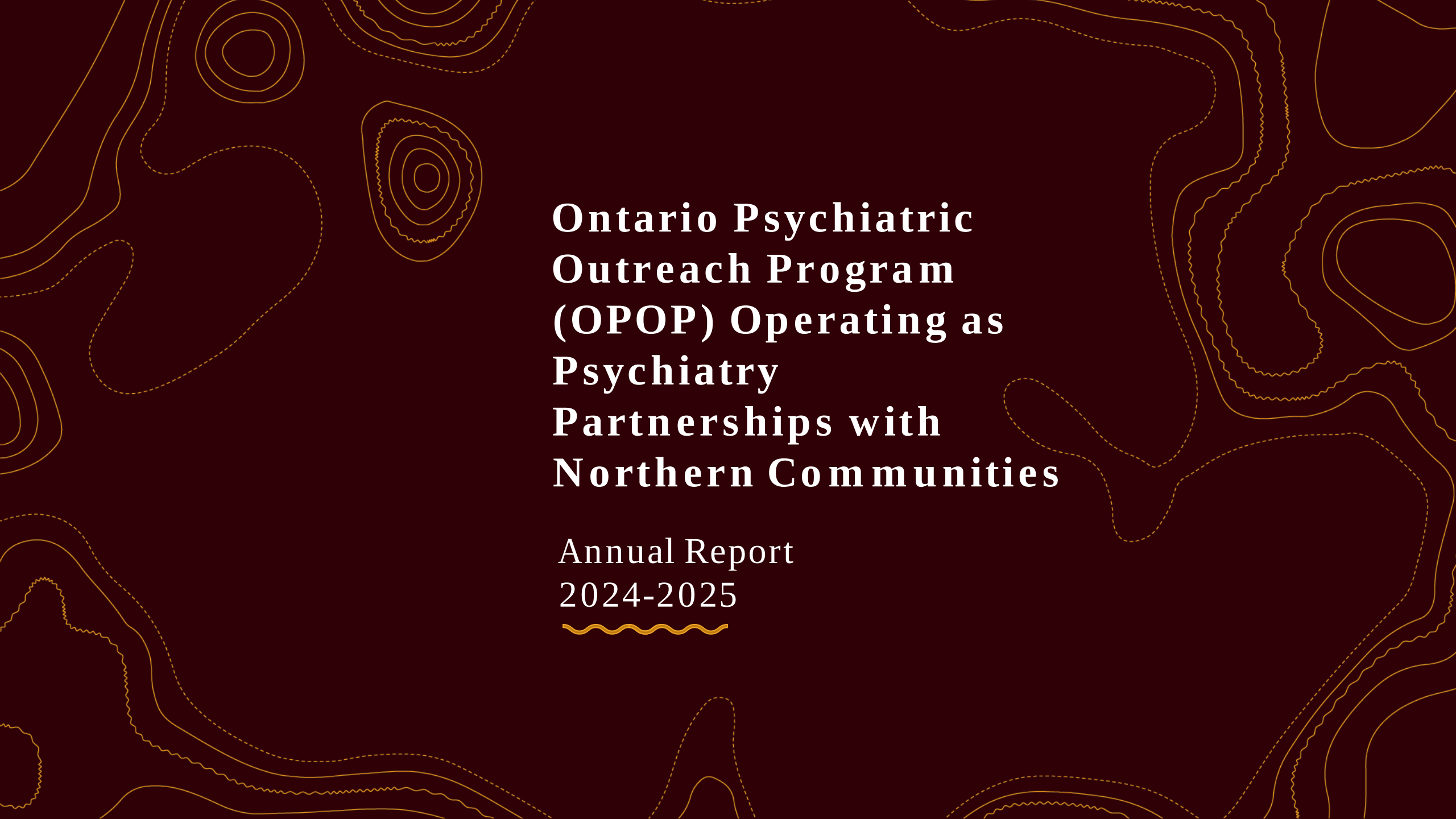




Ontario Psychiatric Outreach Program (OPOP) Operating as Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities

Annual Report
2024-2025



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Land Acknowledgement

Ontario Psychiatric Outreach Program (OPOP) operating as Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities provides services across Northern Ontario. We would like to acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories where we live, learn, and work. We honour the traditional knowledge and ways of knowing and being of the Indigenous Peoples of these Territories. Their knowledge has existed in these spaces since time began. We ask that you take a moment to remember where you live, learn, and work and reflect on what you can do, personally and professionally, to create change.



Who We Are

OPOP operating as Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities, formerly Ontario Psychiatric Outreach Program, started in 1999 as a network of collaborating partner programs that provide mental health services and supports to Northern Ontario's rural and underserved communities. The program is comprised of three collaborating partner programs: Northern Ontario Francophone Psychiatric Program at the University of Ottawa, Extended Campus Program at Western University, and the Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (formerly Northern Psychiatric Outreach Program).

Vision

A **trusted** partner in providing excellence in mental health care and education with underserved communities in Northern Ontario.

Mission

To achieve **excellence** and **enhance equity** in mental health care through collaboration and co-creation with Northern Ontario partners.

Values

Excellence

Collaboration

Equity

Director's Message



It is with immense pride and a deep sense of accomplishment on behalf of our collective efforts, that I present this Report for Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities, covering the period from 2024 to 2025. Recent years have been marked by significant transformation, adaptation, and a renewed commitment to delivering high-quality mental health care across Northern Ontario. Our journey over these past years has been one of challenge, innovation, and profound collaboration, ultimately strengthening our program's foundation and future direction.

First and foremost, I extend my profound gratitude to our invaluable academic partner programs: the **Extended Campus Program at Western University**, the **Northern Ontario Francophone Psychiatric Program at the University of Ottawa**, and the **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities**

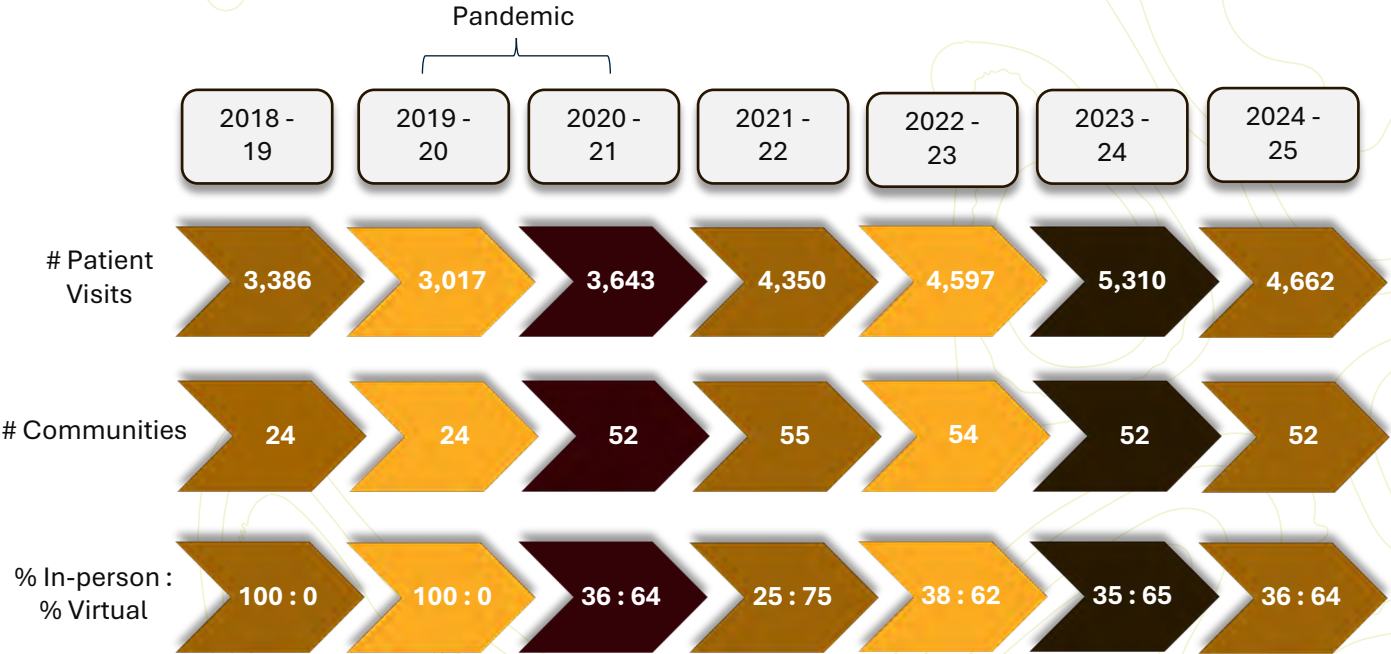
at CAMH (formerly Northern Psychiatric Outreach Program at CAMH). Your steadfast collaboration, expertise, and shared dedication are instrumental in extending psychiatric services and education to underserved communities. These partnerships form the bedrock of our operational model, enabling us to leverage diverse strengths and expand our reach effectively.

Beyond our core academic partners, I also wish to express sincere thanks to all our other partners—the community organizations, healthcare providers, local leaders, and most importantly, the patients and families we serve. Your trust, feedback, and active participation are vital to our success and continuously inspire our efforts to evolve and improve.

The reporting period, spanning 2024-2025, continued to navigate the lasting reverberations of the global COVID-19 pandemic.

While the immediate crisis subsided, its impact on healthcare delivery remained profound. We faced considerable challenges during this time, including the impact on the delivery of in-person services and a significantly underspent budget as we adapted to new operational paradigms. However, these obstacles also catalyzed remarkable innovation, including the accelerated and significantly increased integration of virtual care into our service model. This shift, born out of necessity, has proven to be a transformative force, enhancing accessibility and efficiency. Our program volumes vividly illustrate this evolution: for instance, in FY2019-20, 100% of patient visits were in-person compared to 36% in FY2020-21 during the pandemic. Post-pandemic our service has continued to remain a hybrid service, offering both in-person and virtual care (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Seven Year Trend of Patient Visits, Communities Served, and Modality of Care (In-person vs. Virtual)



Notes:
of Patients Seen reported in FY2020-21 and prior are likely an underestimate due to issues with data collection from program sites.
Data not available for ECP from FY2018-19 to FY2020-21.

This period of adaptation also presented a unique opportunity to strengthen our program through an extensive process of community engagement. The pandemic's disruption forced us to pause, listen, and truly understand the evolving needs and preferences of the communities we serve. Our community engagement initiative involved surveying over 300 interest holders including consultants, trainees/residents, referring providers, external system planners (including primary care networks in Northern Ontario) and collaborating partner programs, as well as hosting a series of 5 listening circles with 44 interest holders from across Northern Ontario. This comprehensive outreach provided invaluable insights on how we could improve our partnership.

Based on this powerful feedback, and with unanimous agreement across our Executive Committee members, we embarked on a significant rebranding initiative. The "Ontario Psychiatric Outreach Program" (OPOP) / "Le Programme d'extension en psychiatrie de l'Ontario" (PEPO) will now be known as the **"Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities"** / **"Partenariats en psychiatrie avec les collectivités du Nord"**. The term "Partnership" better emphasizes the mutually

collaborative service model we strive for, as more current and inclusive terminology than "outreach." This rebranding is not merely a change of name; it signifies a strengthened commitment to partnership, respect, and cultural relevance in our approach to mental health care. This strategic rebranding also aligns seamlessly with the values of excellence, collaboration, and equity that underpin our new **Psychiatry Partnership with Northern Communities [Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#)**. This plan outlines three strategic directions: ensuring High Quality Care, promoting Knowledge Sharing and Education, and fostering Collaboration and Contribution.

Our community engagement process complemented our ongoing efforts to evaluate patient experience through our **Client Experience Survey**. Launched in May 2021 and available in both English and French, this survey assesses patient satisfaction and experience with the care provided. To date, 282 surveys have been completed, offering critical, real-time feedback that helps us refine our services and ensure they meet the highest standards.

Change seems to be an overarching theme for this era of Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities, marked by several leadership changes. **Dr. Michelle Tremblay**, Medical Director of the Northern Ontario Francophone Psychiatric Program at the University of Ottawa retired after her term as Medical Director. We hope she continues to thrive as she cycles her way through retirement - wishing you happy trails and bike paths! **Denise Canso** has also recently transitioned from her incredibly impactful time as Director of the program to a new role. I want to extend my deepest thanks and appreciation to her for her leadership and collaboration – we have had a meaningful partnership in our shared leadership journeys!

On a personal note, this report marks a significant transition in my role. After six fulfilling years as Medical Director, I will be stepping down from this role in July 2025. It has been an immense privilege and an honour to lead such a dedicated team and contribute to the mental well-being of Northern Ontario communities. I have every confidence in the future of our program, and it gives me great pleasure to welcome **Dr. Heather Flett** as the incoming Medical

Director. Dr. Flett brings a wealth of experience, vision, and passion, and I am certain that under her leadership, Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities will continue to thrive, innovate, and make an even greater positive impact on the lives of those we serve.

Dr. Allison Crawford, MD PhD FRCPC

Medical Director, Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities





Collaborating Partner Program Reports

EXTENDED CAMPUS PROGRAM AT WESTERN UNIVERSITY



In 2024–2025, the Extended Campus Program (ECP) of the Department of Psychiatry at Western University continued to advance its mission of fostering collaborative relationships with partners in the Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities. The ECP remained committed to supporting high-quality psychiatric care in underserved communities through education, research, and clinical outreach.

Clinical Services

Psychiatric outreach services to the North of Superior Counselling Programs (NOSP) remained a key component of the ECP in 2024–2025. These services included both psychiatric care and educational activities in rural communities across the Thunder Bay District, including Geraldton, Longlac, Manitouwadge, Marathon, Nipigon, and Schreiber.

In June and October 2024, Dr. Giuseppe Guaiana traveled

to Northern Ontario to provide in-person services. Telepsychiatry options continued to be available throughout the years, ensuring continuity of care for patients in remote locations.

ECP administration supported Dr. Sumit Chaudhari, Dr. Giuseppe Guaiana, Dr. Sujata Ojha, and Dr. Chintan Shah in delivering psychiatric consultations across Northern Ontario during the 2024–2025 period. 229 patients were seen.

The program successfully offered NOSP fly-in trips to residents in 2024–2025. Dr. Guaiana accompanied three psychiatry residents on his two visits, and the feedback received was overwhelmingly positive. The Residency Program Director remains highly supportive of these experiential learning opportunities. Moving forward, the ECP aims to expand resident involvement in both telepsychiatry and fly-in services, with the

goal of exposing trainees to alternative models of psychiatric practice and encouraging future engagement in rural and remote mental health care.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD/CME)

Psychiatrists and other mental health professionals in Thunder Bay, Sudbury, North Bay, and Sault Ste. Marie—along with medical clerks from the Northern Ontario School of Medicine—were able to participate in CPD events hosted by the Department of Psychiatry at Western University. These sessions featured presentations by Western faculty and invited experts, providing valuable opportunities for ongoing professional development and knowledge exchange.

Giuseppe Guaiana, MD, MSc, PhD, FRCPC

Associate Professor of Psychiatry, Western University
Chief of Psychiatry, St. Thomas Elgin General Hospital
Director, Extended Campus Program, Western University
Clinical Director, North of Superior Program, Western University



NORTHERN ONTARIO FRANCOPHONE PSYCHIATRY PROGRAM AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA



The Northern Ontario Francophone Psychiatric Program (NOFPP) is affiliated with the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Ottawa and operates as part of the Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities program. In keeping with its mission, NOFPP offers French-language psychiatric services in several communities across northeastern Ontario. It also provides training to francophone psychiatry residents and encourages them to practice in Northern Ontario.

NOFPP underwent significant changes during the 2024-2025 fiscal year, at both the leadership and consultant levels. In March 2025, Dr. Michèle Tremblay stepped down from her position as executive director to begin her well-earned retirement, after seven years of efficient and dedicated service to the program. We wish her a long and happy retirement and extend our heartfelt thanks for her unwavering dedication and determination.

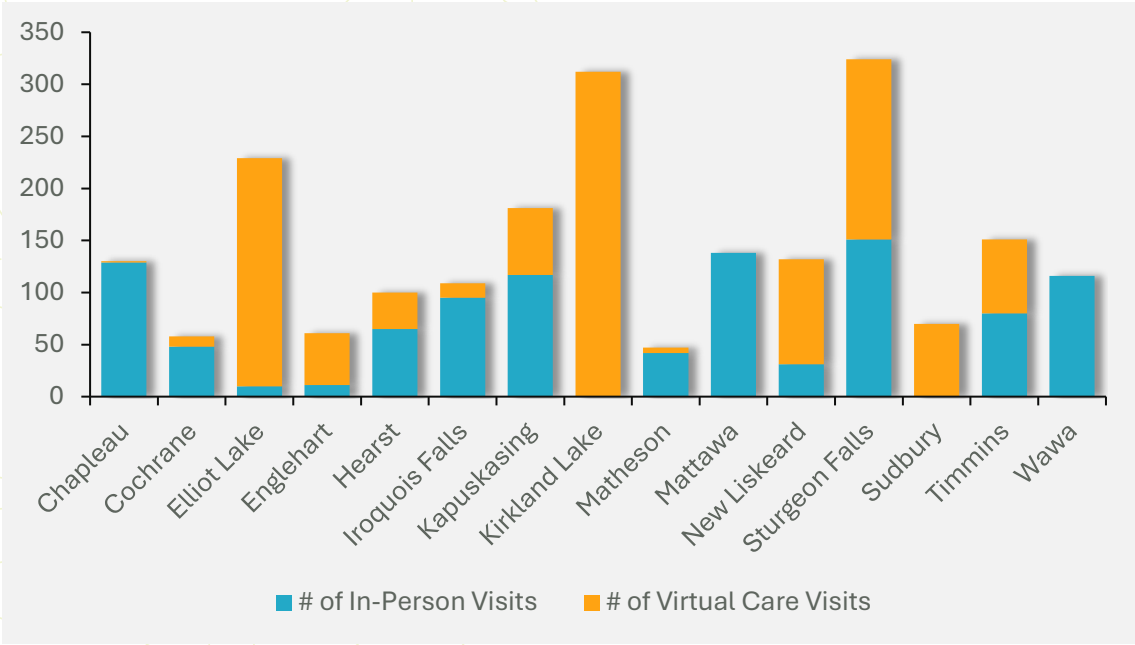
Prior to her departure, Dr. Tremblay recruited five new psychiatrists.

- Dr. Jean-Marie Ribeyre has extensive experience in the field of psychiatry. He joined NOFPP's team in September 2024, replacing Dr. Phaneuf, who had to leave the program. Dr. Ribeyre offers services in Hearst and Kapuskasing, Sudbury, and CSC Timmins.
- Dr. Emmanuel Fortier was recruited in September 2024 to work in Sturgeon Falls, following his rewarding experience as a resident in Northern Ontario.
- Dr. Lisa McMurray, Dr. Sarah Russell, and Dr. Marie-Hélène Rivard—three excellent geriatric psychiatrists—took over from Dr. Tremblay in November 2024 and are working together to cover Timmins and Timiskaming.

Direct clinical services:

Over the past year, 17 NOFPP psychiatrists provided 4,050 hours of psychiatric services at 15 service points to 2,158 patients, 48% of whom were seen in person and 52% of whom were seen virtually, via videoconferencing or by phone.

Number of Patients per Service Point 2024 / 2025



Indirect clinical services:

NOFPP consultants continue to meet the needs of the various mental health teams in communities served by the program. Activities include indirect services, such as education, resident supervision, training of local clinicians, and case discussions, as well as communication with families, doctors, nurses, and therapists. Being available by phone and email between visits ensures continuity of care for clients.

Geriatric psychiatry:

In collaboration with Monica Bretzlaff of the North Bay Regional Health Centre, Dr. Tremblay advocated for sustained geriatric psychiatry services and continued to support the work of the Behavioural Supports Ontario (BSO) program, increasing local capacity.

Education and training:

Dr. Hugues Richard led six half-day experiential learning sessions in Chapleau throughout the year. Participants included clinical members at Turning Point, as well as nurse practitioners at Chapleau General

Hospital and Indigenous Communities in the greater Wawa-White River-Chapleau region.

Two residents from Montfort Hospital also underwent this training during their visit to Turning Point.

The participants tackled difficult cases, deepening their knowledge and use of psychotropic medications. Other topics included substance use disorders, psychoses, and affective disorders, as well as psychotherapy and crisis interventions.

Residents:

One of NOFPP's main objectives is to recruit Francophone residents from the University of Ottawa by giving them the opportunity to accompany consultants during their trips to the north. This enriching and educational experience allows residents to learn about psychiatric services in rural and remote areas, inspiring some to join the program later on, as was the case with Dr. Fortier.

During 2024-2025, four residents, including a geriatric psychiatry resident in her final year, accompanied our psychiatrists on their visits to Northern Ontario.

Here are some of their impressions:

“I had a great experience providing care and consultations in collaboration with patients and their families through the Northern Ontario Francophone Psychiatric Program. The team members were extremely welcoming, well organized, and coordinated. We appreciated how they made sure we all had a positive and meaningful experience!”

~ Monica Parmar

“Training in Northern Ontario was a unique and enriching experience. It's deeply fulfilling to provide mental health care in such warm and welcoming communities.”

~ Benoit Ouellette

In conclusion, and to mark the end of her term as NOFPP's executive director, Dr. Michèle Tremblay offers the following message:

Concluding my career as NOFPP's executive director has been an incredibly rewarding experience! Throughout my seven-year tenure, our consultants have demonstrated unwavering dedication to the people of Northern Ontario and a strong commitment to the program's sound management, resulting in meaningful solution-driven collaborations. I have seen firsthand how our consultants uphold core values of kindness, compassion, responsibility, and excellence in caring for people with mental illness. This has always been a team effort.

We increased the number of general psychiatry service points to include the City of Sudbury and the Centre de santé communautaire de Timmins.

We now also provide geriatric psychiatry services to the greater Timiskaming region, and we developed brochures to recruit new consultants and residents, based on the role description approved by our team.

The Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities' annual

conferences, which were well attended by our consultants, have been replaced by highly productive continuing education days that draw even more participants.

It has truly been inspiring to witness the collaboration taking place among the programs that share NOFPP's model (Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities at CAMH, Extended Campus Program at Western University), as part of the Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities network.

Over the past seven years, NOFPP has relied on the ongoing support of its program managers. I have had the privilege of working first with Diane Gratton and then with Karima Benqaddi, both of whom have enriched our team with their strong leadership and positive influence.

Thank you, everyone!

Michèle Tremblay M.D., F.R.C.P.(C)

Associate Professor, University of Ottawa

General Director, Northern Ontario Francophone Psychiatric Program (NOFPP)

PSYCHIATRY PARTNERSHIPS WITH NORTHERN COMMUNITIES AT THE CENTRE FOR ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH



The Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (PPNC-CAMH) continues to deliver both direct and indirect care to patients living in rural, remote, and underserved communities across northern Ontario. In addition to patient care, our psychiatrists provide education and support to mental health clinicians, health professionals, and community agencies at our partnered sites. These efforts aim to strengthen the overall health care system while maintaining a strong commitment to community-centered care.

We continue to fulfill our primary mandate of delivering direct psychiatric services both in-person through our Visiting Specialist's Clinics and virtually across our Telepsychiatry Integrated Care Model and General Provincial Referral Model. In the fiscal year 2024/2025, we provided care to 2,275 patients across 38 partner organizations throughout the region.

Partnered Consultants and Communities

Our program continues to grow and thrive through strong partnerships with both our dedicated consultants and partnered northern communities. In the fiscal year 2024/2025, we welcomed three new psychiatrists, each bringing valuable experience and expertise to support the delivery of mental health services in rural and remote areas. We also expanded our reach by onboarding a new Integrated Care Model Site, Mamaway Wiidokdaadwin Indigenous Interprofessional Primary Care Team, enhancing access to collaborative and community-centered care for Indigenous populations in that community.

Commitment to our FNIM Patients and Community Partners

At Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities at CAMH, we remain deeply committed to delivering culturally responsive and inclusive mental health services across northern Ontario.

In the fiscal year 2024/2025, we have continued to prioritize cultural competence by providing targeted training and resources to both our frontline psychiatrists and administrative support staff. These efforts are designed to enhance our team's understanding of diverse cultural perspectives and improve the quality of care for all patients, particularly those from First Nation, Inuit and Métis communities. As part of this initiative, we are actively encouraging staff to enroll in and complete the San'Yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Online Training Program. To date, we have had 11 consultants register for this program. This training focuses on perspectives on mental health and healing, reducing health inequities, uprooting anti-Indigenous racism, and enhancing Indigenous cultural safety in mental health and substance use services; key principles that align closely with Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities' values and community-centered approach.

Our program's leadership team holds regular monthly collaborative meetings with Shkaabe Makwa at CAMH, as part of our ongoing commitment to shared learning and relationship building. Through this ongoing collaboration, we remain responsive to the evolving needs of

partner First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities and the patients they serve.

Resident Training Opportunities

Through our affiliation with the University of Toronto's Department of Psychiatry, Psychiatry Partnerships at CAMH actively promotes northern training opportunities for psychiatry residents, providing them with diverse experiences in both supervised virtual and in-person care in remote and rural settings. We are proud to share that 23 of our current consultants began their careers as residents within our program, reflecting strong retention and the impact of our hands-on learning environment. This growth in resident participation highlights the valuable experiences gained through collaboration with our knowledgeable consultant team and reinforces our commitment to improving access to health care in the North.

Launching Electronic Consultation Platform for Geriatric Psychiatry

In response to the increasing needs of the geriatric population and the challenges posed by long wait times for care in northern communities, Psychiatry Partnerships at CAMH, in partnership with the Geriatric

Psychiatry Program at the University of Toronto, launched its first e-consultation service in September 2024. This service, delivered through the Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN), provides timely specialist advice to physicians and nurse practitioners caring for geriatric patients across northern Ontario. Key areas of expertise include: general psychiatry; brain health and cognitive disorders; and pharmacotherapy for older adults. We are committed to evaluating the program's outcomes to ensure it effectively meets the needs of primary care providers serving geriatric patients in northern Ontario.

We look forward to expanding our program and strengthening partnerships to better serve our northern patients. With continued focus and innovation, the fiscal year 2025/2026 promises significant growth and improved outcomes.

Heather Flett, MD, MHPE, FRCPC

Medical Director, Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities at CAMH

Consultant Psychiatrist, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine,
University of Toronto





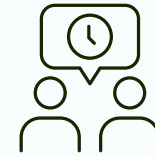
Our Impact

FY2024-25 BY THE NUMBERS



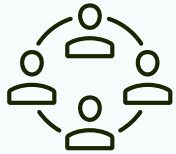
4,662

Patient Visits



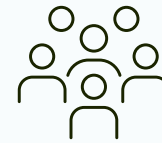
6,870+

Direct Care Hours



126

Communities Engaged
(virtually and/or in-person)



1,340+

Indirect Care
Hours



131

Trips to **17** Communities

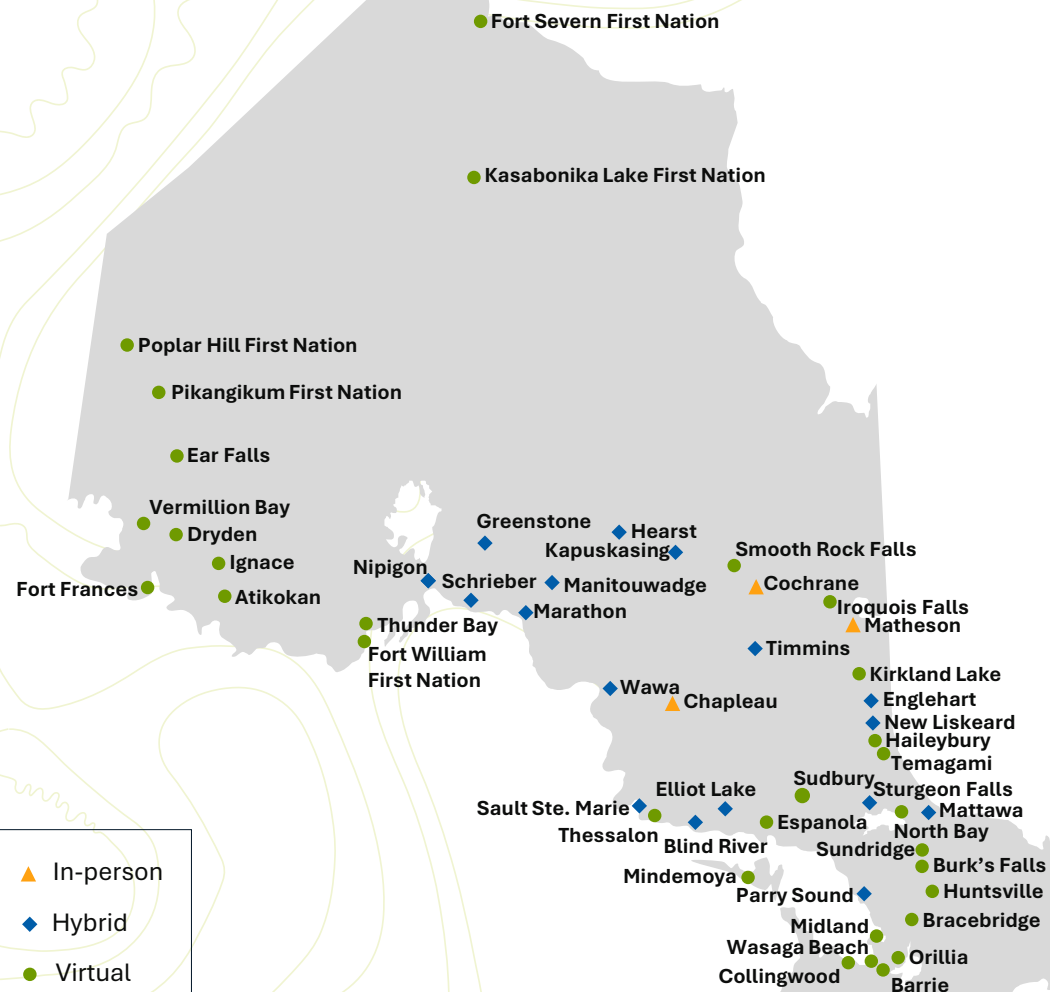
COMMUNITIES ENGAGED FY2024-25

	Collaborating Partner Program		
Community	ECP	NOFPP	PPNC at CAMH
Atikokan			●
Barrie			●
Blind River			◆
Bracebridge			●
Burk's Falls			●
Chapleau		▲	
Cochrane		▲	
Collingwood			●
Dryden			●
Ear Falls			●
Elliot Lake		◆	◆
Englehart		◆	
Espanola			●
Fort Frances			●
Fort Severn First Nation			●
Fort William First Nation			●
Greenstone	◆		
Haileybury			●
Hearst		◆	◆
Hunstville			●
Ignace			●
Iroquois Falls		▲	●
Kapuskasing		◆	▲
Kasabonika Lake First Nation			●
Kirkland Lake		●	
Manitouwadge	◆		

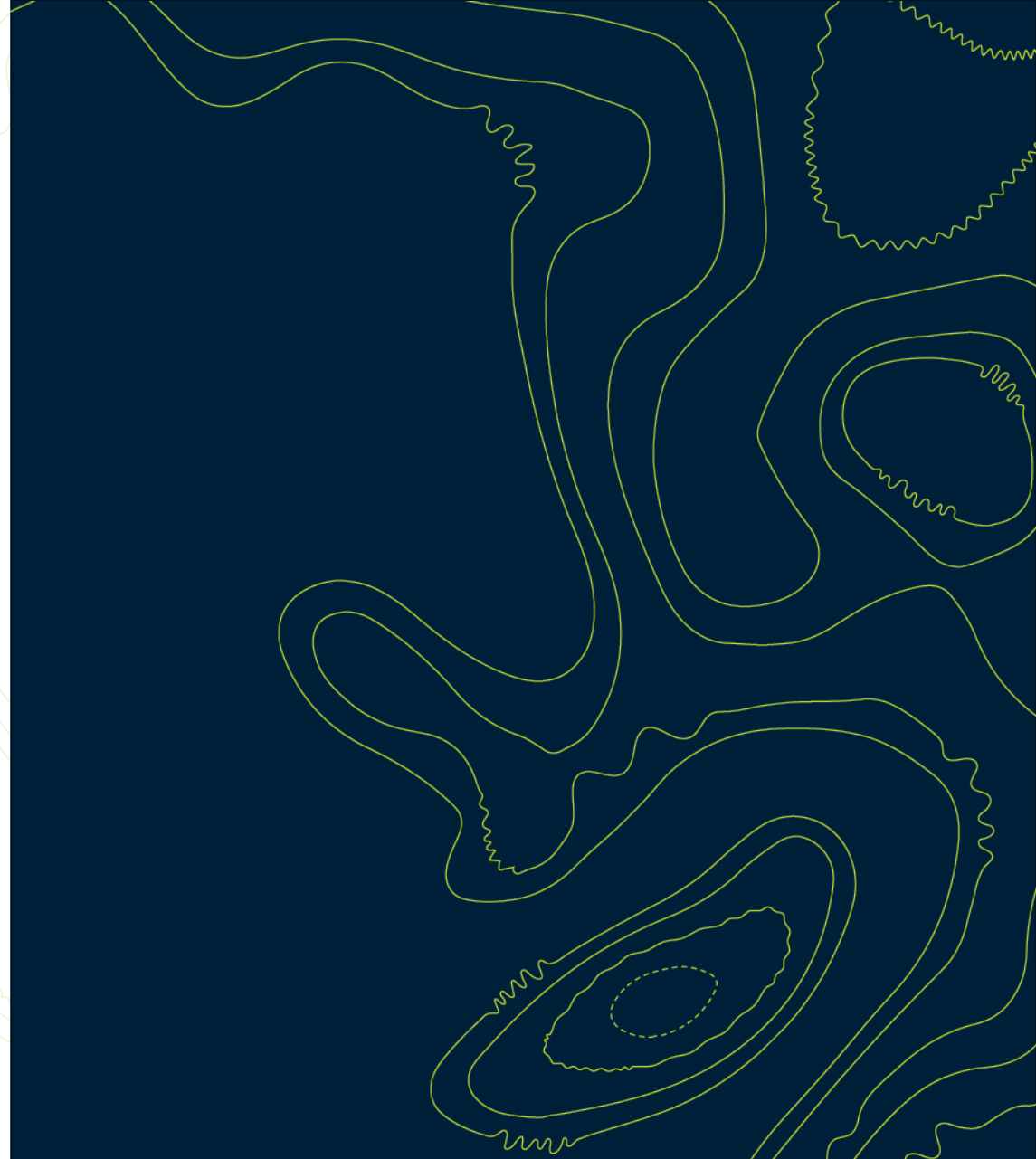
▲ = In person ◆ = Hybrid ● = Virtual

	Collaborating Partner Program		
Community	ECP	NOFPP	PPNC at CAMH
Marathon	◆		
Matheson		▲	
Mattawa		▲	●
Midland			●
Mindemoya			●
Muskoka*			●
New Liskeard		◆	●
Nipigon	◆		
North Bay			●
Orillia			●
Parry Sound			◆
Pikangikum First Nation			●
Poplar Hill First Nation			●
Sault Ste. Marie			◆
Schreiber	◆		
Smooth Rock Falls		●	
Sturgeon Falls		◆	●
Sudbury		●	●
Sundridge			●
Temagami			●
Thessalon			●
Thunder Bay			●
Timmins		◆	●
Vermilion Bay			●
Wasaga Beach			●
Wawa		▲	◆

*Included to reflect communities in Muskoka region not otherwise listed in table.



Note: Points on map indicate approximate locations and intended for general reference.



Acknowledgements

We are deeply grateful to our medical directors, consultants, collaborators, and administrative team for their dedication and commitment to the everyday work that sustains and strengthens our service.

Medical Directors: Dr. Allison Crawford, Dr. Giuseppe Guaiana, Dr. Heather Flett, Dr. Michèle Tremblay

Administrative Directors: Denise Canso, Eva Serhal

Managers: Karima Benqaddi, Jim McCormack, Michelle Deherian

Working Group Members and Collaborators: Denise Canso, Anne Kirvan, Nina Flora, Stephanie Paquette, Eva Serhal

Administrative Team Members: Cameron Sharp, Divine Omeire, Hiba Iqbal, Leah De Guzman, Marc Salvador, Nina Flora, Sabrina Advani, Siya Lin, Wing In Cheah

ECP Consultants: Dr. Chintan Shah, Dr. Sujata Ojha, Dr. Sumit Chaudhari

NOFPP Consultants: Dr. Andrea Stewart, Dr. Andrew Wiens, Dr. Dominique Nadon, Dr. Emmanuel Fortier, Dr. Gilles Fleury, Dr. Hugues Richard, Dr. Jean-Marie Ribeyre, Dr. Lisa McMurray, Dr. Marc Lapointe, Dr. Marie-Hélène Rivard, Dr. Rajiv Bhatla, Dr. Raymond Tempier, Dr. Rebecca Gomez, Dr. Sabrina Paterniti, Dr. Sarah Russell

PPNC at CAMH Consultants: Dr. Amanda Abate, Dr. Amina Ali, Dr. Angela Golas, Dr. Anvesh Roy, Dr. Bruce Fage, Dr. Chelsea Kaplansky, Dr. Crystal Baluyut, Dr. David Matthews, Dr. David Rodie, Dr. Helena Kim, Dr. Iline Guan, Dr. Ioana Iordache, Dr. Justine Giddens, Dr. Laura Pacione, Dr. Mark Lachmann, Dr. Maryna Mammoliti, Dr. Michael Kiang, Dr. Mishelle McIntyre, Dr. Paul Benassi, Dr. Rayudu Koka, Dr. Robert Cooke, Dr. Roisin Byrne, Dr. Sheri Ah-Sue, Dr. Shilpa Ghate, Dr. Tamara Hoppe, Dr. Tanya Hauck, Dr. Trevor Young, Dr. Victor Vien, Dr. Vincenzo Deluca

