

The Newsletter of the Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick

2024 CHANB ANNUAL CONFERENCE THE FACES OF HOMELESSNESS

The Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick held its annual conference in Miramichi on September 19th and 20th. There were 95 registrants from 12 Catholic Health International Sponsored facilities in New Brunswick. Greg Bishop, a Senior Director from the Human Development Council (HDC) led off the conference on Thursday with an overview of homelessness in New Brunswick. He began by identifying the many “Homelessness Data Tracking Tools” that the HDC uses in its research, followed by an overview of the “Point in Time” count held in 2023 in Edmundston, Bathurst, Miramichi, Moncton, Fredericton, St. Stephen and Saint John. The results of this count indicated a 110% increase in total number of homeless,



Greg Bishop from the Human Development Council

72% increase in shelter users and 177% increase in the number of people unsheltered in the 3 largest cities in the province since the last survey (2021).

Greg then gave an overview of the demographics of the unhoused, statistics on early experiences of homelessness, the overall health of this population and an overview of experiences with police, emergency departments, hospitals and correctional facilities.

Greg finished his presentation with an exploration of the reasons for housing loss and a call to build a provincial network to deal with the crisis in homelessness. Greg then led the conference in a break out session where the participants answered three questions at their table; does the information in the presentation line up with your experiences at work or in your home community, what can be done within your facility or program to better meet the needs of those who are unhoused and what could the Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick do to better advocate and assist those experiencing homelessness?

The tables then reported back to the plenary with questions regarding further research in smaller communities, opportunities for the different agencies to work together and a call for the CHANB Board of Directors to discuss advocacy efforts at its upcoming meetings. Greg’s presentation was very well received and participants appreciated the important research that Greg and the Human Development Council have conducted.



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Friday began with Marc Belliveau, Senior Director of Philanthropy, Government Relations and Strategic partnerships with Harvest House Atlantic - Moncton (HHA) presenting on the theme “How we properly support those most vulnerable.” He began his presentation by describing the many services HHA offers to the community and the growth it has experienced in the past five years. Marc highlighted the many reasons why people are unhoused, what he and his team are seeing in shelters, and several inspirational stories of those who use Harvest House services. He then focused on what is happening in the world of recovery, harm reduction and a call to ensure that such programs are whole person centered. Finally Marc explored what he is seeing in the world of housing and spoke of the merits of an “action oriented case management plan” for each individual seeking assistance and for the different agencies to work together. He too encouraged the participants to be advocates and to help “build a model where people of lived experience have a say in decisions and changes that affect them.”



*Michèle Nadeau and Tara Hosford
from the YWCA Moncton*

The final presenters of the conference were Michèle Nadeau and Tara Hosford from the YWCA Moncton. Michèle is the CEO and presented on the theme of “Women’s Housing Needs & Homelessness.” She noted that homelessness amongst women, girls and gender diverse individuals is in a crisis situation in Canada, and here in New Brunswick. The statistics on the number of women who are homeless are not as accurate as they are for men. This is because women are less likely to appear in mainstream shelters, drop in spaces, public spaces, or access other homeless-specific and “are

more likely to rely on relational, precarious, and dangerous supports to survive such as sleeping on friends’ couches or trading sex for housing.” The “profound lack of safe, affordable, adequate and appropriate housing” only adds to this crisis and there is a general lack of appropriate support systems for women experiencing homelessness. Michèle then introduced Tara Hosford, a Housing Case Manager for YWCA Moncton. Tara shared her lived experience, and background in supporting women through addiction recovery. Her presentation was deeply moving and inspirational. It was one of the highlights for many of the conference attendees.

The CHANB Board and staff want to thank the presenters for their inspiring work and for the challenge to find ways to advocate for those working in the homelessness field. Conference presentations are available on the CHANB website at this [LINK](#). We also would like to thank all who attended from the many different facilities and corners of our province. See you next year!

CHANB LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

The CHANB Board of Directors are proud to announce that Theresa Mercer, Director of Finance at Rocmaura Nursing Home in Saint John is the 2024 recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Award. In the words of Rocmaura, we honour her with this Award because “Theresa demonstrates true commitment to the mission of Rocmaura in every decision she makes and in every interaction she has, both inside and outside her work. Theresa does not function as an accountant only; she takes on the many roles required when working with people from all walks of life and with those with disabilities and challenges related to aging.



Theresa Mercer with Dr. Robert Stewart

Recently Theresa recently stepped in to fill the Executive Director role at Rocmaura and did an amazing job, making decisions for the betterment of the residents, families and staff. “They didn’t miss a beat because Theresa was there to hold us up, support us, and keep going in the right direction.”

Her dedication doesn’t end there. She was diagnosed and treated for Cancer several years ago and barely missed a day. She was offered to take off as much time as she wished but she said, “Rocmaura is my home and my therapy.”

Her positive attitude and ability to cope with whatever comes her way is inspirational. Theresa lives the mission in everything she does every day. While money is her business, the residents are her priority. “We always know that the money will be found to do what’s right for the residents because as Theresa says “that’s just the right thing to do?”” It is with a great deal of pride that the Catholic Health Association of New Brunswick proudly presents its 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award to Theresa Mercer.

CHANB RECOGNIZES RETIREES

The CHANB also recognized two recent retirees at the CHANB Annual Conference. Marthe Léger former Facility Manager from Hôpital Stella- Maris-de-Kent, in Sainte-Anne-de-Kent and Dina Haché, also a Facility Manager, from St-Joseph Community Health Centre in Dalhousie were recognized. Dr. Robert Stewart acknowledged their many years of contributions to their communities, their facilities and to Catholic healthcare. Marthe continues to help out with our annual CHANB conferences and Dina is the Filles de Jesus representative on the Catholic Health International Board of Directors. We wish the both a happy and well deserved retirement.



Marthe Léger with Dr. Robert Stewart



Dina Haché with Dr. Robert Stewart

NEW CHANB BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE

At the CHANB Annual General Meeting, held September 19th in Miramichi, the new Board of Directors of Association was announced, along with new Executive.

2024-2025 CHANB Board of Directors

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| One Director selected by the Religious Institutes | Dina Haché, Dieppe |
| One Director selected by Catholic Health Partners | vacant |
| Two Directors Elected by the Hospitals | Jennifer Eagan, Perth-Andover - new member Sindy Turcotte, Saint Quentin |
| Two Directors Elected by Long Term Care Facilities | Sheana Mohra, Saint John Mike Kingston, Miramichi - new member |
| Two Directors selected by the Board | Adélard Cormier, St. Paul Nadia Losier, Tracadie-Sheila |
| One Director selected by the Bishops | Bishop Claude Champagne, Edmundston |
| Three Directors elected from Members-at-Large | Heather Oakley, Saint John Claire Savoie, Bathurst Vicky Knight, Fredericton |

Executive 2024 - 2025

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|----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| President | Heather Oakley | Treasurer | Dina Haché |
| Vice-President | Nadia Losier | Past Chair | Vacant |
| Secretary | Adélard Cormier | Ex officio & Secretary to the Board | R. B. Stewart, Executive Director |

UPCOMING CHANB BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETINGS

December 4, 2024
February 26, 2025

**For more information about the
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