "Reckoning with anti-Indigenous racism in health care." The first session was held September 24 and the second is planned for September 30. These interactive presentations are co-facilitated by Karina Redick, clinical scholar nurse with Professional Practice, and Sarita Addy, St. Joseph's Director of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging.

## **2.0 Recognition**

### **Excellence in Professional Practice Awards**

St. Joseph's annual Excellence in Professional Practice Awards recognizes all professional practice disciplines staff, who are at the heart of patient and resident care at St. Joseph's. Recipients are nominated by their peers or leaders for leading by example and for exemplifying the mission, vision and values of St. Joseph's. Presented September 25, the 2024 recipients are:

- **Excellence in Clinical Practice**
  - Acute Ambulatory Care: Kate Grattan, nurse practitioner/clinical nurse specialist
  - Complex Care, Rehabilitation and Geriatrics: Cassia Vienneau, registered practical nurse
  - Mental Health: Reem Ubeid, registered nurse
  - Team or Group Award: Colposcopy Clinic
- **Excellence in Innovation and Evidence-Informed Practice:** Samantha Matty, Ontario Review Board specialist
- **Excellence in Leadership:** Sandra McFarlane, medical imaging technologist
- **Excellence in Teaching and Coaching:** Denise Kreutzwiser, pharmacist

Bursary applications are also accepted each year, creating an opportunity for professional practice staff to apply for funds to support their studies. The bursaries and awards are made possible through generous donations to St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation.

### **An "extraordinary career"**

Congratulations to Dr. Susan McNair, who has received the Board Award from the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) for her outstanding work on behalf of those who

have experienced sexual abuse and domestic violence. Nominated by her peers, the award honours outstanding Ontario doctors who have demonstrated excellence.

Dr. McNair is Medical Director of St. Joseph's Regional Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Program (RSADVTP) and a family physician with St. Joseph's Family Medical and Dental Centre. An innovative leader and passionate advocate in Ontario for the care of for those who experience sexual assault and domestic violence, Dr. McNair was central in the development and implementation of the RSADVTP in 1991. Her clinical expertise, leadership skills and research also played a major role in the creation of the Ontario Network of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Treatment Centres, which currently consists of 37 hospital-based clinics in Ontario.

As a medical advisor to this network since 2021, "Dr. McNair continues as a clinician, educator and researcher to transform how physicians treat – and interact with – these patients," says the CPSO. She has built an "extraordinary career" in the area of sexual assault and domestic violence treatment through her clinical work, as an expert witness in the court system, through her research into injury patterns and factors involved in sexual assault and domestic violence, and as dedicated educator for the next generation of physicians. Read more in the CPSO's digital publication, [Dialogue](#).

### **Highest honours**

Congratulations to Dr. Manuel Montero-Odasso for being named a Fellow to the [Canadian Academy of Health Sciences](#) (CAHS). Election to Fellowship in the CAHS is considered one of the highest honours for individuals in the Canadian health sciences community and acknowledges outstanding contributions to the health sciences. CAHS Fellows are nominated by their peers and selected in a competitive process based on their internationally recognized leadership, academic performance, scientific creativity, and willingness to serve.

Dr. Montero-Odasso is one of 49 individuals to receive the honour this year. A geriatrician and clinician-scientist, he is recognized for pioneering innovative lifestyle interventions to prevent dementia. As Director of the globally renowned Gait and Brain Lab at Parkwood Institute, he is exploring gait and cognition in older adults to combat falls and has assembled multidisciplinary experts from 39 countries to create the World Falls Prevention Guidelines, which has transformed clinical practice. Read more about Dr. Montero-Odasso and his work on [St. Joseph's website](#). St. Joseph's is fortunate to have such a standout and dedicated leader, physician, researcher and educator.

### **A speech language pathologist with distinction**

Congratulations to Penny Welch-West, speech language pathologist, who has been awarded the Communication Sciences and Disorders Alumni of Distinction Award from Western University's Faculty of Health Sciences. This award recognizes a graduate of the School of Communication Sciences and Disorders for their professional achievements, contributions to research and/or education, and commitment to community service and leadership. Penny has been an innovative and passionate clinician and researcher in various areas of rehabilitation and in the Complex Care Program at Parkwood Institute Main Building. She is recognized as a leader and dedicated patient advocate in the in the field of speech language pathology provincially and nationally.

## **3.0 CEO Activity**

### **Board and committee orientation**

A full day orientation session was held September 9 for new and returning members of our Board Directors, standing committees of the Board, St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation Board of Directors, and St. Joseph's Senior Leadership Team. I was pleased to take part in this comprehensive, interactive session, during which I presented on the provincial and local health

care landscape, provided an organizational overview, and discussed the year ahead. The day also delved into capital master planning, finance, research, quality, governance, the role of the foundation, and more.

### **Technology as a job-creation driver**

As a member of the Board of Directors of the London Economic Development Corporation (LEDC), I attended the LEDC's strategic planning retreat on September 12. This year's discussion theme was technology-led economic development – the leveraging of technology, innovation, research and development to drive economic growth, attract investment and create high-quality jobs.

The session aimed to help inform the LEDC's work to reframe its current technology-led economic development approach with an emphasis on technology-driven job-creating investment. Various invited speakers provided external perspectives and generated a robust discussion.

### **Cornerstone Society Dinner**

I was pleased to take part in the annual Cornerstone Society Dinner on September 10 hosted by St. Joseph's Health Care Foundation. This event is designed to recognize and celebrate our most generous donors and demonstrate how their donations are making a difference across our organization. I had an opportunity to express my gratitude to donors for their generous support in furthering the mission of care, teaching and research at St. Joseph's, and to provide an update on several exciting initiatives on the horizon.

The 2024 Cornerstone presentation included videos showcasing the da Vinci robotic surgical system, nursing education and training, and innovations in ophthalmology at the Ivey Eye Institute. Featured speaker Tiffany McCarthy shared the story of her children's life-changing eye care at St. Joseph's and thanked donors for their support.

### **Master planning summit**

As previously reported, St. Joseph's has been working diligently to meet the requirements for submission to the Ministry of Health of Stage 1.2 of our Capital Master Plan, with robust engagement key to ensuring our planning is in alignment with the needs of those we serve. As we come closer to completing the development options for our proposed future care settings, I presented at a follow-up engagement session on September 18. The purpose of this session was to:

- Share the Physical Planning Vision Framework co-developed with St. Joseph's staff and physicians in May 2024, and reflect on the planning vision principles that have informed the development of proposed planning options
- Introduce potential development strategies being considered for each of St. Joseph's care settings
- Allow for discussion and feedback prior to beginning the evaluation and assessment process for our potential development options

This session was conducted in a virtual format within a shorter time frame to make it more accessible for participants. About 165 staff, physicians and members of partner organizations attended. Strong engagement by all resulted in valuable feedback, which will be used to inform the evaluation process.

### **Visit by MPP Rob Flack**

On September 20, I hosted Rob Flack, MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London and Ontario's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness, for a tour at Parkwood Institute, where he was interested in learning about our innovative Nourish Project and on-site garden. As previously reported, this project is part of a national collaborative that is harnessing the power of food to address health for people and the planet. The visit was also an opportunity to engage in advocacy regarding our



funding streams. I was joined by members of the Senior Leadership Team and leaders of our Nourish Project.

## 4.0 Federal/Provincial Updates

### Ontario boosts funding to enhance ambulance services

The Ontario government is investing more than \$910 million to [increase the availability of ambulances](#) across the province. This investment includes the following:

- An increase to land ambulance base funding to municipalities by an average of eight per cent, bringing the province's total investment to over \$877 million this year.
- An investment of more than \$33 million through the Dedicated Offload Nurses Program to help hospitals hire more nurses and other eligible health professionals that are dedicated to offloading ambulance patients in hospital emergency departments. This program allows paramedics to get back out into the community faster and respond to their next 9-1-1 call sooner. It has played a significant role in reducing ambulance offload times and increasing ambulance availability for 9-1-1 patients across the province

### Ontario expanding access to palliative care

As part of Ontario's 2024 budget, the provincial government is investing up to \$19.75 million in capital funding to [build 84 new adult hospice beds](#) and 12 new pediatric hospice beds. An Expression of Interest (EOI) for the new adult hospice beds opened September 17 with beds expected to be operational by 2027. Once these 84 new beds are open, the province will provide an additional \$15.9 million in operational funding per year.

Through this process, Ontario is also looking for applicants with longer term expansion opportunities to meet the future needs of Ontario's growing communities.

### Ontario expanding diagnostic services in long-term care homes

The Ontario government is investing \$9 million this year across the province in the new Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care Plus (CPLTC+) program, which will allow paramedics to deliver diagnostic services like bloodwork and ultrasounds to residents in long term care homes. This investment will also increase funding to allow more long-term care homes to receive the equipment and training they need to provide diagnostic services to residents in the comfort of their home. The overall goal is to help improve residents' quality of life and [reduce avoidable emergency room visits and hospital stays](#).

## 5.0 St. Joseph's in the News

[London hospital slashes management ranks, warns cost-cutting not done](#), London Free Press, September 5, 2024

[Bridging the digital divide in health care](#), Health System News (Ontario Hospital Association) September 2024

[A digital navigator can troubleshoot and get patients connected](#), Canadian Healthcare Technology (Page 6), September 2024

[Tight timeline for London's pitch for provincial HART Hub to address addiction and homelessness](#), CTV London, September 20, 2024

## 6.0 Environmental Scan

[Your trip to the emergency department is taking longer every year: report](#), CTV News, August 30, 2024

[Federal health spending has outpaced provinces, analysis shows](#), Canadian Press, September 2, 2024

[Canadian Medical Association calls for more tracking of health care funds](#), Canadian Press, September 9, 2024

[Paramedics to start bringing care into London-area homes for the aged](#), London Free Press, September 9, 2024

[Arbitrator awards Ontario doctors 10% increase in 1st year of new deal](#), Canadian Press, September 13, 2024

[Code red: How more Ontario hospitals are struggling with balancing the books](#), Global News, September 14, 2024

[Canadian Medical Association to apologize for past harms to Indigenous people by medical professionals](#), Globe and Mail, September 17, 2024

[Health Canada approves updated Moderna COVID-19 vaccine](#), CTV News, September 17, 2024

[Controversial law designed to free up Ontario hospital beds to be tested in court](#), Global News, September 23, 2024

[Public system spent at least \\$1.5-billion on private nurses last year, study finds](#), Globe and Mail, September 22, 2024

[Rising number of Canadians support major health care reform, survey finds](#), Globe and Mail, September 24, 2024

[Diabetes Canada releases first-of-its kind survey on the social experiences of living with diabetes](#), National Post, September 24, 2024

[Ottawa launches pandemic preparedness agency, seeks faster vaccine development](#), CBC News, September 24, 2024

[Health Canada approves Pfizer-BioNTech's updated COVID-19 vaccine](#), CTV News, September 24, 2024