PCHS

HEALTH MAGAZINE



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LETTER FROM THE CEO

Amandeep Kaur CEO, PCHS

Strengthening Community Bonds: Compassionate Approaches to Grief

September is a month for reflection and renewal, a time when we encourage and support our community to look inward, set new intentions, and prepare for the upcoming season. At Punjabi Community Health Services (PCHS), it is also a time to highlight important conversations that shape our collective well-being.

This year, we are honoured to host the 5th Annual Mental Health and Addictions Forum on September 11, 2025, with the theme Strengthening Community Connections and Building Resilience. The forum offers a space for dialogue on issues that are often overlooked or stigmatized, especially grief. By recognizing and addressing grief with compassion, we cultivate stronger, more connected communities where healing can genuinely begin.

Our community's generosity and solidarity shone brightly on August 10, 2025, during the Hope Collective's Soap for Hope event. This inspiring initiative brought our business community and the broader community together with a shared goal: to support those in need. The funds raised will allow us to provide a dedicated grief counsellor, someone who can assist individuals and families through their loss, and to enhance our Langar on Wheels program, ensuring seniors (LOW) nourished, engaged, and connected. These efforts are more than just financial contributions; they serve as proof of the power of collective action.



We recognize that grief impacts everyone, but accessing support can be very difficult. Free grief services are scarce, wait times are lengthy, and culturally and linguistically responsive supports, especially in Punjabi and Hindi, are rarely available. At PCHS, we are dedicated to closing this gap by offering compassionate, accessible care options that respect the cultural realities of our community.

September also marks the beginning of a new school year, a time full of excitement and challenges for students, parents, and educators. At PCHS, we support families, especially newcomers, ensuring that mental well-being, resilience, and community connections remain at the heart of the learning experience.

Finally, I warmly invite you to attend our 30th Annual General Meeting on September 17, 2025. This milestone not only celebrates our collective achievements but also provides an opportunity to reaffirm our vision and plan the future together.

As we move forward, let us continue to lead with courage and conviction, ensuring that no one walks their journey alone. Together, we can build a stronger, more compassionate future for everyone.

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Autoinflammatory Awareness Month

By Savita Saini, Preventative Care Specialist

Every August, people around the world come together to recognize Autoinflammatory Awareness Month—a campaign created to bring attention to a group of rare conditions that often go unnoticed. While the word "autoinflammatory" may sound complex, at its core it means that the body's first line of defense—the innate immune system becomes overactive and triggers inflammation, even when there's no infection or injury.

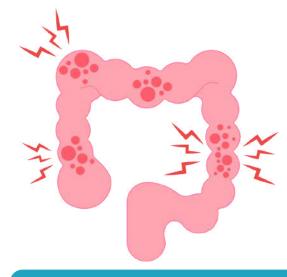
For people living with these conditions, the impact is very real. Recurring fevers, unexplained rashes, joint pain, and fatigue can make everyday life challenging. Disorders such as Familial Mediterranean Fever (FMF), Cryopyrin-Associated Periodic Syndromes (CAPS), and TRAPS (Tumor Necrosis Factor Receptor-Associated Periodic Syndrome) fall into this category. Unfortunately, because symptoms are vague and mimic other illnesses, patients often go years without a clear diagnosis.

That's why awareness is so important. Autoinflammatory Awareness Month helps educate not only the public but also doctors and health professionals who may encounter these patients. Throughout August, families and advocacy groups share their stories, landmarks are lit up in orange to symbolize inflammation, and online events connect patients worldwide. These efforts remind those living with autoinflammatory conditions that they are not alone—and that support, resources, and community are out there.

The campaign also emphasizes the importance of research. Understanding how autoinflammatory diseases work has already helped doctors make progress in other health areas, such as managing severe inflammation in COVID-19. By investing in rare disease research, we gain insights that benefit everyone.

Most importantly, Autoinflammatory Awareness Month is about hope. It's about pushing for earlier diagnosis, better treatments, and more compassion for the families navigating these lifelong conditions. And it's about making sure that no one feels invisible just because their condition is rare.

So, as August rolls around, remember the people behind the science—the children who miss school because of fevers, the adults balancing work with chronic pain, and the families searching for answers. By learning and sharing, we can all play a role in making these hidden conditions more visible.



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Importance of Self-Care

By: Avtar Singh, Addiction Case Manager





Self-care is the practice of taking care of the physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual aspects of your life to promote health and wellness. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2019), self-care is the ability to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider.

The main goal of self-care is to prevent or control disease and preserve overall well-being through consistently taking care of various aspects of your health. For a person to practice true self-care, they must take personal responsibility and practice self-reliance in a way that positively impacts their health in both the present and the future.

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zelfcare

Self

Key components of self-care include:

- Prioritizing your physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health
- Adopting healthy lifestyle habits that can be maintained long-term
- Eating a balanced and nutritious diet
- Finding exercise activities, you enjoy and participating in them regularly
- Getting an adequate amount of good-quality sleep
- Following treatment plans for existing conditions
- Taking time out for yourself to participate in healthy activities you enjoy
- Engaging in spiritual or reflective practices such as meditation, hiking, spending time in nature, listening to inspirational music, visiting religious places, attending spiritual groups, praying, or speaking with a spiritual advisor

Practicing self-care regularly can bring both short- and long-term benefits, leading to improved well-being and better overall health. People who engage in consistent self-care often experience positive changes such as:

- **Reduced stress levels** Putting your health and needs first, along with giving yourself adequate rest, can significantly lower stress (NIMH, 2021).
- **Increased self-worth** The more you care for yourself, the more confident and positive you will feel about who you are.
- **Greater sense of belonging** Spending time with others fosters connection and love, which are vital for mental and emotional health (WHO, 2019).

Self-care is not a one-time activity but a lifestyle that enables you to set aside time for your health, ensuring your overall well-being now and in the years to come.



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Honoring Lives, Raising Awareness: International Overdose Awareness Day 2025

By: Navdeep Kaur Case Manager, SHPP



Every year on **August 31**, communities around the world come together to recognize **International Overdose Awareness Day (IOAD)**. This global event is dedicated to remembering those who have lost their lives to overdose, supporting families and friends in grief, and raising awareness about the urgent need for overdose prevention and drug policy reform.

In 2025, the message behind IOAD remains as vital as ever. With the continued rise in overdose deaths, particularly those linked to synthetic opioids and unregulated substances, the day serves as a reminder that every life lost to overdose is one too many. IOAD offers an opportunity to reflect, to educate, and to take meaningful action.

A Global Movement for Prevention

First launched in Melbourne, Australia in 2001, IOAD has grown into the world's largest campaign focused on ending overdose. It promotes evidence-based solutions and encourages communities to engage in open conversations about substance use, access to care, and harm reduction. The campaign emphasizes that overdoses are preventable, and that compassionate, informed responses can save lives.

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Ending the Silence and Stigma

One of the key goals of IOAD is to break down the stigma that surrounds drug use and overdose. Stigma creates barriers to care, isolates individuals, and often prevents people from reaching out for help. On this day, individuals are encouraged to share their stories, wear silver to honor loved ones, and participate in community events such as vigils, educational forums, and naloxone training sessions.

How You Can Make a Difference

International Overdose Awareness Day is not just about remembering, it is about taking action. Here are some ways you can help:

- **Learn the signs of overdose** and how to respond in an emergency
- **Carry naloxone**, a medication that can reverse opioid overdoses
- **Support harm reduction services** in your area, including safe consumption sites and syringe access programs
- Speak openly about substance use to reduce shame and promote healing
- Advocate for access to treatment and changes in policy that support public health over punishment
- **Remembering with Compassion**; Behind every overdose is a person with a story, a family, and a future that was tragically cut short. International Overdose Awareness Day is a time to mourn, but it is also a call to action. It is a chance for communities to unite in remembrance and to build a more compassionate, informed, and proactive response to the overdose crisis.

On **August 31**, join millions around the world in honoring lives lost and working toward a future where no one else has to die from a preventable overdose. **Mourn. Act. Prevent.**



The Importance of Immunization: Protecting Families and Safeguarding Communities

By: Fariha Abdul Muqueet, Preventative Care Specialist-SHPP



Immunization is one of the most important accomplishments in public health that has, over the past 50 years, led to the elimination, containment and control of diseases that were once very common in Canada. Immunization is important in all stages of life. Infants and young children are particularly susceptible to vaccine preventable diseases because their immune systems are less able to fight infection; as a result, they require timely immunization. Older children and adults also require immunization to restore waning immunity and to build new immunity against diseases that are more common in adults.

National Immunization Awareness Month

Every August, we mark National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM) to remind Canadians of the importance of vaccines across all stages of life. This year's theme, Don't let history repeat itself, Protect your future, Get immunized is especially relevant for families, newcomers, and immigrants.

Immunization for Newcomers and Families

When moving to Canada, many families bring unique health records from their home countries. Vaccination schedules, names of vaccines, and availability often differ across nations. This can sometimes leave gaps in protection. For newcomers, updating immunization records with a local healthcare provider is a critical first step toward safeguarding your family's health.

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Vaccines for School-Aged Children and Adults

Children starting daycare or school in Canada are required to be up to date with vaccines such as measles, mumps, rubella, polio, and whooping cough. Adults may also require boosters for tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis, along with protection against shingles, HPV, and influenza. For those who immigrated from countries where certain vaccines were not routinely offered, additional doses may be needed.

Travel and Immunization

If you're planning to travel outside Canada, check your immunization status before you go. Certain diseases that are rare in Canada such as hepatitis A, measles, and yellow fever are still common in many parts of the world. Speak with your healthcare provider at least six weeks before your trip to find out which vaccines you may need based on your age, destination, and activities. Staying protected ensures a safer, healthier journey.

Protecting Communities Together

Checking your family's immunization status is simple, your family doctor, public health unit, or pharmacist can help review records and recommend what's missing. Immunizations are an important part of your health record. This helps keep communities safe by preventing outbreaks.

Vaccines work. They save lives. As we celebrate NIAM 2025, let's commit to ensuring every family has the protection they deserve.

Your future is worth protecting.

 $\#NIAM2025\ \#DontLetHistoryRepeatItself\ \#ProtectYourFuture\ \#VaccinesWork$



Understanding Postpartum Psychosis: A Rare but Serious Condition After Birth

By: Taranjot Bath- Early Psychosis Case Manager



While many people are familiar with postpartum depression, fewer know about postpartum psychosis—a much rarer and more severe mental health condition that can occur after childbirth. Though it affects only about 1 to 2 out of every 1,000 new mothers, it's considered a psychiatric emergency that requires immediate attention and treatment.

What Is Postpartum Psychosis?

Postpartum psychosis is a mental illness that typically begins in the first few days or weeks after giving birth. It comes on suddenly and is characterized by a break from reality, with symptoms that can escalate quickly. Unlike the "baby blues" or even postpartum depression, postpartum psychosis involves serious changes in thinking, perception, and behavior.

Common Symptoms

The symptoms can vary but often include:

- Hallucinations seeing or hearing things that aren't there
- **Delusions** strange or false beliefs, often involving the baby or external threats
- Extreme mood changes rapid shifts between mania and depression
- Confusion or disorientation
- Agitation or restlessness
- Inability to sleep, even when the baby is asleep
- Paranoia or irrational fears
- Thoughts of self-harm or harming the baby

Not everyone will experience all these symptoms, but the presence of even a few can be cause for serious concern.

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What Causes It?

The exact cause of postpartum psychosis isn't fully understood, but it's likely related to sudden hormonal changes, sleep deprivation, and the stress of childbirth. Women with a personal or family history of bipolar disorder, schizoaffective disorder, or a previous episode of postpartum psychosis are at much higher risk.

It's important to note that this condition is **not the mother's fault**, and it's not caused by weakness or lack of love for the baby.

When to Seek Help

Postpartum psychosis is a medical emergency. If a new mother is showing signs of being out of touch with reality, expressing strange beliefs, acting erratically, or speaking about harming herself or her child, **immediate action is needed.** This could mean calling 911, going to the emergency room, or contacting a mental health crisis service.

Early intervention can make a significant difference in recovery.

Treatment and Recovery

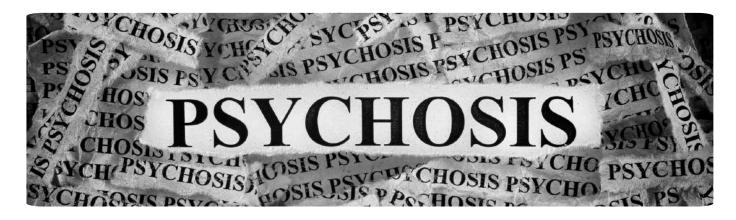
Treatment usually involves a combination of:

- **Hospitalization**, often in a specialized psychiatric unit, to stabilize symptoms and ensure safety
- **Medication**, such as antipsychotics, mood stabilizers, or antidepressants, depending on the symptoms and diagnosis
- **Psychotherapy** and long-term support, including help adjusting to motherhood and managing any underlying mental health conditions

With prompt and proper care, **most women recover fully** from postpartum psychosis, though ongoing mental health support may be needed, especially if there's an underlying bipolar or psychotic disorder.

Final Thoughts

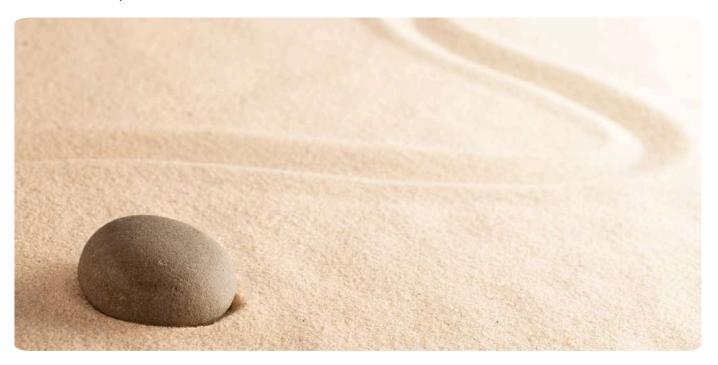
Postpartum psychosis is rare but very serious. Raising awareness, reducing stigma, and knowing the signs can help save lives. If you're worried about yourself or someone else after childbirth, don't wait—trust your instincts and seek help.



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The Power of Mindful Living in a Distracted World

By: Ramanpreet Kaur, Community Health Ambassador, SHPP



In today's world, it feels like we're always rushing. Our phones are always buzzing, our todo lists never end, and there's always something we "should" be doing. We're connected all the time — but many of us feel disconnected from ourselves, from the people around us, and from what really matters. That 's where mindful living comes in.

Mindfulness means paying attention to what's happening right now, without judging it. It's about slowing down, breathing, and truly noticing the present moment. It helps us live with more purpose — and less stress.

Why Do We Need Mindfulness Today?

Today, everything is designed to grab our attention — social media, apps, ads, emails. We're constantly distracted. It's easy to go through the day on "autopilot."

Mindfulness is like pressing a pause button. It helps us take back control of our attention and our actions. Instead of just reacting to everything, we can choose how we respond. That's powerful.

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How Mindfulness Helps Us

Research shows that mindfulness has many real benefits. It's not just for yoga or meditation. It works for everyone, no matter what job you have or how old you are.

Here are some simple benefits:

- Better focus: You can pay attention longer and think more clearly.
- Less stress: Breathing and being present can calm your body and mind.
- More emotional control: You don't get angry or overwhelmed as easily.
- Better relationships: When you really listen and stay present, people feel heard and valued.

Mindfulness Works for All Jobs

No matter what you do, mindfulness can help you do it better — and with less stress.

- Doctors and Nurses: It helps them stay calm and focused while caring for others.
- Teachers: It helps manage stress and stay patient with students.
- Office Workers and Leaders: It helps with clear thinking, communication, and decisionmaking.
- Artists and Creators: It helps boost creativity and stay in the "flow."

You Don't Need to Be Perfect

A lot of people think mindfulness means sitting in silence for hours. Not true! You can be mindful anywhere, anytime.

You can practice mindfulness:

- While doing the dishes
- When walking to work
- During a tough conversation
- Before replying to a text



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All it takes is a pause and a breath. And if your mind wanders — that's okay. Just come back to the present. That is the practice.

Slowing Down is Not Laziness

Many of us feel like we must always be busy. But slowing down is actually smart. It helps us focus on what really matters — and be more present in our relationships, work, and daily life.

Ask yourself:

Are you truly living each moment, or just reacting to everything around you? Mindful living helps you show up more fully — for yourself and others.

A Simple Start

You don't have to change your whole life at once. Start small:

- Take a deep breath before a meeting.
- Pause before answering a message.
- Set an intention when you wake up.



These little moments build up over time — leading to a calmer, clearer, and more meaningful life.

In a word full of distractions, choosing to be present is powerful. In fact, it's revolutionary.



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By: Asha Ashwal, Caregiver Support Worker, Geriatrics Department

The Independence Day celebrations at PCHS (Punjabi Community Health Services) carried a special touch, blending the rich values and traditions of the Punjabi community with the significance of India's Independence Day, observed on August 15th. The event not only honored India's freedom but also highlighted community health and well-being, with a special focus on seniors.

The day began with a flag-hosting ceremony, followed by inspiring speeches, the singing of the national anthem, and moments of reflection on the sacrifices made for independence. Seniors contributed by sharing songs related to Independence Day and actively joining in the performances. They especially enjoyed singing the patriotic songs "Vande Mataram" and "Ae Mere Pyare Watan" in Hindi, filling the room with heartfelt emotion and national pride.

In keeping with PCHS's commitment to health and well-being, the celebration incorporated health education sessions for seniors, offering guidance on managing chronic conditions, supporting mental health, and maintaining physical fitness. Light exercise and yoga sessions were also arranged to help improve flexibility, balance, and overall strength for senior groups.



Community leaders—especially seniors who have made significant contributions—were invited to share speeches reflecting on India's journey to independence and the importance of passing these values on to future generations. The program also featured segments honoring key freedom fighters, whose stories continue to inspire and resonate deeply with the community.

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PCHS placed a strong emphasis on unity, celebrating both India's independence and the strength of the Punjabi community through group activities and discussions designed to foster a sense of belonging and mutual support. The Independence Day celebration was a resounding success, with everyone enjoying the delicious, authentic Indian food. Attendees embraced the spirit of the occasion by dressing in the vibrant colors of the Indian flag—orange, white, and green—adding to the festive atmosphere.

A highlight of the event was the opportunity for community interaction and socializing, with traditional Punjabi dishes served to encourage bonding and celebrate cultural heritage. Seniors enjoyed dedicated spaces where they could reminisce and share personal stories about India's independence, fostering meaningful intergenerational connections.

The program also recognized elders who have made valuable contributions to the community—whether through volunteer work, leadership, or preserving cultural traditions, emphasizing the importance of staying active and engaged in community life. Younger members added to the celebration with performances and skits honoring India's independence, creating a heartfelt bridge between generations





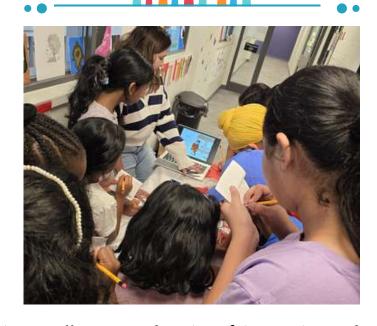


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Camp Kaleidoscope Summer Camp August 2025

By: Simarjot Kaur - Youth Worker

The Newcomer Youth Program successfully hosted an impactful Summer Camp at the Malton Youth Hub (3545 Morning Star Drive, Mississauga, ON) from August 18 to 22, 2025. This program welcomed a diverse group of participants aged 4 to 30 years, including Permanent Residents. Conventional Refugees. and newly naturalized Canadian Citizens (within three months of obtaining citizenship). To ensure an inclusive and welcoming experience, daily meals and refreshments were provided to all attendees.



Throughout the week, participants engaged in a well-structured series of interactive and educational sessions designed to promote cultural awareness, teamwork, creativity, and environmental responsibility. The camp featured a variety of activities, including cultural exploration, interactive water-based games, a knowledge-building Jeopardy-style quiz, a creative pen-making workshop, and a guided field trip to the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM), where participants explored diverse art, history, and science exhibits. Additionally, a hands-on Eco Explorers Lab, facilitated by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), provided valuable learning about ecosystems and human anatomy, encouraging scientific curiosity and ecological understanding.



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This achieved than program more recreation: fostered intercultural it understanding, strengthened community connections, and nurtured critical thinking and creative expression among the youth. Each activity was carefully designed to deliver meaningful learning experiences while creating a sense of belonging and shared purpose.



The success of the Summer Camp August 2025 reflects the dedication and professionalism of the youth workers and volunteers who contributed their expertise and time. We extend sincere appreciation to all participants for their active involvement and enthusiasm, which made the camp both memorable and impactful.

This initiative not only enriched the personal growth of its participants but also reinforced the spirit of community engagement, leaving a positive and lasting impression on everyone involved.







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PCHS In The Community



SHPP Team at DBNC Summer Fest



Independence Day Celebration at PCHS



PCHS Team at Annual Charity Car Wash



The Newcomer Youth Program hosted a Summer Camp at the Malton Youth Hub

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WELCOME NEW STAFF





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Strengthening Community Connection and Building Resilience

Join us for a free community event focused on mental health and addictions awareness in the community.

What to Expect:

- Keynote by Dr. Chhavi Kaushik from Trillium Health Partners
- Presentations by Mental Health and Addictions Professionals
- Interactive Activities
- Light refreshments and lunch will be served
- Resource-building and networking opportunities

Date: September 11th, 2025

Time: 11AM-3PM

Location: Riverstone Community Centre

195 Don Minaker Drive Brampton, ON



Scan the QR code or click here to register:

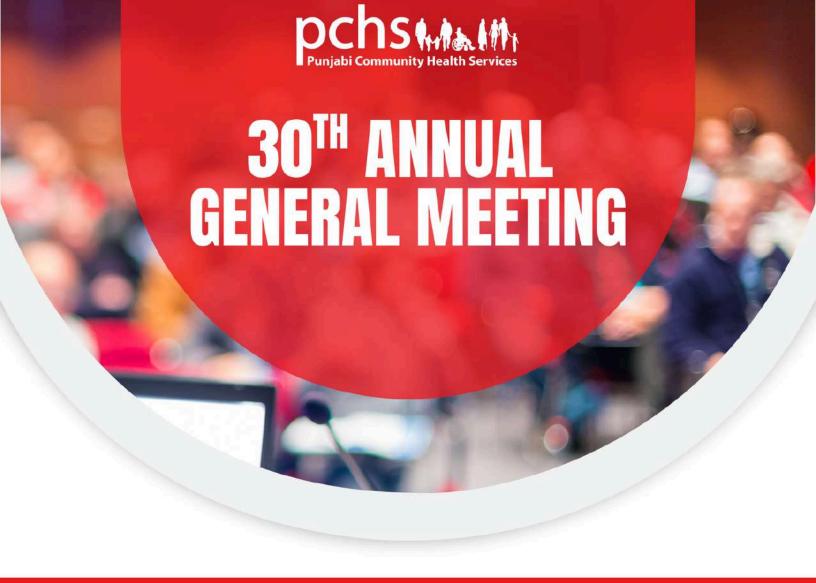
www.eventbrite.ca













WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2025



() 6: 15 PM - 7: 30 PM

VIRTUAL MEETING

SCAN OR CLICK HERE TO REGISTER



















CANADA EDUCATION SAVINGS PROGRAM



SEPTEMBER 25th, **2025**

06:00 PM - 07:30 PM



ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA



- Permanent Residents
- · Convention Refugees
- Canadian Citizens (within 3 months of receiving status)
- · Live-in-Caregivers

TOPIC POINTS

- Understanding how RESP works
- Related benefits and eligibility (CLB,CESG)
- How to apply

FREE INFORMATION SESSION

Scan or click here to register



REGISTRATION CONTACT

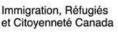
SHARON UY (437) 213-3973 SHARON.UY@PCHS4U.COM

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Paint the Night Away

An Evening of Art, Fun, and Relaxation

Come join the SHPP team for a relaxing and creative workshop focused on mental wellness, self-expression, stress relief, and the joy of painting!



Refreshments



Presentation



Activity

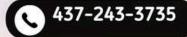
Date: 25 September, 2025 **Time:** 4:30 PM - 6:30 PM

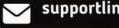
📍 Location: 60 West Dr Brampton,

ON L6T 3T6



Scan this QR code to register or





supportline@pchs4u.com



presented by PCHS Foundation

"Ruhaani" Soulful Evening

Date: Saturday, 27 September 2025

Venue: Maja Prentice Theatre, 3650 Dixie Rd, Mississauga, ON L4Y 3V9

Time: 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Doors Open at 4:00 p.m.

featuring Ramneek Singh



Accompanying Artists Gurinder Singh (Tabla) Sushant Anantharam (Harmonium)

To reserve your spot, please use QR Codes below



\$100 Rows 1-3



\$75 Rows 4-7



\$50 Rows 7 onwards

Interac at accounts@pchs4u.com

For more details and receipt, please contact Gursharan Kaur at 416-407-9347



CLIENT TESTIMONIAL



"PCHS's mental health program was a lifeline for me. The team's dedication, understanding, and support helped me find my footing when I needed it most. They went above and beyond, offering a safe space to share my struggles and work through them. I'm grateful for their expertise, compassion, and kindness. Thanks to PCHS, I'm stronger, more resilient, and better equipped to face life's challenges. If you're struggling, don't hesitate to reach out – they're truly angels in disguise!"

Client: Mental Health Program

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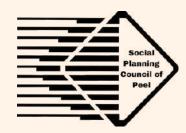


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In memory of RCMP Constable Harvey Dhami



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

Dewside Drive:

2 Dewside Dr, Unit 202, Brampton, ON, L6R 3Y5

Different Spokes:

8 Nelson Street West Brampton ON, L6X 1B7

Southfields Community Center: 225 Dougall Ave. Caledon, ON L7C 3M7











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