



## **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT Annual General Meeting September 2022**

It's almost three years to the day that I remember my 88-year-old Aunt and 87-year-old mother saying to me that this pandemic was going to be around for a very long time to come, many years they said. I remember thinking to myself that they were wrong, they had to be wrong! With the advancements in medicine today, this would be over in a year, at most, a year, I said to myself.

As was the case last year in my AGM report, I did not envision yet another, now a third year, in which our staff would all be impacted by COVID-19 and still be working tirelessly to manage within this context. "To mask, to not mask? To work on site, to not work on site? To bubble, to not bubble? To maintain or not maintain six feet? etc. So much confusion, so much grey area. What I can say with some clarity is that, through their sheer determination, our staff and managers had one success after another. Was life all that it could be here at York Hills? Not at all. Times were very tough, tears were shed and frustrations expressed. But through the resiliency and creativity of so many of our staff, we prevailed. From the front lines in our Day Treatment classrooms and live-in treatment homes, to our clinical workers delivering therapy and counselling services, to our administrative teams in the front and back offices, we did it. We delivered excellent services throughout every spectrum of our organization. In actuality expanded our service delivery spectrum and found ourselves in some new and groundbreaking initiatives that has the entire province talking.

This fiscal year saw the implementation of year 1 of our agency's first strategic plan that included the key areas of: (1) Prioritizing Diversity, Equity and Inclusion; (2) Being an Employer of Choice; (3) Delivering Quality Services; and (4) Empowering Community Capacity. In the past year, the agency completed a massive DEI-driven gap analysis and is now beginning the process of translating the many recommendations into action plans via a newly formed DEI committee. We launched a community of practice focused on building awareness and understanding of our Indigenous community and what it means to be a member of that community. Our recruitment strategy intently focused on attracting talented individuals representing the diversity that is York Region. We further developed specialized capacities in the areas of servicing the LGBTQ2S+, Black, First Nations and our Persian communities. We expanded our Human Resources team and recruited a new HR Manager and Director to guide our work towards being an employer of choice. New HR policies have been written in keeping with the times, including procedures to include working from home and within the virtual world. We spent many hours in interviews towards the hiring of some amazing new staff across the varied facets of our

organization. We expanded our Quality Assurance team to assure that we continue to deliver the highest quality of services across all the areas of our services in very challenging times. We have been preparing for accreditation and involving almost all of our staff in this work. Within our service delivery spectrum, we expanded our services in some very sector unique ways. We were successful in obtaining a two million-dollar, annualized fund, that will support children and youth transitions as they relate to live in treatment supports across the province. We launched, in true partnership with York Region Children's Aid, a new live-in treatment program in Queensville, Ontario. The success of this program may act as the cornerstone to many more similar endeavors by other organizations that will meet the needs of some complex children and youth across our Province. Finally, and most significantly, very positive client testimonials continued to be received. Our greatest testament to this year, is the quality of work that many of our staff delivered and took pride in.

I would like to take this moment to recognize the President of our Board of Directors, Steven Rebellato, who has remained by my side throughout the many ups and downs we have again faced this year. A very heartfelt thank you that you to our most amazing Vice-Chair, Richard Housen, who has stood by us all for so many years and continues to support us with his exceptional style and expertise in legal matters. Our sincerest gratitude to outgoing Board member, Basil Mwawasi who after 15 years has decided to retire from us (we shall miss you Basil!). Good bye and thanks to Victoria Tundo, Eleanor Wint and Peter Milovanovic. Your time with us truly made a difference and we wish the three of you all the best in all that life has to give you. Gleb Matushansky and Rajiv Kutty, we are thankful for continuing support, expert skill sets and truly look forward to what this new year will bring us with your guidance.

I would also like to take a moment to thank Rishma Mirshahi, our Ministry of Health Program Supervisor. Rishma, you have been a huge support and supporter of our organization and have helped to steer our work to better places. I would also like to thank CMHO for their unwavering support of our agency and other member agencies like ours across the province who work hard to collectively support the children and youth in our local communities.

To our Managers and Directors who have worked so tirelessly to assure service delivery remained at a high standard, I say thank you from the bottom of my heart. To our staff, across every position within the organization, the work is only possible because of each of you. You are York Hills and for that I remain in your debt. We will continue to push ourselves and each other to assure excellence in all that we do. We will continue to embrace inclusion and equity and build towards a lasting change that recognizes the diversity of our community. I thank each and every one of you for your persistence in supporting the children, youth and families who grace our doors each and every day.

Respectfully submitted,

Dean Rokos  
Chief Executive Officer