

**Halifax Sexual Health Centre
Annual Report
2024 - 2025**

Executive Director's Report

When people ask me how the Halifax Sexual Health Centre is doing, I always say that we are beyond busy, but the clinic runs like a ship. That is certainly true for the 2024-2025 fiscal year. This year was particularly exemplary at showing our strengths – I think we really did what we do best as both a clinical space and as a community organization. The joke around the office is that it's the 'year of free'!

At HSHC, we pride ourselves on being a location where anyone from any walk of life can access high quality, non-judgmental, and affirming sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming health care services. While Nova Scotians can access these types of clinical services through other means, they know that at HSHC we go above and beyond, and have done so for over 50 years. This year, we stepped it up a notch by adding a new clinical service – physiotherapy! Physio is often only available to those with private health insurance or the funds to pay out of pocket, but it has deeply impactful uses for pelvic health and gender-affirming health. We have taken over our under-used boardroom and shifted it into a brand new clinical space where patients can access assessments and treatments for FREE by our incredible physiotherapist, Amy.

We have also amped up our award-winning, beloved program Compassionate Contraceptives. Last year, we doubled our budget for free contraceptives. This year, thanks to the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia, we have upgraded our program to the Extended Compassionate Care program! On top of free contraceptives, we are now able to offer FREE injection supplies for gender-affirming hormones, FREE treatments for common infections that are not covered by Public Health (ex: HSV, yeast, bacterial vaginosis), and FREE gender-affirming surgery post-operative support kits. While gender-affirming surgery is covered by MSI, it does not include the costs of time off work, medical supplies, and comfort items required to convalesce appropriately. We're hoping that these build-your-own kits can offer some small, comforting support during the more physically challenging components of gender-affirming journeys.

I would also be remiss not to highlight that as of May 2024, HSHC has officially completed the waitlist to access gender-affirming hormones within our clinic. As someone who has worked for HSHC for almost nine years, and spent many of those years as a medical administrator, I personally delivered the devastating news to patients that they could expect not be seen for care for over a year, and heard the expressed impacts on their lives. The wait for care was not only a distressing barrier, but dissuaded community members from even looking into the process. We could not have completed this waitlist without our dedicated clinical team that took on additional shifts and additional patients, participated in training other providers in gender-affirming care, and gave their expertise in our program development. I would also like to thank our funders that contributed to supporting our journey to a waitlist-

free informed consent gender affirming care model – the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, Sexual Health Nova Scotia, and the Department of Health and Wellness.

So much of what we do at HSHC is meeting patients where they are at – and often, that means making sure treatments, prescriptions, medications, allied health visits, and supplies are a financially viable option. Without access to these “complimentary” services and items, a health care visit covered under a provincial health card is not going to holistically support a patient’s life and health circumstance. No one should be choosing between rent, food, bills, and their health care costs. While giving away items and services for free seems overly simple, it is essential to the ways in which we practice medicine at HSHC. We repeatedly hear from patients that it is one of the most impactful components of their visit to the clinic.

In 2023, we joined Access Now Nova Scotia, a coalition of clinicians, professionals, politicians, and individuals pursuing barrier-free access to contraception in consideration of gender equity, best medical practices, and smart economics. Unfortunately, Nova Scotia has still not signed an agreement with the federal government, nor created their own provincial universal contraceptive program. Contraception has been deemed a basic human right, and providing contraceptive choice without barriers is fundamental to the overall physical, emotional, and socioeconomic health and wellbeing of patients, their families, and their communities. I’m hoping that one day soon it will be the ‘year of free’ for all Nova Scotians, not just HSHC patients.

Like always, we took some time to modernize this year! We have finally introduced a service long-requested of HSHC, online booking! I look forward to the next fiscal year, as I focus on sustaining the funds required for the ‘year of free’ to keep these amazing new programs running. While we continue to look at a challenging national and global political climate in terms of 2SLGBTQ+ and reproductive rights, we see every day that full, equal, non-judgmental, and safe access to sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming health care and education are one the most important components of our democratic society. Thank you to our passionate and dedicated board members, staff, clinicians, volunteers, and community partners who make it all possible every day.

In solidarity,



Abbey Ferguson
Executive Director, HSHC

Board Chair Report

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I'm pleased to share this year's Chair Report for our Annual Report. It's been a year of growth, resilience, and meaningful impact, as HSHC continued to meet challenges and deliver inclusive, accessible, and affirming care through the strength of our staff, volunteers, and leadership.

Celebrating a Year of Impact

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we want to express our sincere appreciation for another impactful year at HSHC. Your commitment to responsive, inclusive, and community-led care continues to shine across all areas of the organization.

A standout achievement was the elimination of the Gender-Affirming Care waitlist—made possible through innovative service models, in-house surgical letter writing, and expanded billing. This milestone reflects your ability to meet community needs with compassion and efficiency.

Throughout the year, **HSHC maintained high volumes of in-person and virtual care, offered blood testing services, and responded swiftly to public health issues like mpox and STBBI outbreaks.** Initiating participation in the REACH Nexus syphilis rapid self-testing project further highlights leadership in forward-thinking, community-based care.

Stabilized MOA staffing and strong social work placements have reinforced your capacity, while the launch of a physiotherapy program for post-operative and pelvic health care demonstrates your continued innovation. Financially, the organization remains steady, with reserves supporting future planning and a growing sessional billing model paving the way for sustainability.

Creative fundraising and successful grant applications brought vital support for mental health, accessible medical treatments and supplies, and compassionate care kits. The new online booking system has already improved access and reduced administrative burden. **Your presence in community spaces—from Halifax Pride to policy advocacy — reflects the values at the core of HSHC.** Through education, research, and provincial projects like PrEP-Rx and Access Now NS, your impact extends far beyond the clinic.

Thank you for your leadership, adaptability, and care. The Board is proud to support your work and excited for what's ahead.

A Big Thank You to Our Executive Director

The Board would like to offer our sincere thanks to Abbey for her outstanding leadership and continued dedication as Executive Director. This past year, Abbey has led the organization through significant achievements, including, (1) the elimination of the gender-affirming care waitlist, a major step forward in access and equity, (2) the launch of a new physiotherapy program supporting post-op and pelvic care, (3) securing key grants to expand mental health services, (4) the rollout of online booking with Mikata Health and planning for tech upgrades, (5) ongoing attention to staff wellness and clinic safety improvements.

Abbey's clarity, diligence, creativity, and compassion in the face of both opportunities and challenges has had a deep and lasting impact on HSHC. On behalf of the Board, thank you, Abbey — we are grateful for your leadership and proud to stand beside you.

Challenges & Lessons

As always, challenges came with the work. Patient and staff safety incidents prompted an important review of our panic button system, and we have submitted a federal funding application to support a more secure clinic environment. The unauthorized scraping of appointment data by NSHA also caused confusion among patients — an incident we resolved through direct engagement with NSHA and Telus.

Persistent bureaucratic delays — particularly from provincial health departments — continue to affect our ability to fully implement sustainable billing models and program growth. We also faced difficult grant decisions, including the ethical choice to decline NSLC funds and the capacity-based decision not to apply for OXFAM funding.

HSHC Board of Directors

The Board has maintained a strong complement since the last AGM, with a few member changes over the year. We've recently launched a new recruitment strategy aimed at broadening representation and strengthening governance through lived experience and diverse perspectives. This evolving initiative will explore new representative roles and expand the skillsets and voices at the table. While still in early stages, it reflects our commitment to equity, inclusion, and responsive leadership, with more to come in the second half of 2025.

We are also undertaking a significant review and update of our Bylaws to ensure they align with current realities and future goals. In parallel, we are continuing our strategic planning to set clear, forward-looking priorities. As part of this modernization, we are updating key documents to better reflect who we are — most notably by formally including gender-affirming care within our mission and values. These efforts are key to strengthening our governance and staying aligned with the evolving needs of the community we serve.



Looking Ahead

We are excited about what the coming year holds. Plans are underway to further expand services, evaluate youth access to gender-affirming care, and refine our service delivery model. With new grant-funded projects, a growing physiotherapy program, and continuous advocacy at the policy level, HSHC remains committed to meeting the evolving needs of our communities with care, courage, and collaboration.

To our incredible staff, volunteers, funders, clients, and community partners — thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mary Myketyn Driscoll". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light-colored, slightly textured background.

Mary Myketyn Driscoll
Acting Chair of HSHC Board

Medical Director's Report

HSHC continues to have a high demand for appointments, our available slots now filling within hours of release each month. The launch of our online appointment booking in January 2025 has been enthusiastically received by patients, resulting in the ability of patients to fill last minute cancellations online and helping to reduce call volume to our busy phone lines. We continue to have no waitlist for GAC hormone initiation therapy and very minimal waitlists for IUD and implant insertions.

Our physician workforce is currently 14 part-time physicians, working in various capacities. Despite having lost some physicians to positions elsewhere, most notably Dr's Lee, Kancir and Fraser, we continue to add new providers, most commonly recent graduates who did HSHC placements during their training. Dr. Laci Williams continues to do an excellent job of managing the learners' schedule, with positive feedback from both students and our team in terms of experiences.

RNs Michelle Harvey and Christine Preston continue to provide excellent support to clinicians, admin staff, and HSHC patients. Both Michelle and Christine work part-time at the Victoria General-STI clinic and have helped maintain an informal, but mutually beneficial, connection between HSHC and the VG-STI clinic. HSHC continues to partner with Public Health to provide vaccines for persons at high risk of infection, including Imvamune for MPox, Gardasil-9 for HPV, and Twinrix for Hep A&B prevention. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we have expanded the list of compassionate medications available to HSHC patients to include treatment for herpes, bacterial vaginosis, trichomonas, and vaginal yeast.

A very positive addition to HSHC patient care in February 2025 is physiotherapist Amy Prescott. Patients are grateful and extremely happy with Amy's services. Current physio patients present with a balance between Gender Affirming Care (GAC) and pelvic floor concerns (approx. 50/50). Social Worker Jey Benoit and their team of students continue to provide much appreciated support for GAC patients as well as one-off counselling sessions for a wide range of HSHC patient concerns.

For 2025/2026, we will continue to advocate for resources for the ongoing provision of sexual and reproductive health primary care, including GAC, in our community and beyond. Menopause specifically appears to be a more common patient concern and many of us are educating ourselves to provide appropriate care. In June 2025, we had two educational sessions on-site for Pentrox, a self-administered, inhaled rapid-onset effective pain medication, and indicated for endometrial biopsies and IUD insertions. Given the continued



long wait times for gynecology consults, including procedures, it is our hope that Pentrox will allow us to provide care to those patients that would otherwise require sedation in hospital.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie Gibson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

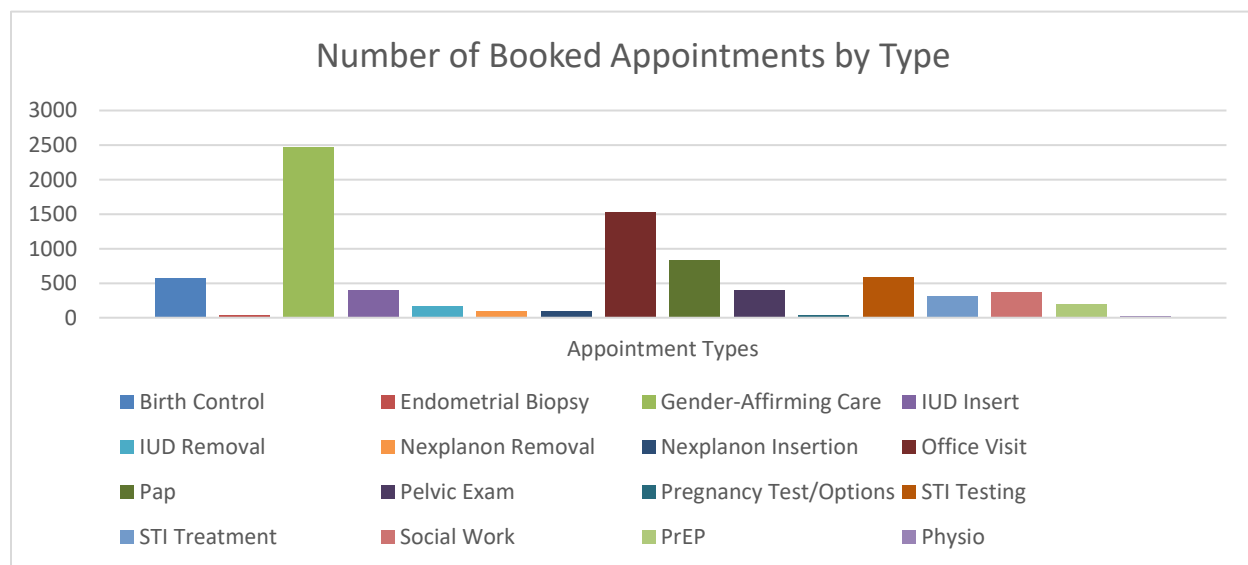
Dr. Julie Gibson
Medical Director, HSHC

Operations & Services

HSHC provided primary sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming health care to **4,631 patients** and booked **10,917 appointments** during the 2024-2025 fiscal year (not including STBBI testing). We are not a walk-in clinic as we require an appointment for all physician and nurse visits (except for requests for emergency contraceptives).

In addition to our primary care services with our physician team, we offer nurse run anonymous and non-nominal HIV/STBBI (sexually transmitted and blood borne infections) testing. This fiscal year, we performed **over 175 STBBI tests (blood draws)**. When possible, our incredible RN team does in-clinic draws in collaboration with the physicians, totaling an additional 105 blood draws.

Overall, services in highest demand were Gender-Affirming Care (2,460 appointments), Pap Testing (830 appointments), STI Testing (579 appointments), and general Office Visits (1,522 appointments). Office Visit appointments can be used to discuss all sorts of sexual and reproductive care services, both virtual and in-person. Some examples include vasectomy referrals, menopause care, pelvic pain, result follow ups, and much, much more.

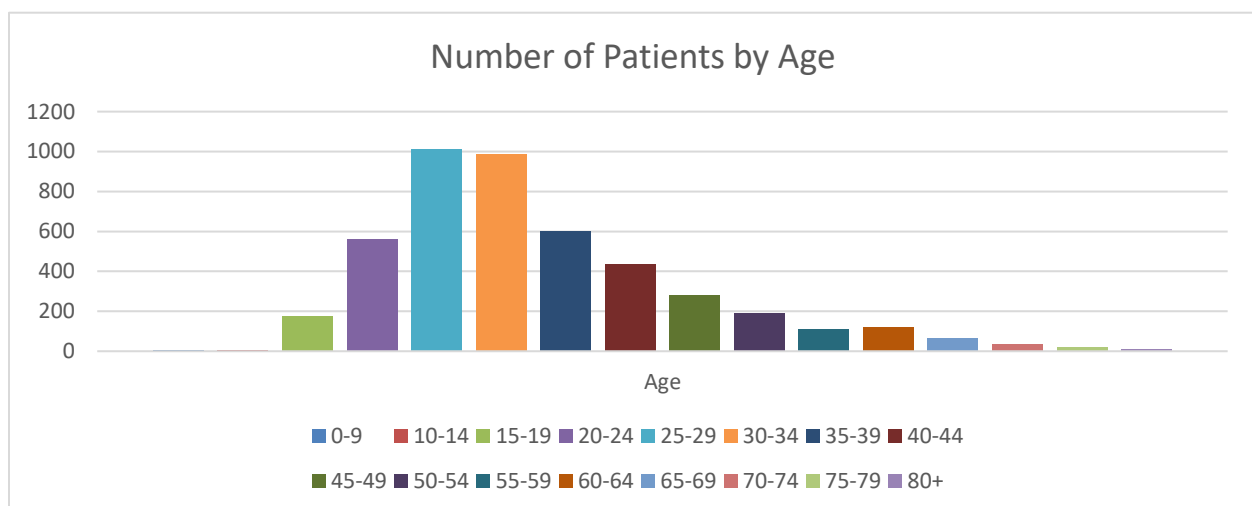


Gender-affirming care is a major focus at HSHC, with nine of our physicians offering gender-affirming health services, including hormone therapy, surgical referrals, navigational support, and post-operative care. This past year, HSHC supported **873 transgender/gender diverse patients with their gender-affirmation journeys**. We have a total roster of 1,701 patients who see us for gender-affirming care. These numbers do not account for patients who may be trans/gender diverse but only see us for general sexual and reproductive care.

Thanks to the generous contributions of the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, we currently staff a Masters of Social Work to offer both gender-affirming specific social work care, as well as collaborative primary care social work services. After last year's transition to an Informed Consent model for gender-affirming care, **we were able to complete our waitlist for hormone access!** We have successfully maintained waitlist-free access to gender-affirming care for over a year. Additionally, our MSW continues to be available to offer FREE surgical readiness assessments to meet provincial funding coverage requirements. Collaborative primary care social work service can include services such as diagnosis acceptance support, assistance with forms, referrals to outside non-profit and community services, single session mental/sexual health discussions, navigational support, needs assessments, appointment debriefing, and more.

Thanks to grant funds supporting some of our regular programming, we were able to shift some funds to offer a **new clinical service – physiotherapy!** As of February 2025, we have transformed our board room into a physio clinic room! We have a physiotherapist working once a week to offer both gender-affirming physio services (pre- and post-operative support, managing binding and tucking, gait, and more) and pelvic physio services (pelvic pain, painful sex, pregnancy, incontinence, and more). This service is being offered for free to patients, with no private insurance coverage required. As physio, and especially pelvic physio, is prohibitively expensive to access privately without insurance, we look forward to giving more access to expansive, patient-centred care to a greater proportion of our community, all within the safe and trusted space of HSHC.

Of the over 4,600 clients we saw at HSHC this year, the majority were between the ages of 20 and 40 years old.



As reported previously, we are continuing to see an interesting upward swing in requests for Pap testing, including from patients who have a primary care provider. Additionally, we are seeing a significant increase in requests for menopausal care and support. We also utilized medical translation services for over 110 appointments, and are often using a hand-held medical translation device with the administrative team. Multilingual support and culturally informed newcomer health support are on the forefront of our minds for clinical programming development. Overall, it is notable that many requests for services are much more complex than what is stereotypically expected of our clinic. A huge thank you to our clinicians who take this in stride, and continue to meet our patients where they are at.

We continue to provide **telehealth services** (we offered **2,885 televisits**) this fiscal year. It provides great accessibility to services like gender-affirming care, menopause support, PrEP management, and contraceptive prescriptions to those who live outside of Central Zone and unfortunately must look to Halifax for their sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming care needs.

During this fiscal year, the Halifax Sexual Health Centre was open from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM on most Tuesdays. Our average wait time for an in-person appointment throughout the year was approximately 5 weeks. **Our clinical schedule, released monthly, takes on average 1 – 3 days to fill** during the past year. We have on average 870-924 appointments available in a month. That means that every other caller looking to make an appointment during the rest of the month is a request for a service beyond our capacity to fulfill.

While tracking appointment and patient data is one way to demonstrate our service reach, we would be remiss to not mention the immense volume of phone calls that we receive. Due to the nature of HSHC's services and the sheer volume of calls we receive, **we are unable to track the specific number of unique client contacts and individual requests for information and services beyond our capacity.** Our admin team answers hundreds of calls a week (sometimes even hundreds a day) from people looking for medical services beyond our capacity, substantial healthcare navigation, sexual health education, general support, etc. over the phone. The rate of this type of contact and assistance is so high that it is our chief complaint from clients and patients. We are constantly looking for ways to streamline call volume, including new priority voicemails for procedure follow-up patients and for health professionals looking to get in touch with us. This year, **we invested in an online booking system with Mikata Health** to try and alleviate some of the administrative burden and offer more accessible appointment booking options to patients. While this has not changed how quickly we book an entire month's schedule, it is much more convenient for patients both to book and to check on availability without facing the incoming phone call volume of the clinic.

Health Promotion, Programming, and Advocacy

While clinical services are HSHC's bread-and-butter, health promotion and advocacy are a key component to our engagement with the community at large. It is an honour to be a part of Nova Scotian's larger health journey; not just in the exam room, but in the classroom, conferences, community meetings, and more. This year, we were able to go in-person into the community to provide approximately 44 hours of comprehensive sexual education to over 600 participants and 18 hours of professional development sessions to over 400 participants. We had several opportunities to speak to the media about sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming health topics and to promote and advocate for HSHC and our services. We also continued to produce online content for social media. This year, our social media reached over 61,600 users.

This year, we entered into a unique partnership with FRED Beauty and Coastal Gender-Affirming Care. Thanks to the generous donation of time, supplies, and expertise from FRED Beauty, we were able to offer free Gender Expression classes to trans women patients of HSHC. These classes included hair and make-up lessons, styling tips, and a free cut/colour or wig consult with FRED Beauty. It was an incredible opportunity to facilitate more social programming, and to see how expansive gender-affirming care can be – it's not just medical!



Thanks to funds from the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia VISIONS fund, our award-winning and longest-running program got a HUGE upgrade this year! Our Compassionate Contraceptives program, which offers patients free and discounted prescription contraceptives, has now grown to become the **Expanded Compassionate Care program**! With these additional funds, on top of contraceptives, we have been able to offer patients free in-house treatments to common genital infections (such as yeast, HSV, and bacterial vaginosis), free gender-affirming hormone injection supplies, and free post-operative gender-affirming surgery support kits (medical and emotional support items such as bandages, scar cream, colouring supplies, and more). As always, we do not require any paperwork or financial information to access the program – just let our nurse or doctor know at your visit. Removing the barrier of cost has a huge impact on our diverse patient population.



This year, we have focused heavily on **advocating for free, universal access to contraceptives**. In 2023, we joined Access Now Nova Scotia, a coalition of professionals, clinicians, and activists advocating for barrier free, universal access to contraception in consideration of gender equity, best medical practices, and smart economics. In support of this initiative, we themed our float for the Halifax Pride Parade on universal PrEP and contraceptive access (and made some excellent giant birth control props). We made a video outlining birth control options and access with Dr. Hali Bauld for World Contraception Day on September 26, and released an open letter to candidates during the 2024 Nova Scotia provincial election. We will continue to advocate for this important cause – hopefully one day, we will no longer need our Compassionate

Contraceptives program.

Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights hosted their second Member Centre's Retreat, and we were able to attend. Objectives of the event were to strategize on far-right hate and risk impacting our sector, discuss sector trends, and build up policy and advocacy skills. Most excitingly, **we secured a meeting with Federal Minister of Health, Mark Holland.** We were pleased to see Minister Holland use some of what he learned from Action Canada members in his speeches since this meeting.

We had a whole host of students this year! Over this fiscal, we were joined by Chana (Bachelors of Social Work), Allison (Masters of Social Work), Lucy (Masters of Social Work), Kirsten (Bachelors of Health Promotion), Shea (Political Science intern), and one cohort from the Dalhousie Medicine Service Learning program, Brianna, Kelly, and Samantha. Chana, Allison, and Lucy assisted our staff MSW in performing intakes and assessments for gender-affirming care and gained impactful clinical experience, along with shadowing and support for health promotion activities, such as presentations and tabling events. Kirsten championed our Expanded Compassionate Care program. Shae focused on creating impactful documentation and content to support our fundraising efforts. Brianna, Kelly, and Samantha were the core organizers of our *Sex with Sue* screening fundraiser. Students and interns provide incredible opportunities to HSHC by increasing our capacity and creating future sex-positive and gender-affirming professionals for the community. Thank you!



The Team

At the heart of everything HSHC does is our dedicated team of professionals who work hard to ensure HSHC offers the best quality care and service to all of our clients. Without our multidisciplinary team, HSHC would not be able to meet the clinical or educational sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming health needs of our community. We have grown our team this year, thanks to several grants!

Executive Director

Abbey Ferguson is the current Executive Director of HSHC. She is responsible for general oversight and management of the clinic and staff, as well as all of the amazing collaborations that HSHC gets to participate in. She has continued to do Health Promotion Coordination as well, and regularly gets out of the office to deliver comprehensive sexual education and professional development sessions in the community.

Volunteers

Volunteers are very important members of our team here at HSHC. Volunteers help with our daily operations (e.g. reception, appointment bookings and reminders, specimen management, etc.) and our fundraising initiatives. We had over 20 volunteers pick up shifts this year, contributing over 1,060 hours of support! We are so grateful for their help.

Administrators

This past fiscal, HSHC employed 2 full-time Medical Office Administrators and 2 casual Administrators. Our admins are the front-line contact for our patients and do so much more than book appointments. We thank them endlessly for their skills in healthcare navigation, clinical management, and being the supportive voice on the line for so many community members. Our admin are our champions for modernizing our clinical processes – without them, there would be no online booking and digital communications with patients! We welcomed Tamara Smith to the team this year. A special shout out to Maddie Clark-O'Brien and Kailey Webber, who both moved on to pursue additional education in health and human service related programs. We wish them all the best, knowing they will continue to have incredible impacts on their community!

Social Work

Thanks to the generosity of the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia and Sexual Health Nova Scotia, we have an MSW on our team, Jey Benoit! Jey was also able to take on three Social Work students, one Masters level and two Bachelors level. Students help us increase our capacity while ensuring future providers are well informed on sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming care provision.

Physiotherapy

We are so excited to announce that this year, we started a brand new clinical service, physiotherapy! Our physiotherapist is a familiar face, Amy Prescott, who has previously worked with HSHC as a casual MOA. Amy completed her studies and immediately stepped into program development and standing up a totally new clinical space and service within HSHC.

Health Promotion

The Health Promotion Coordinator has been a split role at HSHC. Previously split with an admin, the Executive Director is now taking over those duties. The Health Promotion Coordinator is responsible for organizing educational presentations and workshops (such as sexual education in schools and professional development sessions for allied health professionals) and developing resources for physicians, staff, and clients.

Nurses

This fiscal, HSHC employed 1 full-time RN and 1 part-time RN. Nursing is an integral part of our service model and proved invaluable this past year. Our nurse provides critical follow-up of all urgent issues, runs the STBBI testing and treatment program, works closely with our gender-affirming care patients to initiate new assessments and provide injection teaching, and is available to answer clients' questions by phone on a daily basis. Managing the clinic without our nurses would be impossible.

Physicians

We have had an incredible full roster of physicians this fiscal year. 20 physicians practiced with us over the course of this year, and we are ending with a team of 14. In addition to seeing patients, our physician team also works hard to facilitate practical learning opportunities in our specialized primary care setting. They frequently train medical residents, medical students, pharmacy students, and registered nursing students in gender affirming care and other sexual and reproductive health specialties. Learner opportunities continue to be a mainstay of HSHC. This year, physicians offering gender-affirming care have continued managing their own monthly meetings, led by Dr. Sarah Fraser, to discuss care provision, program development, and interesting cases.

Contracts

In addition to our core team, HSHC also relies on several contracted workers to ensure our operation runs smoothly. Very special thanks to our Medical Director, Dr. Julie Gibson, who offers ongoing support and leadership of our clinical service offerings, policy, and resource development. Dr. Hali Bauld continues to advise on gender-affirming care projects. Chey Morris is a part of the team as Financial Controller/Bookkeeper.

Partnerships & Research

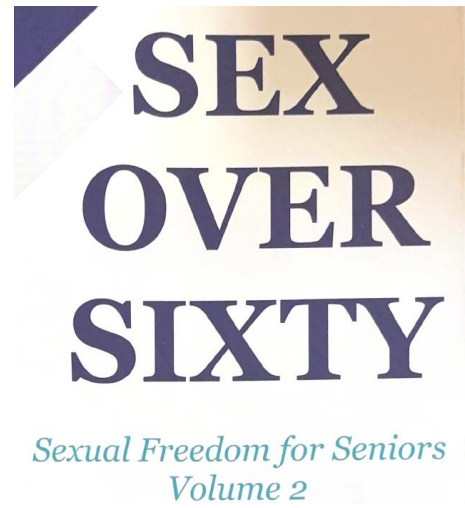
Our partnerships and networks are what make HSHC a strong player in sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming care in Nova Scotia. We love and appreciate opportunities to partner with a variety of professionals, community groups, researchers, and national organizations over the past year to continue the hard work of advancing sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming health. Some of the projects we've participated in throughout the year include:

- Joining Access Now Nova Scotia, a coalition advocating for barrier free, universal access to contraception in consideration of gender equity, best medical practices, and smart economics.
- Contributing to HEAL NS (prev. AIDS Coalition of NS) project "Check Me Out" – a tool to create personalized STI testing checklists.
- Working with Dalhousie University and other post-secondary institutions across Canada to provide clinical residency rotations to all family doctor residents and opportunities for clinical shadowing for pharmacy students and medical students.
- Being a community partner for the Dalhousie Medical School Service Learning program.
- Offering a student placement for the Dalhousie University Bachelors and Masters of Social Work programs, and the University of Waterloo Masters of Social Work program.
- Offering a shadow day to a Dalhousie Masters of Health Administration student.
- Collaborating with Public Health and the Nova Scotia Health Authority in the continued management of mpox immunizations, including mass clinics in Fall 2024.
- Contributing to the continued influence of the PrEP-RX study. Since the study, pharmacists in Nova Scotia have had their scope expanded to allow them to prescribe and manage PrEP, including labs and STI panels! The study paper has been submitted and approved by the *Canadian Pharmacists Journal*.
- Collaborating with Dr. Austin Oswald and Dr. Thabani Nyoni on two separate STBBI and



2SLGBTQ+ related research projects funded by Research Nova Scotia.

- Partnering with Sexual Health Nova Scotia and the network of rural sexual health centers on a project funded by the Government of Nova Scotia's Age-Friendly Communities grant. We will be updating the infamous Sheet Harbour Sexual Health Centre's *Sex Over Sixty* guidebooks and workshop content.
- Partnering with researchers from REACH Nexus out of Unity Health Toronto to initiate the steps to bring rapid syphilis self-tests to HSHC as a clinical partner.
- Sharing office space with Sexual Health Nova Scotia's Transformation Closet. We are also a pick up location for gender-affirming gear.
- Providing feedback and consultation support to a variety of projects relevant to sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming care, such as with the Office of Equity and Anti-Racism, prideHealth, clinics looking to provide sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming services, and many community groups and researchers.
- Participating in 2QTHINKS, an Atlantic-wide queer health networking group. We meet several times a year and discuss ongoing initiatives and partnership opportunities. The group is comprised of organizational leaders from various non-profits in Atlantic Canada (e.g. Planned Parenthood Newfoundland and Labrador, PEERS Alliance, Wabanaki Two-Spirit Alliance).
- Participating in the Halifax Queer Health Programmers networking group. We meet monthly and discuss ongoing initiatives and partnership opportunities. The group is comprised of organizational leaders from various local non-profits (e.g. HEAL NS, prideHealth, CBRC).
- Providing Safer Sex Supplies to several community groups, including the Elizabeth Fry Society, NSCC (Ivany, IT, Akerly, and Truro campuses), Avalon Sexual Assault Centre, YWCA Supportive Housing for Young Mothers, YWCA Access program, DalMed SHOUT program, DalLaw Party Safe, Out of the Cold Shelter, BGC Greater Halifax, NovembFur, Caitlin's Place, Metro Community Housing, Ross Road School, and more. Free safer sex supplies are also given out at every in-person Health Promotion workshop.
- Providing letters of support for various research projects and grant proposals that would support the development of sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming health knowledge and resources in Nova Scotia.



Our Funders

HSHC derives its revenue from a variety of sources (overhead from MSI billings, fundraising, private donations, etc.) but without support from government, small grants, and community partners, we would not be able to sustain our operations.

HSHC would like to thank several departments in the Province of Nova Scotia, in particular the Department of Health and Wellness and the Department of Community Services. Additionally, this year HSHC was able to secure a sessional compensation package for our physicians providing gender-affirming care, thanks to collaboration with the Department of Health and Wellness.

Special thanks to the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, the Community Foundation of Nova Scotia, Sexual Health Nova Scotia, The Plum Foundation, and United Way for supporting HSHC.



Fundraising & Donations

We are thrilled to announce HSHC raised **\$24,501.69** in support of our programs and services! The majority of these funds came directly from individual donors and those making a donation in turn for our Health Promotion program delivery, which is incredibly meaningful.

We were the beneficiaries of several generous fundraisers, including Nauticus Events, Chainyard Sex Trivia event, and the Chains for Change disc golf tournament by Queer Disc Golf. We also hosted our own fundraising event this year - a screening of *Sex With Sue (2022)* and panel event. This event **sold out** the Bus Stop Theatre. Thank you to Venus Envy, Access Now, Em Bailey, and our incredible DalMed Service Learning students for making this amazing educational and entertaining event happen.

Huge thanks to our private donors for your many contributions big and small that have an equally important impact. While grants come and go, it is the support of our community members that sustains HSHC's long-term, operational endeavors. Additionally, this year we received several donations trusted in a will or otherwise made in memory of people passionate and dedicated to sexual, reproductive, and gender-affirming health and rights. We are honoured to contribute to their legacy. We are so grateful to our community of donors, we would not be able to offer the same services and level of care without your support.

