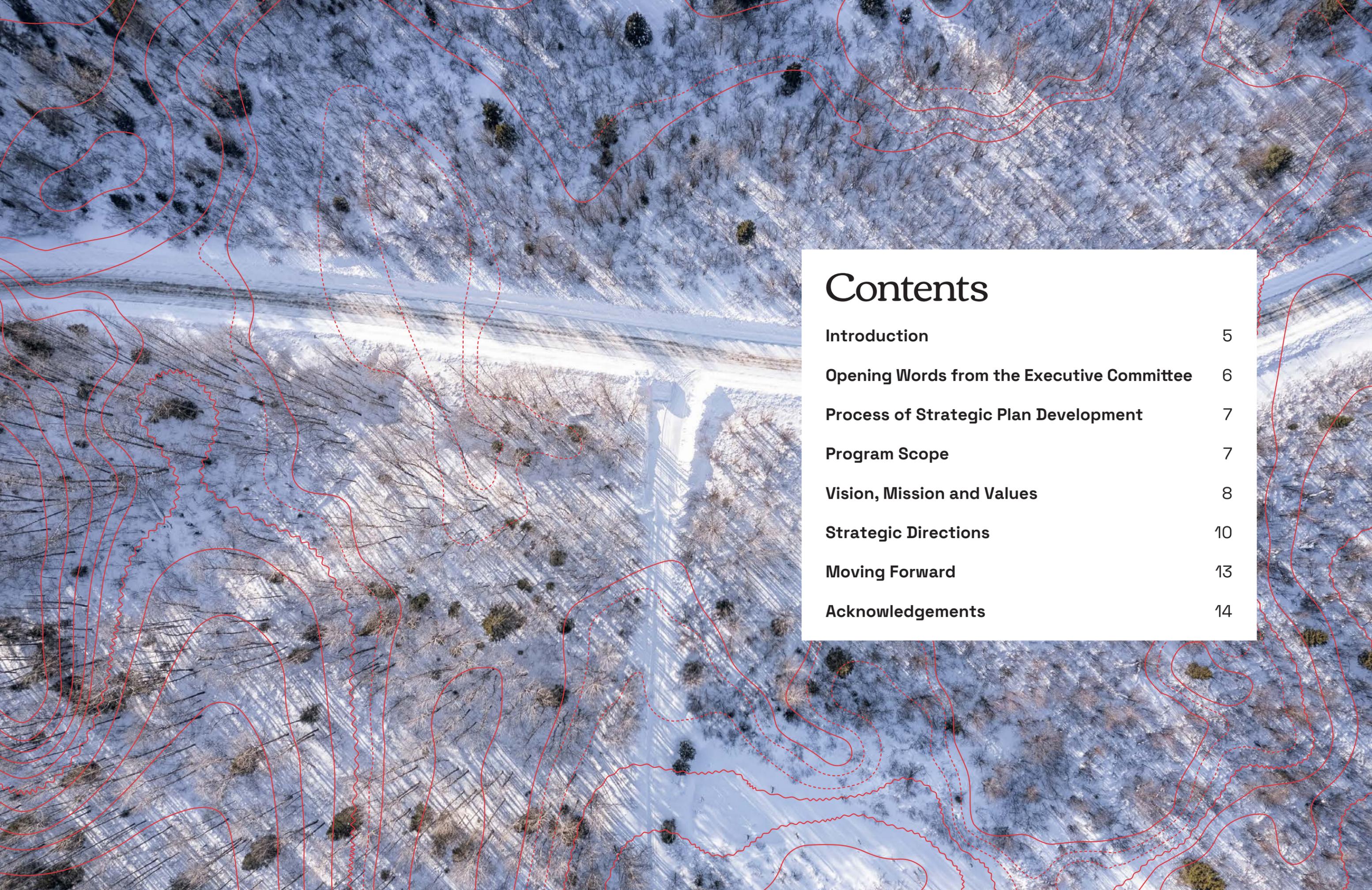


Psychiatry
Partnerships
with Northern
Communities

Strategic Plan

2025-2030



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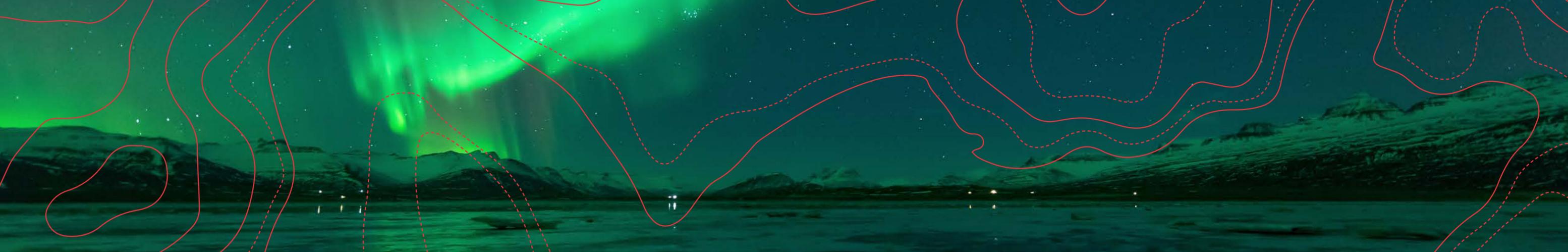


Introduction

Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities, formerly Ontario Psychiatric Outreach Program, started in 1999 as a network of collaborating partner programs that provide mental health¹ services and supports to Ontario's northern, 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 Northern Psychiatric Outreach Program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health.

The new program name, **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities**, is reflective of the new directions outlined in the strategic plan. The term "Partnership" emphasizes a commitment towards increased collaboration and co-creation within the scope of services offered.

¹The term 'mental health' is inclusive of both mental health and substance use health.



Opening Words from the Executive Committee

We are pleased to share the 2025-2030 strategic plan for **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities**. This plan reflects the culmination of 2 years of engagement with hundreds of interest holders in Ontario through community consultations, focus groups, and surveys.

We used a strengths-based approach to understand the aspirations that all of the partners of **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities** have for the future of the program. Recognizing the challenges that exist within the mental health system, we also envisioned opportunities for collaboration and program improvement. Through this process, we increased our understanding of **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities**' unique role and position within the mental healthcare system in northern, rural and underserved regions in Ontario, and learned of strategies and approaches to enhance our contributions to mental health care and education.

This strategic plan reflects a commitment to mental health **excellence** and **equity**, as well as **collaboration** to achieve the program's strategic directions and goals over the next five years.

The mental health system in Ontario is changing, and we are evolving to ensure that we, alongside many other services in rural and underserved parts of the province, are able to more effectively meet the needs of patients and families.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to this plan and to shaping our vision of being a **trusted partner** in providing excellence in mental health care and education with underserved communities in Northern Ontario.

*Allison Crawford on behalf of the **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities** Executive Committee*

Process of Strategic Plan Development

The strategic planning process drew on a strengths-based approach, which included the Strengths-Opportunities-Aspirations-Results (SOAR) framework² and principles of appreciative inquiry, a strengths-based approach for organizational change.³ The SOAR framework is a strategic planning approach that supports participants to focus on current successes and aspirational opportunities for the future. This process included the voices of interest holders across the mental health system, including community-based referring providers, system planners, and consultants and residents, to inform the development of strategic directions. In this work, our engagement has helped us to articulate the core values through which we do this work, and to delineate strategic directions for the five years ahead.

² Reference: Stavros, J., Cooperrider, D., & Kelley, D. L. (2003). Strategic inquiry appreciative intent: inspiration to SOAR, a new framework for strategic planning. *AI Practitioner*, 11, 1-21.

³ Reference: Cooperrider, D. L., Stavros, J. M., & Whitney, D. (2008). *The appreciative inquiry handbook: For leaders of change*. Berrett-Koehler Publishers.

Program Scope

Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities will continue to fulfil its agreement with the Ministry of Health that includes our agreement to provide clinical services for rural, underserved communities in Northern Ontario through in-person, virtual and hybrid consultations. We will continue to collaborate with departments of psychiatry at Ontario medical schools to create capacity and support education and training for current and future generations of psychiatrists. We will work closely with communities and healthcare partners throughout Ontario to ensure that care is integrated with local services.

We heard throughout the engagement and consultation process of the importance of working closely with northern, rural and underserved communities to ensure that **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities** is responsive to the evolving needs of the communities it serves.

Relationships are a key element of providing responsive and cohesive care for patients and families⁴, and continuing to build trust in the program and the services **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities** provides.

Our commitment to working with communities is embedded in our vision, mission and values, as well as reflected in the strategic directions and goals.

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.

⁴ The term 'patient' refers to anyone accessing a mental health consultation through **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities**. The term 'family' refers to anyone identified by the 'patient' as being part of their support system.

⁵ The term 'equity' refers to equal access to and outcomes of high quality care irrespective of geographic, social, cultural and economic factors.



OUR VALUES

Excellence
Collaboration
Equity⁵

Strategic Directions

The strategic objectives identified in this section outline the specific actions and commitments of **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities** to ensure that the program is continuously advancing these strategic directions across the 5-year timeline for this strategic plan.

DIRECTION 1

Provide high quality mental health and substance use health care

Provide high quality mental health and substance use health care with underserved communities in Northern Ontario, respecting local needs, values, and cultures.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Establish a model of care for **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities**.
2. Develop and implement an evaluation and quality improvement framework that measures patient-centredness, effectiveness, efficiency, timeliness, safety and equity of services.
3. Define standards that support the consistency and quality of **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities**.

“ I think **hybrid is definitely the way to go**. In our area people **absolutely value the in person** and I have to say my clinicians also **learn a lot from our psychiatrist**, and I think those relationships are of **better quality** because of the in person...
~ COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PARTICIPANT ”

DIRECTION 2

Share knowledge and education

Share knowledge and education to support best-practices in mental health care with northern communities.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Provide educational opportunities for medical learners in **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities**. These opportunities should support practice in cultural humility, cultural competence and trauma informed care, including working alongside Indigenous healing practices.
2. Develop an education strategy in collaboration with key interest holders, grounded in key competencies for psychiatry services in northern communities.

“ I think it’s **pretty important living in the north with a high Indigenous population** that there needs to be **understanding** of what that means. The **cultural impacts** and how it **relates to some mental health issues**, historical traumas.
~ COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PARTICIPANT ”

DIRECTION 3

Collaborate and contribute

Collaborate and contribute to local, regional, and provincial systems planning and provision of mental health care and education.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Collaborate with community-based providers to enhance communication and care coordination for patients.
2. Continuously review and update the distribution of **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities** services in Ontario to be responsive to community needs.
3. Enhance integration and alignment with northern health systems initiatives through engagement in planning tables and discussions.

“ Mental Health and Addiction tables are a **great way to be part of a larger planning system**. The [program] is such a great way to **reach our clients** and **provide services that otherwise are a challenge** in our rural communities to retain.
~ COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PARTICIPANT ”



Moving Forward

We are committed to working together to support the mental health of patients and families in Northern Ontario communities.

This new strategic plan will be our guide over the next 5 years. We look forward to aligning operational work plans with this strategic plan.

We are committed to ongoing engagement and continuous feedback on our progress towards our strategic directions and objectives.

To contact a member of the **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities** team:

PsychiatryPartnerships@camh.ca

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the opportunity to have heard diverse perspectives from the hundreds of people who contributed meaningfully to the development of this strategic plan over the last two years. Your insights and authenticity will help to improve the quality of the program for years to come.

This report was developed with the **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities** Executive:

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The Executive Committee is grateful to the members of the Working Group, Denise Canso, Anne Kirvan and Nina Flora, that guided this strategic plan, as well as Ms. Stephanie Paquette of Lohi Lake Consulting who provided expert advice, community engagement, and facilitation in collaboration with **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities** in the preparation of the strategic plan.

We would like to acknowledge and thank Shkaabe Makwa at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health for offering guidance and support during the strategic planning community consultation process and ongoing collaboration.

Finally, we would like to thank Dr. Allison Crawford, Medical Director of **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities**, from 2019 to 2025, whose vision, wisdom and leadership will continue to live through this plan in the years to come.

FUNDING

Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities is funded through the Northern Health Program of the Ontario Ministry of Health. The **Psychiatry Partnerships with Northern Communities** strategic plan was conducted with the support of the Ministry of Health.

The views expressed in the publication are the views of the Executive Committee Members and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Health.

