



# ConnectWell

## COMMUNITY HEALTH

# Annual Report

## 2022-2023



The work of ConnectWell Community Health takes place on the traditional unceded territories of the Indigenous nations who have lived on these lands since time immemorial. In particular, we acknowledge the Anishnaabeg, Huron-Wendat, Haudenosaunee and Oneida peoples.

*Eagle feather design contributed by  
Indigenous artist Margaret Summers*

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# About ConnectWell Community Health

ConnectWell Community Health is a multi-service, multi-site charitable organization established in 2001 through the voluntary integration of several pre-existing non-profit organizations in Lanark and Renfrew, including the North Lanark Community Health Centre (est. 1993), Lanark Community Programs (est. 1979), Connections (est. 1993), Mental Health Peer Support Project (est. 1999), and the Whitewater Bromley Community Health Centre (est. 2004), among others. One of the drivers for this integration was to encourage and deepen collaboration between health, social and developmental services for the rural residents in Lanark and Renfrew Counties.

As our integration has evolved, so too has our organizational structure, leadership team, board composition, corporate name, regional footprint and much more. ConnectWell Community Health has 240+ employees and 100+ volunteers who work together to support people and communities in achieving and maintaining their best possible health and social well-being. We provide a broad range of client and community-centred primary and allied health care, autism and developmental services, health promotion/community development and mental health services and supports in the rural communities across the Counties of Lanark, Renfrew, and Leeds and Grenville. Some of our services are also available virtually without geographic restrictions.



## Our Interdisciplinary Team of Staff

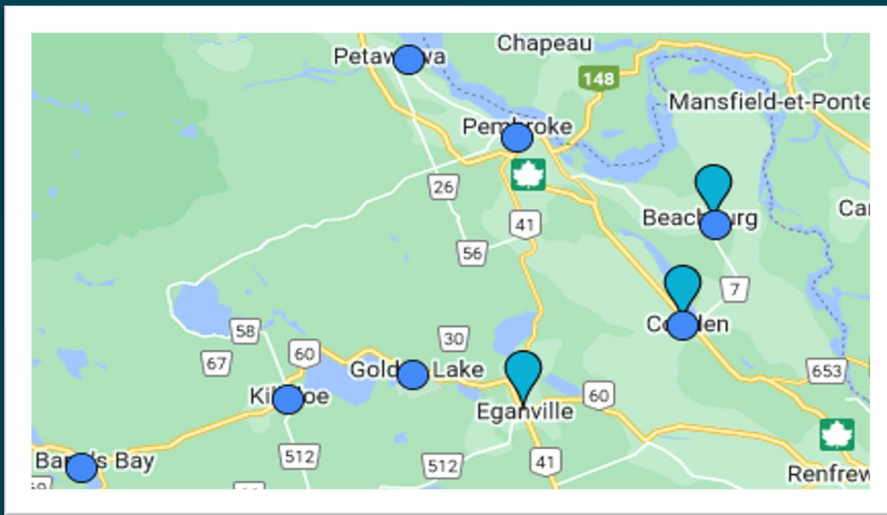
**Regulated front-line staff:** Chiropodist, Dentist and Dental Hygienist (partner service), Early Childhood Educators, Family Physicians, Geriatrician (Consulting), Kinesiologist, Nurse Practitioners, Occupational Therapist, Physiotherapist, Psychiatrist (Consulting), Psychologist, Psychotherapists, Registered Dietitian, Registered Nurses and Registered Practical Nurses, Respiratory Therapists/Respiratory Educators, Social Workers, Speech Language Pathologists.

**Other front-line staff:** Autism Service Therapists, Behaviour Analysts (Board Certified Autism Services), Behaviour Consultants, Communicative Disorder Assistants, Community Programs Coordinator, Community Health Workers, Family Support Workers, Health Promoter, Infant and Child Development Consultants, Mental Health Peer Support Workers, Respite Service Workers, Residential Care Workers, School Readiness and Playgroup Facilitators, System Navigators, Therapeutic Riding Instructors/Therapist.

**Senior leadership team:** Chief Executive Officer and Director(s) of Corporate Services, Developmental Services, Respite Services, Mental Health Services, Lanark Primary Care, and Renfrew County sites.

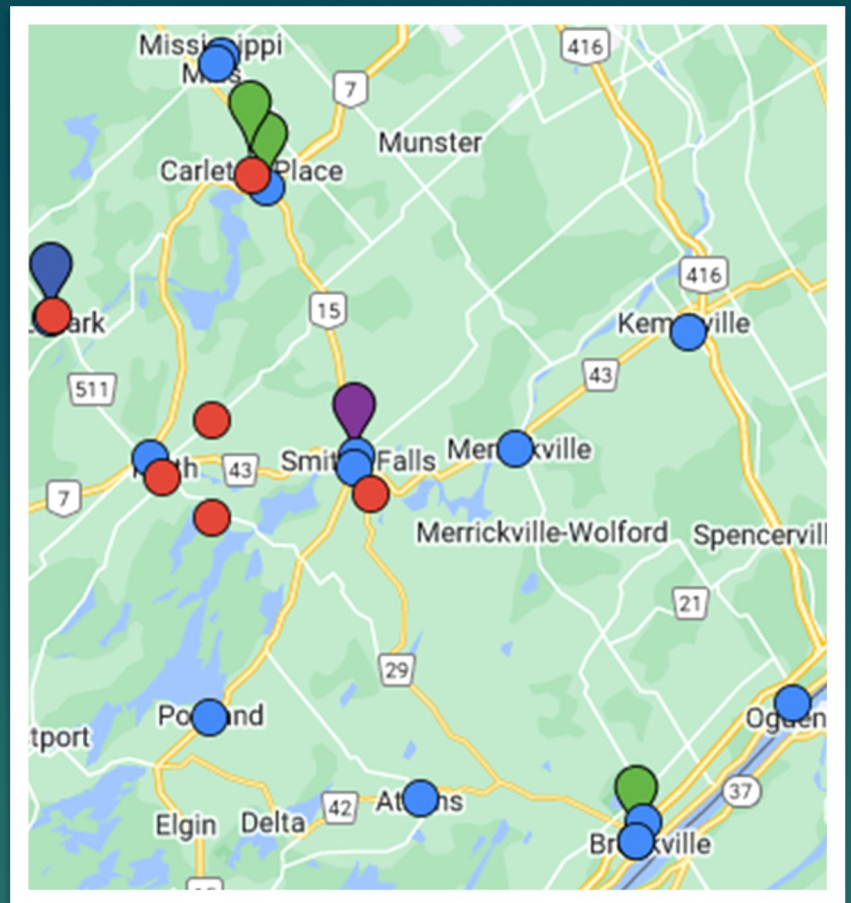
**Administration and Support Staff:** Data, Finance & IT staff, Executive and Administrative Assistants, Receptionists, Medical Secretaries.

# Geographic Area Served



## ***Distances between:***

Barrys' Bay to Beachburg = 86 km  
 Beachburg to Eganville = 38 km  
 Beachburg to Lanark Village = 113 km  
 Lanark Village to Almonte = 32 km  
 Carleton Place to Brockville = 79 km  
 Lanark Village to Smiths Falls = 38 km  
 Beachburg to Brockville = 213 km





## Letter from Jean Dunning, Board Chair and Sarah Sark, Chief Executive Officer

Each year, our organization reports a busy, challenging, and rewarding past year. This year has been no exception. We welcomed Sarah Sark as our new Chief Executive Officer. Over the past 25 years, Sarah has worked as a regulated health professional, manager, and director in various positions at ConnectWell, as well as acting as the organization's Privacy Officer. Her understanding of the organization through this transition has been an asset. Sarah, together with the Board and staff, continued to work diligently to maintain and grow services in support of our clients and families.

During this year, we also continued to successfully meet the acute challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. Although the pandemic is not completely over, the lessons it taught us have resulted in several innovative approaches to serving our communities. Throughout the pandemic, we maintained essential in-person services across most of our programs. As public health measures allowed, we have increased in-person services and continue to maximize our ability to serve clients by maintaining the option of virtual service and meetings where appropriate.

As the need for attention to the necessary considerations posed by the pandemic diminished, and in response to a rapidly changing care environment and an increase in the complexity of client needs, we turned our attention to reviewing and renewing our strategic directions. To that end, we engaged the Tamarack Institute to guide us as we considered the best path to follow to ensure we are able to continue to provide quality care and meet the needs of our communities over the next four years. The new strategic plan is in progress, and we look forward to sharing it with you very soon. When it is finalized, it will be posted on our website.

ConnectWell also engaged in the yearlong preparations necessary to apply for our sixth accreditation review. The Canadian Centre for Accreditation is a national accrediting body which offers third-party reviews to community-based agencies providing health and social services. ConnectWell met all of the mandatory and leading practice standards at our last review, and we have every expectation we will continue to do so. The site review will occur in September 2023.

Of course, a number of issues continue to need our attention. Provincial funding changes to the Ontario Autism Program have meant the development of a new and creative approach to meeting the needs of families. Human resources recruitment and retention remain challenging and we continue to actively recruit for many key positions, including primary care (physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses), allied health staff (mental health counsellors, speech-language pathologists), and respite staff. With staffing changes, we are seeing more demand than ever placed on our employees, with an increase in advocacy on their behalf. We know that creativity and innovation are skills our staff have in abundance, and they are supported by our dedicated volunteers, community supporters, and organizational partners. We extend our sincere thanks and gratitude to each of you for your continued belief in our values and commitment to serve.

## We Believe . . .

... in the right of all people to have conditions and resources for good health, including peace, shelter, education, food, income, access to health care, a stable ecosystem, sustainable resources, social justice, equity and social inclusion.

## Our Vision . . .

... a community that is healthy and just and supportive of all.

## Our Mission . . .

... together we support people and communities in achieving and maintaining their best possible health and well-being.

### Board of Directors

Jean Dunning, Chair

William Enright, Vice Chair

Kim O'Connor, Secretary-Treasurer

Tom Baumgartner, Past Chair

Stephen Bird, Director

Bruce Brough, Director

Carole Devine, Director

Nick Dibdin, Director

Miriam Hunt, Director

Tambrae Knapp, Director

David Moat, Director

Sharon Mousseau, Director

### Retiring from the Board

Stephen Bird, 3 years

Cynthia Carver, 3 years

Maddy Dever, 3 years

William Enright, 2 years

Sharon Mousseau, 3 years





## 2022-23 HIGHLIGHTS

Looking back at the past year, ConnectWell has experienced challenges as well as successes. None of these accomplishments would be possible without the hard work of our staff, partners, volunteers, clients, and community members.

As always, we are guided by our strategic directions, working towards a community that is healthy and just and supportive of all.

### WE WILL...

#### **Maintain and further develop excellence in meeting health and community needs**

Like many primary healthcare organizations, ConnectWell had seen a significant drop in cancer screening rates during the pandemic. According to statistics



gathered by Ontario Health, almost a million fewer colorectal, breast, and cervical cancer screenings were conducted in 2020 than in 2019. To address this issue, we gladly accepted an invitation to participate in

the Alliance's cancer screening learning collaborative. ConnectWell formed a team across Lanark and Renfrew, consisting of physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, management, and our data officer. Working

with a quality improvement coach, we identified inconsistent data as the root cause of the problem. With the improvement of data entry processes, the team developed a process map and a standardized set of procedures. Concurrently with the learning collaborative, our primary care team was implementing a new dashboard tool within our EMR (Electronic Medical Records). The combination of these changes led to more accurate data, and less time spent on data validation. Participating in the learning collaborative provided a greater appreciation for staff engagement in quality improvement. Everyone involved shared insights, identified challenges, and proposed solutions.

The Alliance for Healthier Communities received grant funding from the Public Health Agency of Canada to develop new social prescribing initiatives for mental health. ConnectWell was the recipient of funds to support a project focused on promoting mental health and well-being, destigmatizing mental illness, and promoting the role of the mental health peer support worker. This project supports programs across all ConnectWell sites, and runs until March 31, 2024.



**Alliance for Healthier Communities**  
Alliance pour des communautés en santé

## WE WILL...

# Provide leadership and work towards equity to sustain and build the health and well-being of our rural communities

### Partnerships

ConnectWell plays a vital role in helping individuals of all ages achieve optimal health and well-being, but we couldn't achieve this goal without our collaborative partnerships with many organizations, networks, and coalitions.

- ◇ Our Developmental Services team is working with CHEO and KidsInclusive in the implementation of SmartStart Hubs (SSH). The purpose of SSH is to provide parents who are concerned about their child's development with a 'one-stop' they can contact to get information about local service providers. This reduces the need for families to share information with multiple agencies and will create greater efficiencies in the system.
- ◇ In Renfrew County, we established a partnership to embed paramedics as part of primary care outreach, in order to build capacity and divert patients from local emergency rooms. Renfrew staff also worked with Eganville & District Seniors to provide home-cooked and community meals to residents.
- ◇ Primary care staff joined in the Kids Come First Health Team initiative to help families catch up on immunizations that may have been missed due to the pandemic..

### Fresh Food Box Program



ConnectWell partnered with The Table Community Food Centre in a pilot produce prescription program. Healthcare workers from ConnectWell and Rideau Community Health Services identified people who would benefit from improved access to fresh produce and, twice a month, they are offered a free produce box from the Fresh Food Box program. The program is financially supported by the Perth and District Community Foundation and Perth Rotary.

## WE WILL...

### Promote the engagement and well-being of staff and volunteers to strengthen our organization

ConnectWell volunteers give enormous amounts of time and talent to the organization, bringing their life experiences, skills, abilities, compassion, intellect and humour. We are very fortunate to have an incredibly dedicated group of people helping with programs such as Therapeutic Riding, Birthing Companions, Community Volunteer Income Tax Program, fitness, and more.



National Volunteer Recognition week took place April 25-29, 2022 and we had the opportunity to celebrate the 90+ individuals who contribute so much to our organization and communities ~ **THANK YOU!**



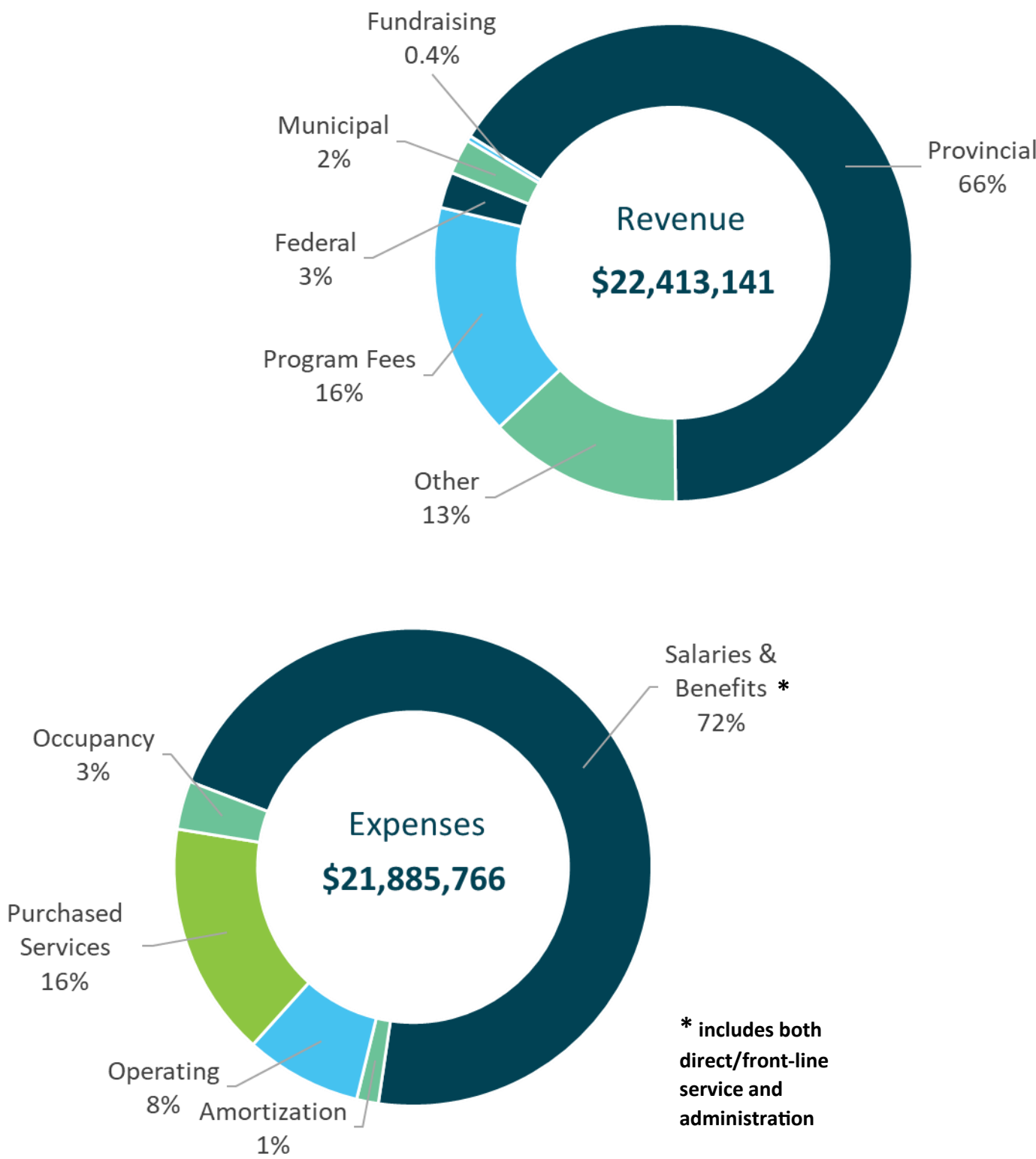
We reconnected with our colleagues through walking groups, book club meetings, spirit days, and regular potluck lunches. Plans are in the works for an all-staff event later this year, and we look forward to more fun times ahead as ConnectWell staff continue to support and encourage each other.

Emerging from the pandemic has been challenging, but staff were excited to return to in-person gatherings (while still using Zoom from time to time). Some of our favourite staff events over the last year have included 'pie day' with a Thanksgiving pie contest and auction, Hallowe'en costume contest, Christmas door decorating, baby and wedding showers, team rafting, and a golf tournament.





# Financial Summary



Please email [info@connectwell.ca](mailto:info@connectwell.ca) for a copy of the Audited Financial Statements

# Staff Service Recognition

## 40 YEARS

480 MONTHS  
2,080 WEEKS  
14,600 DAYS  
350,400 HOURS  
21,024,000 MINUTES

**Carol Anne McNeil, Director of Respite Services**

## 30 YEARS

360 MONTHS  
1,560 WEEKS  
10,950 DAYS  
262,800 HOURS  
15,768,000 MINUTES

**Pam Fergusson, Community Health Worker**

## 25 YEARS

300 MONTHS  
1,300 WEEKS  
9,125 DAYS  
219,000 HOURS  
13,140,000 MINUTES

**Tannia Cooke, Behaviour Consultant**  
**Sarah Sark, Chief Executive Officer**  
**Kara Symbolic, Community Programs and  
Communications Coordinator**

## 20 YEARS

240 MONTHS  
1,040 WEEKS  
7,300 DAYS  
175,200 HOURS  
10,512,000 MINUTES

**Michael Bingley, Nurse Practitioner**  
**Erin Hewson, Infant and Child Development  
Consultant**

# Staff Service Recognition

**15 YEARS**

180 MONTHS

780 WEEKS

5,475 DAYS

131,400 HOURS

7,884,000 MINUTES

**Alicja Gruder, Physician**

**Ellen Fleming Michaud, Lung Health Team Lead**

**Sarah Mattey, Respite Coordinator**

**Jennifer Smith, Autism Therapist**

**Jeff Winkenweder, Maintenance Coordinator**

**Betty Mae Bryanton, RPN**

**Katie Forfar, Physician**

**Tamela Kennedy, Administrative Assistant**

**Dorothy Mercier, RPN**

**10 YEARS**

120 MONTHS

520 WEEKS

3,650 DAYS

87,600 HOURS

5,256,000 MINUTES



**Angele Blaskie**

**LEIP**

**Resource Teacher**

**30 years**



**Teri Mullins**

**LEIP**

**Program Coordinator**

**27 years**



**Ellen Holmes**

**Lung Health**

**Respiratory Therapist**

**8 years**

## Retirements



**Congratulations!**

# CONNECTWELL IS...

transparent growing co-operative efficient perseverance family  
community-oriented welcoming empathetic family-focused passionate trusting  
dedicated meaningful inclusive sympathetic  
invested gratitude driven joyful caring changing effective stimulating  
nurturing flexible friendly encouraging relaxed  
professional understanding empathic supportive client-centred enthusiastic  
inviting accepting committed fun positive busy  
rewarding engaged creative healthy casual compassionate competitive innovative  
empowering cohesive progressive unified collaborative  
responsive forward-thinking respectful evolving  
community-minded

Word cloud developed with feedback from  
February 2023 ConnectWell staff survey



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