

A YEAR IN FOCUS



2020 BOARD MEMBERS

VHA Home HealthCare is governed by an independent volunteer board of directors that provides leadership, expertise and time to support VHA's vision, mission and core beliefs. We are indebted to this team for its tremendous commitment and wise counsel.

Karen N. Singh, *Board Chair*

Adrienne Largo, *Vice-Chair*

Paul Moroney, *Treasurer*

Ian Brunskill

Sheree Davis

Eitan Dehtiar

Michael Kenigsberg

Joseph Mayer

Patrick Tallon

Cindy Veinot

Karen Waite

Catherine Wiley



2020 CLIENT & CARER ADVISORY COUNCIL VOLUNTEER MEMBERS

VHA Home HealthCare is committed to client and family-centred care.

Amr Elimam, *Co-Chair*

David Shaul

Sandra Shaul

Michael Vince

Margot Algie

Vince Aliberti

Laura Williams

Patrick Walters



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Vision, mission & core beliefs

Vision

High quality care delivered with great heart – for every person, every time, everywhere.

Mission

Creating possibilities for more independence, championing the needs of our clients and families and delivering high quality, integrated care.

Core Beliefs

Our care must be :

Client-driven because what matters most to clients and families is what counts

Spectacular and continuously focused on quality improvement and safety

Integrated and collaborative to unearth innovative answers to complex challenges

Inclusive and committed to serving the most vulnerable in our communities

Inspired and creative, delivered by a skilled team that has tremendous heart



President and CEO message



I find myself in the unique position of writing this letter within weeks of becoming VHA's CEO and attempting to reflect back on a year unlike any other. Amidst

the devastating heartbreak of this past pandemic year, what comes into focus most for me is the learning the health care sector has done together and the incredible courage and commitment of our frontline workers.

Throughout the pandemic everyone has been told to stay home as much as possible. It became clear early on that home was the safest place to receive care and it has been truly inspiring to witness the unwavering commitment of our staff and service providers to keep their clients and families safe in their homes. I had the privilege and challenge of leading VHA's COVID response and was humbled by the dedication and compassion of our teams, the appreciation and understanding of clients and families and the ingenuity and cooperation of partners as we worked collaboratively to develop best practices and support the most vulnerable in our communities.

Our COVID response reinforced many of VHA's ongoing priorities including our commitment to high quality care and we were pleased to once again achieve Exemplary Standing from Accreditation Canada. These areas of focus, outlined in **VHA's Strategic Plan 2020-2025: CARE to Transform** will continue to guide our work going forward. **CARE to Connect**

reflects our commitment to championing the integral role of home care as our health care system transforms, to driving the integration of care through innovative collaboration with like-minded partners in the 14 Ontario Health Teams VHA is actively involved in and beyond, and to fostering a culture of inquiry through the expansion of our research initiatives and opportunities. **CARE to Create** focuses on our goals to build on virtual care opportunities developed through the pandemic, to invest in digital solutions to enhance client and staff experience, and to implement more data-driven business intelligence and decision-making to position us for success in the future. And **CARE to Inspire** guides our efforts to provide enhanced supports for our spectacular team, to combat anti-Black racism and ensure an equitable and inclusive workplace for all and to develop new models of care to help address the serious shortage of health care human resources.

As we hope for better days ahead with vaccines now rolling out, we remain laser-focused on our vision of high quality care delivered with great heart – for every person, every time, everywhere. VHA is a vibrant and caring organization and I am excited about the opportunities ahead to advance our goals with the people who care deeply about, and contribute to, our mission – our terrific staff, service providers, volunteers, clients and families, partners and funders.

Dr. Kathryn Nichol

President and CEO, VHA Home HealthCare

Board Chair message



Like many of us,
it is with mixed
emotions when
I look back
on 2020. It
has been a
challenging
year as we
have all faced
the unknown
with the COVID-19

pandemic. But the

dedication and compassion of VHA's staff and service providers continues to inspire me every day. They never wavered in their commitment to supporting our valued clients and families. The health care sector's response to the pandemic has been truly inspiring and it is encouraging to see that vaccines are now available for health care workers and many of our most vulnerable populations.

VHA's one, key focus throughout the pandemic has been to keep our staff, service providers, clients and families safe. And alongside that VHA has also accelerated our work in a number of areas outlined in VHA's **Strategic Plan 2020-2025: CARE to Transform**. VHA has developed different models of care in response to the impacts of COVID, we are now providing many services virtually and research opportunities with our partners have expanded and accelerated.

VHA's reputation as a valued and trusted partner led to increased participation in Ontario Health Teams and other integrated care partnerships which developed innovative, collaborative ways to continue to provide care and serve our communities. We look forward to building on these efforts and continuing to play a key role in the ongoing

transformation of Ontario's health care system to ensure the needs of our clients, families and service providers remain at the forefront.

VHA was also able to pivot many of our community support resources to contribute to pandemic-related programs including essential food and supply deliveries, protective equipment distribution and an innovative initiative with volunteer technology support to enable virtual care services.

We were able to accomplish this great work under the leadership of VHA's longtime CEO, Carol Annett. Carol announced her retirement in the fall and while we were sad to see her go, we are happy for her to embark on new adventures, including those with her grandson. After an extensive process to find a suitable placement the Board was pleased to announce Dr. Kathryn Nichol as VHA's new President and CEO in February. And we are excited to have her advance VHA's mission of creating possibilities for more independence, championing the needs of our clients and families and delivering high quality, integrated care.

Now more than ever, we see the value and impact that VHA has on helping the most vulnerable. Together with VHA's dedicated point-of-care staff and service providers, office support groups, leadership team and volunteers, I am humbled by what we have achieved over this past year and optimistic about all we will achieve to make care better for everyone.

Karen Singh
VHA Board Chair

Client & Carer Advisory Council message



The challenges of 2020 demonstrated more than at any other time the close collaboration between the Client and Carer Advisory Council and VHA's leadership team and how beneficial and impactful that connection is. In response to the pandemic, the Council geared up to support VHA, its frontline staff as well as clients and caregivers, playing a pivotal role in identifying priority issues and in engaging with key people at VHA to develop response strategies and plans.

Communication around key issues such as infection management protocols and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) were important priorities. The Council worked with VHA's Communications department to co-design strategies for effective, consistent client

communications, utilizing electronic newsletters and town hall call-in opportunities. Clients and their family caregivers were able to hear from senior leadership who shared updated information and answered key questions, thereby strengthening the relationship between VHA and its clients and families.

The Council supported the implementation of virtual care through useful discussions around future planning and leveraging technology to provide care and keep people safe in their homes. Caregiver burden and burnout was another topic the Council highlighted and through these efforts, VHA and Council members have lent their voices at various forums to address the gaps associated with unpaid caregivers.

In addition to pandemic-related issues, the Council also focused on supporting VHA's strategic deliverables, in particular staff retention and training, and participated in VHA's successful bid to retain an Exemplary Standing designation from

Accreditation Canada. The Council reviewed its Terms of Reference and recruited some outstanding new members, enhancing the makeup of the Council and expanding its size and diversity. In addition to supporting key initiatives at VHA, members will also now participate in a newly formed working group to support VHA's role in Ontario Health Teams.

In a year like no other, it was rewarding to see VHA's Client and Carer Advisory Council make valuable contributions and become stronger and more relevant. It is truly heartwarming to see the level of motivation, engagement and collaboration of Council members. I feel fortunate to co-chair this group and work with VHA's management team to support high quality care for all clients and caregivers.

Amr Elimam

Amr Elimam

Co-Chair, VHA Client & Carer Advisory Council

Christian Owusu-Mensah



Anti-Black Racism Action Group co-chair leads VHA towards positive change

In the midst of a worldwide social justice movement in the summer of 2020, VHA launched an Anti-Black Racism Action Group tasked with developing a clear action plan to bring about meaningful change. Christian Owusu-Mensah, Care Team Supervisor, co-chairs the group. Together with nearly 30 passionate individuals from across the organization, he is guiding VHA's progress toward solutions and a stronger community than ever.

"We live in a world where not all voices are heard," says Christian. "I want my team and my community to feel empowered and confident that they will be treated with respect in any home and any situation."

VHA's Anti-Black Racism Action Group is focusing on four key areas to achieve that important goal: data, to gather a better understanding of the diversity at VHA; education and training, to enhance our anti-racism and allyship offerings

and to create opportunities for open discussion; policy and communication, to critically examine our language and develop guidelines to promote and ensure inclusion; and advocacy, to identify areas where VHA can influence systemic racism in our community.

Christian, who is a nurse by background, has always felt that listening is the first step towards positive change. In both his leadership role in the community and as the Anti-Black Racism Action Group co-chair, action quickly follows.

"As a human being, if you see someone who is in need, your heart will go out to them to help. Having a diverse staff and client population opens the door for even more meaningful dialogue to make sure everyone's needs are met."

Volunteer improves client experiences accessing virtual care

Through the COVID-19 pandemic, as everyone has been encouraged to stay home as much as possible and to maintain physical distancing, VHA quickly developed the means and protocols to safely and effectively deliver many of our services virtually.

Since the launch of VHA Virtual Care in spring 2020, over 35,000 virtual visits have been completed, helping clients continue to reach their goals and receive essential care at home.

For many clients, the technology needed to support virtual care was a challenge and VHA recognized that support was needed to make this option more accessible. Zeynep Onel is one of the volunteers who has stepped in to help clients access virtual care as a volunteer Virtual Care Coach at VHA. Through the program, she provides tutoring to lessen the barrier of technology and ensures clients feel comfortable before their first virtual visit.

"I've worked with clients who have never used a device," says Zeynep. "So there is a sense of accomplishment after every session as I help clients learn how to connect with their service providers digitally."

A natural communicator and educator, outside of her volunteer coaching role, Zeynep acts as an English-Turkish translator. When she was offered the chance to be a volunteer Virtual Care Coach, she jumped at the opportunity to use her skills to make an impact during the pandemic and beyond.

Zeynep is one of 12 volunteer coaches who together can offer their service in a total of nine languages to both VHA clients and staff.

"It's amazing to be involved in this program. In such an isolating and challenging time for so many, I couldn't imagine not being able to reach my health care provider or family because I wasn't comfortable using a computer or cellphone. Volunteering brings meaning and purpose to my life."

A portrait of Zeynep Onel, a woman with short, curly brown hair, smiling warmly. She is wearing a dark blue V-neck sweater with a small crocodile logo on the left chest. The background is a blurred indoor setting. A dark blue diagonal graphic element is in the top right corner.

Zeynep Onel

Maria Lercy Del Sole



Personal Support Worker helps vulnerable populations stay healthy at home

“When you put a smile on a client’s face, you bring back their strength,” says Maria Lercy Del Sole, a Personal Support Worker (PSW) at VHA.

Maria is one of many frontline health care workers who have been helping the most vulnerable populations in Ontario stay healthy, safe and out of hospital throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

As everyone was advised to stay home as much as possible, personal support services took on a whole new level of importance for clients and their caregivers who were homebound. Home care has been proven to be the safest way to receive care during the pandemic. And in addition to providing essential care, Maria improves her clients’ quality of life through the close bonds they develop as well, with many regarding Maria as a member of their family.

“I bring a positive impact to the people I serve, and this impact continues to inspire me to provide more and more excellent care and make a positive difference in my community.”

Nursing Supervisor leads her team to deliver care in new way, increasing life-saving capacity in East Toronto

In the race to protect and support clients and families amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, VHA collaborated with Michael Garron Hospital (MGH) and East Toronto Health Partners Ontario Health Team to create more life-saving capacity in East Toronto. This project established the Kew Beach Unit in the Atrium at Kew Beach Retirement Home as a new off-site hospital wing for patients who were in MGH's Alternative Level of Care unit. These patients require 24/7 nursing and personal support care, but their needs are typically not as intense as other hospital patients.

Oliva Mabborang, Nursing Supervisor at VHA, is the lead manager of the unit, which is now staffed by nearly 50 VHA nurses, personal support workers, rehab service providers and cleaners. The unit came together in just a few weeks and, thanks to Oliva's leadership, has been caring for patients since spring 2020.

"The transition from visiting clients in their homes to providing care in a hospital-like setting took some adjustment," she says, "But every worker was up for the challenge."

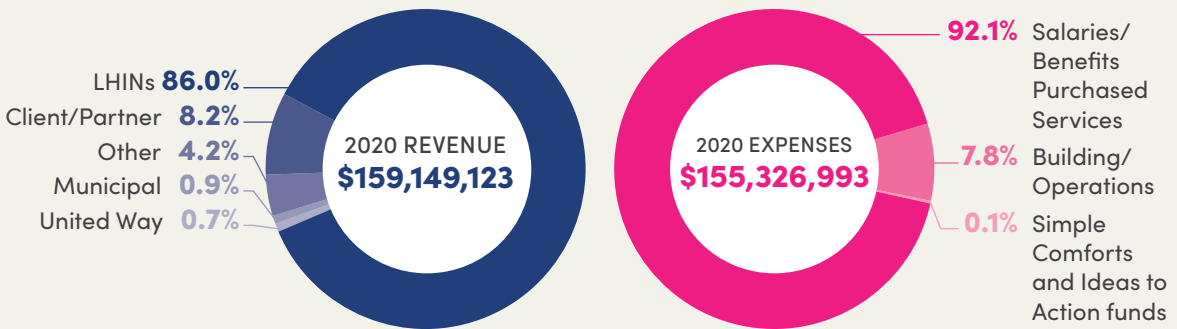
VHA is a member of 14 Ontario Health Teams in the regions where we provide service and also actively participates in other integrated initiatives with partner organizations. Through innovative partnership projects like these we are redefining how care is delivered and improving experiences and outcomes for clients and their families.

"I'm amazed at what we've been able to achieve. Every one of our new clients feels like family."

A close-up portrait of a woman with long, straight brown hair, wearing tortoiseshell-rimmed glasses and a bright yellow top. She is looking directly at the camera with a slight smile. The background is a solid light blue, and a dark blue curved shape is in the top right corner.

Oliva Mabborang

VHA by the numbers



Surplus funds are reinvested in community support, innovation and research programs.

4,518 
hours of volunteer service our volunteers gave of their talents and enthusiasm

2,808 
staff and service providers

293 
extreme cleaning clients were able to stay safe in their homes and avoid eviction

83 
client partners provided their sage advice to co-design and/or improve services

35,000 
care visits delivered virtually

45,270 
hours of community support services delivered to clients in need

3,142,871 
units of services delivered

92% 
of staff rate VHA as an excellent, very good or good place to work

87% 
of staff believe VHA can emerge even stronger after the current crisis

109,450 
clients admitted to care where and when they needed it

192



hoarding support

clients received critical services through programs like VHA's Hoarding Support Volunteer Program and the Toronto Hoarding Support Services Network, of which VHA is the lead

2,579



hours and 104 clients

- Bundle of Care Services: Now and Beyond (UW Covid-19 Emergency Community Fund)

126



Ajax Hub clients:

COVID-19 Support Funding through Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative

13,819



hours of support for families in crisis

4,281



hours of parent relief provided

Research & Innovation

12-24



days of work time saved

through texting implementation

22



innoVHAtion

facilitators trained

22



research study **co-investigators**

30



academic trainees

31



active research projects

36



research partnerships



To learn more about VHA's research accomplishments in 2020, [read our Research Annual Report.](#)

VHA's COVID-19 response throughout 2020

VHA's efforts have been concentrated on keeping our staff and service providers and clients and families safe throughout the pandemic while continuing to provide essential care. Our crisis response was managed by a dedicated Incident Command Team with members from all areas of the organization. Here are some of the areas we focused on:

Infection Prevention & Control



- VHA has closely followed the guidance of Public Health throughout the pandemic and has carefully monitored evidence being shared

from the scientific community, experiences from other countries and stories from all corners of the public health system to guide our learning and our practice.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Supply & Distribution



- VHA never ran out of PPE to provide to our staff, even in the early days when supplies were scarce.

• Community Hub distribution was arranged to deliver PPE to teams in their communities to reduce travel time for frontline workers. This also created an opportunity for physically distanced outdoor knowledge sharing, team connections and reassurance.

Partnership & Supporting the Community



- We participated in local, regional and provincial pandemic discussions to help develop best practices and establish consensus guidelines.

- VHA staff and service providers stepped in to provide much-needed assistance in long-term care facilities experiencing outbreaks.
- VHA worked closely with partner organizations to provide community-based supports to keep people out of hospital.
- New community programs were established to support homeless populations and our most vulnerable communities.



Health Care Human Resources



- New models of care were developed in partnership with funders that led to an extensive virtual care program and to dedicated staff serving our clients in congregate care settings.
- We developed and provided extensive resources for our staff and augmented financial supports where possible.



Communication



- Streamlined organization-wide communications were established to ensure staff and service providers could easily access the information they needed.
- Communications were enhanced with clients and families with monthly e-newsletters, client and family town halls and regular COVID-19 updates.

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