



Thank you

As Family Physician-in-Chief, I have the privilege of leading the Mount Sinai Academic Family Health Team at Sinai Health — a talented group of health-care professionals whose hard work and dedication ensure patients have access to the best family medicine care.

The care we provide stretches across the continuum — from family medicine pregnancy and newborn care led by Dr. Anne Biringer to mental health and equity-based training for the next generation of family medicine practitioners. They are supported by donors like you.

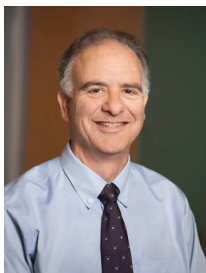
Your gifts recognize the value of family-centered care for patients of all ages, at all stages of life. By investing in family medicine, you are supporting the health and well-being of patients and the physician and staff teams who care for them.

We are grateful to each and every one of you. I hope you feel proud as you read through the activities and progress outlined in this report, made possible through your support.

*Dr. Erin Bearss, MD CCFP (EM)
Family Physician-in-Chief
Sinai Health*

Honouring three trailblazers

For generations, the Mount Sinai Academic Family Health Team (MSAFHT) has been a primary point of care for thousands of patients, who come from across Ontario for a full spectrum of health needs. Their care is elevated by the education and research of key individuals. Together, with our team of physicians, nurses and allied health professionals, they've positioned Sinai Health at the forefront of family medicine. It is with mixed emotions that we are preparing for the retirement of three prolific leaders in primary care.



Dr. David Tannenbaum

Dr. Tannenbaum joined Mount Sinai Hospital in 1983, dedicating more than 40 years of his career as a family physician and later Sinai Health's Physician-in-Chief to improving patient care and education in family medicine. He was part of a working group that pioneered a new comprehensive curriculum centered on family medicine, which was introduced at Mount Sinai Hospital in 1997 and has since become the national and international standard for family medicine training programs. In 2022, he was appointed to the Order of Ontario for his dedication to excellence in family medicine.



Dr. Warren McIsaac

Dr. McIsaac has been the Director of the family medicine research and scholarship team at Sinai Health for more than a decade. His own research is dedicated to improving health services utilization in primary care, and notably, is slowing the spread of antibiotic-resistant superbugs which affect treatment of common and serious infections. This research in antibiotic resistant organisms has been critical to conserving antibiotics through judicious prescribing, helping family doctors limit this growing and serious threat and ensuring patients can continue to count on these essential medications when they're needed most.



Dr. Anne Biringer

Dr. Biringer is a family doctor who delivers – a champion of family medicine-based care for pregnant patients and their babies. She has inspired and trained hundreds of family medicine residents to provide perinatal care as part of their practice. She also wrote the first book focused on teaching obstetrics to primary care physicians and other health professionals. Building on Dr. Biringer's professional legacy as the inaugural Ada Slaight & Slaight Family Foundation Director in Family Medicine Maternity Care, the Dr. Anne Biringer Mount Sinai 100 Chair in Family Medicine Pregnancy & Newborn Care was recently named in her honour. It pays tribute to Mount Sinai's origins as a maternity hospital founded through the leadership of women and their philanthropy.

Supporting families' mental health

The transition to parenthood can be both joyous and challenging, and for many individuals, it is also accompanied by emotional and mental health struggles.

Perinatal Mental Health Program

The Perinatal Mental Health Program provides comprehensive mental health support for patients at various stages of the perinatal journey. This program – run by social workers Jessica Haber and Sarah Goodman – addresses the mental health needs of those trying to conceive, experiencing pregnancy loss, dealing with fertility challenges, as well as those who are pregnant or up to one year postpartum. Through a combination of individual and couples counselling, support groups, mental health screenings and follow-up care, the Perinatal Mental Health Program is improving the well-being of patients and their families.

In 2024, the Perinatal Mental Health Program supported the following:

- 177 total patients
- 84 postpartum phone calls (initial and follow-up)
- 129 individual therapy clients, consisting of fertility, postpartum and pregnancy clients
- 11 postpartum support groups held

Group Perinatal Care

The Group Perinatal Care Program, initially piloted then expanded with support from the Slaight Family Foundation and now fully government funded, features inter-professional education delivered by family medicine residents, physicians, pharmacists, dietitians and midwives.

The program's expanded services include postpartum home visits for all patients, providing well-baby checks, feeding support and mental health resources to families in the comfort of their own home. A twice-weekly feeding support clinic at 60 Murray helps patients manage feeding issues without having to visit the main hospital clinic. The program's virtual drop-in support sessions have also been highly successful, with the introduction of perinatal mental health support allowing for an additional monthly postpartum parent support group focused on families' mental health. This expansion has greatly improved continuity of care and the transition to parenthood for patients.

In 2024, the Group Perinatal Care Program supported the following:

- 150 perinatal patients accessing midwifery care
- 600 perinatal group encounters
- 150 postpartum group encounters
- 200 postpartum clinic visits
- 200 home visits

Increasing access to care

Patients can face many barriers when seeking care — financial, geographic and systemic — which prevent them from receiving timely and effective support. Often, there is shame and stigma associated with accessing resources. That's why we launched the Comfort Closet Initiative to improve patient access to basic items like clothing and hygiene products.

Today, thanks to donor support, the Comfort Closet is regularly stocked with seasonally appropriate clothing, shoes and toiletries. These items can be accessed by any member of the family medicine team — at any time. They speak to their patients to get a sense of what is needed and bring back items for patients to choose from.



The Comfort Closet is open to everyone — without criteria or screening — so patients can access the supports they need without stigma.

“ I care for a patient who lives in a shelter and comes to our clinic monthly for care. She greatly appreciates the clothes I give her each time, appropriate for the season. It has helped her see we want to treat more than the medical aspects of her care, including her comfort and dignity. ”

Dr. Michelle Naimer, Clinical Director,
Sinai Academic Health Team and
Family Health Team Lead

Creating a socially conscious workforce

The education of family medicine residents, physicians and staff is essential to the delivery of high-quality, safe and compassionate care. With donor funding, Sinai Health is able to offer updated and relevant training opportunities to our primary care team, so they can ensure patients are cared for, in the ways they need to be.

Equity, diversity and inclusion training

Sinai Health is committed to creating a more equitable health-care system, where all patients, regardless of their background, receive the care and respect they deserve. Through sessions focused on equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), our first-year family medicine residents learn to reflect on their own biases, seek feedback and engage in culturally safe practices.

San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training

The San'yas Indigenous Cultural Safety Training is focused on correcting and rebuilding systems to uproot anti-Indigenous racism while providing learners with the knowledge and skills to work with Indigenous people and communities. These workshops cover topics including the history of colonization in Canada and the unique cultural contexts and historical factors that have impacted the health of Indigenous peoples — a necessary learning to address the significant health disparities that exist.



“On a personal level, these trainings have given me the confidence to advocate for my patients more effectively. Donor support enables more residents like me to undergo this crucial development, ultimately leading to a more inclusive health-care workforce. By improving the cultural competence of health-care providers, we can build stronger relationships with the communities we serve, fostering trust and collaboration that will benefit public health on a broader scale. ”

Rebecca Bourdon, Family Medicine Resident
and EDI Family Medicine Representative,
Mount Sinai Academic Family Health Team

Mental health care in family medicine

At Sinai Health, patients receive mental health care from both staff family physicians and family medicine residents, whose training includes core teaching and clinical experience in collaborative mental health care. They are part of a team that also includes skilled social workers, nurses, nurse practitioners, a psychiatrist and psychiatry residents.

The education, scholarly work and clinical care conducted by this team is known as the Rotenberg Mental Health Program and is led by family physician Dr. Kristina Powles. Over the last year, their work has included:



Core mental health rotation for family medicine residents

We have developed a new mental health rotation which includes training in addiction medicine, geriatric medicine, psychiatry and counselling skills, as well as an emergency room bridging clinic for patients who have more acute mental health symptoms.

Counselling skills opportunity for residents

Since 2021, residents have had an innovative opportunity to gain counselling skills through their training at Sinai Health. Now, as part of their core mental health rotation, residents work directly with MSAFHT patients to provide mental health counselling and are observed and supervised one-on-one by a social worker or family doctor for direct feedback.

New mental health projects in primary care

This year, the Rotenberg Mental Health Research Grants in Primary Care supported two initiatives addressing mental health issues in family medicine. One group is developing a new addiction medicine component for the mental health block – a collaboration between Sinai Health's Psychiatry and Family Medicine Departments that would bring the entirety of the mental health rotation to Sinai Health. A second project is underway to build online learning modules in geriatric psychiatry – a current gap in family medicine training – including topics on depression in the elderly, lithium management and collaborative mental health care.

Thank you

We are grateful for your support of family medicine, which has enabled our physician and staff teams to care for the thousands of patients who count on us every year.



See what care can do.

For more information, please contact:

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OUR SHARED FUTURE.**



When you include Sinai Health Foundation in your estate plans, you are transforming health care for future generations. By making a legacy commitment, you can help ensure Sinai Health continues to discover and deliver life-changing care for years to come.

Legacy, or planned giving, allows individuals to leave a lasting impact on their communities, reflecting their values even after they pass. Through tax-efficient strategies, these gifts can maximize philanthropy, support loved ones and reduce estate taxes. Each legacy gift made to Sinai Health shapes the future of innovative care and discovery and inspires the next generation to make a difference.

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