



**STAFF HEALTH AND WELL-BEING STRATEGY
2022-2025**

LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

When the pandemic arrived in 2020, the need to keep our community safe and a surge of adrenaline sustained the health care workforce through its most challenging period in recent history. For a time, pots and pans banged each evening in encouragement of health care heroes and glowing hearts lit up living rooms across Toronto. Two years into life with COVID-19, support for health care heroes is less visible; however, demands on the health system remain greater than ever.

The pandemic exacerbated existing challenges in our sector and a protracted response has placed unrelenting demands on stretched teams. Patient mental health and surgical backlogs have grown. Pandemic precautions constrained scientific discovery. Staffing shortages became widespread. And health workers are burned out or languishing from two years of long hours, limited vacations, and managing challenges at work and at home.

Despite this, we face a need to innovate for sustainability to meet the needs of the community we serve, and we must fix the plane while we're flying it. In order to do this, we must first repair and prepare ourselves. Using the Staff Health & Well-being Strategy as a blueprint, we must find novel solutions to reduce overload, model healthy behaviours in our leadership, culture, and daily activities, and create environments where teams and individuals can thrive.

We see your struggles. We have heard your suggestions and solutions. And we have taken heed. Please join us in bringing this strategy to life. Only together can we restore the health and well-being of our remarkable team.



Ronald Cohn
President & CEO



Susan O'Dowd
VP Human Resources
& Commercial Services

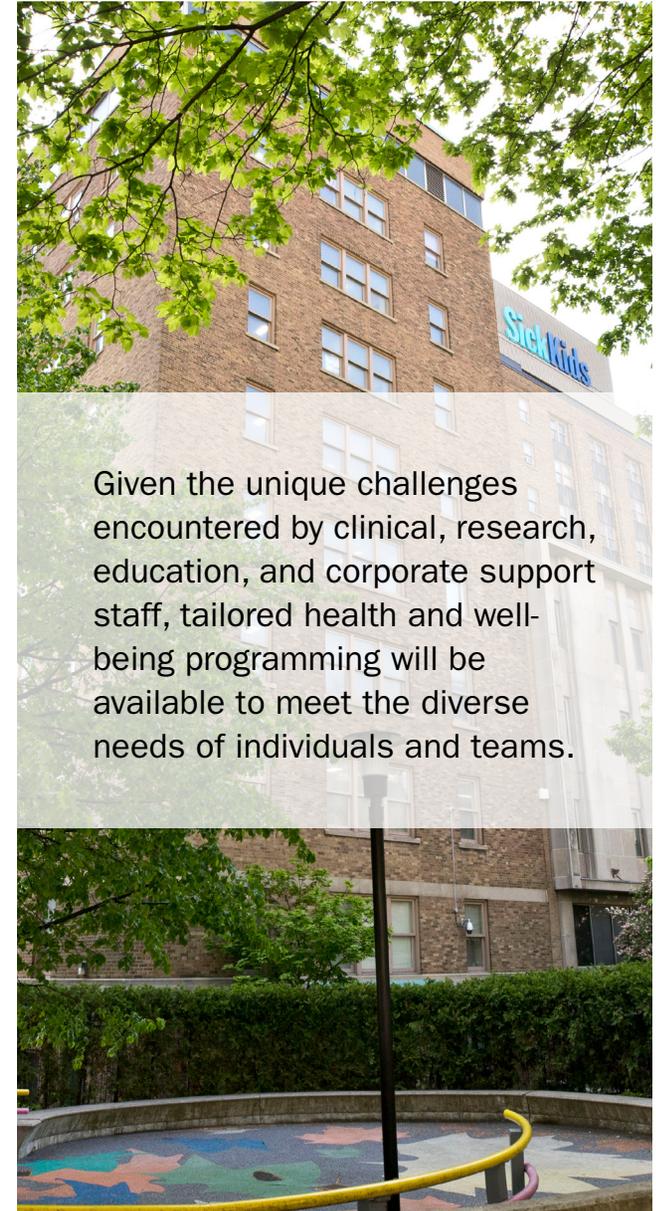


Lennox Huang
CMO, VP Medical &
Academic Affairs

A FLEXIBLE STRATEGY FOR THE ENTIRE SICKKIDS TEAM

Staff, Students, Trainees, and Volunteers (2020-2021)

Hospital Operations and Clinical Care	2,150	Nursing & Nursing Specialists
	469	Physicians
	810	Allied Health and other clinical support roles
	319	Lab Support
	340	Technicians and Technologists
	2,996	Management and support
Research Staff	276	Scientists
	394	Project Investigators and Team Investigators
	762	Research Staff (primarily grant funded)
	219	Research Operations staff
	145	Core Facilities research staff
Students and Trainees	248	Research fellows
	592	Research graduate students
	137	Research students
	1,274	Medical Affairs residents and fellows
	468	All other clinical and corporate trainees
Volunteers	882	Registered volunteers
	270	Women's Auxiliary Volunteers (WAV)
Total Staff and Volunteers	12,751	



Given the unique challenges encountered by clinical, research, education, and corporate support staff, tailored health and well-being programming will be available to meet the diverse needs of individuals and teams.

HOW WE GOT HERE...

445

SickKids
trainees and
staff contributing

16

Focus
groups

125

Staff Wellness
Survey responses



Environmental scan

Well-being
Strategies in
Health Care
Organizations



Inventory

Well-being
Programming
and Resources
at SickKids



Data analysis

Employee
Engagement Survey
Return to
Work Surveys
Carleton University
C-19 Survey
KPMG Internal Audit

GUIDANCE FROM OUR STAFF

“If we don’t choose to place a focus on wellness, we’ll be forced to place a focus on illness.”

“Workload – this challenge looms massively.”

“Please don’t make me feel bad for working after hours if that is my passion and my choice, rather help me to work efficiently.”

“Work hard but don’t neglect yourself.”

“Well-being can’t simply be lip service. We must promote well-being, model behaviours at all levels, and shift expectations around how and when we work.”

“We do an excellent job of delivering child- and family-centred care. We need a similar emphasis on staff-centred work.”

WHAT IS HOLISTIC HEALTH AND WELL-BEING?



VISION



**SickKids Vision:
Healthier Children. A Better World.**

**Staff Health & Well-being Strategy Aim:
Healthier Staff. A Better SickKids.**

GUIDING PRINCIPLES



**Emphasize proactive approaches
to well-being**



Include a focus on mind, body, and spirit



**Address common goals and
individual needs**



**Build well-being leadership at
all levels of the organization**



**Encourage personal agency
in improving well-being**



FOSTER HOLISTIC HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN OUR PEOPLE

- Identify physical and mental health risks and establish service pathways to meet employee needs
- Improve literacy and destigmatize mental health in the workplace
- Expand equitable, inclusive access to in-person and virtual well-being programming and resources



OPTIMIZE WORKLOAD TO IMPROVE BALANCE

- Develop a menu of tactics to help teams and individuals reduce overload and after-hours work
- Embed opportunities to assess workload and promote well-being in organizational programs
- Phase out unnecessary bureaucracy, over-collaboration, and inefficient legacy practices



CREATE A SAFE, INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Ensure everyone is acknowledged and respected through a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion
- Eliminate harm through physically and psychologically safe workplaces
- Champion civility, respect, and compassionate service excellence
- Maintain flexible work arrangements, ensuring connectedness and belonging



EMBED A CULTURE OF WELL-BEING

- Build visible well-being leadership at all levels of the organization
- Establish a channel for staff to provide input on well-being efforts
- Integrate well-being programming across the enterprise and create a one-stop shop for resources
- Amplify recognition of staff efforts and achievements



OPTIMIZE WORKLOAD TO IMPROVE BALANCE



Develop a menu of tactics to help teams and individuals reduce overload and after-hours work

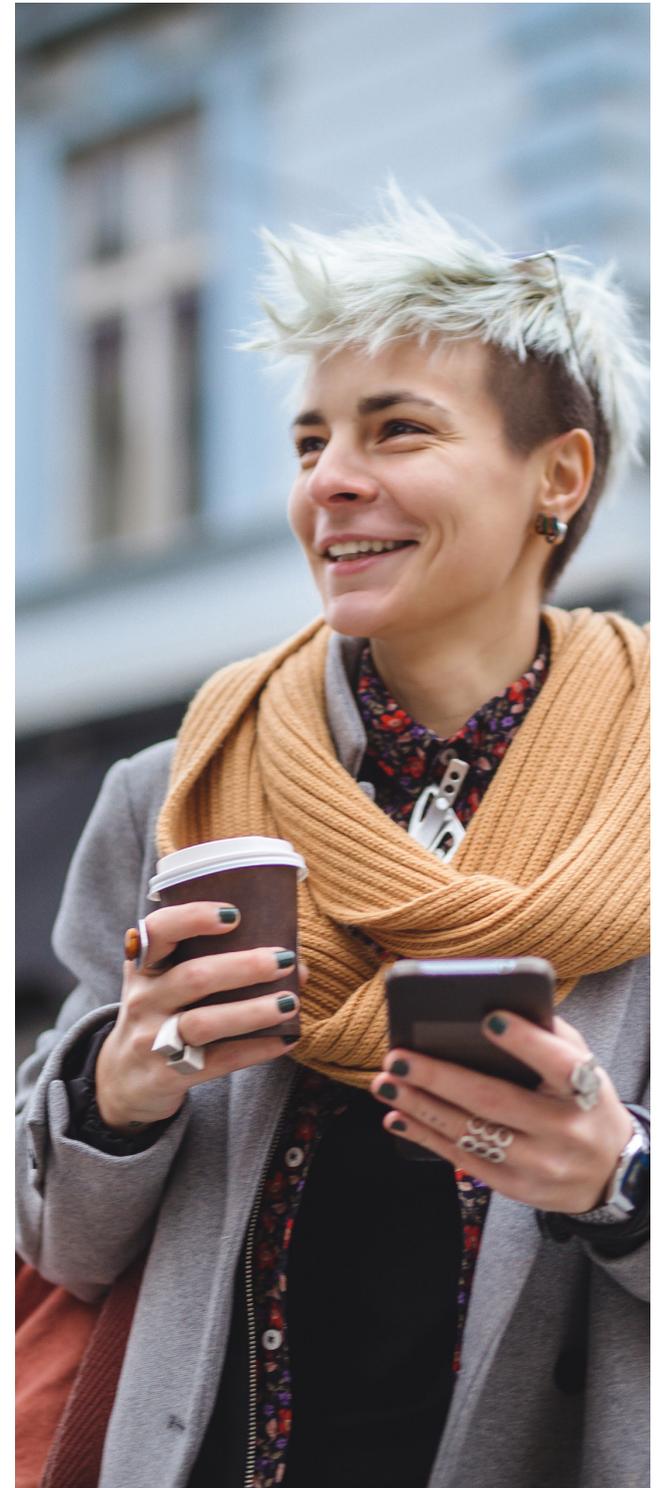
Embed opportunities to assess workload and promote well-being in organizational programs

Phase out unnecessary bureaucracy, over-collaboration, and inefficient legacy practices

There is no denying it – optimizing workload is the fulcrum that the health and well-being of our people rests upon. Successive years of contracting budgets have left teams running lean, asked to do more with less, with capacity further strained by a global pandemic.

Alongside sustained government advocacy to increase SickKids’ human and financial resources, we must act together to activate a litany of small changes that, taken together, will rebalance workload with capacity. In an organization as complex as SickKids, solutions will not be one-size-fits-all. By arming the organization with a playbook of tactics to reduce overload and recruiting well-being coaches to support conversations with leaders, teams and individuals can select options that make sense for them. Moreover, integration of well-being into organizational programs such as Daily CIP and iPerform will help leaders to set expectations, promote positive behaviours, and identify challenges upstream.

Sustainability necessitates that we critically examine the work we do and re-imagine it, eliminating that which no longer adds value and removing the pebbles from the shoes. Human-centered design and intelligent automation must be leveraged to ensure innovations have net zero workload impacts or achieve efficiencies, thereby creating space to balance staff well-being with continued progress impacting the community we serve.



CREATE A SAFE, INCLUSIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT



Ensure everyone is acknowledged and respected through a focus on equity, diversity, and inclusion

Eliminate harm through physically and psychologically safe workplaces

Champion civility, respect, and compassionate service excellence

Maintain flexible work arrangements, ensuring connectedness and belonging

The **Staff Health and Well-being Strategy** provides an opportunity to align with SickKids' inaugural Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy. Together, these mutually reinforcing initiatives will foster an organization where all staff and their opinions are valued and respected, a strong contributing factor to well-being.

In synergy with **SickKids 2025** objectives to eliminate preventable harm and champion civility in the workplace, we will continue to identify and eliminate toxic behaviours within our physical and virtual walls. Central to these efforts will be an incivility coaching and feedback program and policy enhancements that aim to protect staff from angry, aggressive, or violent actions of individuals in violation of SickKids' code of conduct. We will work tirelessly to ensure no SickKids patient, family, or staff member ever feels threatened on the SickKids campus. And as the campus is redeveloped through Project Horizon, incorporation of well-being standards in the design of physical spaces will foster healthier everyday routines and activities for staff.

The COVID-19 pandemic has fuelled dramatic changes in the way we work. To support this ongoing evolution, SickKids will maintain a commitment to our Workplace Flexibility Program to meet the needs of on-site staff and decentralized teams. By connecting groups to innovative solutions and resources we will help teams maintain and strengthen a sense of belonging and support individuals to feel connected.



EMBED A CULTURE OF WELL-BEING



Build visible well-being leadership at all levels of the organization

Establish a channel for staff to provide input on well-being efforts

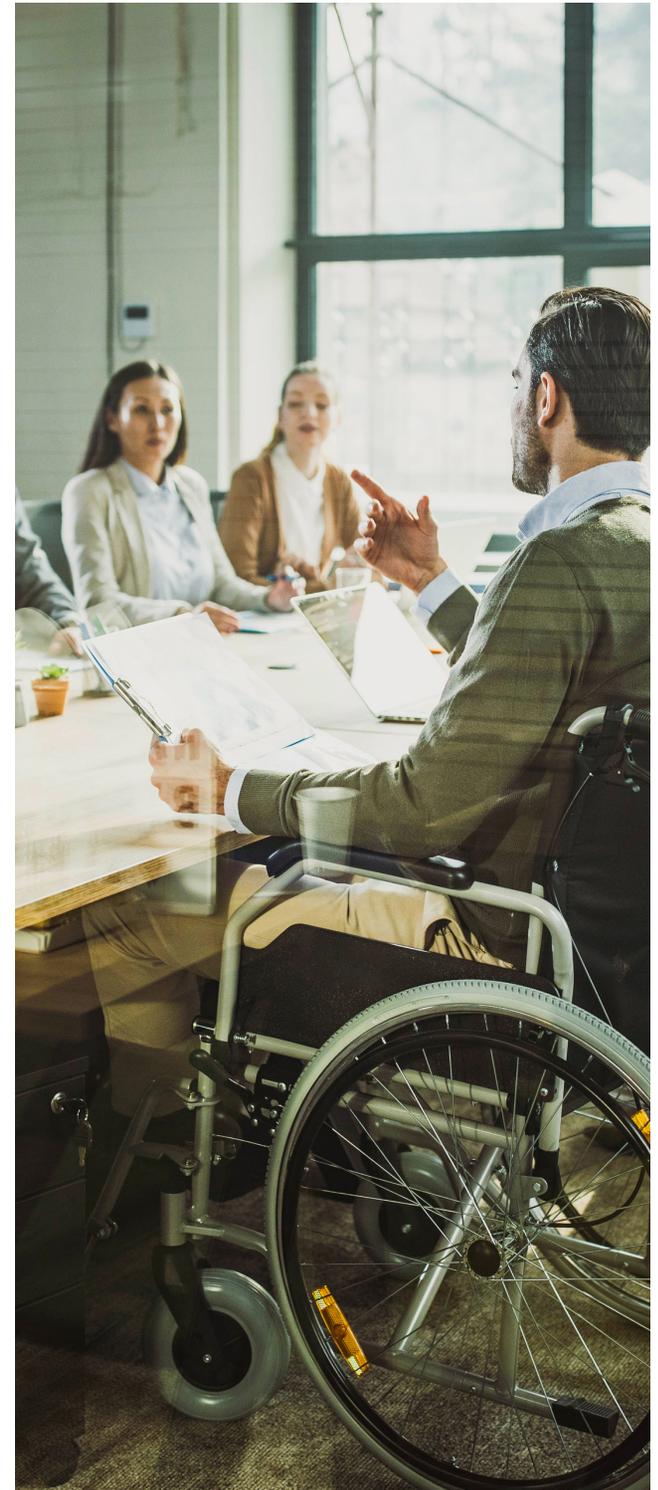
Integrate well-being programming across the enterprise and create a one-stop shop for resources

Amplify recognition of staff efforts and achievements

Transformation to a culture that enables health and well-being will begin with consistent modelling of behaviours by organizational leaders. A campaign to promote health and well-being through leader rounding and dialogue in public forums will signal a renewed focus on well-being at SickKids, cascading to all levels of the organization. Augmenting messaging with education on well-being, mental health literacy, moral distress, and EDI, and backing it with accountability, will catalyze change.

A range of well-being programming and resources currently exist at SickKids, yet this information is decentralized and can be difficult to navigate. By integrating resources from across the enterprise into a well-being hub, access and utilization will improve. An internal website can serve the needs of staff, while external facing materials will support recruitment of a new generation of professionals who place a heightened emphasis on well-being.

Staff recognition large and small is another factor that directly impacts well-being. Monumental achievements and day-to-day activities alike should be recognized, earnestly and often. Leveraging existing channels and novel solutions, SickKids will amplify staff recognition in all that we do and shine a light on those modelling health and well-being behaviours in the workplace.



FOSTER HOLISTIC HEALTH AND WELL-BEING IN OUR PEOPLE



Identify physical and mental health risks and establish service pathways to meet employee needs

Improve literacy and destigmatize mental health in the workplace

Expand equitable, inclusive access to in-person and virtual well-being programming and resources

The culminating aim of this strategy is to restore the holistic health and well-being of our people. Emphasizing proactive approaches, SickKids will make voluntary physical and mental health screening tools available to staff, as well as opportunities to assess moral distress. Where results reveal needs, we will connect individuals to the resources and services necessary to address health and wellness before it becomes illness or injury.

By educating leaders across the organization, we will create a climate where mental health is destigmatized, prioritized, and supported. Recognizing that well-being is multifactorial, SickKids will expand and more effectively promote a wealth of resources available to staff, ensuring offerings are accessible to staff in all roles, working all shifts, and designed with inclusion of our diverse workforce in mind.



WELL-BEING ENABLERS

Employee Engagement

Ongoing cross-sectional surveys will facilitate understanding of staff perspectives, including health and well-being, permit action planning to address barriers preventing staff from thriving, and measure the impact of initiatives to improve staff experience.

Competitive Compensation & Benefits

Striving for internal equity and competitive positioning in external markets, components of SickKids Total Compensation include:

- Base Compensation (salary/wages, premiums, and other pay)
- Group Benefits e.g. health, dental, insurance, EAP
- Retirement Pension plans
- Educational support, e.g. SCPDF

Objectives are achieved through regular internal analysis and review, monitoring of the external marketplace (public and private sector) across role types, compensation policies, and funded strategic programs (e.g. Annual Increase program, Group Benefits plan, Defined Benefit and Defined Contribution pension plans).

Learning and Education

Organizational programming and resources will build competence and confidence in our workforce. Through creation of psychologically safe learning spaces, staff will be provided with environments to seek support, share, learn, and grow, together.

Performance and Development

Consistent approaches to setting clear short- and long-term goals will clarify how individuals can contribute to SickKids' success, how SickKids can support staff in achieving their goals, and provide opportunities for ongoing conversations to foster improvement.

Recruitment, Retention, and HHR Planning

SickKids will implement targeted approaches to attract and retain a stable workforce representative of the community we serve, with skills matched to current and future demands across clinical, research, education, and corporate support functions.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

	FROM 2022	TO 2025
 WORKLOAD	High levels of overload and burnout, exacerbated by pockets of bureaucracy and inefficiency	 Optimal workloads, with teams and individuals using flexible approaches to maintain balance
 WORK ENVIRONMENT	A historical focus on safety with initial steps in progress to build a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive work environment	 Mature modelling of equity, diversity, inclusion across the organization, within physically and psychologically safe work environments
 CULTURE	Recognition that well-being is important, yet sometimes contradictory to organizational behaviours	 Steadfast organizational commitment to promote and uphold well-being, modelled in behaviours and backed by resources
 HEALTH & WELL-BEING	Increasing physical and mental health challenges among staff, with a shortage of readily available supports	 Literacy, tools, and resources to support early identification of health issues, and timely service pathways to meet staff needs

IMPACT THROUGH ALIGNMENT

Staff Health & Well-being Strategy

