

# camhconnexions



## CAMH brings Family Health Team to West Queen West

**In August**, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care announced that Toronto's fast growing Queen West neighbourhood will be getting a Family Health Team (FHT), thanks to an application made by CAMH.

Like the FHTs currently providing care to more than 2.3 million Ontarians, the West Queen West Family Health Team will bring together family physicians, nurses, social workers, dietitians, and other professionals in one setting to provide health care for the community, seeing patients who do not have a family doctor.

"Right now the surrounding neighbourhood has over 6,500 new housing units under construction or approved, and only one family doctor taking new patients. We

wanted to help address the serious lack of primary care services for the community at large, as well as for our clients who live in the neighbourhood — for whom finding primary care services is a serious problem," explained Carrie Fletcher, Project Director, Primary Care Capacity Building at CAMH.

This will be the first FHT formally linked to a mental health and addictions hospital, ensuring that a full range of mental illness and addiction treatment are woven into the mix of primary health care services being provided to the community.

"This is a landmark initiative for CAMH," said CAMH President and CEO Dr. Catherine Zahn. "It will address the interface between

mental and physical health care, and decrease the obstacles that prevent people from receiving care for mental illness and addiction because of fear and stigmatization."

CAMH is currently redeveloping its 27-acre Queen Street site to improve care and break down stigma, creating an inclusive, mixed-use neighbourhood where new hospital buildings will be interwoven with non-CAMH shops, affordable housing, businesses, public parks and new through streets.

"Locating a FHT here emphasizes the 'urban village' vision of CAMH's Queen Street redevelopment project, strengthening the model of community-based care for everyone in a welcoming and inclusive environment," Dr. Zahn said.





*Addiction Therapist Mair Ellis (c.) and Stress Management Therapist Marilyn Parker (r.) begin a group session as part of a specialized treatment program for clients of African descent.*

## Specialized treatment for clients of African descent

Vance is playful, skeptical, weary but game as he awaits the coming session that’s a part of his client care at CAMH’s Addiction Program.

Group sessions aren’t at all unusual here, but this program is part of a new 21-day residential cycle for people of African descent who are working to recover from addiction issues.

“There was a clear awareness of need going back a decade for services for people of African descent,” said Dennis James, deputy clinical director in CAMH’s Addictions Program, which has pioneered several initiatives over

the years to reach out to diverse communities and make treatment more culturally competent.

That includes service models for women, Spanish and Portuguese group therapy and a program for Aboriginal clients—with Aboriginal staff including an elder—rolled out in 2007-2008 with LHIN funding. CAMH’s Rainbow Services is the only one of its kind, offering inpatient and outpatient treatment for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, two-spirited, intersex, and queer communities.

A variety of specialists work with Vance and the other

clients —addiction therapists, social workers, occupational and recreation therapists, dietitians, peer support workers, stress management therapists as well as advanced practice clinicians and nurses.

Mair Ellis, an addiction therapist, related some of the clients’ perspectives. “They say it feels good to be part of a community, that the likeness of mind and shared experience gives them a break from having to explain themselves,” she said.

Vance and the first group of clients graduated from their treatment program recently.

## Select Committee report on mental health and addictions services lauded

**This summer** CAMH President and CEO Dr. Catherine Zahn congratulated the Legislative Assembly’s all-party Select Committee on Mental Health and Addictions chaired by MPP Kevin Flynn for providing Ontario with a blueprint for improving care.

“The Committee heard from people across the province, and produced a thoughtful, comprehensive report,” Dr. Zahn stated.

The report, released this summer, identified the fact that Ontarians wait too long for treatment, and that our system of mental health and addiction care requires fundamental change.

“The Select Committee has recommended that we improve access to a high quality, coordinated system of care,” said Dr. Zahn. “They have provided the government with sound advice on how to achieve this objective. CAMH looks forward to working with the government on the establishment of an organization dedicated to planning and delivering a comprehensive, accountable system of supports and services.”

CAMH appreciates the Committee’s commitment to the creation of more affordable housing for people with mental illness and addictions, which is a critical component of the mental health and addiction care system.

## CAMH welcomes much needed prescription narcotics strategy



**The Government** of Ontario's narcotics strategy, announced in August, will address the root causes of a significant and growing health problem – the inappropriate use of prescription pain medication, in particular OxyContin®.

“Everyday at CAMH we see the consequences of problematic use of prescription opioids, as more and more people are seeking treatment for opioid dependence,” said CAMH President and CEO Dr. Catherine Zahn. The change in usage patterns from illicit opioids (like heroin) to prescription opioids is reflected in

a CAMH study published in 2009 which found that over a five-year period, the percentage of people coming to the Medical Withdrawal Service of CAMH having a problem with OxyContin® increased steadily from fewer than 4% to 55%.

The Province's strategy includes a commitment to increased awareness of the risks of prescription narcotics, and legislation to better track prescribing and use of prescription opioids and other controlled substances.

“[It] contains the key elements of a comprehensive solution: more and

better drug information, improved professional and patient education, and high-quality treatment for those with dependence problems,” said Dr. Zahn.

Other CAMH research released last year indicated that prescription opioids are the third most widely used substance among young people, after alcohol and cannabis. About 18% of students (grades 7 to 12) report using prescription opioids non-medically in the past year. The source for these drugs was overwhelmingly the students' own homes.

## Internet gambling is a public health issue



**Reacting to** an announcement that Ontario would soon get into the online gambling business, CAMH's Problem Gambling Institute of Ontario (PGIO) stated that any gambling expansion must be done thoughtfully and carefully, balancing the significant social and public health impacts with the benefits.

“Gambling is a fact of life in our society,” Robert Murray, manager at PGIO, said in media reporting at the time. “That being said, we are concerned that the ease of online access and the sanction of a government-run enterprise through the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) may attract significant numbers of new people to gambling.”

CAMH welcomes the opportunity to consult with the OLG and the sector on appropriate safeguards to ensure that the OLG's online gaming initiative:

- will not expand gambling access for young people
- uses ‘gold standard’ consumer protection measures, such as player tracking technology and tools for gamblers to set limits on their losses
- thoroughly evaluates its expected impact on Ontario's addiction treatment system
- includes self-exclusion measures and access to responsible gambling information, self-assessment, treatment and other supports.

“Every day at CAMH we see the harmful consequences of gambling to people, families and communities,” Robert said. “We believe that the public interest is served by learning from other jurisdictions and research evidence to ensure that the harmful social and health-related problems of all gambling are minimized.”

## CAMH Scientists honoured



Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Deb Matthews with CAMH Senior Scientist Pat Erickson and Edgar Kaiser, founder of the Kaiser Foundation.

CAMH Senior Scientist **Dr. Patricia Erickson** received a Kaiser Award for Excellence in Leadership. One of the nation's first champions of harm reduction, Dr. Erickson helped bring acceptance of the approach to Canada through her research, articles and books, as well as community talks and work at CAMH. She was also the first scientist to thoroughly examine the consequences of drug criminalization.



CAMH's Dr. Daniel Mueller (l.) with the Honourable Minister Glen Murray (c.) and Dr. James Kennedy, Director of Neuroscience at CAMH.

**Dr. Daniel Mueller**, CAMH's Pharmacogenetics Research Clinic Head, received an Early Researcher Award from Minister of Research and Innovation Glen Murray in August. Dr. Mueller studies the genes that help the liver break down antipsychotic and antidepressant drugs in patients with mental illnesses.

The award will help Dr. Mueller's team seek the most effective combination of drugs and dosages for psychiatric disorders such as schizophrenia and depression, leading to personalized treatment, fewer side effects and reduced health care costs in Ontario.

## Mental health leaves most costly disability

**Mental illness** causes more lost work days than any other chronic condition, costing the Canadian economy \$51 billion annually in lost productivity. In the first study of its kind, CAMH researchers have calculated the actual cost of mental health leave and found that on average it's double the cost of a leave for a physical illness.

Looking at short-term disability leave data for 33, 913 full-time Ontario employees, researchers showed that the cost to a company for a single employee on a short-term leave due to mental illness totals nearly \$18,000.



Head of CAMH's Work and Well-being Research and Evaluation Program Dr. Carolyn Dewa.

Lead investigator Dr. Carolyn Dewa, head of CAMH's Work and Well-being Research and Evaluation Program, noted the disproportionate cost compared to other disabilities. "In an average year, a firm with 1,000 employees might expect about 145 disability cases. But only a fraction are on disability due to mental illness, yet it costs employers the most." Disability leaves due to physical illness cost nearly half of that for a leave due to mental illness.

Health and wellness interventions are key to maintaining a healthy workforce and reducing costs. "We know that mental health triggers in the workplace can lead to disability – things like stress, casual and part-time work, and uncertain economic conditions can really take a toll on workers – especially if there is a pre-existing mental health condition," said Dr. Dewa. "And while it is important to support workers who are on disability leave, it is crucial that businesses make mental health and wellness a priority to prevent disability in the first place."

## Survey shows high rates of psychological distress among students

**The number** of Grade 7 to 12 students who rate their health as poor has significantly increased over the past two decades. CAMH's 2009 Ontario Student Drug Use and Health Survey (OSDUHS) Mental Health and Well-Being Report reveals important trends in mental health, physical health, and risk behaviours among Ontario students.

Elevated psychological distress has been a concern over the past decade, and the rate remains largely unchanged at 30%. "This includes feelings of depression, anxiety and social dysfunction, said Dr. Robert Mann, CAMH senior scientist and lead investigator on the study. "Many of these students expressed feelings of unhappiness and experienced loss of sleep. This percentage represents about 327,000 students — a staggering number — and the rate increases with grade. The good news may be that students seem to be consulting someone for mental health issues in higher numbers than ever before."



### OVERALL PHYSICAL HEALTH

Another area of concern was students' overall physical health, with 14% reporting it as poor — markedly higher than the rates reported in the early 1990s — and 25% are considered overweight or obese according to body mass index calculations.

### SCREEN TIME, VIDEO GAMING AND GAMBLING

Measured for the first time this year was "screen time": the amount students are spending watching television or using the computer. Some 10% reported spending an average of seven hours per day on screen time.

Forty-three percent of students reported engaging in gambling-like card playing, lottery tickets and betting in sports pools. One-in-five report playing video games daily and 10% of students have reported symptoms of preoccupation, loss of control, withdrawal, and disruption to family and school.

### BULLYING

Bullying behaviours also remain a concern, with one-quarter of all students reported bullying their peers, and 29% of students reported being bullied at school since September. The good news is that the younger cohort may be turning around — reports of bullying victimization significantly decreased among grade 7 students only.

## Link to autism in boys found in missing DNA

**A CAMH** research advancement has recently garnered worldwide media attention. A research team led by Dr. John B. Vincent, head of CAMH's Molecular Neuropsychiatry and Development Laboratory, and Dr. Stephen Scherer, director of The Centre for Applied Genomics at SickKids Hospital, have found further clues as to why Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) affects four times more males than females.

The scientists discovered that males who carry specific alterations of DNA on the sole X-chromosome they carry are at high risk of developing ASD.

ASD is a neurological disorder that affects brain functioning, resulting in challenges with communication and social interaction, unusual patterns of behaviour, and often, intellectual deficits. ASD affects one in every 120 children and a startling

one in 70 boys. Though all of the causes of ASD are not yet known, research has increasingly pointed towards genetic factors.

The scientists found that about one per cent of boys with ASD had mutations in the *PTCHD1* gene on the X-chromosome. Similar mutations were not found in thousands of male controls. Also, sisters carrying the same mutation are seemingly unaffected.

"We believe that the *PTCHD1* gene has a role in a neurobiological pathway that delivers information to cells during brain development — this specific mutation may disrupt crucial developmental processes, contributing to the onset of autism," said Dr. Vincent. "Our discovery will facilitate early detection, which will, in turn, increase the likelihood of successful interventions."

## Transforming Lives – in construction and healing

**As construction** of the three CAMH buildings progresses and the first non-CAMH building gets underway, there is a buzz of change on Queen Street West.

The Intergenerational Wellness Centre, Gateway Building, and Utilities and Parking Building are now starting to rise above the ground and the transformation of CAMH's Queen Street campus into a mixed-use urban village is starting to take shape.

In September, construction began on the urban village's first non-CAMH building, located at Queen and Ossington. This building will house street-level retail shops and seven floors of affordable rental housing, with an expected occupancy date of early 2012.

What began as the 1850 Provincial Lunatic Asylum is beginning to transform before our eyes into a new kind of hospital where being part of the community is part of the treatment and healing. As one of our clients has commented about the changing CAMH site, "Now we can see out, and they can see in."

In addition, CAMH is proud to have been selected by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish the West Queen West Family Health Team (FHT) to provide primary health care services to the wider community. More information on this landmark initiative can be found in the full article in this newsletter.

This integrated redevelopment, the mix of CAMH and non-CAMH uses, will enhance the recovery of CAMH clients and the health of the wider community, while helping to breakdown the stigma associated with mental health and addictions.

*To keep up to date on the progress of the redevelopment, go to [www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net).*

### Coming events



November 5-13, 2010  
Workman Arts presents the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual **Rendezvous with Madness** film festival  
Toronto, ON – various locations  
Go to: [www.rendezvouswithmadness.com](http://www.rendezvouswithmadness.com) for details



Your Gift of Light brightens up the holidays for someone staying at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). You can purchase symbolic gifts including a robe, slippers, blanket, hat and mittens, care kits...or you can select one of our new special gift bundles for a patient in our care.

Your simple act of giving lets CAMH patients know someone is thinking of them and that they are not alone on their journey to recovery. With your help, over 1,000 people living with mental illness and addiction will receive a Gift of Light this holiday season.

Visit [www.camhgiftsoflight.ca](http://www.camhgiftsoflight.ca)  
or call 1 800 414-0471

### Receive *Connexions* by e-mail

**Subscribe now** and get your next issue as a PDF attachment.

E-mail [public\\_affairs@camh.net](mailto:public_affairs@camh.net) to request an electronic subscription.

DISPONIBLE EN FRANÇAIS  
HIGHLIGHTS DISPONÍVEL EM PORTUGUÊS

Published by: CAMH Public Affairs  
[Public\\_Affairs@camh.net](mailto:Public_Affairs@camh.net)  
416 535-8501, ext. 4250  
Editor: Margaret Goulding

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH),  
33 Russell Street, Toronto, ON M5S 2S1  
[www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)

#### How to reach CAMH

CAMH MCLAUGHLIN  
INFORMATION CENTRE  
1 800 463-6273

EXECUTIVE OFFICE  
901 King Street West  
Toronto, ON M5V 3H5

WEBSITE  
[www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)