



Patient News

2019: Fall-Winter Edition

Welcome to your newsletter, created for patients by patients!

This newsletter is the third issue of Patient News, a project led by our Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC). Our PFAC is made up of 13 patients who meet once a month and work hard to improve the Family Health Team (FHT) patient experience. We work together to make sure your patient voice is included in healthcare decisions.

Do you want to know more or have some thoughts you'd like to share with the team? Contact us at FHTpfac@smh.ca

What's Happening in our Community?

- October 6-12 was Mental Illness Awareness Week with World Mental Health Day on October 10. The FHT offers many services to provide you with support. Discuss your concerns with your doctor, nurse practitioner or clinic nurse who all have training and experience in helping people with mental health concerns. This may include counselling, lifestyle advice and medications. They may also refer you to a community program or to one of our social workers, psychologist or psychology interns from Ryerson University. You will be assessed and matched to a treatment that is right for you.
- November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month. The majority (85%) of lung cancer cases are directly related to smoking tobacco, particularly cigarettes. If you are interested in quitting, ask your provider for a referral to the Smoking Cessation Clinic. Our services include a 1hour group education session, with follow up options for 1-1 counselling with a nurse trained to help you quit smoking. You may also be eligible for free Nicotine Replacement Therapy through the CAMH STOP study.
- November 14 is World Diabetes Day. Did you know that we have a diabetes education program, run by registered nurses and dieticians? These professionals are trained specifically in diabetes care. The program helps those living with diabetes to maintain healthy eating habits, set goals and use basic tools to help better manage their diabetes care. For more information please visit <http://www.stmichaelshospital.com/programs/familypractice/diabetes.php>

St. Michael's

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Academic Family
Health Team

Flu Season: What you need to know

What is the flu?

Influenza (the “Flu”) is a highly contagious virus spread through direct contact and more commonly through droplets or particles in the air from sneezing/coughing and talking. When you come in contact with these droplets, they can enter your body via the eyes, nose and mouth and infect you with the flu. Each year in Canada, it is estimated that influenza is responsible for 12,000 hospital admissions and 3000 deaths (Public Health Agency of Canada, 2019). The flu virus can spread before the onset of symptoms and even before you realize you are sick. Symptoms typically appear about 1-5 days after you’ve been exposed to the virus.



How does the flu vaccine work?

The flu virus can mutate and therefore the flu vaccine is slightly different each year. The flu vaccine usually provides protection against A and B strains of Influenza. The vaccine contains inactivated strains of influenza and helps your body build antibodies: specialized cells that can fight the real flu virus if you come in contact with it. Once you receive the flu vaccine it takes about 2 weeks before your body builds immunity and you are protected.



For more information:

[Toronto Public Health – Flu Information](#)

[Ministry of Health and Long Term Care \(MOHLTC\) – Flu Facts](#)

What are common flu symptoms?

Flu symptoms are similar to that of the common cold and can include cough, runny nose and sore throat. Flu symptoms are often more severe and accompanied by fever, muscle aches and fatigue. Most people recover from the flu within 7-10 days.



What can I do to help prevent getting the flu?

- Get your flu shot
- Wash your hands often
- Stay home if you are feeling unwell
- Wipe down frequently touched surfaces (phones, door knobs etc.)



Who should get the flu shot?

We recommend that everyone get a flu shot to protect themselves and those around them. Certain people are at greater risk of developing complications from the flu and we strongly encourage those people to come in for the flu shot. People at highest risk of developing complications from the flu include children age 6 months to 5 years, adults age 65 and older, pregnant women, and those with a chronic disease (e.g. Asthma/COPD, heart disease, and diabetes). If you are frequently around people who are high risk, it is important you get the flu shot too, in order to protect them (e.g. caregivers, those working with children and elderly).

If you are a patient of the FHT, you can get your flu shot at your home clinic. Simply **call to book an appointment with a nurse for a flu shot during regular business hours**. Please note flu shots are not available during the lunch hour 12-1pm.

Please feel free to **walk-in during our weekend clinics only** for a flu shot. Clinics are located at 410 Sherbourne St. on Saturdays and 73 Regent Park Blvd. on Sundays from 9:00am to 3:30pm.

Alternatively, you can get your flu shot at a local pharmacy (available to those 5 years and older) or a [Toronto Public Health Flu clinic](#).

Featuring Patient Advisors

Who We Are and Why We Got Involved

Patricia (Pat) Maurice

Pat's volunteer work started in her teens in Montreal where she worked as a volunteer, home visitor to shut-in seniors and supported early activities leading to the opening of a walk-in referral centre called Face A Face Centre D'ecoute, operated by the local Community Health Services Centre (CLSC). She acquired a wide range of skills throughout her work life including planning, program development and project management in Human Resources, particularly the development and implementation of employee benefits programs and systems.

As a retiree living in a large complex with many seniors, Pat is actively involved in her community. She has been involved in the planning and delivery of various services such as a tenant library, health workshops, a website, tenant guide, and an orientation and intake program for Syrian newcomers. She is an active member of the Toronto Police Services Neighbourhood Safety Council in her Thorncliffe Park Neighbourhood. She is also Co-chair of the Toronto Central LHIN Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC) where as a patient advisor, she has participated in co-design activities supporting several health-related initiatives. She is very committed to using her skills and experiences to improve the delivery of a quality patient centered care and services to Ontario residents.

Arun Jain

Arun moved to Canada in 2002 and has been a patient at the St. Lawrence Clinic since arriving. As a retired senior, he would like to give back to the community. Having participated in some workshops conducted by St. Michael's Hospital, he came across the opportunity to join the PFAC and have been a member since its inception. He has lived in India, the Middle East and the Far East. Arun is therefore uniquely positioned to bring the perspective gained by interacting with other health services to our group. He understands the challenges that immigrants face when navigating a new health system. His background in IT and Systems drives his interests in exploring ways that technology can be incorporated into improving the patient experience.

Arun believes that preventative medicine is the most important part of maintaining good health. The FHT is a great model of compassionate, accessible and innovative care for others to follow. The catchment area of St. Mikes is going through major transformation in terms of population density, ethnic, cultural and social diversity. Arun wants to actively engage in the process of meeting the emerging challenges for delivery of health services in a cost-effective manner.

Paul Steier

Paul Steier is a retired professional and independent business owner. Because of many complex health issues Paul has relied on the St. Michael's Hospital Academic Family Health Team for more than 20 years. Most recently Paul has become an enthusiastic fund raiser for the St. Michael's Foundation because of his positive experience at the Health Centre at 410 Sherbourne. This clinic took on staff and patients from the ground breaking HIV/AIDS clinic at the Wellesley Hospital when that clinic closed in 1998. Paul was one of those patients.

Having suffered the loss of a partner to HIV, and having contracted the disease himself, Paul is passionate about promoting the first rate care, compassion, integrity, kindness and emotional support that the medical practitioners and all staff give to patients at the clinic at 410. Paul also has brought his current spouse to the clinic, so 410 has remained in his family practice from day 1 to today.

"Because the clinic is part of the hospital, patients have access to great medical care, procedures and specialists. But there's a family feeling that you don't usually get in medicine" he says. He is now giving back to St. Mike's.

Patient Tips: Helpful Things for Patients

Patient Comfort Closet and Laurie Malone Comfort Fund

What is the Patient Comfort Closet? It is a closet that is stocked with everyday essentials and new clothing that providers can access to offer their patients in need. Through a partnership with Brands for Canada it is stocked every two months with items varying from personal hygiene to cleaning supplies and more. As all items are new, it is dignifying for our patients and can provide immediate comfort to those in need.

It was created in January 2017 at the Sumac Creek Clinic by our Community Engagement Specialist and proved to be an immediate success. The St. Jamestown and 410 Health Centres, through the Dr. Philip Berger Health Advocacy Fund, have also been able to build their own shared closet and there are smaller closets at each of the other clinics so that patients at all sites can access resources.



St. Michael's Hospital Academic Family Health Team has also committed to supporting our patients who are facing disadvantage by raising money for the **Laurie Malone Patient Comfort Fund**. It is a self-fundraised endeavour that allows us to support our patients whose health has been detrimentally affected by a range of social issues. In the last year we have helped our patients in many significant ways, including TTC tokens for travel to appointments, grocery cards for food, assisting with costs of essential medications, eye glasses, dental care, providing assistance to avoid eviction and baby equipment for our newest patients.

In 2018-2019 the department spent over \$50 000 to support hundreds of patients in need. The feedback from these individuals has been incredibly positive and they are overwhelmingly grateful for any assistance no matter how small, because they know it can make a huge difference to their lives. 100% of funds raised go directly to our patients.

If you are interested in donating please visit <http://www.stmichaelsfoundation.com/comfort>. Cash donations are eligible for a tax receipt.