

DEPARTMENT COVID-19 UPDATE #14 - May 12, 2020

On behalf of Nick Kates, Chair, Department of Psychiatry & Behavioural Neurosciences -

As we move into the ninth week of the Pandemic, it appears that we have been relatively successful in containing CoVID-19 in Hamilton, and flattening the curve without our health care system becoming overwhelmed. As a result, St. Joseph's were able to announce last night that they will be re-opening 10 Acute Mental Health at the Charlton site, and moving staff and patients back there from HN2 at the West 5th. Campus this Thursday, May 14th

But as our focus starts to shift to resuming not only clinical services – and the Province has issued guidelines for Hospitals for the re-opening of services that had been closed or curtailed during the pandemic [here](#) – but also academic activities, and we begin to conceptualise what the “new future” might look like, we know that we still face many uncertainties, including the effects of longer-term physical distancing. The last two months have been challenging, but they have also shown us that there are many things we can do differently, and these lessons can help to guide us over the coming weeks.

I also want to again thank each of you for your efforts, commitment and creativity every single day over the last two months. And as today is the second day of National Nurses Week (and also Florence Nightingale's Birthday) I particularly want to thank all of the nurses associated with our Department not just for what you've done over the last two months, but for everything you contribute to all of our activities and work. Its really appreciated.

DEPARTMENT NEWS

The next **Department Meeting / Townhall** is taking place tomorrow **Wednesday May 13th from 08.00 – 09.00**, and will also be recorded. The zoom link and Agenda have already been emailed to all of you and will be resent again tomorrow at 07.15. The main goals are to help us remain connected, to review the key messages of the recent Department survey that looked at how the Pandemic is affecting us, to hear members of our Department reflect on their experiences over the last 8 weeks and what they have learnt, and to find out about the Hospitals plans for the next couple of months.

We also want to leave plenty of time for questions, so if there is anything you want to ask either send your question to Joanne Milne beforehand milnej@mcmaster.ca or raise it during the meeting.

Competency Based Medical Education

The Royal College's Specialty Committee has determined that despite the pandemic, Psychiatry will proceed with its CBME launch on July 1, 2020. They are calling it a “permissive launch”, and will ensure that accreditors (McMaster's next accreditation visit is scheduled for 2 years from now) take into consideration the constraints COVID 19 may have placed on training and educational experiences e.g. The need for flexibility in Training Experiences to meet the EPAs, or decreased numbers of observations related to EPA's etc. Information sessions on

requirements for general in-patient, out-patient and PES rotations that are open to all faculty are being offered via Zoom Videoconference on: Tuesday, May 19th – 5 - 6:15pm, Friday, May 29th – 12 - 1:15pm, and Wednesday, June 3rd – 8:30 - 9:45am.

Congratulations

To a number of people on their recent achievements.

Karen Saperson who has recently been appointed to two prestigious positions. She is the new McMaster representative on the Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario. And she is also the Chair-Elect of the Royal College's Geriatric Psychiatry specialty program. These are a tribute to the wide range of educational and leadership experiences she will bring to both these roles.

The Research and Clinical Training (RCT) Stream, housed in the Department of Psychology, Neuroscience and Behaviour's (PNB) Psychology graduate program, which has just learnt it has been granted its initial full 3-year accreditation, which is a terrific achievement for a new program. This program stream is a three-way partnership between our Department, St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, and PNB and members of our Department are heavily involved in all aspects of the program, including leadership roles, teaching courses, and supervising clinical placements. Special thanks are due to **Sheryl Green, Jenna Boyd, Arela Agako and Alina Protopopescu**, and to everyone else who was involved in the program and preparations for the visit.

Ryan Van Lieshout received funding from the Ontario Brain Institute for a CBT program for mom's with post-partum depression, in partnership with Kids Can Fly, a community organisation in Brant.

And **St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton Mental Health and Addiction Program**, which is one of five hospitals chosen by the Provincial Government – in partnership with **Ontario Health's Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence** - to provide mental health supports for health and community care workers from across the province. Making this happen required a lot of work on the part of **Peter Bieling, Maxine Lewis** and the MH&AP leadership team.

In the Media

CBC Hamilton featured interviews with **Randi McCabe**, about the services St. Joe's is providing for front-line providers [article](#) and with **Roselyn Wilson** talking about the impact of CoVID 19 on teens mental health [article](#).

During Mental Health Week the Hamilton Spectator published an interview with **Andrea Gonzalez** who discussed a study she has launched to look at how Ontario families are coping with the pandemic and the supports they might need [article](#).

They also published a piece by **Randi McCabe** and **Karen Rowa** on "10 tips to help maintain mental wellness" [article](#).

Ana Hategan recently had an excellent review article published on line. This has been also been shared by the publishers with the WHO [article](#).

And McMaster's Daily News published an article on **Professor Hippo**, McMaster University's very successful training program to help faculty and staff increase their skills and comfort in recognising and assisting students who are facing mental health and addictions issues, and which was developed and is being led by **Catharine Munn** [article](#)

Catharine has also started teaching a new Undergraduate course called "Coping with COVID and Stress: Building Resilience and Mindfulness Skills in University", part of the new intercession series of courses called INSPIRE. Students from all faculties can take these [courses](#).

Four important and helpful articles relevant to our current situation

These four brief but excellent articles each touch on a different aspect of our current situation. The first is by Tait Shanafelt on "Understanding and Addressing Sources of Anxiety Among Health Care Professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic" [article](#).

The second, a blog by Erin Bromage, reviews some of the risks as we loosen isolation restrictions and how to manage them [article](#).

The third, by Alexandra Love, presents pointers for "leading your team into the new normal" [article](#).

And the last, by Jay Shore and colleagues looks at the current and future outcomes of the "Virtualisation" of psychiatric care [article](#)

Other resources that may be helpful

Worldometer continues to post up to date global data on CoVID-19 [site](#).

And the McPherson Institute has put out this collection of **Teaching Resources**:

1. [10 Tips for Virtual Teaching](#) (2 min read) will help you mount your own remote teaching activities and includes a chart of video conferencing tools. PDF also attached.
2. [11 Tips for Virtual Learning](#) (1 min read) is meant to be shared with all learners (faculty and residents) who are adjusting to the virtual learning environment. PDF also attached.
3. [CanMEDS Teaching and Assessment Tool Guide](#) includes online chapters and several tools for every CanMEDS role to support resident learning.

And finally.....

Crush the Curve A local clothing organisation is printing T-Shirts emblazoned with the words "Crush the Curve" on the front and "Caution, Physical Distancing in Progress" on the back, and is

selling them to raise money for local CoVID related charities. These have already been distributed to our residents, and JoAnn Corey added the McMaster logo as well. These are now available at a cost of \$17.00 and if you want to purchase one can you let Joanne Milne know. She will place a single order and let you know how to arrange payment. Can you also let her know what size you would like.

Stay well and stay safe.

Nick