



CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S REPORT Annual General Meeting September 2024

Although the days of the COVID lockdown remain a fading memory for some, many of us are still experiencing its remnants. We see clients, both young and old, that are still struggling with the long term social and psychological impacts of that time. Our fundamental clinical and staffing models of delivering services have been transformed and as an organization, we have been impacted in a way that has continued to challenge us to deliver effective care. As a Management team we worked tediously to move the organization forward and out of this past. This was a year in which we made a concerted effort to re-establish our footing and direction in this quick paced, ever-evolving social services landscape. We reflected a little less on what was and aligned our visioning on moving strategically into the future. As a York Hills organization we embarked into our second strategic planning process. Through an innovative approach, guided by a third party (SME Strategy Consulting Inc.), we challenged ourselves to hear from the collective wisdom of our staff, managers, Board of Directors, community partners and consumers on what was needed to “better ourselves” and our services. We looked critically at what and how we deliver services and dared each other to move beyond the status quo. After months of deliberations we forged our strategic plan on 3 pillars of practice and aligned the corresponding work plans to include all of our Managers and Directors. In a tightly packed nut shell, we have committed to the following: 1) Providing high quality services that are clearly articulated, measurable and have a system in place that hold us accountable to these well-articulated standards of practice; 2) Assuring a high level of staff engagement that includes staff that are committed to York Hills and its mission; and 3) Assuring that we are an organization that continues to prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging as its mission. Organizationally, and following this strategic plan, we decided to engage with a third party (Sidekick Consulting) in an in-depth operations review of all of our services. The goal remains in line with assuring we provide quality services that are accountable to the Ministry, to our clients and our many other stakeholders. We started this review with our Day Treatment Services and are very much looking forward to the feedback in order to plan a course forward.

I am pleased to say that in 2023, through a number of staff engagement efforts, inclusive of more competitive wage enhancements, we saw more stability in our work force with a number of staff hitting impressive legacy milestones of 30 years plus. Congratulations to Joanne Pariseau, Marcel Wegman and Tony de la Torre. This organization is truly indebted to all that you have invested and given of yourselves throughout your respective tenures.

This year saw our DEIB Committee work towards promoting our efforts in the area of inclusiveness. Thank you to the Co-Chairs of that committee, Michelle Song and Janet MacQuarrie, for all of your efforts. We look forward to our work with Komal Bhasin and her consulting firm, Insayva, as she plans to engage with the all members of the organization to further the learnings. Our Family Engagement Committee moved its efforts forward with an all-staff training in the value of assuring practices and our work is informed by the voices of our consumers. Our Complex Transition Fund (CTF) was again fully utilized in this last fiscally funded year. Thank you to Erin Thornton, Gill Weintraub, and Lyka Dinglase from York Hills and all the committee members from across the province for supporting all the moving parts of managing this program. It was a busy year with nonstop referrals. As a reminder, the Fund now holds 2.4 million dollars (up from 1.8 million dollars) and is to be targeted to servicing children and youth from across the province that are presenting with very complex mental health needs.

The work on Georgina Island has continued through the support of Pam Snelgrove. We know the needs remain high and we will continue to challenge ourselves and the Ministry to find means of enhancing the services on the Island. Our Kuumba service, under the guidance of Teresa Knibb, is focused on the better mental health for the region's black identifying community and remains in very high demand. We are happy to say that we have applied to the local OHT with hopes of expanding this program's capacity through more funding dollars to hire additional staff. A huge thank you to Chantel Simm, Child and Family Therapist, for her relentless work with this community.

I would like to take this moment to extend a heartfelt thank you to Lisa Chotowetz, Simone Shindler, Peter Mukundi and Kai ner Maa Pitanta for your willingness to participate in many of the endeavors highlighted in my statements above. Only with your dedication and leadership have we delivered the services we had hoped to deliver. To all of our managers – Onika Haywood, Domenica Giacomini, Joanne Pariseau, Marcel Wegman, Donna Lamanna, Teresa Knibb, Sandy Cosentino, Alessandra Panico, Shilagh Ostrosser, Robin Marshment, Susan Blair-Drouin, Blythe McKinlay, Janet MacQuarrie, and Tom Lam – I truly thank you for all that you gave of yourselves this year. Thank you to our Ministry Supervisor, Rishma Mirshahi, for your patience, guidance and support throughout this year. I want to recognize the esteemed members of our Board of Directors – Richard Housen (President) Steven Rebellato (Vice-President), Gleb Matushansky (Secretary), Rajiv Kutty (Treasurer), Deandra Christopher, Anne Falomo, Noura Gharibo Shaw, Donna Healey, Shana Kapustin, Ruben Rodriguez, and Saba Ateyah – you have been an integral part of guiding the Centre forward and assuring accountabilities.

As we collect our thoughts, reflect on the vision forward, I am truly optimistic that the best is yet to come for York Hills. I have always been of the mind that collectively and personally, we will all achieve many things, as long as we remember that we are all here to “do good for others and each other.”

Respectfully submitted,

Dean Rokos
Chief Executive Officer