



Niagara Region's Public Health & Social Services Committee

May 6, 2025

Presented by:

Carolyn Dyer, Executive Director



OUR VISION & MISSION

MISSION

Together, with our community partners, we will provide compassionate care and reduce barriers to healthcare for the homeless and marginalized.



VISION

All individuals who are homeless or marginalized have equitable access to healthcare in the Niagara Region.



Snapshot of REACH Niagara

- “Young” organization
 - Founded in 2019 with a focus on bringing care directly to individuals experiencing homelessness
- Partner driven
- No base funding - rely on grants and donations
- Over 14 family physicians are part of this work



Who We Serve

- Equity deserving populations of the Niagara Region who:
 - Are or is at risk of experiencing homelessness
 - Are experiencing (including families) gender-based violence
 - Struggle with substance use and/or mental health
 - Are exiting the justice system
 - Recently immigrated to Canada
 - Impacted by social factors (food insecurity; employment; education)



Understanding Barriers to Care

Barriers

How we address barriers

Transportation

- Go to where people are at

Competing life priorities

- Focus on building trust and engaging when ready

No identification and/or health insurance

- Do not require a health card or any form of health insurance
- Created pathways where identification is required

Ability to make or keep appointments

- No appointment required

Stigma

- Focus on trust; addressing immediate healthcare concerns



Our Programming



REACH Across Niagara

 Mobile Health
Clinic Location

 PATH
Location

 Welcoming
Streets

Pope John Francis

**Hope Centre •
Encampment Care •
The Welland Shelter •**

Port Cares •

- Southridge Shelter
- Start Me Up Niagara
- Gillian's Place
- Westview Centre for Women
- Riordan Shelter
- Bethlehem Housing
- Queenston Neighbourhood (CTS)
- Welcoming Streets Initiative

- Bridge Housing
- Summer St. Shelter
- Howard Johnson
- Encampment Care
- Birchway Niagara

**Mrs O's Pharmacy •
Fort Erie Native •
Friendship Centre**



Programs at a Glance

Indoor and Telus Health Mobile Clinics:

- Bring low-barrier primary care, system navigation, peer led services, and mental health and addictions counselling directly to community members

Program for Addiction Treatment and Healthcare (PATH):

- Improve access to addictions medicine options and address client goals and social needs
- Increase access to financial assistance (for example, ODSP)
- Build access to dedicated gender informed case management support

Encampment Care:

- In collaboration with NASO, bring Primary Care and Counselling directly to encampments



Programs (Cont.)

Justice System Transitional Integrative Care & Empowerment (JSTICE):

- Team based approach to enhance community reintegration for individuals exiting the corrections system by connecting them with essential health and social services

Welcoming Streets (in collaboration with Positive Living Niagara):

- Pilot focuses on community safety and fostering relationships with the unhoused, business owners, and the community

Monthly ODSP Clinics:

- Improve access to financial assistance for those with a disability
- Collaboration with a number of community partners
- Supported 121 ODSP applications (Sept. 2024 - March, 2025)



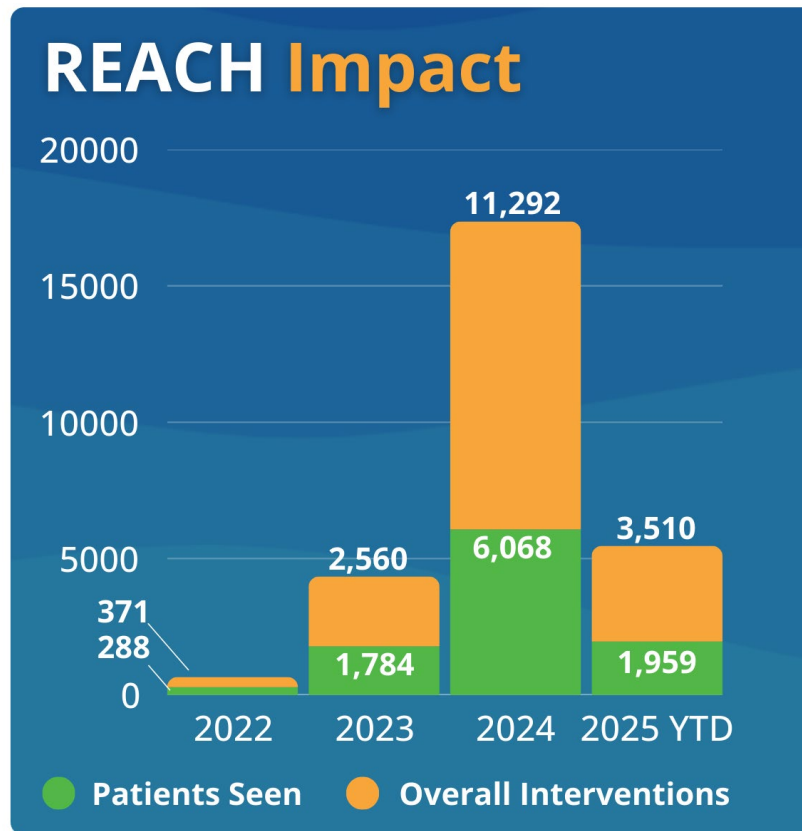
Impact

In 2024:

- We provided care to 6,000 community members
- Diverted 249 Emergency Department visits
- 47% of our clients have stated 'without REACH' they would go NO WHERE for their care

In 2025 (Jan. - March):

- We have seen more patients than all of 2023



Client Impact Story: Full Circle



Client's Background:

- Recent immigrant from Nigeria
 - Fled to Canada because their life was in danger
- Came in Contact with REACH through staying at a partnered shelter
 - Shelter staff referred client because of trauma and night terrors

What REACH was able to do:

- Provide timely trauma informed counselling
- Received immediate primary care
- Attended ODSP Clinic while providing a real time psychiatrist assessment



Client Impact Story: Full Circle (Cont.)



Outcomes:

- Mental health care plan by a psychiatrist
- Now receives ODSP
- Ongoing trauma specific counselling
- Was able to get housed through support of community partner



What's Next for REACH Niagara

1. Secure sustainable, provincial base funding
2. Expansion of gender based violence mental health support and dedicated gender based care
3. Implement new programs and evaluate outcomes
4. Key partner in the HART Hub





Questions & Comments

