

## SPRING NEWSLETTER 2025

### HIGHLIGHTS

#### MESSAGES

- CEO's Message
- Co-Chairs Message

Starting on **page 2.**

#### Strategic Plan Launch Highlights

BCHS has launched the new 2025 Strategic Plan. Find out more on **page 9.**



**Leading Beyond Care**

 Strategic Plan 2025-2030  
Brant Community Healthcare System



Read more about the lifetime achievement award recipient, along with other award recipients on **page 13.**



The Youth Advisory Council recently cleaned up around the BGH's grounds just in time for Spring! Find out more on **page 10.**



Meet Anthony and Will! Learn more about their work and the ADT Alumni Group on **page 11.**

## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**Bonnie Camm, President and CEO  
Brant Community Healthcare System**

Patient and Family Advisors (PFAs) are essential members of Team BCHS. They have consistently inspired us with innovative initiatives that improve patient experience, including Patient Experience Rounding, strengthening connections with local communities, and developing wayfinding solutions. This newsletter serves as a testament to their pivotal work. Their partnership, advocacy and input are invaluable and greatly appreciated by our team.

I would also like to extend a warm welcome to our new members and our first-ever Youth Advisory Council. We are truly fortunate to have their insights and contributions, which we rely on as we strive to enhance patient care and ensure that it meets the diverse needs of our community. Their involvement is vital to our ongoing efforts to create a more inclusive and effective healthcare environment.

Thank you to our amazing PFAs for all that they do!



## MESSAGE FROM CO-CHAIRS



### Harold Stahl

I would like to start by honouring a long time member of our Patient and Family Advisor Council who has been my mentor and partner as Co-Chair of the CEO Patient Family Advisor Council.

Anna Maynard has been a long time Family Advisor, some seven plus years. She has taken on many responsibilities, joined many focus, quality and other groups using her knowledge of the healthcare system not only as a former nurse, but also from her personal patient experiences. She has been the voice of reason and a guiding force in helping shape what we as a group are today.

Although she is stepping aside as my co-chair, she will continue to serve on various committees going forward ensuring that we continue to co-design the best possible care experiences at BGH. I look forward to her continued support of our growing group insuring that our Patient and Family Advisory Program continues to deliver care that is not only safe and evidence based, but also deeply personal, compassionate, and inclusive.

This year has been another busy year for our diverse group and has resulted in some of our PFA's co-designing a Patient Rounding Program, as well as rolling out the Acute Day Treatment continuation program. We are very proud of the efforts that have gone into these two programs and have seen awesome feedback and results in the very short time these programs have been operational. These two programs show that patients are not just part of the healthcare journey- they are the reason for it. A job well done Nancy, Will and Anthony on these programs.

I would also like to mention our Youth Council that are very active and making an impact on being the "Voice" of the youth. They have launched an ID bracelet program, are signed up to help with spring cleanup and helping in the establishing and planting the new Indigenous Healing Garden. This group brings a fresh new and appreciated prospectus to the Family Advisor Group.

In closing, I would like to leave you with this quote **"Patients can't measure quality of clinical care: but they can measure quality of experience!"** Author Unknown (google)



## MESSAGE FROM CO-CHAIRS



### Anna Maynard

Over the past two years, we've accomplished some amazing things. Our PFA number has grown from 14 to 28 PFAs which includes eight Youth PFAs. I'm excited to announce that 2 youth PFAs have joined Our Patient Family Advisory Council.

Our PFAs have been busy with co-designing the Patient Experience Rounding Program and an Alumni Peer Support Group for the Mental Health Acute Day Treatment Program. Three PFAs represented the patient and family voice during BCHS's strategic planning process 'Vision 2030'.

The PFA's voice has been present at all Program Councils and numerous committees, such as the Re-image Committee, Diagnostic Imaging Steering Committee, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Council, and Pressure Injury Prevention Committee, to name a few. These partnerships remind us just how much we can achieve when we share common goals, and mutual respect.

It's about thinking outside the box. It is turning great ideas into solutions that make a difference in the patient experience.

Through shared experiences, conversations, and co-design we're helping to build a culture that prioritizes high-quality, person-centred care which results in improved patient experiences.

I want you to remember how important your lived experiences are when shared.

Your ideas, effort, and passion are what keep us moving forward. Together as PFAs, we can create a future that keeps the patient and family at the centre of all care and embraces the endless possibilities ahead.

It's about making an impact, inspiring others, and leaving something truly special behind. Every comment is a chance to improve the patient experience, and every effort matters.

I would like to thank Harold for his hard work as my co-chair this past year. While I am stepping down from the PFAC, I am confident you will continue to thrive under his leadership. I appreciate your support on this journey and have enjoyed learning and growing with you all.

Your resilience, creativity, and passion are what drive the Patient and Family Advisory Program forward. I couldn't be prouder to be a part of this group. I challenge you to keep this momentum going. The future looks bright, and with your continued enthusiasm and dedication, I am confident that PFAs will accomplish amazing things and remain a valuable and integral part of BCHS's vision of "Leading Beyond Care."



## MEET OUR PFAS



### **Angela DeMontigny - PFA for Mental Health Inpatient Unit**

**Can you tell us about your experience as a patient or family member within the healthcare system that inspired you to become a Patient and Family Advisor?**

Over the past three years, I have navigated a number of distressing and challenging experiences within the healthcare system as a mother advocating for my son during a mental health crisis. These encounters exposed both the strengths and the gaps in the current system and inspired me to contribute meaningfully to positive change—particularly within the Mental Health

Inpatient Unit. As an Indigenous woman with a long-standing connection to traditional healing, plant medicines, and ceremony, I bring a different worldview and understanding of wellness and recovery. Having worked closely with respected Indigenous healers and medicine people, and currently serving as a coach under Dennis Windego — a renowned Indigenous trainer and psychotherapist specializing in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and Complex Trauma — I have witnessed the transformative power of culturally rooted, land-based healing. These experiences compelled me to become a PFA so I could help integrate traditional Indigenous approaches alongside mainstream care, especially for those experiencing trauma, addiction, and mental health challenges.

### **What stands out to you most about that experience? What made it particularly meaningful or challenging?**

Serving as a Patient and Family Advisor has been both enlightening and rewarding. One of the most significant challenges has been recognizing how slowly change can occur within a large, complex healthcare system. However, this has also deepened my appreciation for the many competing demands and systemic issues that healthcare professionals and institutions manage daily. Having a seat at the table has allowed me to build impactful relationships with staff and other Patient and Family Advisors, ensuring my voice is heard. I've seen meaningful progress, including the formation of an Indigenous Health Team, improved cultural safety education, and new efforts to engage patients in feedback processes. These developments reflect a sincere commitment by BCHS to provide more compassionate, culturally sensitive care—especially for Indigenous patients and those in crisis. I am especially grateful for the outstanding teams in the Mental Health Inpatient and Outpatient Units and Early Psychosis Intervention programs. Their dedication and compassion have been both inspiring and reaffirming.

### **How has your experience shaped your perspective on healthcare delivery?**

My time as a PFA has given me a broader and more nuanced understanding of how the healthcare system operates—from its strengths and innovations, to the systemic challenges it faces.



Angela is also an Indigenous Artist and Fashion Designer that created the installation in Hamilton's Bayfront Park called "All Our Relations".

## MEET OUR PFAS



I've observed how certain policies and practices that may have worked in the past, now need to evolve in order to meet the diverse and changing needs of our communities.

At the same time, I have a deep respect for the dedication and hard work of healthcare professionals across BCHS. Despite facing resource constraints, staffing shortages, and increasing demands, many continue to go above and beyond for their patients.

Being able to view the system through both a personal and objective lens—as a caregiver and as a collaborator—has allowed me to identify critical gaps, as well as opportunities for more inclusive, effective, and compassionate care.

"All our relations is our way of giving thanks to all of creation ... it's the circle of life, it's honouring all living things, beings, celestial beings." - **Angela DeMontigny**

### Why is being a Patient and Family Advisor important to you personally?

Being a PFA is important to me because I believe in being part of the solution. It's not enough to point out what's not working—we must also contribute to making things better. I want to understand the rationale behind healthcare policies, treatments, and protocols to assess whether they are truly serving patients' best interests—including my own family.

I see PFAs as essential contributors to the healthcare system. We bring lived experience, empathy, and a human-centered perspective that can often be overlooked. I believe compassion, empathy, and cultural understanding should be at the core of healthcare, and I'm committed to helping ensure those values are reflected in every patient's experience.

### How do you hope to use your experience to support improvements in care for others?

I hope to continue using my lived experiences and holistic worldview—as an Indigenous woman, mother, artist, entrepreneur, and healer—to advocate for trauma-informed, culturally grounded care across the healthcare system. Specifically, I want to help integrate Indigenous healing practices and knowledge into the delivery of mental health services at BCHS. My goal is to support the development of care models that address the whole person—mind, body, spirit, and community—and to ensure that the voices of patients and families are not only heard, but woven into the fabric of healthcare planning and delivery.



## MEET OUR PFAS



### **Krystal Nagy - PFAC, PFA for NICU, Pediatrics and ED**

**Can you tell us about your experience as a patient or family member within the healthcare system that inspired you to become a Patient and Family Advisor?**

I have had a lot of experience firsthand as a mother of an infant, now turned toddler, who's been at BGH quite frequently. My son was born with congenital heart, disease, horseshoe, kidney, amongst a few other diagnoses. When he was an infant, any new virus he contracted, would land him being admitted as his heart would be overloaded and needed to be on oxygen.

Having spent a total of eight weeks in the NICU across four different hospitals, along with multiple admissions to the pediatrics department, I feel qualified to provide feedback for patients and families. I am very passionate about our pediatrics department and the incredible strides we have made. Additionally, I serve on the emergency department committee to help make it more pediatric-friendly.

**What stands out to you most about that experience? What made it particularly meaningful or challenging?**

Honestly, all of the nurses and pediatricians in both the NICU and pediatrics give such an incredible level of care and quality that stands out against other hospitals. I have had to fight for my son's care with other hospitals, and at BGH, the pediatricians and nurses don't treat you as though you're uneducated. They treat you with respect, and I've never had to fight for his care. It's really nice as well, when we see some of the BGH staff, they'll stop just to say hi ask us how we're doing. You don't get that at other hospitals. As for challenging, I am working with the emergency department to make it more pediatric friendly. Currently, there's not really a space that's friendly for young children, and as a child coming into the hospital, it can be scary as it is. My goal is to help create a safe and welcoming space for children when they are coming into the emergency department.

**How has your experience shaped your perspective on healthcare delivery?**

I gained a better understanding of how the hospital works. It's enlightening as a patient to realize that while staff is eager to implement changes, it isn't always feasible due to bureaucratic challenges, such as budget constraints from the government. Being part of the committees has been a fantastic opportunity to grasp all the efforts being made to improve patient care. The pediatrics and NICU departments at BGH go above and beyond, and is one of the few hospitals where I feel completely safe bringing my child.

**Why is being a Patient and Family Advisor important to you personally?**

I feel like I have a voice and it's being heard. Often times, patients and parents of patients don't feel like they have a voice or that it's being taken seriously. I know as a PFA, my job is to advocate for the community and I love that I get to help shape the future care for generations to come.

**How do you hope to use your experience to support improvements in care for others?**

Connecting with the committees, nurses, and the pediatricians. Providing feedback from the patient's perspective is important as it offers insights that may sometimes be overlooked by medical professionals who are often focused on life-saving measures. I will say, the staff is absolutely incredible—not only in the care they provide but also in how they collaborate with me as a PFA. This partnership has been truly rewarding, and I feel great about contributing to efforts that enhance programs for client care.

## FEATURED YAC: FRANKIE COSTA



### **Can you tell us about your experience as a patient or family member within the healthcare system that inspired you to become a Patient and Family Advisor?**

I am a graduate of the Youth Early Intervention program. I started in that program at the beginning of 2024 and had just graduated this year in early January. This program had helped me overcome so many mental health issues, from anxiety to personal experiences, as well as help me grow into a person who I can happily say I am proud of today. Alongside the Youth Early Intervention program, I also took part in Peer-to-Peer support which helped me overcome my driving anxiety in a safe space, and comfortably study for my written G1 test. Although my only experience with the healthcare system has been primarily mental health focused, my mom has been in and out of the hospital often times due to her chronic pain. With that experience within the family, I want to do as much as I can to help improve the system.

### **What stands out to you most about that experience? What made it particularly meaningful or challenging?**

The most meaningful thing for me about having this experience is developing the connections within the Youth Advisory Council. Everyone within the council has been so sweet and supportive of every members' ideas and contributions. Building these connections with other's has been super meaningful to me.

### **How has your experience shaped your perspective on healthcare delivery?**

How much it is a trial and error process. My experience has shown me how difficult certain aspects of healthcare delivery can be, and how long it can be to overcome those issues. Everything from planning, budgeting, communication and implementing has been very fascinating for me to see unfold. Additionally, I have always perceived healthcare delivery with various departments, all working on their own section of the hospital. My volunteer experience really changed that perspective, now I see that while there are various departments; many of them come together and collaborate to overcome overlapping issues. It really showed me that everyone within healthcare delivery, no matter big or small their roles may seem, really does play a part in the system.

### **Why is being a Patient and Family Advisor important to you personally?**

Being a Patient and Family Advisor is important to me because helping people is what makes me feel most fulfilled in life. Helping me has always been an aspect of life that I love, and I strive to do it whenever I can.

### **How do you hope to use your experience to support improvements in care for others?**

I hope to use my experience to support improvements in care by providing a positive impact within the system. I hope that providing my ideas and perspective, it makes someone's day a little bit easier or happier. I hope with my volunteering that I can uplift other people's voices within the system and be a part of creating a solution for certain issues.





## Leading Beyond Care

STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

Harold and Anna both attended the 2025 Strategic Plan Launch on May 15, 2025. Harold played a key role in shaping the Strategic Plan as a member of the Steering Committee. He emphasized that patients are not just part of the healthcare journey; they are the reason for it.



The “Patients” pillar directly addresses this truth, focusing on delivering care that is not only safe and evidence-based but also deeply personal, compassionate, and inclusive. As the PFA program expands, creating culturally safe spaces for patients and families is paramount to the services provided.

The 2025-2030 Strategic Plan can be found at:  
[www.bchsys.org/strategicplan](http://www.bchsys.org/strategicplan).





## SPRING HAS SPRUNG - YAC EDITION



The Youth Advisory Council continues to show great dedication in their work both within and outside the hospital. Recently, the youth focused on cleaning up garbage on the hospital grounds to create a cleaner environment for patients at BCHS. They engaged in this activity with smiles and laughter, finding a sense of purpose both in the hospital and in their community. The youth consistently demonstrate passion and enthusiasm for their community, working exceptionally well as a team. We could not be prouder and are excited to watch them grow as individuals.



### About the YAC Bracelets:

The Youth Advisory Council members have been working diligently on creating bracelets to distribute in the community, including libraries and schools. Each bracelet has a charm with a QR code that provides quick access to mental health services provided at BCHS, as well as Indigenous Services provided through BRISC.





## ALUMNI PEER SUPPORT GROUP ENHANCES ADT EXPERIENCE AT BCHS



Will Moore (right) and Anthony (left), both graduates of the Acute Day Treatment (ADT) program at the Brant Community Healthcare System (BCHS), launched the Alumni Peer Support Group in January to help ADT graduates stay connected and supported in their ongoing mental health journeys.

The ADT program is a voluntary, transitional recovery-based program that helps individuals set personal goals, develop coping strategies, improve daily life skills, connect with community resources, and manage their symptoms. Offered through BCHS Outpatient Mental Health, it runs Monday to Friday and serves individuals aged 16 and up through psychiatrist referrals.

Recognizing how valuable the ADT routine and sense of community can be, Will and Anthony co-designed the Alumni Peer Support Group as a way to extend that experience. "The routine and community that ADT provides is something many of us fear losing," Will shared, "but a peer support group helps keep those connections alive."

Meeting every two weeks, the group welcomes graduates into a safe, non-judgmental space where they can reconnect, share wins and frustrations, and support one another through the ups and downs of recovery. Conversation themes like music and self-care help spark meaningful dialogue and community building.

For both facilitators and participants, the group has quickly become a bright spot. "I know Anthony and I get just as much out of the group as those who attend," Will noted. "It's been a real highlight."

This initiative reflects the ongoing commitment of BCHS and its Patient and Family Advisors to support recovery well beyond the six-week program—fostering long-term connection, wellness, and community.

# ABOUT ADT ALUMNI

## How often do you meet?

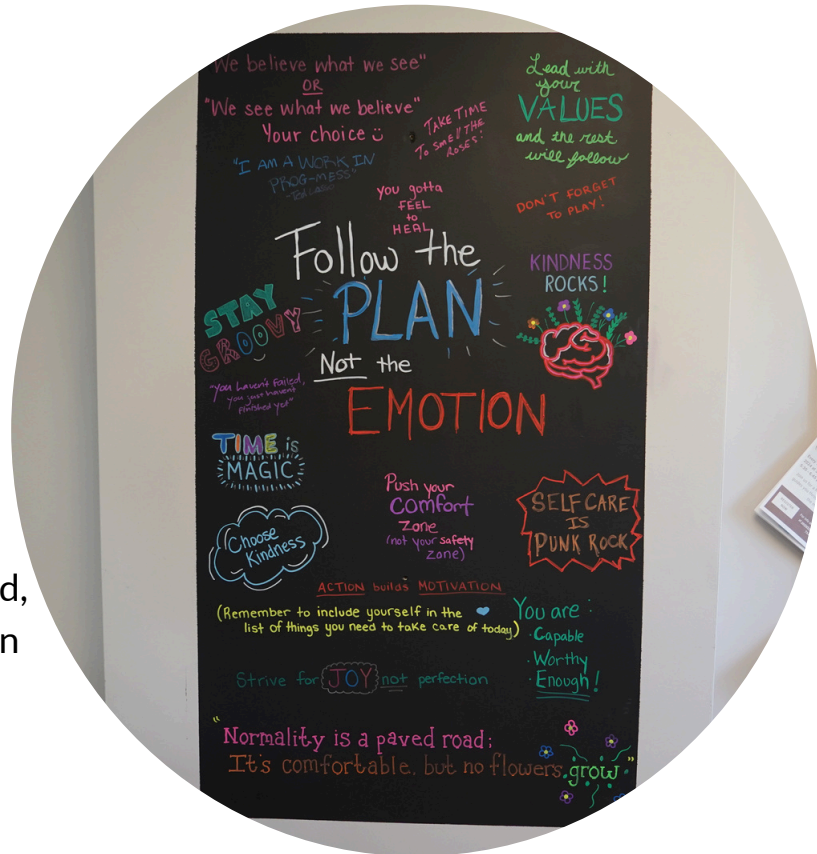
We meet every second week from 4-5:30pm. We've held around five sessions so far since our launch in mid-January.

## How many participants have you had to date?

The members that attend are regulars. We even have a regular who checks-in from Florida. While we don't focus on numbers, our core group tends to be small, committed, and welcoming. Others join as needed when they're seeking support, and we aim to create a safe and inclusive environment for all.

## Any highlights or quotes from participants?

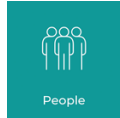
There is a respect for personhood, positivity, and acknowledgement of the importance of having someone who understands. One of the most meaningful aspects has been watching participants grow in comfort and confidence. Some were very quiet or emotional during their first session, but over time, they've opened up, supported each other, and even shared some laughter. We often centre our conversations around a theme—like music or self-care—which has led to powerful discussions about creativity, wins, and areas of growth.



***"Personally, I know both Anthony and I have found the group incredibly rewarding. It's become a highlight of our month, and we're grateful to everyone who's made it what it is." - Will Moore***



## AWARD RECIPIENTS



### People-Centered Care Advocate - Anna Maynard

*This award recognizes a PFA who consistently advocates for policies, practices, and decisions that prioritize the needs and preferences of patients and their families. This PFA demonstrates strong advocacy skills, actively ensures the patient's voice is heard, and influences hospital practices that enhance patient-centered care.*



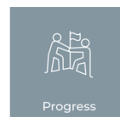
### Compassionate Advocate - Angela DeMontigny

*This award recognizes a PFA who has demonstrated a deep commitment to improving the emotional and psychological well-being of patients and their families. This PFA exemplifies compassion and empathy, provides support and emotional care, listens attentively to patients and families, and works to create an environment of comfort and understanding.*



### Exceptional Leadership/Mentorship in Patient & Family Engagement - Harold Stahl

*This award recognizes a PFA who has taken a leadership role in engaging other patients and families in improving the hospital's care delivery. This PFA demonstrates leadership skills, inspires other advisors, and drives initiatives that promote patient and family involvement in decision-making processes.*



### Innovation in Patient Experience - Anthony (Orazio) Caltagirone

*This award recognizes a PFA who has proposed or helped implement innovative ideas or solutions to enhance the patient or family experience within the hospital. This PFA contributes new strategies, ideas, or suggestions that have made a measurable impact on patient or family satisfaction, works toward creating stronger bonds between patients and caregivers, facilitates effective collaboration, and drives the evolution of patient-family centered practices.*

## AWARD RECIPIENTS



### Innovation in Patient Experience - Will Moore

*This award recognizes a PFA who has proposed or helped implement innovative ideas or solutions to enhance the patient or family experience within the hospital. This PFA contributes new strategies, ideas, or suggestions that have made a measurable impact on patient or family satisfaction, works toward creating stronger bonds between patients and caregivers, facilitates effective collaboration, and drives the evolution of patient-family centered practices.*

### Lifetime Achievement for Patient & Family Advisors - Joy Cesarin

*This award celebrates a PFA who has made a sustained and significant impact over the years in shaping hospital policies and improving the patient experience. It recognizes long-term contributions, leadership, and dedication to the hospital's mission to improve patient and family-centered care.*



Congratulations  
to all the  
recipients of this  
year's **PFA**  
**Awards!**



## PFA FEATURED RECIPES



### Anna's Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookies

*This oatmeal chocolate chip cookie recipe is a crowd favourite, packed with deliciousness and comfort. They're moist, delicious, and perfect for dessert, or a snack.*



PREP TIME  
**10 MIN**



COOK TIME  
**12-15 MIN**



SERVINGS  
**24-30  
COOKIES**

### Ingredients

- 1 cup of butter
- 1 ½ cups of firmly packed brown sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp of vanilla extract
- 1 ½ cups of all purpose flour
- 2 ⅓ cups of rolled oats
- 2 tsp baking soda
- 1 package/350 mg of semi-sweet chocolate chips

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C) and prepare a cookie sheet.
2. In a mixing bowl, mix butter and brown sugar. Beat until light and fluffy.
3. Add wet ingredients: Whisk eggs and vanilla into the mix.
4. In a large bowl, combine dry ingredients: all-purpose flour, rolled oats, baking soda and salt. Mix until well blended.
5. Combine both wet and dry mixes together. Mix until well blended. Stir in chocolate chips.
6. Drop spoonful's of the mixture onto a cookie sheet.
7. Bake at 350°F (175°C) for 12 to 15 minutes, or until lightly browned.
8. Cool on wire rack.

## PFA FEATURED RECIPES



### Annette's Zandgebakjes (Sand Tart Cookies)

*These easy and delicious sand tart cookies are essentially shortbread cookies and so tasty! They're the perfect basic cookie recipe.*



PREP TIME  
**10 MIN**



COOK TIME  
**20 MIN**



SERVINGS  
**36-48  
COOKIES**

### Ingredients

- 1 lb very soft margarine
- 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> cup of brown sugar
- 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>3</sub> cup of white sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 2 tsp of almond extract
- 1 tsp of vanilla
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 4 cups of flour

### Instructions

1. Mix all ingredients together.
2. Fill ungreased muffin tins about half full. (If using Gluten free flour line the muffin tins )
3. Bake at 350 ° (175°C) for 20 minutes.
4. Store in an airtight container with a slice of soft bread to maintain freshness.