



## **Introducing the Ontario Health East Patient and Family Advisory Council**

**FOR RELEASE** – We are pleased to introduce the members of the Ontario Health East Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC). As patients and/or caregivers in the East region, the 11 PFAC members have the first-hand experience, knowledge, and insights to inform how we design and deliver health care that meets the needs of our communities.

With representation across the East region, the Ontario Health East PFAC will play a critical role advising on improving the patient, family and caregiver experience in the many communities we serve.

Most importantly the Ontario Health East PFAC will ensure that the patient and family voice is being heard by Ontario Health, and health service providers and partners across the region.

“The Ontario Health East PFAC enables us to include a variety of perspectives as we work to connect and coordinate our health care system to ensure patients, clients and residents in the East region receive the best possible care,” says Anna Greenberg, Chief Regional Officer, Ontario Health East. “We are very grateful for the commitment and contributions of each of our advisors.”

### **Meet the Ontario Health East Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC):**

#### **Vivian Bethell, Prince Edward County**

Vivian Bethell has extensive experience with the health care system as a caregiver and as a breast cancer survivor with a couple of chronic illnesses. She began volunteering after her husband was diagnosed with multiple myeloma and shortly thereafter, kidney failure. He was in dialysis three times a week, but also in hospital on many other occasions. She was his full-time caregiver for several years until his death. It was early after his diagnosis that she began her involvement locally and regionally in PFACs, committees, task groups, and eventually began to broaden her experience to include provincial and national commitments.

Examples of her experience include: founding co-chair of the South East Regional Renal PFAC; member of the South East Regional Cancer PFAC; former member of the Ontario Renal Network PFAC; member of the Kingston Health Sciences Centre Board of Directors’ Patient Care and Quality Committee; and member of the Ontario Quality Standards Committee and of Caregivers CAN – a federal group of people with lived experience who advise the Centre of Caregiving Excellence. She has been part of many projects including: virtual care; palliative and end-of-life care; COVID-19 planning; compassionate care; redevelopment planning for Kingston General Hospital and planning and implementation of a state-of-the-art Breast Imaging Centre.

She graduated from the University of New Brunswick, completed the U of T Executive Management Program, and retired as a Human Resources executive from the Bank of Canada. She is passionate about helping to improve the quality of life for patients and their caregivers.

### **Natalie del Signore, Ottawa**

Natalie Del Signore is a former registered nurse who worked in acute care and research, for both adult care and pediatrics. She is a strong advocate for marginalized people who face serious challenges when accessing health care, including newcomers to Canada who experience language barriers. She is also a parent advocate, with a focus on the very under-represented pediatric voice, especially in the areas of mental health and complex care. She has past volunteer experience at the Montreal Children's Hospital, various women's shelters, and Hope's Garden Eating Disorder Support. Currently she volunteers with many organizations, including Pediatric Parents Consultation Network; Evidence in Child Health to Enhance Outcomes Research with the University of Alberta; and SickKids Family Advisory Network. She enjoys yoga and meditation and offers classes to women and children in shelters in and around Ottawa.

### **Lisha Di Giacchino, Ottawa**

Lisha works as a research analyst with the Community Addictions Peer Support Association (CAPSA) and holds a Master's in Criminology and a post-graduate diploma in Victimology, Victim Assistance and Criminal Justice. Lisha has health care experience for co-occurring mental and behavioural disorders which supported her in reaching her health goals. She has conducted research and informed policies with the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada and CAPSA on substance use disorder symptom management and the prevention of trauma, violence, and exposure to drugs before birth. Lisha is passionate about decreasing stigma against people with Substance Use Health goals and advocating for accessible care.

Through PFAC, Lisha hopes to support the scale and spread of life-transforming services for people with co-occurring mental and behavioural disorders. These services include the trauma and violence-informed opioid and other substance use disorder treatments that saved her life.

### **Maxime Lê, Ottawa – Co-Chair**

Maxime Lê is a Franco-Ontarian and racialized individual living with an invisible disability and chronic health conditions who wishes to combine his passions for health care, public health, and communication to support PFAC's objectives and shape the future of health care. Maxime has lived health care experience receiving multiple surgeries both as an adolescent and adult for chronic and acute conditions. Maxime founded a bilingual health and science communications consulting company and has worked with Ottawa Public Health and the Public Health Agency of Canada. He holds multiple degrees and certificates in health-related disciplines as well as a Master of Arts in Communication, specializing in Science, Society and Policy.

As a member of the PFAC, Maxime aims to foster positive change, digital modernization, and ensure diverse voices are represented and respected. He advocates for better access to French-language health services, better collection of disaggregated race-based information to inform investments and

improve service delivery to priority populations, and integration of mental health care into the overall health care system.

#### **Dr. Manon Lemonde, Oshawa – Co-Chair**

Manon Lemonde is a registered nurse with a PhD in biomedical sciences. During her 35-year career, she has been an academic and completed evidence-based work in chronic diseases. In 2003, after completing her post-doctoral studies, she moved to Oshawa to teach our future nurses at Ontario Tech University. In addition to her career as a registered nurse, she has worked with the Professional and Legal Order of Nurses in Quebec on nursing evaluation and the faculty at Laurentian University's School of Nursing.

Manon is committed to advance French-language health services and has held committee positions with the Association canadienne-française de l'Ontario and Entité 4. As a member of the PFAC, Manon aims to ensure equitable access to health care and believes prevention strategies for our aging population is of great importance. Manon is the proud mother to Emilie and has been married to Pierre for over 30 years. Her hobbies include watching sports, exercise, reading and daily facetime with her grandson Maverick.

#### **Patricia Messner, Carleton Place**

Pat is a former paramedic who lives in Carleton Place with her wife Marilyn. Being the recipient of over 50 surgeries, she now spends her time focusing on the health care system and providing her knowledge of the health care system from various perspectives. Pat is a former Board Member with the Carleton Place and District Memorial Hospital, Chair of the Carleton Place Patient and Family Advisory Council, Member Ontario Opioid Drug Observatory Steering Council with the Ottawa Hospital Research Group, among many others. Pat is also a former school teacher and runs her own water ski school in Ottawa on the Rideau River.

Pat is a Member of the Order of Canada, awarded for her achievements in the Canadian and North American slalom championships, and becoming a women's world ski champion. She is the only Canadian with an Olympic Medal in the sport of water skiing and is a member of the Ottawa Sports Hall of Fame. Pat feels at home in the health care system and the more she can help other patients feel the same the better.

#### **Anne Newman, Kingston**

Anne Newman lives and works in Kingston. Joining the Ontario Health Cancer Care Ontario Patient and Family Advisor group in 2014, she has shared her caregiver experience on focus and working groups, committees, and the Patient and Family Advisory Council (PFAC). Anne has volunteered locally as a member of the former South East LHIN PFAC.

Anne looks forward to working and learning with the Ontario Health East Region Patient and Family Advisory Council members as we all strive towards an inclusive, welcoming, and equitable health environment supported by open communication and accessible care. Anne enjoys family time boating on the St. Lawrence River and early morning lane swims at a local community pool.



**Patricia Powers, Peterborough**

Pat spent her career as a Registered Nurse with a special interest in long-term care. She worked in the positions of Human Resources Officer and Chief Operations Officer for over 20 years with a company that owned and operated 16 long-term care homes in Ontario. She subsequently spent eight years as a Long-Term Care Homes Inspector with the Ministry of Long-Term Care, and at the time of her retirement was the Regional Director, Ontario South East Operations for Extencicare Canada Inc.

After experiencing a critical illness and extended period of hospitalization, Pat became acutely aware of how essential it is for the patient's perspective to be a key component in the delivery of health care services. She is an active participant on the PFAC and Quality Committee at her regional hospital, and PFAC member with the Peterborough Ontario Health Team. Pat is excited to have the opportunity to expand her efforts to promote meaningful patient engagement beyond her local area, and to see the voices of people who need or have experienced long-term care services in Ontario play a pivotal role in the redevelopment of this system.

**Daniel Shire, Pickering**

Dan grew up on a family farm near Brockville and has lived in Pickering with his wife Karen for 34 years. In 2013, he experienced a heart attack and cardiac arrest while sleeping. His wife administered CPR while paramedics and firemen arrived and defibrillated him before transport to the hospital. Dan spent 10 days in ICU. He credits his experience of skilled critical care, delivered quickly, by integrated health teams that resulted in being one of the 7% of people who survive an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest.

Dan has a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology and was a business analyst at IBM Canada. In the last decade of his career, he helped design web sites and mobile applications that support people with disabilities and served on an Ontario AODA standards development committee. In retirement, he's on the board of Ontario Nature, enjoys travel, hiking and bird watching, genealogy, and local history of the 1000 Islands. In health care, he is passionate about the essential role of community hospitals and the importance of having basic first aid and CPR skills so they may help save someone's life.

**David Wood, Cornwall**

Dave was born in Hamilton, Ontario. A graduate of Queen's and McMaster Universities, he had a varied professional life holding executive positions in finance and operations in manufacturing, electronics and communications.

Since retiring and relocating to eastern Ontario, Dave has been active in several areas including serving on the Governors' Advisory Council and the Audit Committee of a major teaching hospital in eastern Ontario; sitting as a Non-student Member of the Board of Directors of the Queen's University Alma Mater Society and serving for several years on the Township of Leeds and the Thousand Islands Economic Development Committee. Additionally, Dave chaired and oversaw the restructuring of the finances of the Town of Gananoque's Festival of the Islands and most recently was a member of the South East LHIN Patient and Family Advisory Committee.

**Anne-Marie Yaraskavitch, Whitby**

Anne-Marie Yaraskavitch’s journey as a care partner has included supporting family and friends living with cardiovascular, cancer, dementia, mental health and end of life diagnoses, in home and long-term care settings, in urban and rural communities. These journeys have highlighted for her the need for patients, families, and care partners to be involved in identifying health and social needs and co-designing solutions.

Included in her advisory work is the role of co-chair of the Durham Ontario Health Team’s Patient, Family and Care Partner Advisory Council and the Provincial Geriatrics Leadership Ontario Older Adult and Care Partner Advisory Council. She has also been an advisor on various other regional and provincial health system planning tables since her retirement in 2001 and has volunteered on various boards. The journey with her father sparked a special interest in the needs of older adults, leading her to complete a degree in gerontology after retirement and she now focuses her primary advocacy efforts on care and support for older adults.

*Note: There are some vacant seats on the PFAC which will be filled in the coming months to ensure diversity and geographical regional representation.*

**For More Information:**

<https://www.ontariohealth.ca/about-us/our-programs/ontario-health-regions/east-region>

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