

PCHS

HEALTH MAGAZINE



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LETTER FROM THE CEO

Amandeep Kaur CEO, PCHS



As we welcome September and the transition to a new season, I am pleased to reflect on a summer filled with connection, learning, and meaningful opportunities for community members of all ages. At Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS), these moments remind us that strengthening well-being is not only about providing services but also about creating spaces where people can connect, participate, and feel a genuine sense of belonging.

Throughout the summer, our newcomer youth had opportunities to build friendships, develop new skills, and express their creativity through engaging programs such as Mind Games Madness and Artsy Adventure. These activities provided welcoming, supportive spaces where youth could have fun while building confidence, teamwork, problem-solving, and social connections. For young people adjusting to a new country and community, these experiences can help them feel connected, supported, and empowered.

Our seniors also enjoyed a memorable summer experience during a Centre Island Day Trip organized by PCHS for 130 seniors. The outing offered a chance to enjoy Toronto's beautiful waterfront, spend time outdoors, build friendships, and create lasting memories together.

Programs and activities like these are especially important for promoting active living, reducing social isolation, and strengthening the sense of community that supports healthy aging at home.

As we move into September, I am pleased to invite our community, partners, funders, supporters, and friends to attend the 31st PCHS Annual General Meeting, which will be held virtually on Wednesday, September 16, 2026, from 6:15 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. EDT.

Our AGM is an important opportunity to reflect on the past year, celebrate our collective achievements, recognize the contributions of our Board, staff, volunteers, partners, and supporters, and look ahead to the opportunities.

I warmly encourage you to join us for this important annual gathering. Please register in advance on Eventbrite: 31st PCHS Annual General Meeting, Wednesday, September 16 • 6:15 PM - 7:30 PM EDT | [Register here!](#)

Thank you for continuing to walk alongside PCHS as we work together to build healthier, stronger, and more connected communities.

Wishing you and your loved ones a safe, healthy, and enjoyable fall.





AUGUST IS

AUTOINFLAMMATORY AWARENESS MONTH

By Navdeep Kaur Case Manager, SHPP

Autoinflammatory Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness about autoinflammatory diseases and the people who live with them. These conditions can be difficult to understand because many of their symptoms are not always visible.



Autoinflammatory diseases happen when the body's innate immune system becomes overactive, causing inflammation even when there is no infection or injury that needs to be fought. This inflammation can affect different parts of the body and may come and go over time.

Common symptoms can include repeated fevers, fatigue, joint or muscle pain, skin rashes, swelling, headaches, and stomach or abdominal pain. Symptoms can vary from person to person and may sometimes be mistaken for other health concerns.

Because symptoms may disappear and return, getting the right diagnosis can sometimes take time. People living with these conditions may also feel misunderstood, especially when others cannot see what they are experiencing.



Awareness and education are important steps toward better understanding. If someone experiences ongoing or unexplained symptoms, speaking with a healthcare professional can help identify possible causes and determine whether further assessment is needed.

During Autoinflammatory Awareness Month, let's take the opportunity to listen, learn, and show compassion. We can support those living with these conditions by taking their experiences seriously and creating spaces where they feel heard and understood.

ARAO EVENT IN AUGUST

Care, Identity, and Inclusive Community

World Humanitarian Day 2026

By: Fariha Abdul Muqueet – Prevention Specialist - SHPP



Every year on August 19, World Humanitarian Day recognizes the courage, compassion and dedication of humanitarian workers who support communities affected by conflict, disasters, displacement and emergencies. It is also a day to honor those who have lost their lives while serving others.

This year, the World Health Organization (WHO) is calling for greater protection of health care and highlighting the families of fallen humanitarian workers. Healthcare workers are often among the first to respond during crises, providing essential services in difficult and sometimes dangerous circumstances.



Health equity is at the heart of humanitarian action. During emergencies, people who already experience inequities, including newcomers, displaced populations, people living with disabilities, older adults and individuals experiencing poverty can face even greater challenges accessing essential health services. Protecting health care means ensuring that everyone, regardless of their circumstances, can access safe, timely, respectful, and culturally responsive care.



These principles are equally important within our local communities. At Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS), advancing health equity means recognizing that people do not all have the same access, opportunities or resources to achieve good health. It means reducing systemic and cultural barriers, listening to community needs, providing inclusive services, and ensuring that individuals and families are not left behind.

On this World Humanitarian Day, let us remember those who lost their lives while helping others and recognize those who continue this vital work. Protecting health care. Advancing equity. Caring for every community.

DIGITAL DETOX

By: Lekha Chopra Case Manager-
Sahara Mental Health Program

In the modern age, technology has been integrated into major parts of our lives. It allows us to stay connected, participate in work and/or school and access information quickly. However, the increase in reliance on technology has raised concerns as well, mostly pertaining to the constant use of technology and its impact on mental health.

Many people find themselves spending several hours each day on their devices, contributing to increased stress, difficulties in focusing and feelings of overwhelmedness. Moreover, research has found that greater levels of media use are associated with lower psychological well-being and increased symptoms of depression and anxiety (Twenge & Campbell, 2019).

Social media also can influence the view people have on themselves and others. Due to the careful selection of content individuals share online, many users find themselves comparing each other to unrealistic standards shown online, leading to self esteem concerns and feelings of loneliness. Reducing screen time can create more opportunities for physical activity, social interaction, creative activities, and time outdoors, supporting emotional well-being (World Health Organization [WHO], 2022). Taking breaks from social media can also help individuals be more present and reduce comparison with others.



Setting technology boundaries, such as limiting phone use before bed or turning off notifications, can reduce feelings of constant connectedness. Hunt et al. (2018) found that university students who limited social media use experienced reduced loneliness and depressive feelings.

Similarly, Twenge and Campbell (2019) found that excessive media use was linked to lower psychological well-being. Although technology offers many benefits, maintaining a healthy balance is important. A digital detox can encourage more mindful technology use and create space for meaningful relationships, self-care, and activities that support mental health.

Addiction has now become a complex issue affecting millions of people worldwide and is no longer restricted to substances and alcohol only. People have an addiction to online gambling, excessive use of social media, and even workaholism is an addiction. Research has shown that around 50-60% of individuals with substance use disorders also experience other mental health-related conditions such as depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and PTSD (SAMHSA, 2019). It can also be said that addiction doesn't exist alone.

INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

**Saving Lives Through Awareness and
Naloxone Training**

By: Tanya Vyas, SHPP Community
Health Ambassador

Every year on August 31, communities around the world observe International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD) to remember those who have lost their lives to overdose, support grieving families and friends, and raise awareness about overdose prevention. It is also an opportunity to reduce the stigma surrounding substance use and encourage compassionate, evidence-based approaches that save lives.

Drug poisoning and overdose remain a significant public health concern in Canada. According to the Public Health Agency of Canada, thousands of Canadians continue to lose their lives each year due to opioid-related toxicity, with many deaths involving fentanyl and other potent synthetic opioids. While these statistics are alarming, many overdose deaths are preventable with timely intervention, education, and access to life-saving resources.



One of the most effective tools for preventing opioid overdose deaths is Naloxone.

Naloxone is a safe medication that temporarily reverse the effects of an opioid overdose by restoring breathing until emergency medical services arrive. It is easy to administer as a nasal spray or injection and has no effect on individuals who have not taken opioids.

Naloxone training empowers community members, family members, caregivers, and service providers to recognize the signs of an opioid overdose and respond quickly. Common signs include slow or absent breathing, pinpoint pupils, blue or grey lips or fingertips, and an including calling 911, administering Naloxone, providing rescue breathing if trained, and staying with the individual until help arrives.

THE ADDICTION WE DON'T SEE

When Wanting to Stop Isn't Enough Protecting Families and Safeguarding Communities

By: Punit -Addiction Case Manager



"If they really wanted to stop, they would." It sounds logical. It is also one of the most damaging assumptions we make about addiction. Many people struggling with substance use already know what it is costing them. They see the strain on their relationships. They feel the impact on their health, work, finances, and sense of self. Some wake up genuinely determined that today will be different. And sometimes, by the end of that same day, they use again. That is not always because they do not care. Addiction is more complicated than a lack of willpower.

Repeated substance use can affect the brain systems involved in reward, stress, motivation, and self-control. But addiction also exists within a person's life. Trauma, grief, loneliness, mental health challenges, chronic stress, relationships, and environment can all influence substance use. Imagine promising yourself in the morning, "I am done." Then something happens. An argument.

A painful memory. Anxiety. A familiar person calls. You pass the place where you used before. The craving starts, and your mind remembers how quickly the substance once made everything feel quieter. The consequences may be serious, but in that moment, the need for relief can feel stronger.

This does not remove personal responsibility. Recovery requires commitment, difficult choices, and change. But shame rarely creates lasting recovery. Understanding what drives the behaviour gives us somewhere meaningful to begin.

Instead of focusing only on "How do we stop the substance?", we also need to ask: What is happening before the person uses? What are they trying to cope with? What triggers the craving? What support, connection, or coping skill is missing?

Recovery may involve counselling, medical treatment, medication, peer support, harm reduction, supportive relationships, or several approaches together. And recovery is not always a straight line.

A setback does not have to become the end of someone's story. so perhaps we need to stop asking:

"Why won't they stop?"

And start asking:

"What is making it so hard to stop, and what can help them move forward?"

Because sometimes, the person everyone thinks does not want to change is already fighting harder than anyone can see.



SEEING THE WHOLE FAMILY

A Trauma-Informed, Culturally Sensitive Approach to Care



By: Yasha Malhotra, MA, Clinical Psychology

In community mental health work, progress is rarely linear, and it is almost never confined to the person named on the file. One case in particular illustrates why looking beyond the individual is often where the most meaningful support begins.

The client had experienced significant mental health challenges following a major financial loss, one that unsettled their sense of security and, over time, contributed to multiple hospitalizations and extended periods of heightened risk. Beneath the visible crisis sat something quieter: shame, guilt, and a persistent fear of having failed the people who depended on them. For this client, deeply held values around family responsibility and providing for loved ones only sharpened that burden.

Consistent engagement was not always possible. Hospitalizations, shifting circumstances, and missed appointments are familiar obstacles in this field, and they can easily read as setbacks. In this case, however, they became an invitation to look more closely at the family system surrounding the client, and, in particular, at who was holding that system together.

That attention led to the client's spouse, who was quietly holding everything together. Between work, parenting, and running the household, she rarely had a moment to herself, let alone room to process what her partner was going through. She didn't complain much, but it wasn't hard to see the toll it was taking.

So, the work shifted a little. Alongside supporting the client, I made space for her too, checking in, listening, letting her know that what she was carrying hadn't gone unnoticed. Not to take anything away from the client's care, but because the two were clearly tied together.

This is where a culturally sensitive approach matters, especially with South Asian families. Many operate within a collective structure, where day-to-day life and decision-making are shared rather than individual. A client's stability is rarely separate from the stability of the people around them, so support has to extend outward, to as many people in that system as possible.

What stayed with me was how much resilience showed up in that family, even in the harder stretches. They kept showing up for each other. It's a good reminder that recovery rarely happens in isolation.



OBESITY IN OUR COMMUNITY WORKSHOP

By: Savita Saini, Preventive Care Specialist
(SHPP)

Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS) recently hosted an engaging “Obesity in Our Community” workshop on August 10, 2026, bringing together approximately 20 community members for an informative discussion on obesity, its impact on health, and practical approaches to healthier living.

The session focused on understanding what obesity is, its different types and causes, and the various factors that can contribute to weight gain and obesity. Participants learned that obesity is a complex health condition influenced by multiple factors, including lifestyle, environment, genetics, social circumstances, and overall health.

A key component of the workshop was a presentation by a dietitian guest speaker, who provided practical nutrition information and answered participants’ questions. The discussion highlighted the importance of balanced eating, making realistic and sustainable lifestyle changes, and developing a healthier relationship with food.

The workshop also explored the health impacts associated with obesity, including its connection to several chronic health conditions. Importantly, participants discussed the role of cultural attitudes and stigma surrounding obesity, emphasizing the importance of approaching weight and health conversations with compassion, respect, and understanding rather than judgment.



Summer Camp August 2026

By: Disha Mehta – Newcomer Youth Worker

On August 17 and 18, 2026, the Newcomer Youth Team hosted a two-day Summer Camp designed to provide youth with a fun, engaging, and welcoming space during the summer. The camp included a combination of interactive games, problem-solving activities, and creative art sessions that encouraged youth to connect with one another, use their imagination, and enjoy meaningful experiences together.

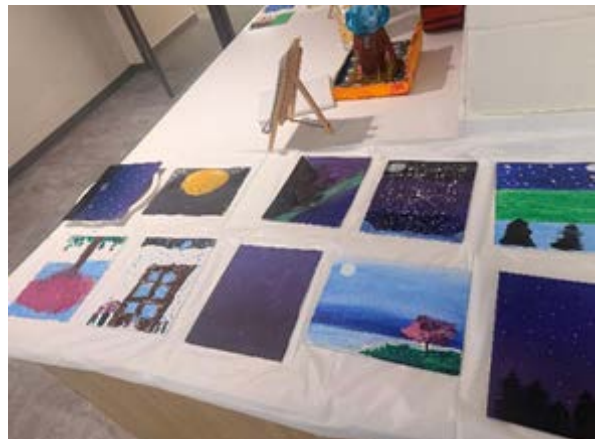
August 17, 2026 – Jeopardy & Mind Games

The Summer Camp began with an exciting day of Jeopardy and other mind games. Youth participated in friendly challenges that tested their knowledge, memory, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. The activities encouraged teamwork, communication, and healthy competition while keeping participants engaged and entertained. Youth had the opportunity to work together, share ideas, and learn from one another in a fun and supportive environment.

August 18, 2026 – Clay Creations & Canvas Painting

On the second day of Summer Camp, youth explored their creative side through clay activities and canvas painting. Participants used clay to create their own unique designs and brought their ideas to life through hands-on art. Youth also expressed themselves through canvas painting, using different colours and creative concepts to make personalized artwork. The activities promoted imagination, patience, self-expression, and relaxation while giving youth something meaningful to take home.

Overall, the two-day Summer Camp provided youth with an opportunity to learn, create, socialize, and have fun in a positive environment. The combination of mental challenges and creative activities supported youth engagement while helping build confidence, teamwork, and stronger peer connections.





A DAY OF CONNECTION AND JOY AT CENTRE ISLAND





On Friday, August 21, 2026, PCHS brought together 130 seniors for an uplifting day trip to Centre Island. Supported by six staff members, two volunteers, and one placement student, the outing provided an opportunity to enjoy nature, stay active, socialize, and strengthen community connections. The trip also encouraged seniors to spend time outdoors, experience something new, and create lasting memories together.

The day began with pickups in Brampton, Caledon, and Mississauga, followed by refreshments and a ferry ride from Toronto Harbour to Centre Island. Participants explored the island's lush surroundings, enjoyed lunch, and spent time connecting with friends and fellow seniors. The relaxed setting encouraged conversation, laughter, and opportunities to build new friendships.

A one-hour boat cruise was a highlight, offering beautiful views of **Lake Ontario, the CN Tower, and Toronto's skyline**. The cruise featured songs, poetry, laughter, and energetic Giddha performances, creating a lively and memorable experience. Seniors also captured the day through photos, videos, and social media reels, preserving special moments from the outing.

Throughout the outing, PCHS staff, volunteers, and the placement student provided support to ensure everyone's safety and comfort. Seniors were reminded to bring essentials such as hats, sunscreen, umbrellas, comfortable footwear, and necessary medications. The day concluded with everyone returning safely, with warm appreciation from participants for an outing filled with recreation, friendship, wellness, and community spirit.

PCHS in the Community



PCHS Team at Peel Living BBQ Outreach



Diabetes Education Presentation at Malton Gurudawara



PCHS Team at Bon Ami Community Event



PCHS Team at Ruby Sahota's Community BBQ

WELCOME

NEW STAFF



Gurjap Khubber
HR Administrative
Support



Vaanathy Kajatheepan
Program Coordinator,
Community Cycling
Program



Chanmeet Dhaliwal
Settlement Counsellor



Eman Hamdan
Case Manager- Mental
Health Wellness



Ramandeep Kaur
Intake Worker, Newcomer
Settlement Programs

CLIENT

T E S T I M O N I A L S

“Working with you was such a good experience for me. You always made me feel supported and understood, and I never felt judged which made it a lot easier to be open. I really appreciated how you checked in with me regularly and helped me work through things at my own pace. The goals we set together felt realistic and actually helpful, and I always felt like you were genuinely in my corner. Even when things were tough, you brought a calm energy that made a big difference. I’m really grateful for the time we spent working together, thank you again for everything!”

-Mental Health Program Client



"OBESITY" IN OUR COMMUNITY

Session Hosted by Punjabi Community Health Services

This session will cover **what obesity is**, its **types and causes**, **how it can impact health**, the **role of cultural stigma**, and **practical ways to manage obesity**.



Educational
Presentation



Guest
Speaker



Refreshments



Transportation
provided, if
required

September 01, 2026 | 4:00pm - 6:00pm

**Riverstone Community Centre
Room #6 (Located in the Basement)**



**Scan the QR Code or
Click Here to Register!**

OR

 **437-243-3735**



Bloom & Breathe

YOGA WELLNESS WORKSHOP

Join us for a wellness workshop featuring interactive coping skill activities and gentle yoga to help reduce stress and promote self-care.



What to Expect



Coping activities



Yoga



Light refreshments



 17

September 3rd, 2026 | 3:30 PM - 5:30 PM



Unit 101, 60 West Drive, Brampton



Support Line: 437-243-3735



Scan to Register

31ST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Date

Wednesday,
September 16, 2026



Time

6:30 pm to 7:30 pm



Location

Virtual via Zoom



SCAN
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CLICK HERE
to → Register



Join us for an evening of connection and community!



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Punjabi Community Health Services

SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 20TH, 2026

11:00AM – 3:00PM

Embassy Grand Convention Centre



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BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

MAKE
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COMMERCE
MARKETING

SAHARA PARENTING GROUP

This support group runs in person every Wednesdays from 5:00pm to 7:00pm. Designed to raise awareness and provide education on building positive and healthy relationships, this group offers a welcoming space for parents and caregivers to learn and share together. Each session focuses on strengthening family connections through guided discussions and practical tools.



LEARN MORE ABOUT:

- ✓ Strengthening parent-child relationships
- ✓ Bullying awareness
- ✓ Understanding cultural differences
- ✓ Developing healthy communication skills
- ✓ Support with education and career planning

** Free for all participants*

FOR INFORMATION AND REGISTRATION:

karman.gill@pchs4u.com
or 365-866-3320

WEEKLY WEDNESDAY GROUP

**LOCATION: 60 WEST DRIVE, UNIT 101,
BRAMPTON**

TIME: 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

TYPE 2 DIABETES

PREVENTION PROGRAM

We are looking for Family Caregivers

Join us for a 6-month coaching program to help prevent Type 2 Diabetes among **Black, African, Caribbean, and South Asian** families in Peel Region.



WHO CAN PARTICIPATE

- ✓ 18+ year old family caregiver
- ✓ Resides in Peel (Mississauga, Brampton, Caledon) and has kids at home
- ✓ Identifies as Black, African, Caribbean, or South Asian
- ✓ Able to participate for 6 months
- ✓ Can speak, read, and understand English



WHAT PARTICIPANTS RECEIVE



Compensation available for participation (Gift cards or E-transfers)



Free health and wellness coaching for your family



GET IN TOUCH



Phone +1 437-231-6951



Email hamna.khan@thp.ca

Or scan this QR :



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Hardeep Mann CPA
PROFESSIONAL CORPORATION

Community Supporters

Jaswinder Bassan





PCHS Locations

Head Office

2980 Drew Road, Unit 241
Mississauga, ON L4T 0A7

Brampton Office Location

60 West Drive, Unit 202 and 101,
Brampton, ON L6T 3T6

Community Door

7700 Hurontario St, Unit 1300,
Bampton, ON L6Y 4M3

Malton Youth Hub

3545 Morning Star Drive, Jonathan
Davis Centre, Mississauga, ON L4T
1Y3

Different Spokes:

8 Nelson Street West
Brampton, ON L6X 1B7

Southfields Community Center

225 Dougall Ave.
Caledon, ON L7C 3M7



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