



RÉSEAU DE SANTÉ

**Horizon**  
HEALTH NETWORK

Experience  
Access  
Retention  
Flow

Report to Our Communities

# PROGRESS ON HORIZON'S CRITICAL ACTION PLAN

June 2023



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Our Strategic Priorities</b>	2
<b>Message from the Interim President and CEO and the Trustee</b>	3
<b>Improvement Initiatives and Projects</b>	5
<b>ACCESS TO SERVICES</b>	5
Emergency Care	5
Surgical Services	7
Addiction and Mental Health	9
Primary Care	11
Diagnostic, Technical and Therapeutic Services	12
<b>RECRUITMENT &amp; RETENTION</b>	14
Recruitment	14
Retention	15
<b>PATIENT FLOW</b>	17
<b>PATIENT EXPERIENCE</b>	19
<b>COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT</b>	21
<b>Join the Conversation!</b>	21



## ACCESS TO SERVICES

Focusing on barriers impacting access to health care services for our patients, with a special emphasis on emergency care and surgical services



## RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Implementing initiatives to retain valuable health care workers paired with an aggressive recruitment strategy



## PATIENT FLOW

Streamlining the way patients move into, through and out of our hospitals



## PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Introducing initiatives focused on providing a safe and high-quality care experience for our patients



## A message from Margaret Melanson, Interim President and CEO and Suzanne Johnston, Trustee

### Changing — for the future of New Brunswick

It has been almost a year since we assumed our roles as Interim President and CEO and Trustee of Horizon Health Network (Horizon) and we are pleased to share several of the positive changes we are seeing in our health care system — and it is just the beginning!

- » An additional **609 people had hip and knee replacement surgeries** thanks to operating room availability after-hours and on weekends, and enhancements at Upper River Valley Hospital.
- » More than **1,000 patients were provided social supports to return home** (instead of being admitted to hospital) thanks to the intervention of social workers in our emergency departments (EDs).
- » The **average patient ambulance offload time has decreased by 21%**, which means each patient is **waiting an average of 13 minutes less** to be offloaded from an ambulance.
- » **128 patients were safely discharged earlier, saving over 2,400 patient days in hospital** thanks to funding for basic equipment.

This report includes many more examples of how we are responding to the challenges we face: an aging population, a demand for more services for more people, and shortage of health care providers, which is putting severe pressure on the system.

Since our last update in February, close to **80 projects are underway in 12 hospitals, 32 community sites, and 27 departments.**

This momentum could not be sustained without our staff, physicians and leaders, patients and clients, volunteers, communities, and partners, whose ideas and passions continue to propel us onward.

We are driven by a collective purpose — improving our health system so that all New Brunswickers receive the high-quality care they need, provided by health professionals and support team members who are supported and happy in their work.

We will continue to keep you informed of the work we are undertaking to improve health care for all New Brunswickers — for now and the future.



*Margaret Melanson*

**Margaret Melanson**  
Interim President and CEO



*M. Suzanne Johnston*

**Suzanne Johnston**  
Trustee



Soon, we will welcome a new Board of Directors to Horizon. We would like to thank Suzanne for her guidance and leadership over the past year, especially opening the pathway to process improvement and reigniting engagement with staff, physicians and communities. **Thank you, Suzanne.**

*You meet here today because you care  
Not just for health.  
And the systems that support it.  
You care for the future of New Brunswick*

**- Thandiwe Jelani McCarthy**

Spoken Word Poet, Author, and Public Speaker  
*"The Horizon"*





# IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES

## ACCESS TO EMERGENCY CARE

We are reducing wait times, improving patient offload delays, and preventing unnecessary hospital admissions, thanks to the leadership and frontline staff of Horizon's Emergency Care teams.

### Emergency Patient Flow Centres in 3 hospitals

Horizon has implemented Patient Flow Centres (Moncton, Fredericton, Miramichi), allowing the emergency department teams to make the most of their staffing and resources available to ensure that patients with lower acuity receive triage, testing and care in the shortest turnaround time possible.

*When I arrived for my shift, there was a 12-hour patient wait time and the main waiting room was filled with patients. By 5 a.m., we managed to clear out the waiting room.*

#### - Dr. Serge Melanson

Executive Clinical/Academic Co-lead,  
Horizon Emergency Care



### What's next?

We're launching a new patient flow centre and overcapacity pilot project in Saint John later this month!

### Decreasing ambulance offload delays in Moncton

We are steadily improving ambulance offload delays, most notably at The Moncton Hospital, where we've been most challenged, and we are collaborating with our partners (Vitalité Health Network and Ambulance New Brunswick) to reduce delays even more and allow ambulances to go back into the communities.



Average offload delay in Moncton this spring.  
(A significant improvement from an average  
of 3½ hours last fall!!)

### Social Workers in Emergency Departments

The addition of social workers began in Fredericton and expanded to Miramichi, Moncton, and Saint John. It is helping improve access, while reducing unnecessary hospital admissions. Social workers provide:

- » mental health and suicide assessments
- » safety plans
- » intake assessments for addictions and mental health services
- » single-session therapy

*My role is to assist patients and their families by breaking down the challenges they face and finding the best solutions to help them. I provide counselling to patients and their families and connect them with community resources and long-term supports.*

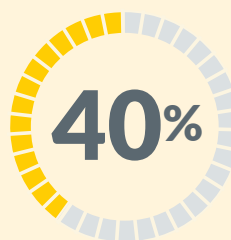
**- Crystal Hicks,**  
Social Worker



  
**1,000**  
**PATIENTS**

were successfully diverted  
from unnecessary  
admission  
(2022-2023)

We are consistently  
achieving a diversion  
rate of well over



## Emergency occupational therapy in Moncton

Horizon recently launched an exciting pilot project at The Moncton Hospital where occupational therapists are directly involved in aspects of patient assessment, and help in making complex decisions on admissions and discharges. This is reducing unnecessary admissions to the hospital.



**Dr. Serge Melanson**  
Executive Clinical/Academic Head,  
Emergency Care



**Steve Savoie**  
Executive Regional Director,  
Co-Leader, Emergency Care

## ACCESS TO SURGICAL SERVICES

More patients in New Brunswick have access to the surgeries they need due to innovative initiatives from Horizon's surgical program leadership and staff.

### Expansion of orthopedic surgeries in Upper River Valley

Following the successful launch of knee replacement surgeries, the surgical team at the Upper River Valley Hospital is now improving access for orthopedic surgery patients who have been waiting for a new hip.

**368**

more New  
Brunswickers per  
year will receive a  
new hip or knee



**120**  
**KNEES**

and

**3**  
**HIPS**

have been  
completed so far



*This is an important step forward for the health of all New Brunswickers. This reiterates the immense dedication, adaptability, and commitment of our staff to serve not only the local community, but also the wider population of New Brunswick.*

**- Dr. Gurpreet Singh Ranger,**

Horizon's Chief of Staff, Upper River Valley Area



## More hips and knees are being replaced through the HIIT initiative

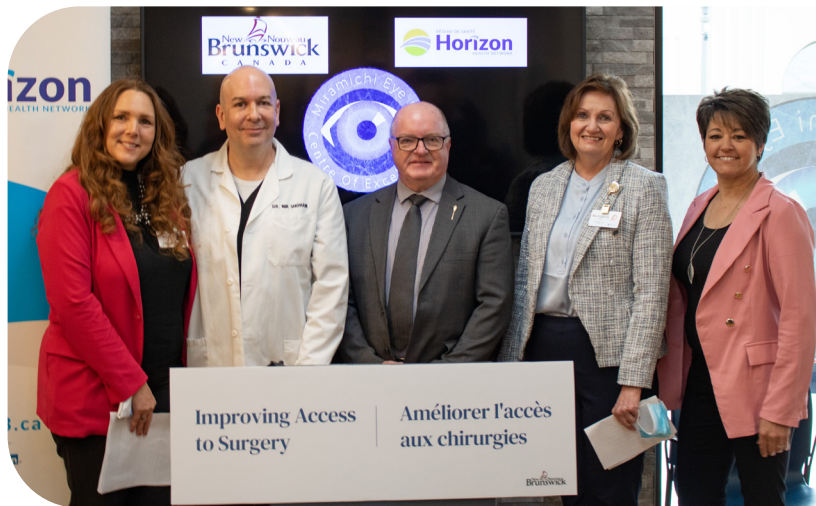
Surgical teams took an innovative approach to address the wait list for patients who have been waiting the longest for orthopaedic surgeries (hip and knee replacements). Through the high-intensity interval theatre (HIIT) initiative, operating room availability was increased during after-hours and on weekends.

(November 2022 – March 2023)



## Increased access to cataract surgeries in Miramichi region

A new partnership between Horizon and a Miramichi-based ophthalmology clinic is tripling the potential number of cataract surgeries in the region on a weekly basis and increasing operating room availability for other surgical procedures at Horizon's Miramichi Regional Hospital. Seventy additional surgeries were completed in the last 12 weeks compared to the same 12 weeks in 2022.



Amy McCavour, Dr. Nir Shoham-Hazon, Hon. Bruce Fitch, Margaret Melanson, Miramichi MLA Michelle Conroy.

**205% increase** in the number of cataract surgeries completed in the last 12 weeks compared to the same 12-week period last year!  
(179 in 2022 to 547 in 2023)



**Amy McCavour**  
Executive Regional Director,  
Surgical Services and Intensive Care



**Dr. Patricia Bryden**  
Executive Clinical/Academic Department  
Head, Surgical Services and Intensive Care

## ACCESS TO ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

*Horizon is committed to doing everything we can to ensure mental health clients of all ages can be connected to the services they need as quickly and efficiently as possible.*

**- Dr. Nachiketa (Nachi) Sinha,**  
Regional Chief of Staff



### 24/7 virtual care psychiatry consultations

Virtual care consultations are now available 24/7 as an alternative to having to travel to a regional hospital. This initiative started as a successful pilot project in Fredericton in August 2022. The virtual technology allows our enhanced Addiction and Mental Health teams at the four regional hospitals (Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton and Miramichi) to provide service to additional community hospitals (including Charlotte County Hospital, Grand Manan Hospital, Oromocto Public Hospital, Sackville Memorial Hospital, Sussex Health Centre, and Upper River Valley Hospital).

### New after-hours psychiatry clinic in Moncton

The clinic is dramatically enhancing access to psychiatry services for **30 patients per month**.

**92**  
**PATIENTS**

were removed from the psychiatry services wait list in the Moncton area

**21 & 30**  
**ADULTS & CHILDREN**

had a treatment plan developed and follow-up services provided in its first few weeks



### Outreach program expanded in Moncton

The Addiction and Mental Health team in Moncton has added a new role to their team: an outreach worker focusing on individuals who are homeless or living rough. Damon Sebastien is well suited for the position, with 15 years of community experience under his belt at MAGMA, special care homes and ReConnect. Damon is a community navigator, with his primary focus on being out in the community, reaching out to encampments and homeless shelters and joining the Salvus clinic mobile team, intervening with clients and connecting them to needed services.

*By expanding our outreach programs to meet people where they are, we are able to provide better care and services and ensure they're getting the care they need.*

**- Kathleen Buchanan,**

Primary Health Care Manager, Moncton area



### Single Session Therapy now available in all Horizon regions

Single-session services (also known as “one-at-a-time therapy”) are providing rapid access to needed care and reducing waitlists for mental health care, which is good news for New Brunswick’s children, youth and families. Between May and December of 2022, the number of youths under 18 on the waitlist for licensed therapy dropped by 367. That’s a 72% drop over the seven-month period. Adult waitlists have seen similar reductions since the introduction of single-session therapy.

*One-at-a-time therapy has given us the ability to offer a different level of service to our clients and see them in their time of need, and also providing proactive services and allowing us to help families navigate the health system in the province.*

*As a clinician, I have personally noted that clients who are not yet ready to engage in long-term counselling seem to really appreciate this approach. Many of our clients have verbalized that they felt supported following just one meeting but appreciated the fact that they can call back at any time for another appointment, and they don’t have to be on a waitlist.*

**- Isabelle Hétu,**

Social Worker and Clinical Lead



**Dr. Nachiketa (Nachi) Sinha**  
Regional Chief of Staff



**Rachel Boehm**  
Executive Regional Director, Co-Leader,  
Addiction and Mental Health

## ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE

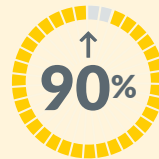
We are reimagining how Horizon delivers primary health care to provide the most efficient, coordinated, and sustainable services that can best support the health and needs of our local communities.

We are developing a comprehensive primary and community care strategy centered on a neighbourhood-based interprofessional practice model. Several new initiatives are underway:



### Fredericton Downtown Community Health Centre Self-Referral Program

The clinic has expanded its services to include same-day, self-referral appointments with nurse practitioners.



We've seen an increase of over **90%** in daily consults within the first few months.

### New prenatal care program for pregnant individuals in Fredericton without a primary care provider

The Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology in Fredericton will provide access to an obstetrician for pregnant individuals in the Fredericton area without access to a primary care provider for the duration of their pregnancy.

- » **More than 40 pregnant individuals per month** will be cared for during this six-month pilot.



### Integrated Community Care in Sussex, Sackville and Fredericton

We are establishing new community-based health services in Sussex, Sackville and Fredericton North where primary care services are delivered through an interdisciplinary approach.

*Primary health care is the foundation of our health care system in New Brunswick, and family physicians and nurse practitioners play a critical role in meeting the health needs of New Brunswick communities.*

- **Danny Jardine,**

Interim Vice President, Community



**Danny Jardine**  
Interim Vice President, Community

## ACCESS TO DIAGNOSTIC, TECHNICAL AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES

### Improvements to CT scan access and wait times for emergency department patients in Moncton

A pilot project at The Moncton Hospital is involving multiple departments to accelerate the care pathway between the emergency and the medical imaging departments for CT imaging after-hours.



**48** more CT scans performed in the first two weeks

**1.5 hours** CT scan cycle time (decreased from **2.3 hours**)

Increase of **4+** patients per day



*The engagement of frontline staff in this solution was critical to the success of the project and our ability to improve services to this patient population. This team has performed so admirably in a very busy environment.*

- Gary Foley,

Horizon's Vice President Professional Services



### MRI Backlog decrease in Miramichi

A pilot project at Horizon's Miramichi Regional Hospital has successfully increased MRI access for all New Brunswickers.

The average number of exams per week have increased from

**56** TO **83**  
in 2021 in Q1 of 2023

The average time between patients has decreased from


**17.10** TO **7.40**  
MINUTES in 2021 MINUTES in Q1 of 2023

(January and February)



## Mobile X-ray service extended to long-term care residents province-wide

We partnered with the Government of New Brunswick, the New Brunswick Extra-Mural program, and Vitalité Health Network to expand the mobile X-ray program, allowing nursing home residents to receive X-ray imaging at home.

  
**360**  
**NURSING HOME RESIDENTS**  
received 525 X-rays

  
**ONLY**  
**5%**  
required transfer to hospital  
after the X-ray

  
**343**  
**HOSPITAL TRANSFERS**  
via ambulance were avoided

March 2022 - May 2023

## Improved MRI Priority for NB-ISAEC Patients

Patients seen through the New Brunswick Inter-professional Spine Assessment and Education Clinic (NB-ISAEC) program are being prioritized and are booked for lumbar MRIs within **30** days of their assessment, compared to the typical wait time of 176 days.

*The goal of the program is to get patients with lower back pain treatment from the right person at the right time. Most patients don't require MRIs or surgery, but when they do, we can really speed that process up.*

**- Andrew Ross,**  
Clinical Coordinator and Physiotherapist



## New program improving quality of life, reducing need for surgery for osteoarthritis patients

Horizon patients living with hip and/or knee osteoarthritis can now benefit from the Good Life with Osteoarthritis Denmark (GLA:D) Canada, an internationally recognized education and exercise program. Horizon's program, offered by a GLA:D-certified physiotherapist, includes supervised education and targeted neuromuscular exercises, consisting of an assessment, two 90-minute group educational sessions and 12 group exercise classes.

**182 patients graduated from the program in 2022-23**

**92 % of patients were very satisfied**

## Improved access at Horizon's Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation

Horizon's Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation pediatric area has undergone major renovations to improve and optimize its space and increase access for patients.



# RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

## RECRUITMENT

Horizon successfully recruited **2,400 employees** during the 2022-23 fiscal year, representing a net gain of 550 more health care professionals who are providing safe and quality care for patients, increasing access to services, and supporting our current workforce. Over half of new hires are in the field of nursing, and the new fiscal year is off to a strong start with over **500 nursing staff** hired since April 1, 2023.

More than **300 Internationally Educated** registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and patient care attendants have joined the organization since April 1, 2022.



Horizon's **Student Nurse Advancement Pledge (SNAP)** has welcomed 175 students to the organization in its first year. They will experience a seamless transition from student to working nurse.



Since the **Horizon Referral Reward** launched one year ago, staff and New Brunswickers have helped us successfully hire **48 nurses** – and were rewarded. In March 2023, we added Nurse Practitioners as eligible referrals

  
**Refer. Reward. Repeat.**  
Horizon Referral Reward



The Talent Acquisition team is growing to support physician recruitment. It's strengthening relationships with medical students, residents, experienced physicians and important medical stakeholders, and is focused on recruiting top talents locally, nationally, and internationally. The physician application process has been streamlined to ensure direct and clear access to Horizon job postings and support.





## RETENTION

*We want our employees and physicians to feel engaged, supported and appreciated and are implementing initiatives to retain our team of skilled, dedicated, and caring health care workers.*

### - Gail Lebel,

Vice President and Chief Human Resource Officer

### We're listening

A new pilot project is providing an avenue for Horizon employees to share their feedback in a meaningful, measurable way through onboarding and exit surveys. We are committing to acting on what we hear to recommend changes in policies, procedures, and practices.

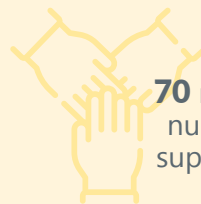


### Nursing Mentoring Program

Horizon's **Nursing Mentorship Program** supports new and transitioning nursing team members and gives experienced nurses opportunities to build on their mentorship skills.



More than **1,000 connections**  
in the last four months



**70** new and transitioning  
nursing team members  
supported by Retired RN  
Mentors



### Everyone has a role to play and a place to belong

A **Diversity, Equity and Inclusion** strategy and framework are in place and initiatives to support our first two priorities – training and mentorship – are underway.

### Self-scheduling for RNs and LPNs

A successful **self-scheduling pilot for RNs and LPNs** to increase scheduling flexibility and job satisfaction are underway on three units at Horizon's Dr. Everett Chalmers Regional Hospital. We have also developed a self-scheduling toolkit so other units can implement this flexible scheduling option.



### Nurse practitioner retention working group

A Nurse Practitioner Retention working group was established in March. Feedback from NPs continues to guide future initiatives around flexibility within practice and a collaborative, formalized decision-making structure.

### Not Myself Today

The Canadian Mental Health Association program was introduced to enhance to culture of mental health within our organization. Access to a free, online mental health toolkit is helping staff and physicians build skills to support a safe, supportive, and mentally healthy work life.

### Horizon's Annual Awards of Distinction in Nursing

Horizon's Annual Awards of Distinction in Nursing will celebrate its sixth year this fall. For the first time, we are excited to seek nominations for Patient Care Attendants for the Awards of Distinction in Leadership and Mentorship!

### Horizon's Awards of Distinction in Professional Services

This year, we congratulated our first ever recipients for their professionalism and excellence. 23 recipients were celebrated in 2023.

### Employee Engagement Initiatives

Every month in 2023, we have at least one employee appreciation initiative happening to let all employees know they are valued and increase positivity in our work environment.

### Celebrating employee milestones

This spring, **Years of Service milestones** were commemorated throughout Horizon with an incredible combined **38,202 years of service celebrated**.

More than **70** employees were presented with pendants celebrating **40 to 55 years** of service!

New this year, we presented one-year pendants to acknowledge this milestone – to more than **1,700** employees!



More than **6,500** *Bravos!* shared in the last **4** months by patients, families and colleagues.

*Bravo!* celebrates our Horizon values and the employees who live these values daily. *Bravos!* thank Horizon staff and physicians for the moments big and small that make an impact.



**Brenda Kinney**  
Vice President and  
Chief Nursing Officer



**Gail Lebel**  
Vice President and Chief Human  
Resource Officer (CHRO)



## PATIENT FLOW

We are taking new approaches to streamline the way patients move into, through, and out of our health care facilities. Improving flow alleviates pressures in our emergency departments and frees up beds for acute and surgical patients.

It also ensures patients receive the support, resources and care they need. We know many patients – once medically discharged – remain in hospital for days, weeks and even months. Multiple initiatives are underway to address barriers to discharge:



### Fredericton improved process for patients admitted through the emergency department

- » 17 complex care patients in Fredericton, hospitalized for almost a full year, have been safely transferred to an appropriate community setting.
- » **4,405 hospital days** is the total amount of time these patients stayed at the acute care facility waiting to be discharged to the appropriate location for their needs (preventing access to acute care patients).
- » These beds can **now be used for acute care patients**, while the 17 patients are receiving the appropriate care.



### Basic Equipment Initiative is helping hospitalized patients get home faster at The Moncton Hospital

Inpatient physiotherapists and occupational therapists have started providing basic equipment, such as canes, walkers, shower chairs, tub transfer benches and raised toilet seats, to low-income patients so they can safely leave the hospital sooner. So far, the program resulted in:

- » 128 patients have been discharged faster
- » 2,436 admitted hospital days have been freed for patients with acute care needs

### New walking program at The Moncton Hospital is also improving patient mobility and timely discharges

## Coming soon: a provincial hospitalist program

The implementation of the Hospitalist Program is expected to be fully running at Horizon hospitals in Moncton, Fredericton and Miramichi by June 30 and work is underway with the New Brunswick Medical Society to onboard physicians at the Saint John Regional Hospital as well.

**Next step:** the recruitment of full-time hospitalist physicians to allow more community physicians to focus on their practice.



**Greg Doiron**  
Vice President, Clinical Operations



## PATIENT EXPERIENCE

*We want all New Brunswickers to be and feel well cared for at every step of their health care journey with us.*

**- Margaret Melanson,**  
Interim president and CEO



### Refurbishments and renovations to improve Horizon facilities

\$22.7 million is being invested in facilities and equipment upgrades

\$155 million is being invested in a multi-year two-story addition at Saint John Regional Hospital for:

- » a new ambulatory procedure unit for endoscopy and minor procedures
- » oncology services including systemic therapy
- » supportive care and clinics
- » a medical/surgical intensive care unit

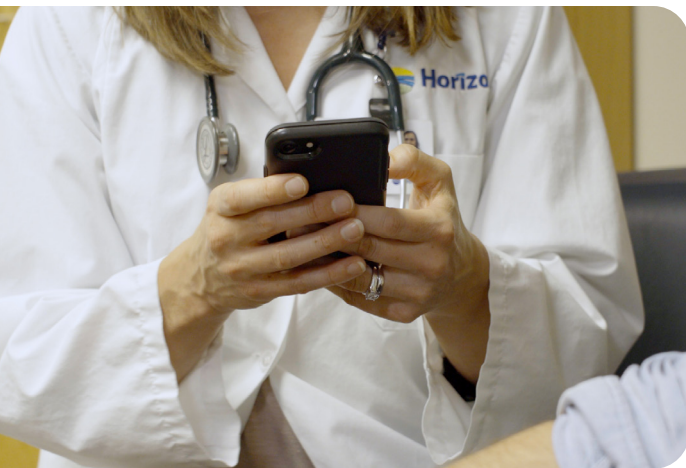
\$400,000 went to modernizing the emergency department in Sackville.



### Helping patients navigate cancer care

Oncology nurse navigator positions were created to help patients navigate the complex cancer care system. The Cancer Patient Navigation Program's goal is creating a more collaborative health-care system by connecting patients with services in the hospital and the community.





## Digital health care support for patients

**800 cardiac surgery patients at SJRH can now have a virtual patient companion.** **SeamlessMD** provides a single point of access to care information that helps patients and their care teams prepare for surgery, support recovery, and reduce hospital readmission.

Since launching the **Patient Appointment Notification project**, many of our clinics, programs and departments can remind their patients about appointments. It will help to reduce the number of missed appointments, decrease waitlists and improve access to services.

## Enhanced Security Officer Program

We are adding **Enhanced Security Officers** at three high-risk emergency departments (Saint John, Moncton and Fredericton) and as a pilot project at one high-risk community mental health centre.

We will also be piloting a plain clothed security officer with enhanced education at The Moncton Hospital internal psychiatric unit.

## Food kiosk at the Saint John Regional Hospital

Second Cup and Pita Pit will soon be offering convenient and healthy options for all at Horizon's Saint John Regional Hospital and will offer pre-ordering via an app. We're exploring options for Moncton as well.



## Horizon has been Accredited!

We have succeeded in meeting the fundamental requirements of the accreditation program and have shown a commitment to quality improvement.

## We're building a team of change leaders

Building a solid foundation to lead sustainable and successful change for continuous improvement across Horizon is important to our organization.

The **Novo LEADing Edge Training** program will cultivate strong leadership skills amongst our staff and physicians who will support programs and services in successfully completing large and complex process improvement projects, drive organizational change and bring about positive transformation.

There are currently **23** people participating in the training. Improvement projects include rapid assessment workforce implementation; clinical trial support; simulation program enhancement; performance development tool; and strategies to improve the retention of Nurse Practitioners.



# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Our vibrant partnerships with all partners, communities and stakeholders are essential in improving and strengthening our health care system for all New Brunswickers.

- » We're continuing to collaborate with the communities of Sackville, Sussex, Charlotte County, and Fredericton to find solutions for accessible and sustainable health services.
- » The Community Health Needs Assessment for Western Charlotte County is underway.
- » Our Patient Experience Advisors are playing a vital role in various projects throughout Horizon to better serve the needs of patients and their families.
- » We're building a stronger culture of philanthropy for Horizon through partnerships with our 17 foundations.
- » Let's Talk! There have been more than **3,000** visits to the Let's Talk Horizon website, garnering more than **1,230** surveys responses – with more than **2,370** website visits and **1,000** survey responses from January 1, 2023, to the end of April 2023.



## Join the conversation!

Horizon is committed to involving people affected by the decisions we make.

Whether you are a staff, physician or volunteer, or a patient, client or family member, or member of the public – we want to hear from you in a way that is meaningful to YOU.

Please share your experiences and thoughts on our plan forward for health system transformation and how it can help further meet the needs of our clients, patients and communities at [LetsTalkHorizon.ca](https://LetsTalkHorizon.ca).

