

Access Alliance Multicultural  
Health and Community Services

# **2020–2021 Annual Report**

# **#FlattenTheCurve**



# Message from the Leadership

Like many organizations across our society, Access Alliance Multicultural Health and Community Services endured a grueling and challenging year due to COVID-19. However, what was most pressing was not our own organization's immediate vitality, but the health and wellbeing of our clients as they navigated an uncertain time.

This was the impetus to establish the initiative – Caring for Clients in COVID-19. This expeditious communications plan was instrumental in establishing an early framework for our organization to respond to the needs and concerns of our clients. It was also integral in ensuring that programming and services, while modified, would continue to be delivered with a client-centred approach. With critical research being undertaken that demonstrated the disproportionate social and economic impacts that vulnerable communities have experienced, such as our clients, it was imperative that we continue to advocate and support them throughout this time.

We also must not underestimate the effect the pandemic has had on our staff. Despite the daily and weekly unknowns in their personal lives, they have worked diligently and put their best foot forward for the clients that we serve.



**Arman Hamidian**  
Chair of the  
Board of Directors



**Axelle Janczur**  
Executive Director



With the immense effort of our staff and senior leadership team, Access Alliance has not just survived the last year, but we were able to thrive in certain ways by adopting new and innovative practices, approaches, and strategies. This has not been an easy time for any of us. We have constantly been exposed to the “unprecedented” nature of this period, analyzing and assessing ways that we could “pivot” to best serve our clients for today and for tomorrow.

Further, as we have also traversed this pandemic journey with our partners and fellow CHCs, we would like to extend our well wishes to them all as we approach some semblance of a post-pandemic society. We will continue to be system thinkers, focused on the improvement of health outcomes for our communities through partnership and collaboration, while embracing the province’s health system transformation.

Once again, our achievements wouldn’t have been possible without the board members, volunteers, staff, and leadership that have worked tirelessly. I want to thank them all for their courage to drive change, their unwavering dedication to our vision, mission, and values, and for providing rays of hope and health for our clients.

Thank you!



When Ontario declared a state of emergency in March 2020, Access Alliance created a Covid response framework that would guide our decision making and deployment of staff during the pandemic period. As an essential service, we knew we could not close our doors – rather we needed to step forward and re-think how to best respond so that care and support to our clients and community would continue. Notably, our C4CC initiative was launched. Access Alliance Caring for Clients in COVID-19 (#C4CC) initiative was based on 4 key strategies:

- ✓ Regular check-in with vulnerable clients;
- ✓ Communicating clear and accurate info to constituents;
- ✓ Creating service alternatives to maintain service continuity;
- ✓ Conducting case-management to offer approximate support to medically complex and socially valuable clients.

Within 2 weeks screening stations were established at all sites to protect clients, staff and community members. All direct service staff were equipped with laptops and working from home, rotating in to the office on a regular basis to ensure that those clients that needed or preferred to be seen in person had that choice. Program staff quickly retooled programming and created a wide variety of online options, making sure we were continuing to support individuals and families. And then an incredible array of COVID-19 specific responses were developed to specifically address emerging needs led by Access Alliance or in partnerships with other organizations and critical stakeholders. The level of collaboration in the community health and services sector has been inspiring. The following pages outline some examples.

# Check In With Vulnerable Clients

## Buddies for Seniors

In 2019, the idea was developed to create a program that would provide support to seniors in isolation. These “buddies” would help to keep seniors motivated and connected to programs. By the time funding was received for the program, and program was up and running, the pandemic would be forcing everyone into isolation, and the need for the program was clearer than ever before.

Buddies for Seniors is a lifeline for many home-bound seniors, that would otherwise have very little interaction. Some seniors experience loneliness, while others simply appreciated the check-in and someone to speak with. At the core of the program is the recruitment of “younger seniors” to be volunteer buddies. These volunteers bring a unique and relatable perspective and are also beneficiaries of the program.

One of the major challenges that was overcome during the pandemic, was that many seniors lack access to devices for connecting to the internet. In many cases, they were still relying on rotary phones. We’re grateful to the Telus Mobility for Good emergency response initiative for donating 50 brand new Samsung phones and 18-month of free data. Staff members created video tutorials to teach seniors how to use the phones.

This generous donation helped to ensure that low-income seniors were able to maintain a connection to their buddies throughout the pandemic.

Access Alliance depends on the engagement and support of volunteers and students, while providing them with meaningful opportunities to give back to the community and develop skills related to their education

### Access Alliance Volunteer & Student Stats



Volunteer Hours:

**3440**

Number of Volunteers:

**208**



Student Hours:

**6627**

Number of Students:

**42**



# Communicate Clear and Accurate Information

## RioMix

The Remote Information Ontario's Multilingual Information Exchange is an initiative that aims to provide a collaborative, centralized and accessible repository of translated materials and multilingual websites relating to health and community care and support.



**We were grateful for the opportunity to collaborate with Access Alliance and create translated versions of the influenza vaccine consent form. In doing so we were able to provide a client-centered experience and reduce barriers to quality client-care with documents that were written in the preferred language of the individual.**

**Amanda Arseneau**

Registered Nurse, Chatham-Kent CHC



### Language Services Stats



Pre-scheduled  
interpretation requests

**10,559**  
requests processed



Immediate over  
the phone interpretation

**162,764**  
calls (2,877,323 minutes)



Number of languages  
and dialects supported

**141**

### And top 5 languages (utilized) at each site:

#### **AccessPoint on Danforth**

ARABIC  
DARI  
SPANISH  
FARSI  
NEPALI

#### **AccessPoint on Jane**

SPANISH  
PORTUGUESE  
KAREN  
HUNGARIAN  
TIGRINYA

#### **College:**

SPANISH  
PORTUGUESE  
ARABIC  
FARSI  
TIGRINYA

# Case Management and Support

## Virtual Client Care

Prior to COVID-19, Access Alliance was already well on track to transitioning to a virtual environment to support team communication and collaboration across the organization's three sites. With government mandated lockdowns and a need to prioritize the health of clients, there was need to rapidly build capacity for doctors and nurses to see clients.

Access Alliance adopted PS Suite to book appointments with clients and facilitate remote sessions with providers. Once booked, clients received an email reminder for their virtual appointment, and are provided with a link that connects them with a provider.

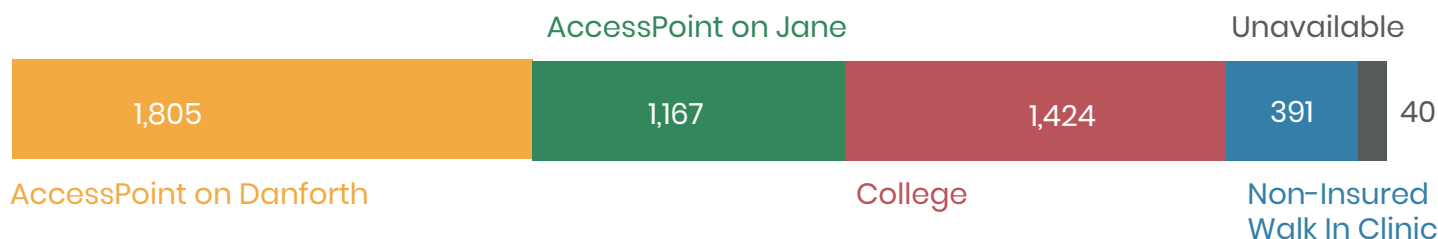
The software is easy to use and allows a client to connect with a provider through video-conference or by phone. In addition to ensuring the health and safety of clients at the height of the pandemic, this technology drastically reduced no-show rates. By eliminating the need for clients to deal with the challenges of booking off time, travelling to appointments and potentially planning for childcare, appointments became far more accessible.

Providers have also benefitted from the flexible appointment options. The increased cleaning requirements because of COVID-19 created challenges in seeing clients in person. By staggering virtual and in-person appointments providers can prepare rooms between clients, and ensure surfaces are appropriately cleaned and sanitized.

While the transition has not been easy, the team has Access Alliance stepped up to meet the challenge, and virtual appointments is an advancement that will benefit clients long after the pandemic has ended.

Total clients seen in  
FY 2020-2021 by site

4,827



Number of new clients:

1,519

Number of group sessions:

1,337 sessions with 68  
Registered groups.

Number of participants  
in group sessions:

51,422

# Create service alternatives

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many of the community programs at Access Alliance had to transition online. For programs that were heavily reliant on in person instruction and interaction, this transition required creativity and hard work from staff, and a great deal of openness from clients. We are proud of the results of those transitions and the successes that our team was able to achieve.

## Food With Dignity

The Food with Dignity (FWD) project provided nutritious and healthy meals four days a week for many seniors, newcomers and adults in the community. Over 70% of our Food with Dignity meal program clients are in households that make less than \$35,000, 60% of our clients found it more difficult to afford food since the beginning of COVID-19.

To help address the barriers of people accessing the program we took several measures including adjustment of food distribution hours, providing take home meal boxes for family members and delivering food to the seniors with mobility issues. Meals were culturally appropriate and included halal meat and vegetarian options to fit the dietary needs of the community.

In addition to the weekly meal program, we also provided grocery gift cards to over 1200 community members. Also, we provided 1300 food hampers to food insecure families.

## Neighbourhood Bike Mechanic

In direct response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Scarborough Cycles Bike Hub launched a new 'Neighbourhood Bike Mechanic' program in the spring of 2021. The program teaches residents to maintain, tune, and safety check, their own bike and the bikes of their friends, family, and neighbours. Participants learned basic bike mechanic skills, and were loaned a toolbox, repair stand, and supplies, and further supported their local community through different activities. All classes were offered synchronous online via Zoom.

**Thank you for bringing such an amazing event for our community, many kids in our neighborhood received bikes and they are riding their bikes to the park. You have put smiles on kid's faces. The work your team is doing is invaluable, Thank you so much!**  
**Nita Goswami, Program Participant**

## Mental Health Monday

Mental Health Monday helps youth to develop emotional resilience during the pandemic. The program aims to equip youth to deal with online fatigue, lockdown fatigue, and other pandemic related mental pressures to help youth develop skill sets they can use. These skills can not only help during the pandemic but also be useful within interpersonal relationships with friends and family, as well with managing mental health during school.

## Hidden Smiles Mask Project

Access Alliance took key initiative in addressing the shortage of masks at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Hidden Smiles Mask Project was a part of the Caring for Clients in COVID-19 (#C4CC) initiative in providing clients, community members, and staff with another tool in slowing the spread of the virus. Over 3,000 masks were made by the local women's sewing group, and was distributed to other CHC's, community organizations, and community members. We were extremely efficient in utilizing community resources as all the supplies, fabric, thread and elastic were donated or bought from a local store that was being effected by the pandemic.



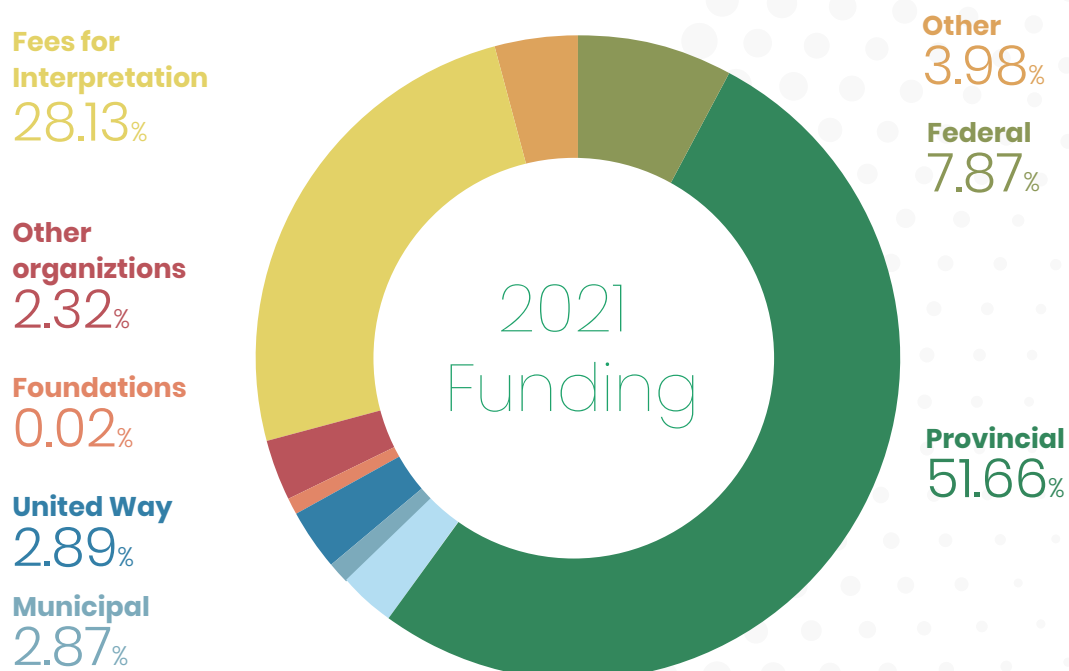
# Financial Statement

Statement of combined Expenditures and Revenue  
For the year ended March 31, 2021

Expenditure	2021	2020
Personnel expenses	6,775,726	6,672,151
Service Delivery	5,436,971	4,605,183
Operating expenses	3,011,552	2,577,991
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>15,224,249</b>	<b>13,855,325</b>

## Revenue

Federal Grants	1,233,690	1,509,275
Provincial Grants	8,092,671	7,182,747
Municipal Grants	490,420	450,560
United Way	452,406	450,115
Foundations	3,500	54,430
Interpretation Fees	4,406,872	3,719,446
Other	986,471	985,799
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>15,666,030</b>	<b>14,352,372</b>



# Board of Directors

**Arman Hamidian** **Natasha Jesenak** **Kiran Govind**  
**Michael Torres** **Priyanka Debnath** **Jasmine Rezaee** **Yinka**  
**Macauley** **Tess Sheldon** **Jaime Boccongelle** **Ambreen Akbar**  
**Neil Shah** **Herleen Arora**

## Vision

Toronto's diverse communities  
achieve Health With Dignity.

## Mission

Access Alliance Multicultural  
Health and Community Services  
(Access Alliance) provides services  
and addresses system inequities  
to improve health outcomes for  
the most vulnerable immigrants,  
refugees, and their communities.

Client Centered: Our clients  
are encouraged and  
supported to make informed  
choices and decisions that  
relate to their health.



Accountability: Our  
stakeholders see a full and  
transparent use of evidence  
and resources that focus on  
positive client impacts.



Innovation and Excellence: Our  
organization fosters a culture  
of continuous learning, quality  
improvement and best  
practice.



CLIENT CENTERED

COLLABORATION



Collaboration: Our  
partnerships increase  
knowledge, strengthen  
systems and maximize  
resources so we can take  
action effectively.

## Values

ACCOUNTABILITY

EQUITY AND INCLUSION



Equity, Access and Inclusion:  
Our commitment is to  
challenge systemic barriers  
that reduce health  
outcomes for vulnerable  
populations.

INNOVATION

Access Alliance Multicultural  
Health and Community Services

## 2020–2021 Annual Report

# #Flattenthecurve



### Central Office

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### Accesspoint on Jane

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### Access Alliance Language Services

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### Accesspoint on Danforth

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