



**K** Kensington  
Health



# ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT

2021/2022





# KENSINGTON HEALTH ANNUAL COMMUNITY REPORT 2021/2022

[Kensington Health](#) is a not-for-profit, community-based provider of specialized healthcare services. Since our inception, we have dedicated ourselves to tirelessly pursuing the best ways to take better care of the communities we serve, and to creating a system in which everyone has access to healthcare experiences that put patient needs first.

Continue reading this Annual Community Report to learn more about our commitment to meaningful community care.



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that the land we operate on is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.



# LETTER FROM THE INTERIM CEO & BOARD CHAIR



**Terry Caputo**  
Interim President and CEO  
Kensington Health

*Terry Caputo*



**Jim Nelles**  
Board Chair  
Kensington Health

*Jim Nelles*

The past two years have been some of the hardest in Kensington Health's history. COVID-19 dealt relentless blow after blow, and our residents, patients, their families, and colleagues were tested like never before. We experienced moments of immense tragedy and grief, but also incredible moments of triumph and courage.

In some ways, 2021 was even more challenging than the year before. When the rest of the world was busy finding a new, more relaxed normal, we had to remain vigilant through every wave, despite employee burnout, frustrated patients, and residents and families who desperately wanted for post-pandemic stability.

But the last year also saw tremendous progress despite the many challenges we faced. While we aren't out of the woods yet, renewal and growth are on the horizon. The spirit that makes Kensington so special has been reignited, and joy and laughter once again carry through our halls. In so many ways, it feels like we are 'back'!

We would like to take this opportunity to thank our outgoing President and CEO, John Yip, for his six years of dedicated service and stewardship.

He helped see us all through the hardest two years of the pandemic, and his legacy will live on through the many accomplishments of his tenure. His focus on meeting the needs of this community with compassion, empathy, and kindness continues to inspire us today.

As we move forward along the road to recovery, we must reaffirm our commitment to community and to care. Care for our amazing staff and volunteers, who worked so tirelessly to get us back to this hopeful state. Care for our patients, residents, and clients, who displayed incredible patience and fortitude in the face of impossibly difficult circumstances. Care for all the community members and families whose lives were changed by the pandemic. Care that inspires fresh ideas and new approaches. Community care.

We are honored to work with the Kensington community and remain committed to ensuring that the care we provide is accessible, equitable, meaningful, and impactful. We thank each of you for your tireless support and look forward to continuing together along the road to recovery.

***"The road to recovery will not always be easy, but I will take it one day at a time, focusing on the moments I've dreamed about for so long." - Amanda Lindhout***



# APPRECIATION & WELLNESS

Kensington's amazing staff and volunteer team has endured a tremendously difficult period since the start of the pandemic. Without fail, they have guided our patients, residents, [Second Mile Club](#) clients, their families, and support systems through the most challenging of times, as safely and as comfortably as possible. They are heroes, each and every one.

## INSIGHT FROM THE GARDENS

In May, we shared a story about [Kensington Nurses](#), to highlight their experiences through COVID-19 and celebrate their efforts. Trang Nguyen, a nurse with over 15 years of experience at the [Gardens](#), described the past two years this way: "It was hard managing the outbreaks and isolations, as well as increased workloads, but our team is amazing and we pulled through together!" This succinctly gets to the heart of the matter; across Kensington, our team faced incredible challenges, and yet continued to support one another and the people they care for.

To help staff and volunteers meet the many challenges presented by COVID-19, the Gardens team also relied on innovative solutions and the Kensington community at large. For example, in January, when facing a critical staffing shortage due to the onset of the Omicron wave, the team put out a call to ask family members whether they'd be interested in taking on a Resident Home Area (RHA) Aide role. Over 20 people answered the call and provided critical support on specific RHAs until the wave receded, staffing needs stabilized, and the program ended in March. It was a true example of community care and we are so thankful to everyone who participated

## WORKING TOWARDS WELLNESS

After everything they have faced, it is incumbent upon us to provide our team with the same compassion and care that they so consistently provide to others. This commitment has led to a renewed focus on wellness, to support the physical, mental, and emotional health of Kensington staff and volunteers.

This focus led us to develop a new, cross-functional approach to wellness: our Wellness Ambassador Program. By relying on teamwork and a shared commitment to wellness, the volunteer Wellness Ambassadors will develop programming that enhances personal and professional well-being across our campus. We encourage staff and volunteers from all our entities to participate, as more diverse views will inspire more impactful and effective approaches. With their support, the future of wellness at Kensington Health is both promising and exciting.





# HEALTH EQUITY

COVID-19 unearthed deeply rooted inequities in our healthcare system. Data collected throughout the pandemic plainly showed what so many in our community already knew: those who already faced health inequities fared worse. For example, did you know that an incredible 73% of people who were hospitalized due to COVID-19 were racialized? The causes of these inequities are complicated and multi-faceted but require a sustained and deliberate effort to combat.

Through a multi-pronged diversity, equity and inclusion strategy, Kensington Health is working to help right systemic wrongs both inside our organization and regionally through our work with the Mid-West Toronto Ontario Health Team.

Our goal is to create an environment that provides equitable access to quality care, and to foster a sense of inclusion where every member of our community feels safe, valued and respected for who they are. Over time, we aim to become a change agent in the delivery of high-quality care that leads to equal health outcomes for every person we serve, regardless of their race, ethnicity, income, gender identity, ability or sexual orientation.

## CLINICAL HEALTH EQUITY

- ➔ **Dr. Nadine Persaud, PhD, MSW, RSW**  
Executive Director, Kensington Hospice  
Senior Director, Client Services, Kensington Health
- ➔ **Dr. Naheed Dosani, MSC, MD, CCFP(PC), BSc**  
Clinical Health Equity Lead, Kensington Health



### Program Highlights

In 2021, Kensington Health launched its inaugural Clinical Health Equity Program, led by Dr. Nadine Persaud and Dr. Naheed Dosani. This new program aims to provide tangible actions to ensure that health equity is the foundation from which all care is delivered institution-wide. The first step in integrating clinical health equity into Kensington Health operations was around the language we use to describe who we care for. For example, instead of focusing on “marginalized populations”, we focused on “structurally vulnerable” populations. In addition, as opposed to just focusing on the social determinants of health (i.e., the social factors that impact how we live, learn, work and play), we started to steer the organization in a direction focused on addressing the structural determinants of health (i.e., those factors that cause inequities in the social determinants of health like racism, ageism, and ableism). Through various initiatives, the Clinical Health Equity portfolio at Kensington Health has begun to take flight. Below are some highlights of our achievements.

### Improving the Way We Collect Data

Through a pilot based at our hospice, we developed and launched a new innovative data collection infrastructure to capture key sociodemographic data to understand the social factors impacting the people we care for at Kensington Health. To explore the experiences of our staff’s understanding of health equity, we conducted one-on-one interviews. The data collected in our first year at the hospice highlighted gaps in supporting structurally vulnerable populations and so we began the implementation of clinical health equity initiatives to address these gaps.

### Transforming Referral Pathways To Prioritize Equity

The data demonstrated that we needed to improve access to structurally vulnerable communities. For example, our hospice program re-designed how we accept and review referrals to create a low threshold, low-barrier equity-based admission process.

### A More Holistic Approach to Clinical Care

To emphasize equity on the frontlines, our team revamped interdisciplinary rounds sessions at the hospice to ensure that each discipline is represented. In addition, over the past year, we have begun facilitating wisdom circles. Wisdom circles bring the interdisciplinary team together through knowledge exchange, clinical care, and practices support.

### Strengthened Community Collaborations

Significant effort was made to strengthen our relationships with various institutions, including hospitals and home-care programs to better support patients needing care. For example, our team developed a new partnership with the Inner-City Health Associates’ ([www.icha-toronto.ca](http://www.icha-toronto.ca)) PEACH (Palliative Education and Care for the Homeless) Program to better support the palliative care needs of people experiencing homelessness in Toronto. In addition, Kensington Health worked to develop a new innovative role within the PEACH Program, the ‘Health Navigator’. The PEACH Program’s Health Navigator supports the social needs of patients experiencing homelessness while living with serious and often life-limiting illnesses.



## Establishing a Culture of Research Focused on Health Equity

Multiple research studies were started this past year, including a systematic review of how the hospice palliative care system can be more equitable. Another study is underway looking at inequities in access to palliative care based on geography.

## Invited Presentations Related to Advocacy

Dr. Persaud and Dr. Dosani were invited to present the work being done at Kensington Health in the area of Clinical Health Equity at McMaster University's Division of Palliative Care Grand Rounds. In addition, they were invited to deliver a keynote address at the 2022 Hospice Palliative Care Ontario Conference on improving equitable access to palliative care through the lens of equity, diversity & inclusion.

## Looking Forward

The team looks forward to developing an education series for all clinical staff institution-wide, centered around trauma-informed care, cultural humility, substance abuse, complex grief, advance care planning, anti-racism in healthcare and caring for racialized people living with advanced illness. Further, plans are in place to expand the footprint of the Clinical Health Equity program throughout the institution. Finally, we aim to establish Kensington Health as an organization committed to anti-racism and anti-oppression to better care for our communities while building a compassionate community.

# LONG-TERM CARE

- ➔ **Dr. Nadine Persaud, PhD, MSW, RSW**  
Executive Director, Kensington Hospice  
Senior Director, Client Services, Kensington Health
- ➔ **Dr. Amit Arya, MD, CCFP (PC), FCFP**  
Palliative Care Lead, Kensington Health



The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for improved care in long-term care. Yet, most long-term residents across Ontario do not receive palliative care in a setting where the average life expectancy is just 18 months. Furthermore, despite the rising complexity and acuity in long-term care settings, access to specialist palliative care physician consults is rare. In March 2021, Dr. Amit Arya was hired as the Palliative Care Lead at Kensington Gardens to address these concerns. Dr. Arya's role at Kensington Gardens involves front-line clinical care and working with Dr. Persaud to improve palliative care through education, leadership, and research. Below are some of the highlights of our achievements.

## Enhancing the Provision of Clinical Care

Since the start of the program, on-site and virtual specialist palliative care support has been provided to over 72 long-term care residents who required assistance with complex symptoms, goals of care conversations, and end-of-life care. Nurses, personal care attendants, and social workers were debriefed and supported after every palliative care consult.

As a result of this intervention, there has been a 7% reduction in the number of residents who died in hospital, as well as a reduction in the overall need for hospitalization. The end-of-life order set was updated to align with current practice standards. A specialist palliative care physician is now available from 8 AM to 5 PM from Monday to Friday for telephone consultation by front-line staff.

### **Expanding Educational Needs**

A needs assessment was conducted for all direct-care staff to understand their palliative care educational needs. During palliative care week, Dr. Persaud and Dr. Arya presented to 177 front-line staff on the need for early, integrated palliative care in long-term care. As part of their clinical rotation with Dr. Arya, several family medicine residents and palliative care fellows were able to work Kensington Gardens.

### **Innovation Through Research**

Currently, a retrospective chart review is underway to examine healthcare outcomes for all residents seen through the specialist palliative care program. Dr. Arya and Dr. Persaud are also leading a scoping review of specialist palliative care interventions in long-term care. Front-line staff at Kensington Gardens participated in a research study led by the University of Ottawa on improving end-of-life prescribing in long-term care. The Kensington Gardens is participating in a study (funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research) about implementing the RESPECT tool, a validated tool which will provide a median prognosis for a long-term care resident, to help guide goals of care discussions and overall delivery of palliative care services.

### **Advocacy Through Action**

Dr. Arya and Dr. Persaud have been invited to present at the Hospice Palliative Care Annual Conference, Canadian Virtual Hospice, the AdvantAGE Annual Conference, and the Sinai Health/UHN Geriatrics Institute Education Day. CBC Toronto did several features on Kensington Gardens Long-Term Care, specifically on the impact of COVID-19 in long-term care. Dr. Persaud and Dr. Arya have published an opinion piece in the Toronto Star on investing in palliative care as a solution to the hospital crisis:

(<https://www.thestar.com/opinion/2022/09/29/ontarios-hospitals-are-facing-a-crisis-investing-in-palliative-care-is-a-vital-solution.html>).

### **Future Directions**

The team will be restarting the palliative care committee to improve clinical programming and expand quality improvement initiatives. We also hope to expand this "generalist plus specialist" model of palliative care at other long-term care homes around the city.







We believe there's always a new opportunity to improve community well-being if we have the passion and compassion to find it, and often those opportunities can be found within our partnerships. We are committed to finding creative and impactful ways of partnering with health and community care organizations, to finding new care delivery solutions, and to creating more seamless experiences for patients.

### **MID-WEST TORONTO ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM**

Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) partner healthcare and social service providers in the same geographic region to better connect patients and providers in their community. Kensington Health proudly joins more than 50 partner organizations and nearly 300 primary care providers to make up the Mid-West Toronto Ontario Health Team. Together, we are building on existing partnerships and working to create an OHT that truly serves our communities. We all share the belief that if we design a system the works for the most vulnerable in our community, we are creating a system that works for everyone.

By connecting hospitals, family doctors, community health centres, home care, mental health and addictions services, and social services in our region, we are taking the burden off our patients and caregivers and creating a more seamless healthcare experience. Our work is also guided by people with lived experience who help shape our plans every step along the way.

### ***Kensington's Contributions***

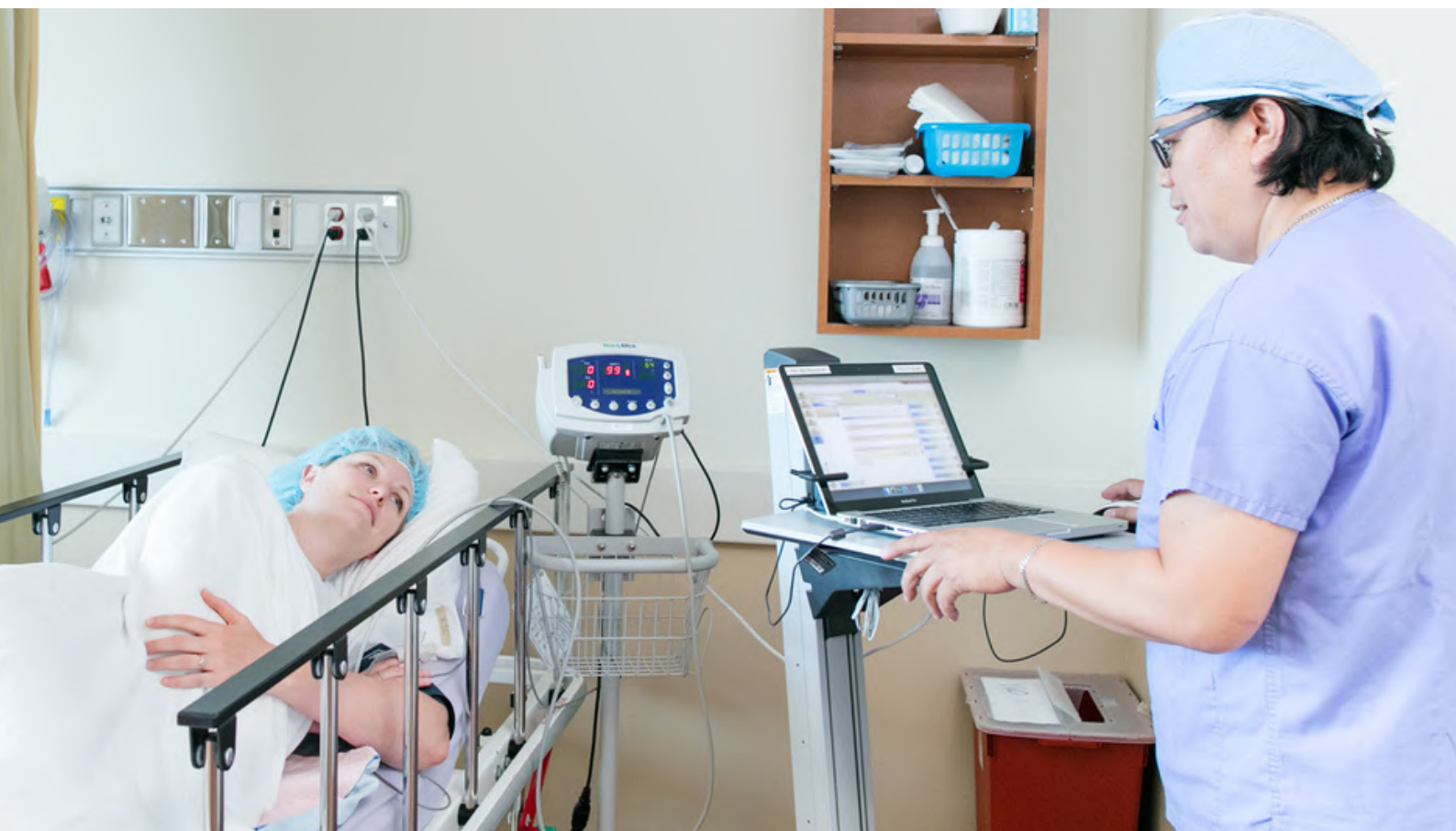
Kensington Health is the host-site of the Mid-West Toronto OHT Secretariat and the holder of implementation funds. Our contributions and commitment to this OHT allow us to help shape the future of healthcare delivery in Ontario and make impactful contributions to long-term decision-making processes. We are actively involved in key areas, such as the Healthy Aging Working Group and Data Management Working Group, and are currently undertaking projects that better connect primary care to our ambulatory services. Learn more about the OHT at [www.midwesttorontooh.ca](http://www.midwesttorontooh.ca).

## HOSPITAL PARTNERSHIPS

In December, in response to growing concerns about the increasing surgical backlogs and to improve patient care, the [Kensington Screening Clinic](#) (KSC) partnered with Unity Health Toronto (UHT) to perform cancer colonoscopy screening and minor endoscopy procedures. As part of the program, UHT endoscopists now bring their patients to KSC for their procedures and KSC is able to supplement their patient lists with additional procedures. In short, Kensington and UHT have been able to serve more patients by working together.

In June, given the success of the existing partnership, KSC entered into a similar agreement with University Health Network (UHN). Through these two partnerships, KSC was able to book over 2,000 procedures between December 17, 2021, and October 19, 2022. Both current agreements have since been extended until March 31, 2023, and we expect the number of procedures booked through the partnerships to increase next year, as more external endoscopists have recently joined.

We're proud to highlight that not only have these partnerships allowed Kensington to serve more patients and support the healthcare system by reducing endoscopic backlogs, but they also help enhance the care we provide. Thanks in part to ongoing collaboration and discussion with fellow experts, the team at KSC recently received congratulations from the Canadian Association of Gastroenterology (CAG) for successfully running their very first Skills Enhancement for Endoscopy (SEE) Program. This training program provides up-skilling and improvement of colonoscopy skills, with a focus on patient safety and comfort. The feedback we received about our participation was glowing and demonstrated how a collaborative approach to care can ensure the best outcomes for all involved.







## OPTIMISTIC OUTLOOK

We are optimistic about the road ahead for Kensington Health, as our model is well-suited to help address current health system challenges. By anticipating healthcare system needs, investing in future solutions, and increasing the accessibility of care, we are primed to be a leader in community-based healthcare for years to come.

### INCREASED CAPACITIES

As a not-for-profit provider of out-of-hospital surgeries and procedures, Kensington Health is uniquely positioned to support the Ontario healthcare system's surgical backlogs. Through the [Kensington Eye Institute](#) (KEI) and KSC, we provide community-based surgeries and procedures, respectively, that can be handled safely and efficiently outside of hospitals. In 2021, we foresaw the need to further support the surgical backlog and invested in building a fifth operating room for KEI, which increased our capacity from 12,000 to 15,000 eye procedures annually. In 2021, we applied for and were granted a funding allocation for 2,000 additional procedures, and we have applied for additional procedures again this year.

Continuing our commitment to increase capacity in the system, we are working on adding a sixth operating room and have submitted a government proposal to secure funding for this expansion. Similarly, we are working on adding a third procedure room for KSC, which will increase our capacity from approximately 6,400 screening procedures per year to over 9,000. Our ability to further increase capacities would mean reduced wait times and less strain on hospitals; all-in-all a major win for patient care in Ontario.

### SUPPORTING ONTARIO'S HEALTH SYSTEM

Our focus on increasing capacities aligns with the Government of Ontario's recent announcement that they are looking to alleviate surgical backlogs. As an not-for-profit Independent Health Facility, KEI is well suited to support this goal. With the proper support and funding, we can expand our care by providing thousands more surgeries and procedures, which will provide much needed relief for hospitals and an essential increase in services for patients. Of further benefit, as a private not-for-profit care provider, our focus has been and will always be on investing and reinvesting in patient care. As we look to the future, we are committed to delivering meaningful solutions that will consistently support patients and their families.

## RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

Our focus on the enrichment and advancement of the academic healthcare sphere is often led by the [Kensington Research Institute](#) (KRI), in partnership with the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine. We have recently established a unique Ophthalmology Cytokine and Imaging Laboratory at KEI, the use of which will allow clinician scientists to obtain a molecular fingerprint that, together with imaging and clinical data, can enable truly individualized care in ophthalmology. This is an exciting and impactful step forward for vision care at Kensington.

Another major ongoing KRI initiative is the development of Canada's first state-of-the-art Centre of Excellence and Discovery in Ocular Genomic Disease (a Clinical Investigative Research Unit) at KEI, in partnership with the University of Toronto. Once ready, the Centre will not only be a place where patients with inherited ocular disease can receive diagnosis and care, but will also become a leader in first-in-human clinical trials, made possible through our expansive network of partners, including five fully affiliated teaching hospitals. Our goal is to create educational, research, and patient care programs that are recognized worldwide and generate collaboration with some of the finest researchers, health professionals, and pharmaceutical companies in the world. This Centre would act as the umbrella organization into which academic practitioners across the city, including our affiliated institutes, would integrate to form a unified Toronto-based program in ocular genetics.

While still under development, this Centre for Excellence contributes significantly to our optimistic outlook, as does our involvement in over 15 clinical trials and over 50 investigator-initiated research studies. Our commitment to research remains strong, and we are always looking to advance our clinical understanding and procedures. One upcoming example is research from Kensington's [Eye Bank of Canada \(Ontario Division\)](#) that will advance surgical techniques in corneal transplantation procedures. This research study will enhance vision care outcomes for those in need, and is one more way that Kensington care is helping Ontarians.

Thanks to our commitment to research and innovation through KRI, we are extremely excited about the future of patient and community care across our ambulatory services – KEI, KSC, the [Kensington Vision & Research Centre](#), and the [Kensington Diagnostic Imaging Centre](#) – as well as our Eye Bank.





## HOSPICE EXPANSION

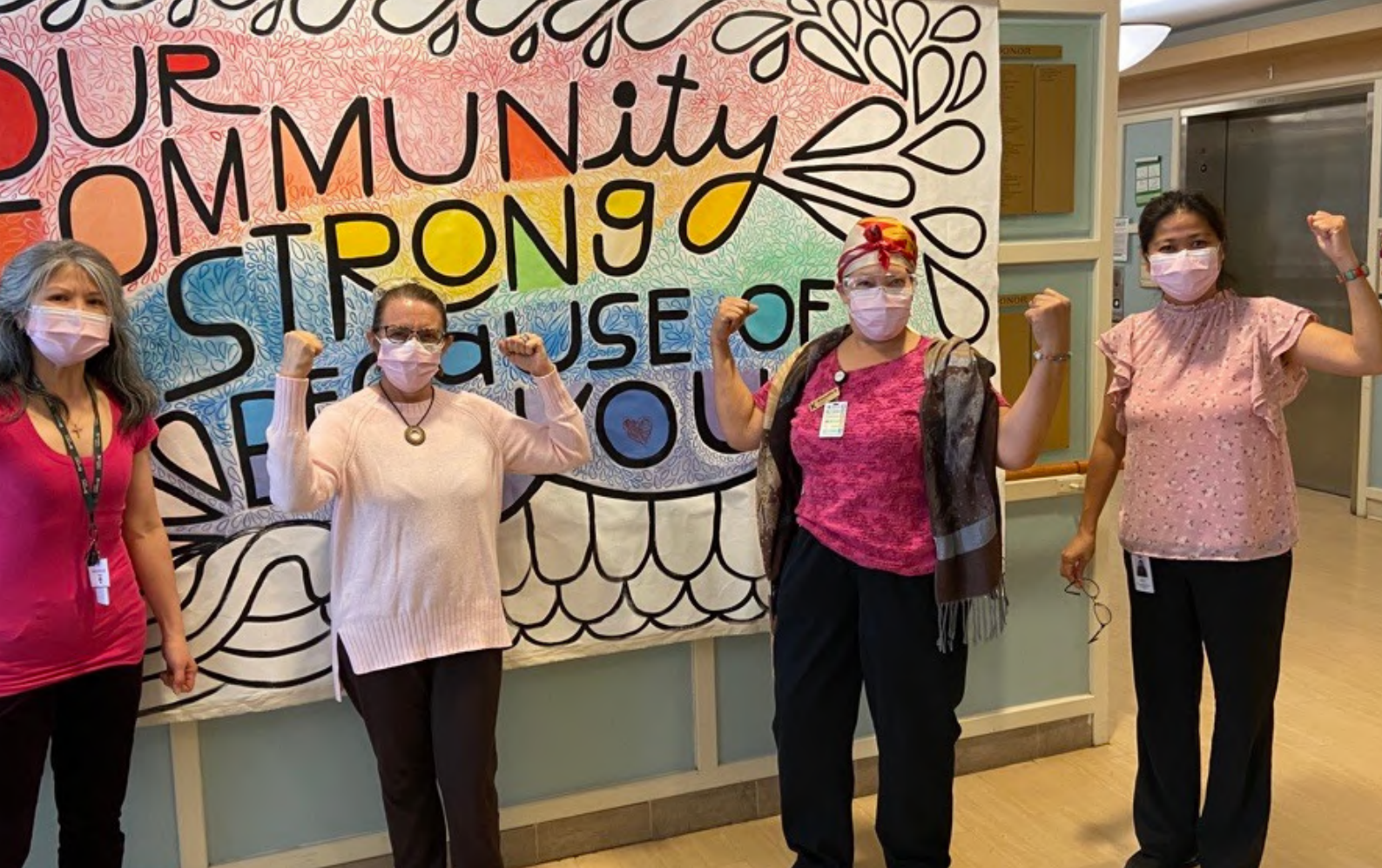
A major project that fills us with optimism and excitement is our soon-to-be-completed [Hospice expansion](#). In the coming months, nine new suites will be added to our existing 10-bed [Hospice](#), a major increase in access to meaningful end-of-life care. The expansion will also accommodate additional clinical areas, new gardens, and community rooms, and support increased programming for those living in the community with life-limiting illness, through the community day hospice. The full scope of the project allows Kensington to reach out to those communities who have been underserved due to structural barriers and increase access to the meaningful end-of-life care that every single person deserves.

Our deepest thanks to the Kensington community for rallying around the cause. We believe that hospice care is human care, and that support for the dying is a fundamental human right. The investment in the expansion from donors, Kensington Hospice family members, staff, and advocates for quality palliative care, shows how many of you share this belief. We are so grateful for your partnership in expanding our palliative infrastructure.

Nobody should have to raise the money to get access to the care they deserve. Government funding covers only 60% of Hospice operational support. That means the other 40% must come from philanthropy – each and every year! Even though hospice helps hospitals, by keeping beds free for emergencies like COVID, not enough people know how beneficial it is for the healthcare system. The cost of operating a hospice bed at Kensington is \$460 per day compared with an acute care hospital bed at \$1100. That's less than half!

To draw attention to the issue from beyond our dedicated community, we recently started a [Hospice Awareness Campaign](#) to build a broader network of advocates. Our goal is simple: create space for equitable and accessible end-of-life care by highlighting the overwhelming need. Join us in spreading the word. **Pledge your support and make an impact in your community by visiting [kensingtonhealth.org/foundation/support-hospice](https://kensingtonhealth.org/foundation/support-hospice)!** You can also advance the cause and help remove barriers to end-of-life care by sharing Kensington Hospice content with your network on [Twitter](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#), and [Instagram](#).





## THE ROAD AHEAD

**Kensington Health is on the road to recovery.**

**With one eye on our continued fight to keep COVID-19 at bay, we now turn the other eye toward full recovery and the road ahead.**

**To Kensington staff, volunteers, patients, residents, clients, their families, and supporters, we say thank you. Thank you for your commitment, compassion and care. Because of you, community care is in the best of hands.**

**Today, we commit once more to providing the kind of support you so thoroughly deserve. It is our honour to work with you and for you, and we do not take the responsibility lightly. By working together, we will undoubtedly give new meaning to community care.**