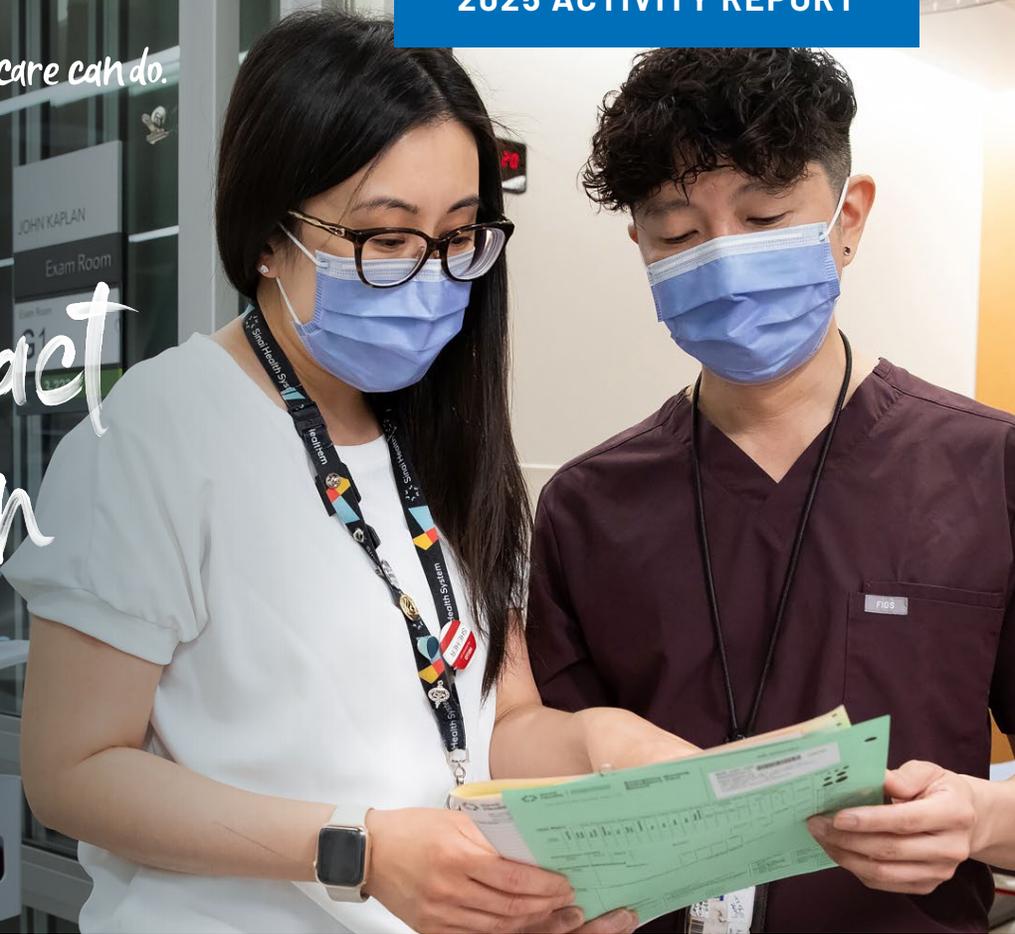


# Your Impact in Action

## EMERGENCY MEDICINE



## Our thanks

Today, both the Schwartz/Reisman Emergency Medicine Institute (SREMI) and the Schwartz/Reisman Emergency Centre (SREC) stand as national leaders in emergency medicine.

SREMI — Canada's first and only institute of emergency medicine — has continued to strengthen its role as a nation-wide resource for emergency medicine innovation. New research coming out of SREMI is improving how we care for older patients, patients with cancer and patients experiencing substance use challenges or early pregnancy loss. Their work informs the care we provide in the emergency department.

Similarly, SREC has had its own remarkable year of progress. The redeveloped emergency department is open and working at full capacity and the search for a new Chief of the Department of Emergency Medicine will begin soon.

We look forward to updating you on the department's achievements and activities. Thank you! We hope you feel proud as you read through the progress made possible with your support.

With gratitude,

Dr. Erin Bearss  
Former Acting Chief,  
Department of Emergency Medicine  
Sinai Health

Dr. Qassim Tejpar  
Interim Chief,  
Department of Emergency Medicine  
Sinai Health

# The search for the new Chief of the Department of Emergency Medicine

In April 2025, after an eight-year term, Dr. David Dushenski stepped down from his position as Chief of the Department of Emergency Medicine. During his time as Chief, he led the emergency department (ED) through the tumultuous changes of COVID-19 as well as the redevelopment of SREC.

Dr. Erin Bearss managed the transition as Acting Chief until September 2025, when Drs. Qassim Tejpar and Nadia Primiani stepped in as Interim Chief and Interim Deputy Chief, respectively. They will lead the department as we begin the search for the new Chief.

## Meet Dr. Qassim Tejpar and Dr. Nadia Primiani



### **Dr. Qassim Tejpar, Interim Chief, Department of Emergency Medicine**

Dr. Qassim Tejpar has been an emergency physician at Mount Sinai Hospital since 2015. He graduated from medical school at the University of Alberta in 2012 before completing a family medicine residency and emergency medicine fellowship at the University of Toronto. In addition to caring for patients, Dr. Tejpar is interested in making the ED safer and more efficient for patients and providers. He is proud of the ED team and their dedication and passion for providing high quality, compassionate care to patients and the community.



### **Dr. Nadia Primiani, Interim Deputy Chief, Department of Emergency Medicine**

Dr. Nadia Primiani is an emergency physician at Sinai Health and Michael Garron Hospital, the associate program director for the Mount Sinai Emergency Medicine Fellowship program and the medical lead for Sinai Health's Pathway to Peers program at its newly expanded location at Michael Garron Hospital. Dr. Primiani is an advocate for marginalized patients, with an interest in increasing awareness of their health needs and promoting compassionate communication between physicians and patients.

# RBC PATHWAY TO PEERS

## Leading Canada's response to youth mental health

**Drs. Bjug Borgundvaag and Shelley McLeod launched the RBC Pathway to Peers (P2P) program in May 2020 to provide support for young adults aged 16 to 29 presenting to the emergency department with mental health and substance use challenges.**

Five years later, the program has made significant progress. SREMI is proud to have signed a formal service agreement with Peer Support Canada to establish training, support and an ongoing community of practice. Several peer support workers are undergoing formal certification through this partnership. We've also welcomed three new peer support workers to Mount Sinai Hospital and launched the expansion of the P2P program to Michael Garron Hospital.

**See how SREMI built the first program of its kind in Canada.**



At the beginning of this year, Stef Filipe Figueiredo (left) and Bella Shulman (right) worked as peer support workers in Mount Sinai's RBC P2P program. Stef became the first peer support worker at Mount Sinai to be certified by Peer Support Canada and now works at a mental health and community services organization in downtown Toronto, where we often refer patients. Bella has stepped into her new role as P2P program supervisor at Michael Garron.

SPECIAL THANKS TO:



Foundation

## • A year of growth: From Mount Sinai Hospital

In 2025, three new peer support workers joined the RBC P2P program at Mount Sinai Hospital, growing the team to a total of six peer support workers.

### Welcoming our new peer support workers at Mount Sinai



**Amal Abdullahi** is in her first year of the Bachelor of Fine Arts program in Creative Writing at the Ontario College of Art and Design. Her lived experience with mental health challenges motivates her to spread hope amongst young psychiatric survivors.



**Antoinetta Guiterrez** is in her third year of the Bachelor of Social Work program at Toronto Metropolitan University. She discovered the power of peer support as a bereaved teenager navigating trauma, anxiety and depression. It's why she is passionate about systems-level advocacy and health equity.



**Rachel Lebovic** is a PhD student at the University of Toronto studying suicide prevention. Her lived experience, including an adult autism diagnosis and challenges navigating mental health care in her youth, is what inspired her to join the P2P program.

## • To Michael Garron Hospital

In November 2025, the P2P program's second location launched at Michael Garron Hospital's ED, thanks to a generous gift from the Slaight Family Foundation.

### Meet the team at Michael Garron

- **Bella Shulman** was once a peer support worker at Sinai Health and is now the new P2P program supervisor at Michael Garron.
- **Dr. Nadia Primiani** is an emergency physician at both Mount Sinai and Michael Garron and will serve as the P2P program's new medical lead at Michael Garron.
- A new team of peer support workers started in November 2025, including **Venessa Rose, Jack Lewis, Ashley Charbonneau** and **Logan McCorkell**. They will train alongside Mount Sinai's peer support workers.

# Emergency Medicine Chairs: Recognizing world-class care and research in emergency medicine

Chairs are unique and highly prestigious positions held by doctors and scientists whose achievements have elevated Sinai Health's reputation for world-class care. They support ongoing scholarly work at Sinai Health and serve as magnets to attract and anchor leadership in these important areas. We are pleased to share updates on four Chairs on the following pages.

## Wolf Lebovic & Harry Lebovic Chair in Emergency Medicine Addiction and Mental Health

After four years of fundraising from the community, the Wolf Lebovic & Harry Lebovic Chair in Emergency Medicine Addiction and Mental Health is becoming a reality. This term Chair, which will be held by a dynamic clinician-researcher, will spearhead studies to identify, understand and remedy shortcomings in emergency care that are impacting the health of people with mental illness and substance use issues.

We are deeply grateful to Harry Lebovic and the Lebovic family for making a \$1.5-million gift in support of this Chair. Alongside support from Judy Wells and the community, their gift makes it possible for us to begin efforts to recruit for the Chair, which began in March 2026.



## Dr. Howard Ovens Chair in Emergency Medicine

The Dr. Howard Ovens Chair in Emergency Medicine is one of 18 Mount Sinai 100 Chairs named in honour of Sinai Health's visionary leaders and will be held by future leaders in the department of emergency medicine.

In the last year, funds from the Chair supported the promotion of faculty members, Drs. Michelle Yee and Aaron Horvath, from Lecturer to Assistant Professor. It will allow them to further their academic projects, including Dr. Yee's website for ED physician recruitment.

Funds were also used to support research led by Drs. Paul Kobic and Rachel Sheps, on patients with bartholin gland abscesses – a condition that can cause severe pain and swelling. Although numerous treatment options are available, current evidence does not support using any single surgical method. Research in this area could improve care for patients with this painful condition.

# Geriatric Emergency Medicine

Canada's aging population is quickly growing, especially in emergency departments where older adults represent 30 per cent of patients. Sinai Health's Drs. Don Melady and Jacques Lee are leaders in geriatric emergency medicine and are addressing this demand for more specialized ED care for older adults.

Learn more about their work.



(Pictured left to right) Drs. Shelley McLeod, Jacques Lee, Don Melady and Catherine Varner at the 2025 European Emergency Medicine Congress in Vienna, Austria.



## Dr. Don Melady Chair in Geriatric Emergency Medicine

One of 18 Mount Sinai 100 Chairs, the Dr. Don Melady Chair in Geriatric Emergency Medicine is named in honour of trailblazer Dr. Don Melady, and will support future leaders in geriatric emergency medicine. To date, funds from this Chair have supported Dr. Melady's national and international work to advance the field.

**In Canada,** Dr. Melady helped organize the 2025 joint conference of the Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians (CAEP). Under his guidance as the Education Lead of the CAEP's Geriatric Emergency Medicine Committee, the

team developed and delivered the Clinical Geriatric Emergency Medicine Course nine times across the country in the last year.

**Internationally,** Dr. Melady was invited to the International Federation of Emergency Medicine (IFEM) to present the prestigious Goerge Podgorny Plenary Lecture, titled "Emergency Departments on an Aging Planet: What Does EM Have to Offer?". His lecture highlighted the global challenges in caring for older adults in the ED and advocated for emergency medicine's unique role in adapting to aging populations worldwide. He also spent a week in rural Ghana delivering a skills development program for community ED workers.

Future Chair holders will be experts in geriatric emergency medicine, and like Dr. Don Melady, will drive change in emergency departments locally and globally.

## SREMI Research Chair in Geriatric Emergency Medicine



Dr. Jacques Lee is leading national research to transform the care of older people in the ED – like research into recognizing and treating delirium in older adults and studies to reduce loneliness and isolation in older hospital patients.

### Understanding what happens during delirium

The Femoral Fractures – Identifying Incident Delirium using Urine Metabolomics Study (FIND\_UM) is a multicenter collaboration between SREMI, Sunnybrook Hospital, the University of Ottawa, Laval University and McMaster University. This study is currently analyzing data from more than 191 people who broke their hip, to discover what chemicals are excreted when someone becomes delirious. Findings could allow us to design new drug treatments for delirium as well as develop tests to identify delirium earlier.

### Recognizing delirium in the ED

Dr. Lee’s team was recently awarded an innovation fund grant worth \$464,966 over two years from the Ontario Ministry of Health to complete the Better ED Delirium Recognition (BEDDeR) project in collaboration with Dr. Lauren Lapointe-Shaw at the University Health Network. It will identify older people with delirium in the ED and determine whether the delirium was recognized by ED staff. The team has begun hiring for the study and will enroll more than 700 older people across two sites. By improving staff’s ability to recognize and respond to delirium, it will ensure fewer patients are sent home without receiving appropriate care.

### Social Isolation and Loneliness Study

Dr. Lee also heads the “HOW-RU” (HOspitals WoRking in Unison) study, which aims to reduce loneliness in older hospital patients by connecting them with volunteers over the phone or by video for 30 to 60 minutes of conversation each week. The HOW-RU study recently completed enrolment and 12-week follow up of more than 141 older people discharged from EDs across Mount Sinai Hospital and North York General Hospital. [Featured on Global News](#), they hope to reduce feelings of loneliness in older patients and address a health problem that, before this study, was not monitored or treated.

A spin-off study, the FRIENDS/AMICAL Study will adapt the HOW-RU intervention for older Francophone adults in the Greater Toronto Area.

# Schwartz/Reisman Emergency Medicine Institute (SREMI)



## Leaders in emergency medicine research and education

2025 was a year of exceptional growth for SREMI. Faculty continued to be recognized with prestigious awards and grants for their work leading provincial, national and international programs and projects. They are also innovating through their education and research – all with the same goal to advance the discipline of emergency medicine and improve ED patient care.

In the last year, they've mentored three fellows from Israel, published 41 manuscripts in reputable medical and scientific journals, and been recognized with 16 research, academic and scholarly awards. This includes work by Drs. Keerat Grewal and Catherine Varner, whom you can read more about in the following pages.

### In 2025

**16** research excellence, academic and scholarly awards

**41** Peer-reviewed publications

**20** medical and graduate students, residents and emergency medicine fellows mentored

# Award-winning research in the news

The emergency department is no place to be told you have cancer



“Social admissions” to hospital are not personal failures but policy ones



**Dr. Keerat Grewal**, an emergency physician and clinician scientist at SREMI, is continuing her work looking at critical gaps in emergency medicine – examining the care of patients diagnosed with cancer in the ED and implementing new

ways to improve outpatient access to cancer diagnostics. She was shortlisted for the 7th annual National Magazine Award B2B for her CMAJ editorial [“The emergency department is no place to be told you have cancer.”](#)

Read more about her work featured in the [Toronto Star](#), [National Post](#), [Global News](#) and [CBC News](#).

**Dr. Catherine Varner**, an emergency physician and SREMI's Deputy Director, is an international expert on the care of pregnant patients in the ED. In 2025, she received an honourable mention at the 7th annual National Magazine Award B2B for her CMAJ editorial [“Investing in streamlined care for patients experiencing early pregnancy loss in Canada would reduce substantial suffering”](#) and [“Social admissions’ to hospital are not personal failures but policy ones”](#). Alongside Dr. Grewal, she hopes to expand the Virtual Wraparound Care program – which provides support for patients after pregnancy loss in the ED – to other vulnerable populations.

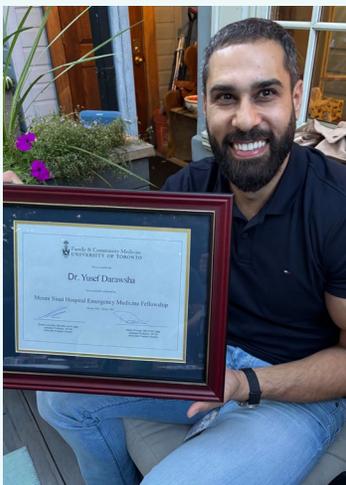
Dr. Varner also published the editorial [“Pregnant and bearing the burden of measles outbreaks in Canada”](#) to shed light on measles exposure and its effects on the pregnant population.

[Watch her CTV Your Morning interview](#) calling on provincial governments to address the ER crisis and [listen to her interview on CBC's Here and Now Toronto](#), where she discusses recommendations for measles prevention and management in pregnancy.

# Training the next generation of emergency medicine leaders

A patient's first point of contact in the ED is often with fellows, who provide direct patient care under the supervision of senior clinicians. Generously supported by the Azrieli Foundation, these fellows will return to their home hospitals with new expertise in emergency medicine and new relationships built with their Canadian colleagues. We are pleased to introduce you to two emergency medicine fellows who will be training with us this year.

## Meet two of our 2025 fellows in emergency medicine



### **Dr. Yusuf Darawsha, 2024-2026 Mount Sinai Emergency Medicine Fellow**

Dr. Yusuf Darawsha recently completed the second year of his fellowship at Mount Sinai Hospital and joins us from B'nai Zion Medical Centre in Haifa, Israel, where he worked as an emergency medicine physician. He has a specialty in internal medicine and chose to pursue the fellowship to further his exposure to comprehensive emergency medicine. During his second year, he will focus on emergency medicine leadership, management of musculoskeletal injuries and simulation.

*"I hope when I go back, I can bring what I learned from the North American emergency department to change the model of practice. This model, where patients are seen by emergency physicians who treat every case independently in the ED, will decrease the length of stay for patients waiting for other specialties."*



### **Dr. Hilal Hurani, 2025 Mount Sinai Emergency Medicine Fellow**

Dr. Hilal Hurani joined the emergency department in July 2025. He is a senior emergency medicine physician from the Carmel Medical Center in Haifa, Israel and completed his medical degree at the Technion Institute. Since then, he has been appointed as the Deputy Clinical Head of the Emergency Department. He envisions utilizing his time in Canada to absorb the different culture of medicine, health-care management systems and leadership modalities. He is now rotating with the new Psychiatric Emergency Services team at Mount Sinai.

# Thank you

With your support, we are improving care for everyone who walks through our doors. Whether through the expansion of mental health support for young people, new research in geriatric emergency medicine or better pathways for cancer patients and those experiencing early pregnancy loss, it's clear we've built something extraordinary together.



*See what care can do.*

For more information, please contact:

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