



niagarahealth

Diversity 

PEOPLE FIRST
at the heart
of Transforming Care

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Niagara Health is honoured to provide care on lands where Indigenous Peoples have lived for thousands of years with their own unique cultures, identities, traditions and languages. These lands are steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, the Anishinaabe and the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation. There are many First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples from across Turtle Island who live and work in Niagara today.

We are committed to listening and learning more about the history and current experiences of Indigenous Peoples and acknowledge our responsibility to take meaningful action towards reconciliation in the healthcare system.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 01** Message from our President and CEO and Board Chair
- 02** 2023-28 Transforming Care Strategic Plan, Vision and Values
- 02** Niagara Health milestones 2023-24
- Putting People First**
 - 05** A year of growth and transformation
 - 08** Niagara Health by the numbers
- Delivering Safe and Quality Care**
 - 10** Honouring Indigenous health practices
- Transforming How We Work**
 - 14** Breaking ground on our future
 - 18** Our Future and Positioning Ourselves for Success
 - 19** Senior leadership
 - 20** Financial overview

01

Message from our **PRESIDENT AND CEO AND BOARD CHAIR**

As we reflect on the past year, it is with gratitude that we share the remarkable progress made in our journey of Transforming Care. This Strategic Plan, built upon the pillars of Putting People First, Delivering Safe and Quality Care, and Transforming How We Work, has guided us through a year of challenges and triumphs.

Putting People First has been at the core of our efforts. In the past year, we took significant steps to strengthen our patient-centred culture. The creation of a dedicated Patient Experience team and the expansion of our Indigenous Health Services and Reconciliation team underscore our commitment to inclusivity and personalized care. We are proud to report the recruitment of 41 permanent full-time physicians, and numerous accolades recognizing our diverse and talented workforce of over 7,300 individuals, including employees, physicians, volunteers, medical learners, students and patient partners.

Our dedication to Delivering Safe and Quality Care has been unwavering. The implementation of inclusive improvements through the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee, alongside the work of the Indigenous Health Services and Reconciliation team, such as a new smudging policy, robust education and training initiatives, and visual representations throughout our sites, exemplifies our commitment to culturally safe care and creating safe spaces.

Transforming How We Work has indeed been a transformative journey, symbolized by the groundbreaking of the South Niagara Hospital in July 2023. This state-of-the-art facility, along with the Marotta Family Hospital and the planned redevelopment of the Welland Hospital, embodies our vision for a regional model of care that ensures co-ordinated and seamless services across Niagara. We heard the importance of healthcare and the delivery of high-quality services across Niagara while discussing our three-site model.

The imminent launch of our new Health Information System in 2024 marks an important stride towards seamless, technology-driven healthcare delivery across all our sites. Despite global health human resources challenges and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, our achievement of Accreditation with Exemplary Standing in 2023 reaffirms our position as a leader in healthcare quality and safety.

Commitment to high-quality patient care remains our *core priority*

In the past year, in partnership with the Niagara Health Foundation, we have been humbled by the incredible generosity of our community and partners. We are deeply grateful for transformational gifts that have propelled our initiatives forward, such as the historic donation from Greg and Diane Slaight. The naming of the Marotta Family Hospital in St. Catharines was recognition of a generous gift from the Marotta family and the support from the McCall MacBain Foundation led to the creation of the Niagara Health Knowledge Institute, which is already improving access to leading edge care through clinical trials and quality improvement projects.

With the shortage of family physicians in Niagara and across the country, the recent establishment of a Chief of Primary Care role will support more communication and collaboration between the hospital and primary care. It is critical that we lean on one another and work together to

repair our healthcare system. We need to create strong partnerships that will lead to better patient experiences, increased safety for patients transitioning from the hospital back to the community and limit the need for patients to return to the hospital for follow-up care.

Our partnerships with academic institutions, such as Brock University, McMaster University, Niagara College and the University of Niagara Falls Canada, have been instrumental in advancing healthcare education, research and workforce development. These important partnerships continue to enrich our training programs and attract top talent to our organization. Additionally, our strategic collaborations with municipal, provincial and federal partners have strengthened our ability to address community health needs and drive positive change.

Looking ahead, it is clear there is a tremendous amount of work to be done. Yet, we cannot do it alone - it requires every member of the community, primary care providers, healthcare, social and academic partners, and each municipality to work together so everyone can access the right care, at the right time and place with appropriately trained and qualified staff and physicians.

Commitment to high-quality patient care remains our core priority. We are dedicated to building on the successes of this past year, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and serving our community with unparalleled care and compassion.

Thank you for contributing to a healthier Niagara.



Lynn Guerriero
President and CEO

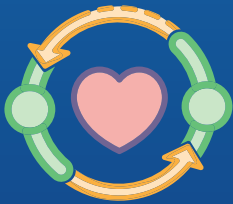


Marylee O'Neill
Board Chair

02

2023-28




Transforming Care STRATEGIC PLAN, VISION AND VALUES



OUR PURPOSE:
Extraordinary Caring.
Every Person. Every Time.

OUR VISION:
A Healthier Niagara

OUR VALUES:

-  Compassion in Action
-  Driven by Optimism
-  Achieving Ambitious Results

STRATEGIC PILLARS



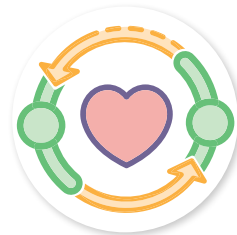
PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

People are the basis of everything we do at Niagara Health – both patients and our team members. Caring for patients is the reason Niagara Health exists. Connecting with our community and building partnerships with other organizations serving our patients help us deliver better care. Nothing can happen without our team.

- **Strengthening** our patient-centred culture
- **Building** an inclusive and collaborative workplace
- **Equipping** our team members with the tools for success

NIAGARA HEALTH MILESTONES 2023-24

2023



Launch of
Transforming Care
Strategic Plan

JANUARY



Launch of
Indigenous Health
Services and
Reconciliation team

JANUARY



South Niagara
Hospital
groundbreaking

JULY



Niagara Health
earns Accreditation
with Exemplary
Standing

NOVEMBER



Formation of Patient
Experience Steering
Committee

DECEMBER



DELIVERING SAFE AND QUALITY CARE

Our purpose is clear that every person who comes to Niagara Health should receive the best care, every time. We must use all resources available to us to ensure people can access hospital services when they need them, that these services and experiences are consistent, and that we are always striving to do better.

- **Improving** how patients move across Niagara Health
- **Integrating** data and research
- **Embedding** continuous quality improvement



TRANSFORMING HOW WE WORK

As the needs of Niagara Health's patients, community and team members change, we must transform how we work. We will become one truly regional system, functioning seamlessly across sites. We are updating our physical structures, including building a new hospital, but we are also changing how we organize ourselves and how we use technology to work together and to serve our patients.

- **Refining** our regional model
- **Implementing** interprofessional team best practices
- **Enhancing** and leveraging technology

POSITIONING OURSELVES FOR SUCCESS

- Ensuring patients receive the right care based on the best evidence
- Improving communication and connections
- Building interprofessional teams across all parts of Niagara Health
- Facilitating smoother transitions in and out of the hospital

2024



Niagara Health launches three-site model community engagement

FEBRUARY



Niagara Health Foundation has record attendance at annual gala and raises \$624,000

FEBRUARY



Niagara Health celebrates International Womens' Day. See back cover

MARCH



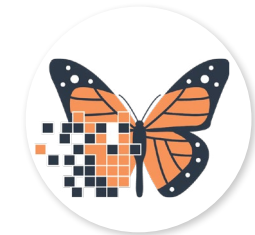
Niagara Health Knowledge Institute One-year anniversary Establishment of three bursaries

MAY



Launch of inaugural Indigenous Health Services Plan

MAY



Operation Monarch Hospital Information System Go Live

NOVEMBER

04

Putting **PEOPLE FIRST**



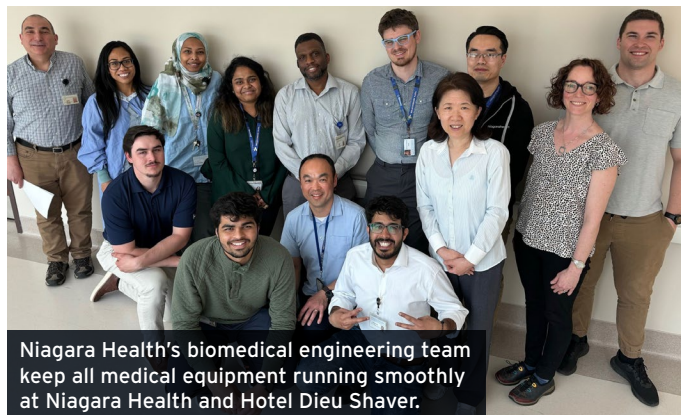
Niagara Health's Mental Health and Addictions program team is part of the groundbreaking Health Information System project.

A year of growth and transformation

As we continue to move past the pandemic and find ways to overcome some of its long-lasting challenges, Niagara Health and hospitals globally continue to struggle with the critical shortage of health human resources. We've been focused on recruiting top talent to enhance patient care and to support our existing teams.

We believe that every team member should feel supported, valued and engaged


Niagara Health is strengthening our patient-centred culture, building an inclusive and collaborative workplace and equipping our team members with the tools necessary for success. None of the work to support the delivery of our Transforming Care plan can happen without our team members. In the last fiscal year, Niagara Health has successfully recruited 41 permanent full-time physicians and filled 3,389 positions across the organization. This exceptional growth in our workforce speaks volumes about our commitment to Putting People First and fostering a workplace environment that offers the best opportunities to work with high-performing teams, cutting-edge technology and access to research and resources. The world-class South Niagara Hospital and new Hospital Information System will attract and retain talent who are looking to work in modern state-of-the-art facilities. Renewed attention on enhancing and strengthening our academic partnerships has been instrumental in Niagara Health's growth. We also continue to foster collaboration with professional practice and community organizations to support internationally educated healthcare professionals. Advocacy at all levels of government has been key to the success of many recent improvements to healthcare funding, international education credentialing and employment regulations.



Equally important to recruitment and key to Putting People First is the retention of our existing teams. We believe that every team member should feel supported, valued and engaged. It is essential that everyone understands how their individual role contributes to our broader organizational vision and culture. We are investing in the training and development of our team members and reinforcing our commitment to a safe workplace by hosting recognition events for Black History Month, anti-bullying initiatives, acts of kindness challenges and more. Virtual town halls, roundtable education sessions and lunch and learns have opened up important internal conversations and broken down barriers to information sharing across our sites. By creating an environment where team members are engaged and healthy, while simultaneously providing greater access to education and training opportunities for growth and development, we are equipping our teams with the tools for success.

There was much to celebrate in 2023-24, a year of accolades recognizing our diverse and talented workforce of approximately 7,300 staff, physicians, volunteers and patient partners. Our teams have always put patients first and that is why at Niagara Health, Putting People First is more than just a strategic goal – it is a priority woven into the very fabric of our workplace culture.


RECRUITMENT AT NIAGARA HEALTH

 **923**
New team members hired

 **3,389**
Positions filled internally

 **41**
Permanent full-time physicians recruited

 **26%**
Reduction in vacancies

 **2,100+**
Student placements in clinical and clinical-support programs

 **22**
Job fairs attended



Expansion of wellness initiatives such as our BeWell program saw

19,000 interactions and requests for wellness services from staff and physicians



From left: Phillip Valvasori, Manager, Patient Partnerships and Relations, and Robert Cosby, Director, Patient Experience stationed a Patient Experience engagement booth at the Marotta Family Hospital.

NEW PATIENT EXPERIENCE TEAM

As part of Niagara Health's ongoing commitment to transforming care, patient experience was identified as a strategic priority. In June 2023, Niagara Health named its first Director of Patient Experience and later added two new roles to the team, Patient Experience Co-ordinator and Senior Patient Experience and Engagement Specialist.

A milestone in the Patient Experience team was the development of the Patient Experience Steering Committee, established in December 2023. The Steering Committee, which includes representation from staff, a physician and patient partners, will co-design a patient experience framework using a health equity approach. A key component of the Patient Experience portfolio is gathering feedback from patients and families. In August 2023, our modernized patient experience survey launched and we began emailing survey links to patients who received care in the Emergency Departments, inpatient acute units, pediatrics and Women, Babies and Children's Health unit. We have received more than 2,500 responses and continue to create more opportunities for patients to opt-in to this survey.

The Patient Experience team also supports the compliment and concerns processes, the Essential Care Partner program and the 50+ patient partners in the Niagara Health Engagement Network. As we reimagine Patient Experience at Niagara Health, the team will continue to partner with staff and physicians, patients, families and the community.

*Current as of March 31, 2023

LISTENING AND TAKING ACTION

Niagara Health is committed to engaging with and listening to staff and physicians to ensure they are part of decisions that make our hospitals a great place to work.

With the current global shortage of healthcare workers, Niagara Health has been looking for innovative ways to attract and retain top talent, ready to meet the region's future healthcare needs. By establishing a two-way conversation between leadership and team members, many new initiatives, policies and workplace improvements have been made. To date, these include staff and physician recommendations for additional rounding and facetime with leaders, free massage therapy and staff wellness rooms, new 24-hour food and beverage options, food trucks and culinary pop-ups, improvements to scheduling, lactation pods and more.

Building off the success of this initial conversation, Niagara Health decided to further commit to a listening culture with the creation of NH Engage - a dedicated space to support internal engagement, where ideas are encouraged and feedback is always welcome.

PROJECT SEARCH

Niagara Health welcomed three new team members in January, whose presence at the Marotta Family Hospital in St. Catharines marked the start of an important relationship. The trio were students from École secondaire catholique Saint-Jean-de-Brébeuf in Welland, participating in Project SEARCH, a program that prepares young people living with developmental and learning challenges for the labour market by immersing them in in-demand jobs with a leading community organization. The students worked alongside Niagara Health team members in Environmental Services and Dietary Services. This was the first Project SEARCH program in Niagara, and due to its success Niagara Health is exploring the possibility of increasing the number of future placement opportunities.



AND THE WINNER IS....

Niagara Health hosts annual awards ceremonies to celebrate the extraordinary achievements and hardworking members of our team. The Awards of Excellence honour staff, physicians, volunteers and students in 11 categories, who help foster a compassionate and innovative work environment. During National Nursing Week, the Excellence in Nursing Awards recognize outstanding nurses across nine categories, acknowledging the work of our 2,700 nurses and their critical role in high-quality patient care. Additionally, the Interprofessional Practice Awards celebrate the collaborative efforts of healthcare professionals, with the 2023 ceremony recognizing 16 individuals and two teams for their contributions to enhanced patient care through best practices and innovation.



NURSE MENTORSHIP

Registered Practical Nurse Carolle Vaillancourt and Registered Nurse Angela Crane have no shortage of practical tips to help nurses enhance patient care. They shared those skills with their colleagues at Niagara Health as clinical coaches with the Clinical Scholar Coaching Program, a six-month pilot funded by the Ministry of Health to support newly graduated nurses, internationally educated nurses, nurses looking to upskill and those transitioning into the workforce. Clinical coaches supported hundreds of nurses in that time on strategic priorities, including falls prevention, sepsis management, pressure injury prevention, responsive behaviours and anything else identified by nurses in a clinical area.

LACTATION PODS

In response to feedback received directly from staff and physicians, Niagara Health is working to better support and promote breastfeeding and the expression of breastmilk by healthcare workers, learners, volunteers, patients and visitors. In February 2024, we installed three lactation pods for team members who need to breastfeed or express breastmilk on the job and prefer a private space to do so. The pods are available at the Niagara Falls, Marotta Family and Welland hospitals.



EXTRAORDINARY US: BUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH MENTORSHIP

In March 2023, Fiona Peacefull and Kayleigh Tyrer sat next to each other as strangers in a hospital conference room. Moments later, Peacefull, Executive Vice-President of Human Resources, and Tyrer, a Quality and Patient Safety Specialist, were paired together in Extraordinary Us, a professional growth and developmental mentorship program that Niagara Health launched in 2023. It provides staff and physicians with professional development, focused goal setting, methods for navigating and accessing resources and networking opportunities. Eleven people were matched with mentors. March 2024 saw the second cohort of Extraordinary Us begin, which runs until September.



08

Niagara Health BY THE NUMBERS

Niagara Health is a regional healthcare provider with multiple sites and a growing network of community-based and virtual services.

We believe that every person in our region deserves to live every day of their life in the best health possible. As a community-based academic centre, our focus on teaching and learning, research, innovation and partnership propels us to continually improve care and make a difference in people's lives.

Our team is made up of approximately 7,300 staff, physicians and volunteers who we count on to deliver Extraordinary Caring. Every Person. Every Time. Our Accreditation with Exemplary Standing is a clear demonstration of our team's commitment to the highest safety and quality standards.

We provide a full range of acute care hospital services to 450,000 residents across the Niagara region, and we are one of the few hospitals in Ontario that own and operate a long-term care facility.

NIAGARA HEALTH TEAM

APPROXIMATELY
7,300

Staff, physicians, and volunteers



2,700
Nurses



600
Physicians



85%
Of workforce
is female

STRATEGIC PLAN PROGRESS UPDATES

We are pleased to see a positive increase in staff and physician engagement with a record response from more than 2,400 team members to our latest employee survey in 2023.

8

Virtual town halls

5

Education roundtables

5

Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity
lunch and learns

EXTRAORDINARY US



From left: Extraordinary Us mentorship program participants, Dr. Anhar Alhussaini, Cardiology Department physician and Lynn Guerriero, President and Chief Executive Officer.

MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

20

Total team members
(10 dyads) in 2023

30

Total team members
(15 dyads) in 2024

MCMASTER UNIVERSITY, NIAGARA REGIONAL CAMPUS

Niagara Health is part of a network of community teaching hospitals affiliated with McMaster University's Michael G. DeGroote School of Medicine, Niagara Regional Campus.

The Niagara Regional Campus (NRC) welcomes 32 undergraduate medical students in August of each year for its three-year MD program who participate in clinical placements across Niagara Health sites, as well as community clinics. The NRC also hosts three post-graduate programs in General Surgery, Family Medicine and Family Medicine/Emergency Medicine.

Since its inception in 2008,
the NRC has graduated approximately

446 medical learners

35

Undergraduate learners
completed training and
practice in Niagara

64

Post-Graduate Residents
have stayed or returned
to Niagara to practice



BURSARY PROGRAM

The Niagara Health Bursary Program was unveiled in 2023, awarding grants of up to \$2,000 to access learning opportunities to upgrade skills and professional designations, including registered practical nurse to registered nurse bridging. Other areas of study pursued by bursary recipients include project management, French as a second language, and quality and patient safety. Interest in the program was so high in its inaugural year that Niagara Health doubled the initial funding to \$60,000 from \$30,000. Niagara Health has currently allotted \$30,000 for grants up to \$1,000 in 2024.



36

Staff and physicians
received bursary support



CARE BY NUMBERS

1,507

Hip and knee replacement surgeries

3,343

Babies born

17,207

MRI scans

2,213

Heart investigation unit procedures

6,306

Cataract surgeries

74,482

Ultrasound exams

798

Stroke care inpatients

656

Cardiac care inpatients

1,804

Children's care admissions



FIRST TIME
leadership status

WALKER FAMILY CANCER CENTRE

The Walker Family Cancer Centre (WFCC) is located in the Marotta Family Hospital and provides compassionate cancer care close to home for patients and families across the Niagara region.

As part of the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant (HNHB) Regional Cancer Program, WFCC works in partnership with the Juravinski Cancer Centre and other partner hospitals to deliver high quality patient-centred care.

78,450

Oncology visits

22

Clinical trials with **148** participants

26,141

In-person and virtual visits in the medical oncology program

Average of **344** patients treated weekly with IV systemic therapy

ENGAGING OUR COMMUNITY

11

Community Engagement sessions



34,800

Followers across all social channels

2,939,146

Social media content views

220,579

Engagements with social media content

190,462

Video views

TRAINING



100% Completion

Cultural Humility training

New Leadership Diversity, Equity and Inclusivity training

San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Course by leadership

INVESTMENTS IN WELL-BEING

443

Team members completed the Working Mind training

Y@HOME

Provides Niagara Health teams and their families access to 24/7 health and wellness programs.



niagarahealth
foundation

This past year the Niagara Health Foundation experienced remarkable success, driven by the generosity of our donors. One of our significant accomplishments was securing a third MRI for Niagara, enhancing our diagnostic capabilities and working to reduce wait times. This achievement reflects the community's unwavering support and commitment to advancing healthcare in our region, ensuring better outcomes for all.



"Thank you for your kindness and unwavering support. Your generosity is simply remarkable and will ensure that our community receives the exceptional care it deserves."
Andrea Scott, President and CEO

In 2023-24, the Niagara Health Foundation proudly committed over \$40 million to Niagara Health, funding the purchase of urgently needed patient-care equipment. This achievement was made possible by the generosity of donors in our community. Thanks to your support, we can provide essential resources for improved patient care.

Here are some examples of critical items your contributions have helped secure:

5

NICU Cribs

12

Bronchoscopes

4

Transport patient monitors

17

Neonatal vital sign monitors

10

Delivering
**SAFE AND
QUALITY CARE**



Honouring Indigenous health practices



Niagara Health's commitment to improving patient care is at the core of everything we do. The Indigenous Health Services and Reconciliation (IHSR) team is prioritizing culturally respectful care to improve healthcare experiences for Indigenous patients and families. The team's work is a reminder of the importance of cultural understanding and inclusivity in creating a welcoming and positive healthcare experience for everyone.

Since early 2023, the IHSR team has been at the forefront of planning and implementing practices that promote a culturally safe environment, aligning with the pillars of our Transforming Care Strategic Plan.

This team encourages inclusivity, equity and compassion throughout the organization. They don't just identify priorities, they act on them, working to make sure every Indigenous patient's healthcare journey is met with understanding and respect. One of their initiatives was the creation and implementation of a new smudging policy within Niagara Health. This policy allows for the sacred practice of smudging, a practice involving the burning of sage and sometimes other sacred medicines, to be performed within our hospital walls.

But their work doesn't stop there. The team has been instrumental, with guidance from the Indigenous community, in supporting and training our staff and physicians on cultural humility and unconscious biases. Through education and awareness, they are creating a more culturally supportive environment for all patients, recognizing that systemic changes can sometimes be met with challenge and discomfort.



For Indigenous seniors and those in palliative care, we recognize the importance of honouring cultural needs during sensitive times. The ability to connect with culturally supportive, traditional practices through the IHSR team, community partners and elders provides a patient-led approach to their care plan. During childbirth, those in the Women, Babies and Children's Health unit use their training and education to provide seamless transfer of care from Indigenous-trained midwives into Niagara Health.

HEALING IS NOT JUST PHYSICAL BUT ALSO *spiritual*

We understand the value in a holistic approach to care, and that is why we make Indigenous-led healing sessions available, providing comfort and relief to patients and families. And to further strengthen community ties, we organize traditional Indigenous activities for both the community and our Niagara Health team to participate in, fostering understanding and solidarity.

At Niagara Health, we believe that providing culturally safe care isn't just a goal; it's a responsibility. Our journey has just begun as we look at the IHSR team to lead engagement, which will provide guidance on hospital priorities identified by the community. We will implement Indigenous-led, culturally inclusive policies and system transformations that prioritize access to traditional medicines and ceremonial practices within the healthcare setting. As we forge ahead, we invite you to join us in building an Indigenous-led future where healthcare is a beacon of compassion, equity and inclusivity for all members of our community.

TRADITIONAL MIDWIFE PROGRAM

To better meet the needs of our Indigenous patients and families while demonstrating our commitment to put people first, the Indigenous Health Services and Reconciliation team has been working to increase access and integration with the Six Nations Traditional Midwife Program. Onkwehon:we midwifery care is based on respect for all life and birth as a profound and sacred part of life. Nurturing this relationship has enhanced the care for our Indigenous families and has provided care that compliments and aligns with their personal beliefs and customs.

“

I'm extremely grateful for the smudging and the medicines I had no other access to.

- Patient

ADVANCING SAFE AND QUALITY CARE THROUGH DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

To support the delivery of safe, quality care for patients and families, we have introduced a variety of programs, policies and initiatives at Niagara Health over the past year, including Indigenous cultural safety training, an inclusive recruitment process, an educational bursary program, a diverse mentorship program and supportive programming for internationally educated nurses.



87

Smudge requests received

“

When I arrived at the Emergency Department, I was treated with nothing but welcoming smiles, support and respect from the moment I arrived until my discharge a few hours later. As a retired nurse, I felt safe and listened to by all members of my healthcare team.

- Kristyn W.S., patient



ENHANCEMENTS IN THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PSYCHIATRIC EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM

We recognize the growing mental health pressures facing communities in Niagara and are committed to providing effective solutions to meet those challenges. Over the past year, the reorganization of Niagara Health's Psychiatric Emergency Response Team (PERT) program included several enhancements such as the appointment of a manager to oversee the program, and the creation of a dedicated area in our Emergency Department. With seven private care areas, this space supports PERT treatments that are administered by a mental health and emergency department nurse and pharmacy technician.

REDUCING EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT PRESSURES

Niagara Health has a growing network of community-based services that help to address pressures on Emergency Department (ED) capacity by encouraging patients to receive care in the most appropriate setting within their communities.

We have a number of innovative strategies to help manage the influx of patients and streamline visits to the ED, such as the virtual urgent care service that enables patients to make an online appointment with a nurse practitioner and the Familiar Faces program, which identifies and creates care plans for frequent visitors to the ED.

With the return of our Fit2Sit program, we are improving ambulance offload delays through a partnership with Niagara EMS, which, if condition allows, permits patients to be taken to a chair to sit upright in the ED and be monitored closely until they can be seen by a doctor or nurse.

Niagara Health continues to work with our regional and provincial partners, including the Niagara Ontario Health Team - Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara, to develop solutions to optimize healthcare capacity and timely access to care.

NIAGARA HEALTH ENGAGEMENT NETWORK

Niagara Health is fortunate to work alongside more than 50 patient partners who volunteer their time to co-create better healthcare experiences based on their own perspectives and interactions. Their involvement ensures that decisions are inclusive and reflect the diverse perspectives within our community, leading to continuous enhancements in healthcare delivery.

Since the program's launch, patient partners have collaborated on more than 200 initiatives across many Niagara Health programs. Initiatives include co-design, collaboration, interview panels, health literacy, committee membership, quality improvement and more.



50+
Patient Partners



200+
Initiatives across
Niagara Health
programs

PRIMARY CARE

Niagara Health has been working with local municipalities, the Ontario government, the Niagara Ontario Health Team - Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara and community partners to find working solutions to help bridge the primary care gap in Niagara, as we are currently facing many external pressures.

Niagara Health has created a new Chief of Primary Care role - Dr. Jennifer Robert - to bridge the healthcare gap. This is the first position of its kind for Niagara Health, and moving forward, this role will support more communication and collaboration between the hospital and primary care providers at a time when there's a shortage of family physicians.

By improving communication and access to primary care, we will improve the overall health of residents in Niagara, as Putting People First and Delivering Safe and Quality Care relies on partnerships and access to family doctors and other primary care providers.

Strong partnerships between the hospital and primary care providers will lead to better patient experiences while in hospital, increased safety for patients transitioning from the hospital back to the community and limiting the need for patients to return to the hospital for follow up care.



Dr. Jennifer Robert,
Chief of Primary Care

NIAGARA HEALTH KNOWLEDGE INSTITUTE

The successes keep coming for the Niagara Health Knowledge Institute (NHKI) since it launched a year ago, formalizing Niagara Health as a leader in community hospital-based research. In the past year, the NHKI secured \$300,000 from the Accelerating Clinical Trials Canada Consortium to help launch a neurology research program and a hematology/transfusion medicine program. The grant also funded the hiring of a research co-ordinator. Additional funding in September from the COVID-19 Network of Clinical Trials Networks (NoN) expanded critical care research to the Niagara Falls Hospital, and in October, Thrombosis Research Co-ordinator Kailee Morrison was recognized with a national award for her work.



36

Publications by Niagara Health researchers



7

Clinical research programs



32

Clinical research studies



930

Patients enrolled



\$6M

In funding



Researchers, learners, community members, physicians and staff gathered at Niagara College's Daniel J. Patterson Campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake for the fourth edition of the NHKI Research Day.



DELIVERING
SAFE AND
QUALITY
CARE

14

Transforming HOW WE WORK



Breaking ground on our future

After a decade of planning, the dream of a new South Niagara Hospital (SNH) came one step closer to reality on July 18, when Niagara Health broke ground on the 1.3-million-square-foot hospital. Joined by Premier Doug Ford, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Sylvia Jones, Minister of Infrastructure Kinga Surma and nearly 300 guests, it was a symbolic day that launched the five-year construction project to bring a new state-of-the-art hospital to the Niagara region.

This milestone wouldn't be possible without the tremendous support of the community. Niagara Health is grateful for commitments of local share funding of \$44.5 million from the Niagara Region, \$30 million from the City of Niagara Falls and an initial \$3 million pledge from the Town of Fort Erie. Through the Niagara Health Foundation's It's Our Future campaign, more than \$62 million has been pledged to date from founding donors in support of the SNH - one of the most successful fundraising efforts in the Foundation's history. Appreciation is also extended to John Grassl and the City of Niagara Falls for donating the 50-acre parcel of land where the SNH is being constructed.

Located in Niagara Falls at the corner of Montrose and Biggar roads, the 12-storey building will offer a full scope of hospital services and feature Centres of Excellence in complex care, wellness in aging and stroke. With 469 single-patient bedrooms, and a goal to be the first WELL-certified hospital in Canada, the SNH will not only improve the patient and family experience, it will also help recruit and retain the best and brightest healthcare professionals.

**This milestone wouldn't be possible without
the tremendous support of the
*community***

The groundbreaking for the new hospital was a monumental occasion that comes just 10 years after the opening of the Marotta Family Hospital (St. Catharines Hospital) in March 2013, and marks the half-way point of Niagara Health's plan to transition to a three-site hospital system.

As we continue our journey to transform hospital care in Niagara, Niagara Health has had the privilege of hosting community engagement sessions across the region to provide information and updates on our future plan.

To provide the best quality care to our patients, we must focus our limited resources and build seamless hospital care across Niagara with three cornerstone hospitals - the Marotta Family, South Niagara and Welland hospitals. Transforming our hospitals means patients will receive better access to hospital services and specialized care from the best clinical experts. While each site will have its own areas of expertise, all three hospitals will work together as part of a seamless system of care.

During engagement sessions, we heard from hundreds of community members who imparted invaluable feedback and insights that will play a crucial role in shaping our future vision. To deliver truly connected care, the future must also include strong primary and community care led by the Niagara Ontario Health Team - Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara and community-based health partners. By ensuring every patient has access to primary care, we will improve the overall health of residents in the region.

Together with our partners, we are building a strong, sustainable hospital system that will meet the needs of our community for years to come.



1.3-million
Square feet



469
Single-patient bedrooms



45
Hemodialysis stations



92,000
Emergency medicine visits



3.8 million
Laboratory tests



179,000
Diagnostic tests



21,000
Mental Health and Addictions program visits



7,500
Wellness in aging visits



8
Operating suites



28,000
Surgical procedures



14
Gardens and terraces

ALIGNING OUR GOALS

Based on the valuable feedback from our teams about the importance of aligning our day-to-day efforts with our organizational strategic goals, we have launched centralized and standardized operational planning across Niagara Health. Although our teams were already engaged in operational planning in their own capacity, we enhanced and standardized the process to ensure full transparency and accountability in developing and reporting on progress, ensuring meaningful contributions from every member of our team.

This work is supported by the Enterprise Project Management Office (ePMO), a small but mighty team that provides organization-wide support. The ePMO team further aligns project goals with strategy, has a line of sight across all portfolios at Niagara Health and builds capacity to maximize resources across the organization.

As part of our commitment to accountability and transparency, Niagara Health will continue to share regular updates on key performance indicators and measures of success. This will support our team members in recognizing the importance of their role, and understanding the impact they have on our progress. To achieve long-term success as an organization, we must work collaboratively on a focused set of priorities.

SOUTH NIAGARA HOSPITAL ROOM MOCK-UPS

The start of construction is an exciting milestone and there continues to be a lot of behind-the-scenes work to finalize the design of the 1.3-million-square-foot South Niagara Hospital (SNH). This endeavour is made a little bit easier through the use of room mock-ups. The SNH project has three room mock-up phases, including paper, low-fidelity and high-fidelity versions. In January, teams had an opportunity to review the low-fidelity rooms, where eight of the most repeated hospital spaces were built to scale with cardboard furniture, fixtures and equipment. This process allows staff, physicians, patients and community partners to walk through and examine real physical rooms and spaces, helping them to make important decisions about the final hospital design and how it will impact the delivery of high-quality patient care.



OPERATION MONARCH

Niagara Health is on a journey to implement a new Hospital Information System and improve the way we deliver care to our patients.

Through the provider Oracle Health, Niagara Health (NH) and Hotel Dieu Shaver and Rehabilitation Centre (HDS) are integrating cutting-edge technology that will manage electronic medical records, a critical element to support our delivery of modern, world-class healthcare services.

When we go live in November of 2024, this new state-of-the-art system will allow NH and HDS to replace paper-based records and outdated electronic processes with more modern, connected and accessible electronic health records. The system will enable better management of data, improved patient safety, faster access to information, enhanced quality and consistency of patient care, and more.



Cost of HIS **\$125M**
(\$352 million over 11.5 years)



150+
HIS team members



1,040
Workshop sessions



249
Accountable leaders



392
Change agents



Niagara Health welcomed occupational therapist assistant and physiotherapist assistant students from Niagara College, who attended a demonstration of equipment and techniques used for rehabilitation.

ACADEMIC PARTNERSHIPS

Niagara Health reaffirmed its commitment in 2023 to educating and training the next generation of healthcare workers. All our sites continue to be a training ground for students and residents from Brock University, Niagara College, McMaster University's Michael G. DeGroot School of Medicine - Niagara Regional Campus (NRC), Nipissing University, and more than 100 other academic partners. Last year alone, there were more than 2,100 student placements in clinical and clinical-support positions. In January, we were proud to see Dr. Rafi Setrak, Regional Chief of Emergency Medicine, named Academic Lead for the NRC.

In April, Brock University recognized Niagara Health as the Non-Profit Co-op Employer of the Year for 2023. Laurel Broski, a change management specialist with Operation Monarch, received the Outstanding Brock Co-op Supervisor for Summer 2023 Work Term Award from the University.

Niagara Health has been working in lockstep with post-secondary institutions to help fill gaps in our workforce. Brock University, Niagara College, McMaster University, Nipissing University and the University of Niagara Falls have been by our side to understand our health human resources shortages by expanding their nursing, allied health and research programs, dedicating more resources to respond to our demand and finding innovative ways to bring new programs to Niagara to grow and foster a local workforce.

Niagara Health currently has 116 affiliation agreements with academic institutions



78

Ontario institutions



22

Other Canadian institutions



14

American institutions



2

Other

AMBULATORY CARE

Niagara Health began an organizational review of Ambulatory Care services to determine an approach that ensures seamless patient care across all sites. By bringing together the expertise of physicians, clinical leaders and front-line staff, this review will support the development of Guiding Principles, as well as new improved practices, policies and procedures for outpatient care.

SeamlessMD

Niagara Health continues to grow its surgical transitions remote care monitoring (RCM) program to service other patient populations leveraging the SeamlessMD digital platform. The innovative digital health solution supports surgical patients' pre- and post-operative care journeys with automated education, reminders, symptom monitoring and access to the surgical remote monitoring team.

The tool provided remote post-op monitoring and 983 hours of personalized patient education, allowing patients to feel confident recovering at home. More than 90 per cent of patients would recommend the program and digital solution to others.



63

Diverted Emergency Department visits



963

Diverted potential hospital bed days



42

Diverted readmissions

Resulting in an estimated savings of more than

\$432,000

SCOPE NIAGARA EXPANDS



From left, Rachel Humphries and Sarah Furnival SCOPE nurse navigators.

Our SCOPE Nurse Navigators, connect primary care providers to a dedicated team of specialists from Niagara Health and from Home and Community Care, providing support for complex and urgent patients in real-time.

SCOPE Niagara is a partnership under the Niagara Ontario Health Team - Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara that connects family physicians and nurse practitioners to a dedicated team of specialists from Niagara Health and from Home and Community Care.

Since launching in May 2022, SCOPE Niagara has registered more than 180 local family physicians and nurse practitioners. To date, there have been more than 1,100 calls to SCOPE Niagara, with 89 per cent of calls resulting in Emergency Department avoidance.

In January 2024, the Mental Health and Addictions pilot pathway launched with its own dedicated mental health nurse navigator and on-call psychiatrist to provide primary care providers with immediate consultation, assessment and management of their patients' mental health conditions. Additionally, the SCOPE Palliative Care pathway launched in March 2024, providing primary care providers with support for patients with palliative care needs.

The SCOPE, Seamless Care Optimizing the Patient Experience program, has now expanded to include more than 3,000 primary care providers across 16 locations in Ontario.



TRANSFORMING
HOW WE
WORK

PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS

Physician assistants (PAs) work collaboratively with our General Internal Medicine team to support Safe and Quality Care. There are currently seven PAs on staff across our sites who help to increase the team's capacity to deliver care as efficiently as possible.

PAs are responsible for providing direct patient care, including assessment, management and treatment of both adult and pediatric patients in acute settings.

“Physician assistants are a welcome and much-needed addition to our teams at Niagara Health. Inpatient medicine in particular has seen a huge influx in patients with increasingly complex care needs and barriers to discharge. The addition of physician assistants has greatly improved our ability to manage high volumes and improved both flow and patient care. I cannot thank our physician assistants enough for what they do to support patient care and our community as a whole.

Dr. Lisa Gabrielli, Hospitalist

“Our physician assistant program has been hugely successful within the Department of Medicine. Our PAs assess and make treatment decisions in collaboration with the supervising physician and our clinical team members to ensure patients get the care they need. We are looking forward to expanding the PA program in the Emergency Department and our outpatient clinics. I have been consistently impressed with the flexibility, competency and professionalism of our PAs, they have become an invaluable part of our care teams.

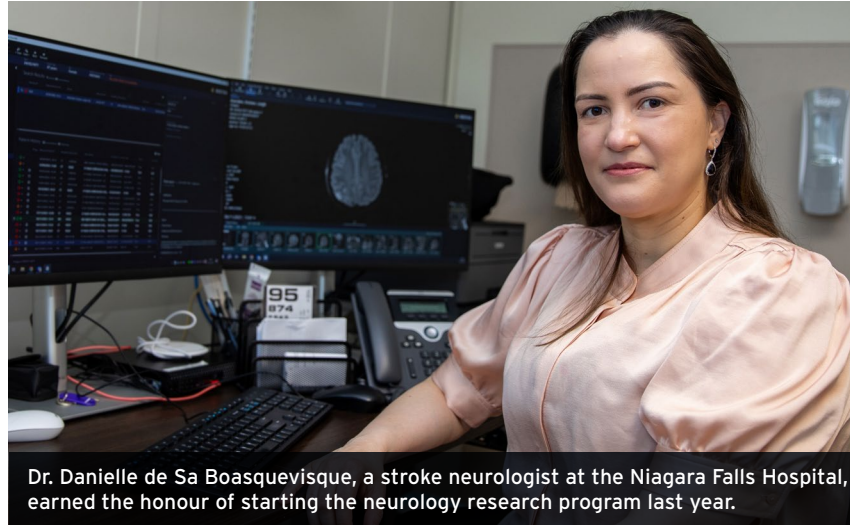
Dr. Gavin Mazzetti, General Internist, Head of Service Medicine Recruitment Lead, Welland Hospital

18

Our Future and POSITIONING OURSELVES FOR SUCCESS

Looking forward to next year and beyond, Niagara Health remains committed to transforming hospital care in Niagara. We will continue to share our future vision for a three-site hospital system and engage the public in this process through regular updates and information sharing.

We will ensure a positive patient experience with a focus on the increasing demands of our aging community and work with specific patient populations, beginning with Indigenous partners, to improve care. We also recognize the growing mental health pressures facing communities in Niagara and we are committed to providing effective solutions to meet those challenges.



Dr. Danielle de Sa Boasquevisque, a stroke neurologist at the Niagara Falls Hospital, earned the honour of starting the neurology research program last year.

KEY PRIORITIES FOR YEAR TWO OF TRANSFORMING CARE



PUTTING PEOPLE FIRST

- Growing and focusing our efforts through community engagement and the launch of a new Patient Experience strategy
- Building an inclusive and collaborative workplace with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion
- Investing in our team members through training, development and improved engagement
- Continuing to connect and build relationships with community partners to help us deliver better care to those we serve



DELIVERING SAFE AND QUALITY CARE

- Implementing the Indigenous Health Services Plan
- Partnering with the Niagara Health Foundation to purchase new equipment
- Stroke Accreditation journey to 2025
- Accreditation Canada 2025



TRANSFORMING HOW WE WORK

- Launch of new Hospital Information System
- South Niagara Hospital development milestones
- Building a vision for the Welland Hospital redevelopment
- Expanding clinical trials beyond the walls of the Marotta Family Hospital

POSITIONING OURSELVES FOR SUCCESS

By fall 2024, we aim to deliver on our promise to provide consistent, high-quality patient care using technology and data, with the implementation of our new modernized Hospital Information System. This will support our goal of ensuring patients are receiving the right care based on the right evidence by providing our physicians and clinical teams with easy access to patient digital medical records.

We will leave no stone unturned in our efforts to attract healthcare professionals to our team while working closely with our partners across the Niagara Ontario Health Team - Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara, local municipalities, Ontario Health West and primary care providers to advocate and expand access to care.

Understanding that retention of our top talent is key to our success as an acute healthcare provider, we will continue to invest into our team members with opportunities for career growth and education.

Our vision for our collective future is coming together and we're excited to see what the next year will bring. Thank you for accompanying us on this important journey.

19

Senior LEADERSHIP



Lynn Guerriero
President and
Chief Executive Officer

*Dr. Johan Viljoen Executive Vice-President,
Medical, Chief of Staff (Until October 2023)

SENIOR EXECUTIVE



Simon Akinsulie
Executive Vice-President,
Practice, Clinical Support,
Chief Nursing Executive



Harpreet Bassi
Executive Vice-President, Strategy
and Communications, Executive
Lead, Research, Niagara Health
Knowledge Institute



Linda Boich
Executive Vice-President,
Patient Experience and
Integrated Care



Dr. Satish Chawla
Interim Executive Vice-President,
Medical, Chief of Staff



Sonali Kohli
Executive Vice-President,
Digital Transformation,
Chief Information Officer



Heather Paterson
Executive Vice-President,
Clinical Operations



Fiona Peacefull
Executive Vice-President,
Human Resources



Angela Zangari
Executive Vice-President,
Finance, Redevelopment and
Facilities, Chief Financial Officer

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Marylee O'Neill
Board Chair

Charlie Rate
Vice-Chair

Ray Archer
Gervan Fearon
Susanne Flett
Jennifer Li
Shane Malcolm
Bill Maurin

Ex-Officio
Lynn Guerriero

Dr. Satish Chawla
Dr. Alison MacTavish
Simon Akinsulie

John McKinley
Stephen Murdoch
Catherine Novick
Anthony Reitboeck
Carmen Rossiter
Janice Thomson
Elisabeth
Zimmermann

MEDICAL STAFF ASSOCIATION

Representatives
on the Medical
Advisory Committee

Dr. Alison MacTavish
President

Dr. Jennifer Frendo
Vice President

Dr. Shira Brown
Secretary/Treasurer



Dr. Satish Chawla
Chair, Interim Chief of Staff



Dr. Helen Caetano
Chief, Surgery



Dr. Julian Dobranowski
Chief, Diagnostic Imaging



Dr. Donald DuVall
Chief, Anesthesia



Dr. Lorraine Jensen
Chief, Medicine



Dr. Dimitri Koutsogiannis
Interim Chief, Laboratory Medicine



Dr. Karen Macmillan
Chief, Obstetrics and Gynecology



Dr. Michael Levesque
Chief, Oncology



Dr. Madan Mohan Roy
Chief, Pediatrics



Dr. Rafi Setrak
Chief, Emergency Medicine



Dr. Jennifer Robert
Chief, Primary Care



Dr. Victor Uwaifo
Chief, Mental Health
and Addictions

MEDICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Department Chiefs

20

Financial OVERVIEW

Niagara Health publishes audited financial statements every year as part of our financial accountability and responsibility to the community. Complete 2023-24 financial results are available on the Niagara Health website.

Our total operating budget for the year was approximately \$762 million. We ended the year with a deficit of \$9.4 million.

“

I was recently admitted to the hospital for a few days and want to express my thanks to the staff members who, although working the late hours of their shifts, could not have been more professional and caring.

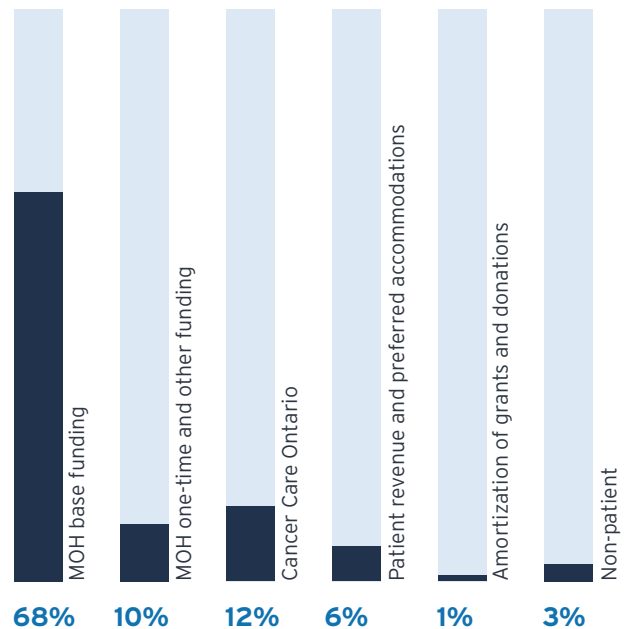
Thank you.

- John M., patient

REVENUE SOURCES FOR 2023-24

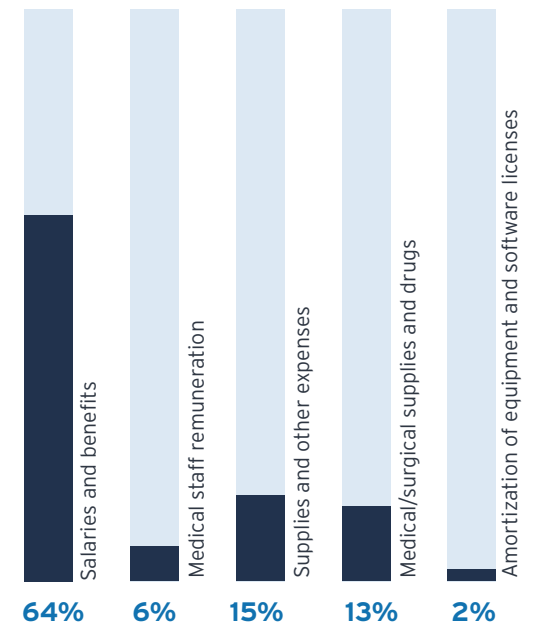
Approximately 90 per cent in base and one-time funding was received from the Ministry of Health (MOH) and Cancer Care Ontario during the fiscal year.

Niagara Health received a \$9.2 million base investment increase in fiscal 2023-24 to help offset inflationary costs pressures for salaries and benefits, patient care supplies and services, and general operating expenses. In addition, Niagara Health received \$55 million one-time in funding to support financial impact related to Bill 124 arbitration awards adjustment.



EXPENSE BREAKDOWN FOR 2023-24

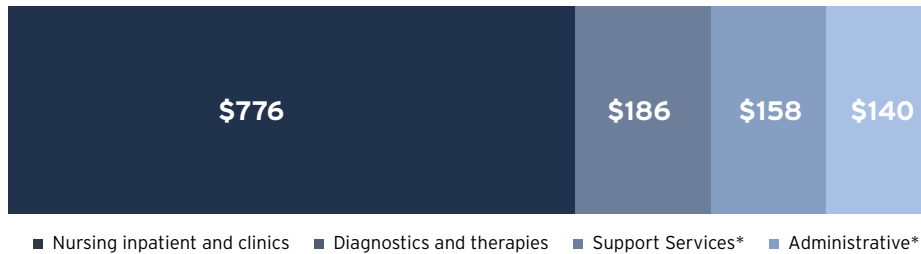
Approximately 70 per cent of total expenses are related to salaries, benefits and medical staff remuneration. Inflationary cost pressures for the fiscal year amounted to approximately \$58 million with \$54 million attributed to collective bargaining, economic and step increases, plus \$8 million of Bill 124 retro payments.



AVERAGE INPATIENT COST PER DAY: \$1,260

Approximately 76 per cent of expenses are related to direct patient care such as nursing, pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, laboratory and therapies.

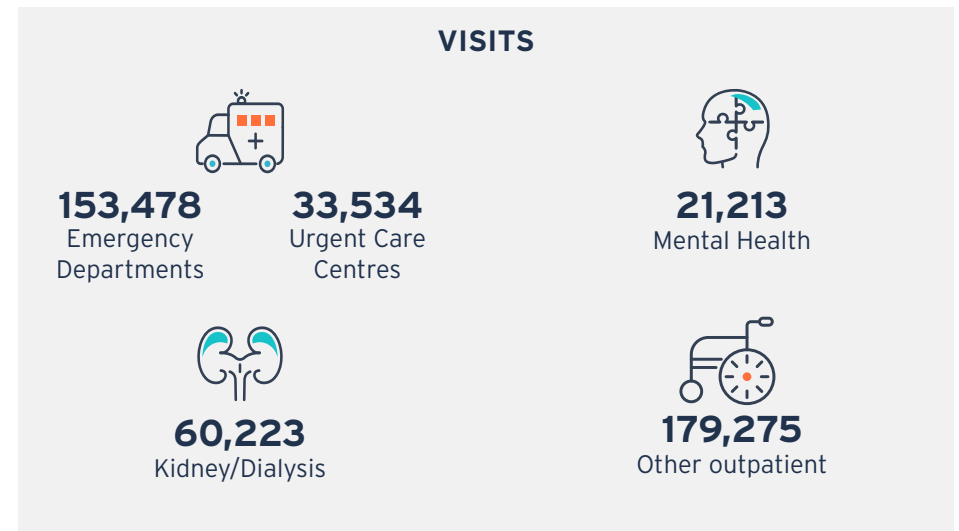
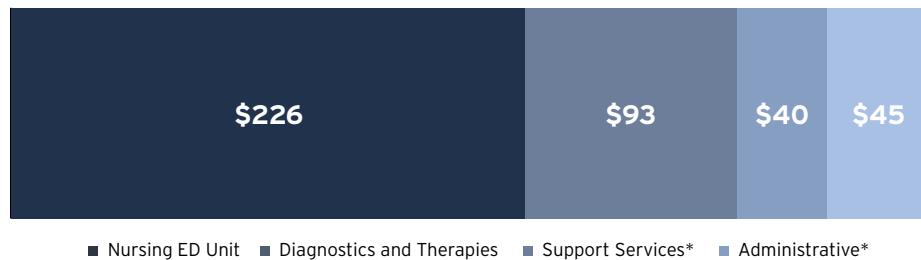
An additional 13 per cent is related to support services such as housekeeping, food and maintenance. The remaining 11 per cent is for administrative costs.



AVERAGE EMERGENCY VISIT: \$404

Approximately 79 per cent of expenses are related to direct patient care such as nursing, pharmacy, diagnostic imaging, laboratory and therapies.

An additional 10 per cent is related to support services such as housekeeping, food and maintenance. The remaining 11 per cent is for administrative costs.



*Administrative includes Administration, Human Resources, Finance, Materials Management, Information and Communication Services.

*Support Services includes Housekeeping, Food, Maintenance, Biomedical, Registration, Health Records and Education Services.



In celebration of International Women's Day, Niagara Health brought together 45 leaders for this iconic photo. Niagara Health is proud to be a national leader with above-average representation of women in leadership roles and women accounting for 85 per cent of the workforce.

niagarahealth



@NiagaraHealth | NiagaraHealth.on.ca



Niagara Health is grateful for the support and partnership of Niagara Ontario Health Team - Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara.