

# Empowering Communities Through Partnership

ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT 2024 - 2025



NorWest Community  
Health Centres  
Centres de santé  
communautaire NorWest





# MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO & BOARD CHAIR

In the past year, our journey has been defined by collaboration, unity, and the unwavering commitment to empowering our communities. Our annual report is a testament to the incredible achievements and profound impact resulting from our collaborative efforts with staff, esteemed community partners and leaders.

As we reflect on the past year, our community collaboration serves as a reminder of the remarkable achievements made possible through collaboration. Looking ahead, we remain committed to fostering strong partnerships, amplifying our collective impact, and continuing to be agents of positive change in our communities.

Together, we have demonstrated that when communities unite, powerful transformations become not just possible, but inevitable. Thank you for being a part of our journey towards a brighter, more interconnected future.

Yours in health,

**Cathy Clara**  
Board Chair

**Juanita Lawson**  
CEO





# NORWEST COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES

## WHO WE ARE

NorWest CHC, a community health centre with sites located in Thunder Bay, Longlac, Armstrong and Kakabeka. We provide comprehensive primary care, mental health, substance use, sexual health, and chronic disease programs. Our interdisciplinary team of over 150 professionals addresses social, economic, and environmental factors impacting health, focusing on accessibility for Indigenous and racialized communities.

### OUR VISION

Healthy People, Empowering Communities.

### OUR MISSION

Provide high quality and integrated primary health care services, foster community development and advocate to improve health and wellbeing for vulnerable people and communities.

### OUR SERVICES & PROGRAMS

- Primary Health Care
- Walk-in Clinic
- Virtual Care Clinic
- First Five Program
- Midwifery Supports
- 2SLGBTQIA+ Programs
- Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD)
- Food Security Supports
- Mental Health & Addictions Supports
- Drug Checking Services
- Mobile Health Services
- Chronic Disease Self Management
- Palliative Carelink

# OUR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Grace  Place



Journey to  
Life Centre



Oahas  
ONTARIO ABORIGINAL  
HIV/AIDS STRATEGY



THUNDER BAY  
**COUNSELLING**  
SOLUTIONS THAT CHANGE LIVES



Canadian  
Red Cross

elevate NWO  
HIV | AIDS | HCV | HARM REDUCTION



ST. JOSEPH'S CARE GROUP



elizabeth   
SOCIETY  
NORTH-WESTERN ONTARIO



Thunder Bay Regional  
Health Sciences  
Centre



CROSSROADS  
CENTRE



Lakehead  
UNIVERSITY



THE DISTRICT OF THUNDER BAY  
SOCIAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION BOARD



SHELTER HOUSE  
THUNDER BAY



Child and Family Centre

Métis Nation  
of Ontario 

HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE  
SUPPORT SERVICES

SERVICES DE SOUTIEN À DOMICILE  
ET EN MILIEU COMMUNAUTAIRE



DEK *Foundation*



THUNDER BAY  
AND AREA  
VICTIM SERVICES





# A YEAR IN REFLECTION

## APRIL

- First Chronic Disease Self-Management Workshop series launched
- Launch of Northwest Virtual Care Clinic in partnership with Durham CHC

## MAY

- Armstrong Community Engagement Sessions launched

## JUNE

- Pride celebrations including flag raising and community outreach

## AUGUST

- Overdose Awareness Day

## SEPTEMBER

- Medicine Garden and Labyrinth opening at Simpson Street Community Garden in collaboration with Willow Springs Creative
- Rockin' Recovery event
- Social Prescribing Program launched
- Drug Amnesty Day

## OCTOBER

- First Five Program launched
- Community Partners Open House
- Presentation on the Palliative Advocacy and Care Team at the McGill International Palliative Care Congress

## NOVEMBER

- Formation of the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Resource Team

## DECEMBER

- Care Bus launched for the 5<sup>th</sup> season
- Expressive Arts Group grew in attendance with many new and repeat attendees

## JANUARY

- Virtual Care Clinic transitioned to NorWest CHC
- Palliative Carelink Education Campaign launched
- Homeless Addiction Recovery Program approved
- Kakabeka primary health care expansion

## FEBRUARY

- Civic Engagement Day for provincial election
- Dementia Café launched in collaboration with Alzheimer Society, Lakehead University and Rural 60 Plus
- Longlac Health Promotion Program launched (Living with Diabetes)

## MARCH

- Path 525 and Safer Supply permanently closed
- Construction started for the new Kwae Kii Win (Managed Alcohol Program) building
- Civic Engagement Day for federal election



# HEALTH INITIATIVES

## BUILDING FUTURES, TOGETHER

This year, we expanded our health initiatives by collaborating with partners and local organizations to reach a broader audience and foster greater community engagement in health and wellness.



### The Care Bus: 5<sup>th</sup> Season

The Care Bus is operated by NorWest Community Health Centres in partnership with the Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre (TBIFC) and the Mindimooyenh Health Clinic operated by the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA). This partnership enhanced the quality of services on the Care Bus, as outreach staff from various organizations collaborated to offer frontline work to individuals who may or may not connect with each other, while also creating opportunities for learning and sharing resources. The Care Bus ran from December 2, 2024 to April 18, 2025 and received close to 10,000 client interactions.

### Increased Support for Vulnerable Populations

Three pop-up clinics, in collaboration with People Advocating for Change through Empowerment (PACE), Thunder Bay District Health Unit, Mindimooyenh Health Clinic of the Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA), and Grace Place, helped connect vulnerable populations with low-barrier access to health care and wraparound care services. The Care Bus was essential to support these pop-up clinics in a number of ways, most notably by using the bus for transportation to and from the events and by having outreach workers on the Care Bus to promote the clinics and services.

### Virtual Care Clinic: Care When You Need it

The Northwest Virtual Care Clinic provides urgent care to individuals in Northwestern Ontario 7 days a week from 12pm-8pm EST. Our Nurse Practitioners can help with minor health issues such as cough, sore throat, sinus infection, skin rash, prescription refill and more. This program started in partnership with Durham Community Health Centre in April 2024 and transitioned to NorWest CHC in January 2025.



# HEALTH EDUCATION

## EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, TRANSFORMING LIVES

This year, we expanded our health education by developing educational events to promote harm reduction philosophies and awareness.

### Path 525 & Safer Supply

Educational events were developed for community organizations to increase knowledge on substance use, harm reduction philosophies, education, and awareness. We engaged with community youth at various elementary and high schools, Confederation College, Indigenous communities, Lakehead University during orientation week, Rockin' Recovery, and Thunder Bay Regional Hospital Mental Health Awareness event. Our team participated on a panel for the Ontario Drug Checking Working Group about the Drug Checking Services that NorWest CHC provides. Team members presented at the Harm Reduction Conference, delivering a presentation about the Spectrum of Substance Use Health Care and services offered.



With the announced closure of Path 525 and Safer Supply, our team committed to supporting local businesses, organizations and community members with free Naloxone training. Efforts to prevent overdose in the community being the goal.

“Dear Path 525, thank you so much for all the hard work and safety you provide for all of us. It is very much appreciated and your dedication is admirable. I feel so very welcomed every time I stop by and it makes me feel like I'm part of something special. Thank you for the hard work each of you do and for taking the time everyday putting in the amazing effort to make a difference in the lives of everyone that comes here.”



### FASD Training

In October 2024, a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) training event titled *Strategic Approaches & Collaborative Solutions* was held at the Italian Cultural Centre. Led by trainer Donna DeBolt, the session aimed to educate and train service providers, professionals, students, caregivers, families, and individuals diagnosed with FASD on best practices for addressing the complex care needs associated with FASD. The event attracted 154 attendees representing 45 community organizations.

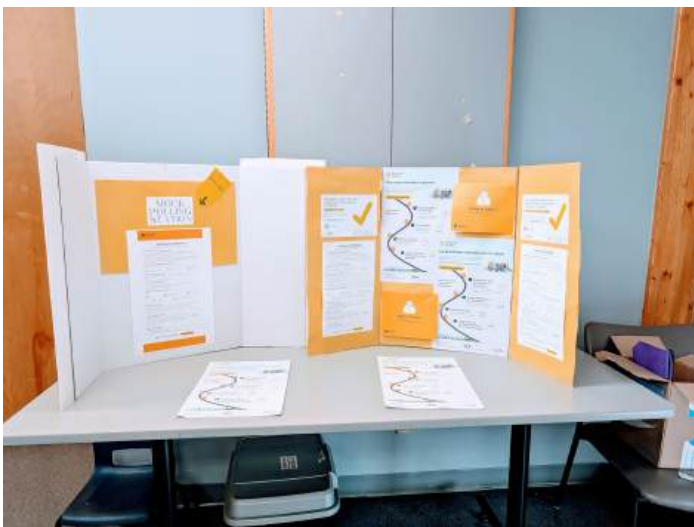


# HEALTH EDUCATION

## EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, TRANSFORMING LIVES

### IEAPC Workshop

The IEAPC workshop, held on September 17–18, 2024, at Wanuskewin Heritage Park in Saskatoon, SK, brought together teams from across Canada to strengthen efforts in improving equitable access to palliative care. Hosted by Healthcare Excellence Canada in partnership with the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer, the workshop aimed to support teams in applying equity-focused principles, shared progress on evaluation—including efforts to decolonize and explore context-based data and measurement strategies. Through open dialogue and shared learning, participants deepened their understanding of equity-based care, land-based medicine, and evaluation practices. By the end of the workshop, teams left with practical strategies to enhance their local initiatives, a better grasp of evaluation approaches, and stronger connections with peers, coaches, and program staff.



### Civic Engagement

The Civic Engagement Campaign's purpose was to support political education and voter participation in the provincial and federal elections. We worked with other organizations to mobilize resources, build coalitions, and support clients getting out the vote through transportation to and from polling stations, providing Attestations as a piece of ID, and advocating at polling stations for the client's right to vote.



# HEALTH EDUCATION

## EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES, TRANSFORMING LIVES

### Smoking Cessation Program

Last year, our Smoking Cessation Program supported approximately 80 individuals in their journey to reduce or quit smoking. We had 67 clients enrolled who received ongoing support through personalized follow-up calls and in-person appointments. We are proud to report that 19 clients have successfully quit smoking, while 32 others have significantly reduced their daily cigarette use. Clients consistently express appreciation for the continuous support provided, often sharing that they wouldn't have reached their current milestones without the encouragement and accountability built into the program. Whether working toward reduction or complete cessation, each client's progress is a testament to the program's positive impact and our commitment to supporting healthier lifestyles.



### Longlac

Our Longlac team engaged the local community in a variety of activities and programs last year and collaborated with many different agencies throughout the process. Some of the key programs included the *Community Garden* and the children's gardening initiatives, *Grow with Me* and *Make it Grow*. These programs were developed to educate and involve the entire community - people of all ages - in gardening and in learning how to grow their own food. We also introduced hands-on cooking programs to teach

children how to cook, which proved to be one of the most beneficial experiences we could offer to our youth. These sessions helped them build confidence in the kitchen and understand the importance of nutritious foods. We also participated in numerous events and activities - whether it was health screenings, nutrition, or informational sessions - allowing us to contribute in meaningful ways that supported community health and well-being.

# CARE BUS AWARD

The Care Bus received the 2025 Transformative Change Award from the Alliance for Healthier Communities. This award celebrates health champions who lead transformative solutions that improve outcomes for people and communities facing barriers to good health. The Care Bus was recognized for its innovative, ground-breaking model that brings care directly to those who need it most.



# COMMUNITY HEALTH CHAMPION AWARD

Our Supervised Consumption Services (SCS) and Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) sites across Ontario were jointly awarded the 2025 Community Health Champion Award by the Alliance for Healthier Communities Board of Directors. This award recognizes the courage, dedication, and leadership of staff working in CTS programs - past and present - who continue to support harm reduction services and advocate for evidence-informed substance use policy amidst ongoing challenges.



# WE ARE ACCREDITED

NorWest CHC proudly announces its attainment of accreditation, a testament to the unwavering dedication and collaborative efforts of our exceptional staff. This significant milestone underscores our steadfast commitment to delivering outstanding care and services to our community. Through rigorous standards and continuous improvement, we remain steadfast in our pursuit of excellence, ensuring that every individual we serve receives the highest quality of care possible. Our achievement of accreditation reaffirms our position as a trusted healthcare provider and strengthens our resolve to continue elevating the standard of care for all.

*Accredited by*  
**Canadian Centre  
for Accreditation**



## VOLUNTEER CONTRIBUTIONS



The Digital Skills for Older Adults program continued to grow, offering over 25 sessions with more than 100 participants overall. Volunteers dedicated over 400 hours to various activities, including the Expressive Arts Group, Digital Skills for Older Adults, the Simpson Street Community Garden, Wayfinder, and general program support. Additionally, two high school co-op students completed their placements at NorWest CHC - one completed 200 hours, and the other is nearing their full hours for completion.



# FINANCIAL REPORT

## NorWest Community Health Centres Summarized Statement of Financial Position (unaudited)

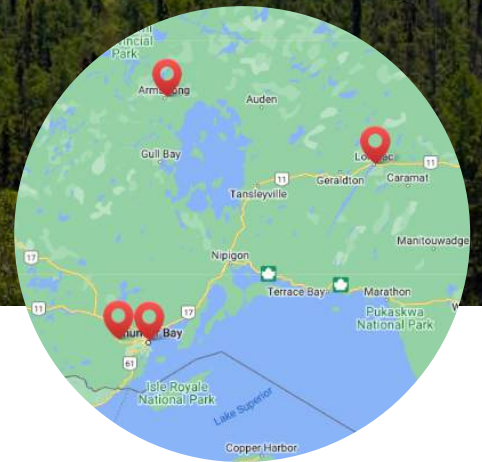
As at March 31,	2025	2024
	\$	\$
<b>Assets</b>		
Cash Accounts receivable	5,707,025	2,865,648
Government remittances receivable	1,814,706	1,696,514
Prepaid expenses	420,396	383,557
	<u>200,390</u>	<u>218,322</u>
	<u>8,142,517</u>	<u>5,164,041</u>
<b>Capital assets</b>	<u>10,076,744</u>	<u>10,147,639</u>
	<u>18,219,261</u>	<u>15,311,680</u>
<b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>		
Accounts payable and accruals	2,366,795	2,365,614
Accrued wages payable	743,422	244,225
Deferred revenue	388,393	108,218
Due to funding agencies	<u>4,533,018</u>	<u>2,335,389</u>
	<u>8,031,628</u>	<u>5,053,446</u>
Deferred capital contributions	<u>8,860,735</u>	<u>8,931,630</u>
Invested in capital assets	1,216,009	1,216,009
Unrestricted	<u>110,889</u>	<u>110,595</u>
	<u>1,326,898</u>	<u>1,326,604</u>
	<u>18,219,261</u>	<u>15,311,680</u>

## Summarized Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets (unaudited)

For the year ended March 31,	2025	2024
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Ministry of Health	18,081,328	14,581,734
Other	2,591,599	3,334,250
Less: deferred capital contributions	- 552,723 -	442,729
Add: prior year deferred revenue	108,218	152,629
Less: current year deferred revenue	- 388,393 -	108,218
	<u>19,840,029</u>	<u>17,517,666</u>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Program expenses	<u>17,564,114</u>	<u>16,796,612</u>
<b>Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses</b>	<u>2,275,915</u>	<u>721,054</u>
<b>Unrestricted net assets - balance- beginning of year</b>	110,595	108,165
<b>Due to funding agencies - beginning of year</b>	2,335,389	2,373,053
Repayment of prior years' funding	77,992	756,289
<b>Due to funding agencies - end of year</b>	- 4,533,018 -	<u>2,335,389</u>
<b>Unrestricted net assets - balance - end of year</b>	<u>110,889</u>	<u>110,595</u>

This condensed financial information has been extracted from the audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2025 previously reported on by our auditors, MNP LLP.

# Healthy People, Empowering Communities



## THANK YOU

Together, we have demonstrated that when communities unite, powerful transformations become not just possible, but inevitable. Thank you for being a part of our journey towards a brighter, more interconnected future.

- 📍 Thunder Bay
- 📍 Kakabeka
- 📍 Longlac
- 📍 Armstrong

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