

DELIVERING SERVICES TO OUR COMMUNITY IN A PERIOD OF CHANGE

On behalf of the Board and Executive Director of Nine Circles, thank you to our members and supporters for your contributions over the past year.

This year Nine Circles continued to be challenged to deliver high-quality health and social services within the ever-evolving COVID-19 reality. We are so appreciative of the Nine Circles community for their resiliency and dedication through this challenging time. The Nine Circles team has worked hard to maintain and improve access to essential community resources, shifting and constantly adapting as we learned more about COVID-19 and received feedback from agency clients and community partners. A particular thanks to those staff members who have been, and remain, redeployed internally or externally during this challenging time.

This past year, Nine Circles continued to find success in priority areas, including:

NINE CIRCLES AND THE MB HIV/STBBI COLLECTIVE IMPACT NETWORK: EXPANDING ACCESS TO PREVENTION AND TESTING

Throughout the COVID-19 experience, rates of HIV and STBBI infections have continued to rise. Additionally, access to testing, treatment and safer sex and drug use supply became more difficult. However, the Nine Circles team was able to adapt to support ongoing testing and treatment both onsite and in collaboration with our Manitoba Association of Community Health Centre partners. Additionally, we were able to maintain access to harm reduction services and, in fact, strengthen our model of service over this year through the formation of The Pit Stop and improved integration among program team members



for increased coverage and collaboration.

Nine Circles collaborates with REACH Nexus to bring you to the next stage of community-owned testing options with self-testing for HIV. This collaboration is working to introduce self-testing technology to the community and launch the [Event-Based STBBI Testing Toolkit](#), designed to support agencies and communities to integrate STBBI testing into new spaces free of stigma or systemic barriers that can prevent testing. Nine Circles and our partners will pilot this toolkit in the year ahead.



CALLING FOR ACTION IN OUR COMMUNITY: EXPANDING ACCESS TO PREP, TASP, PEP AND NALOXONE

Over the past year, Nine Circles has and will continue to advocate for a range of systemic changes to better meet the needs of the population we serve. Our advocacy includes universal HIV treatment coverage, improved access to PrEP, PEP, Naloxone and Narcan, managed alcohol programming, safe consumption and safe drug supply. This year we have worked

to rally continued support as we call on Manitoba Health to fund TasP, PrEP and PEP fully. Members are encouraged to join this effort by signing a draft letter, available through our [website](#). For more information on these technologies, go to [ninecircles.ca](#) to learn more.

Throughout COVID-19, Nine Circles partnered with a range of agencies to advocate for lower threshold access to Naloxone, including lessening the requirement for clinician involvement in training. This effort was successful, significantly simplifying the process and increasing kits distributed to clients. We have also partnered with Manitoba Harm Reduction Network and Councillor Sherri Rollins to advance supervised injection services in the City of Winnipeg.

ENSURING EVIDENCE-BASED PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Moving forward, Nine Circles will use new research and project partnerships in the coming year to further explore how we can best serve the broad range of clients we see and how we can expand our collaborations throughout the community. Projects this year will explore more deeply how we can better serve our community through initiatives like the Northern Journey Mapping Project: Migration and Health Study, HIV Stigma Photovoice, HIV Community Readiness Assessment Guide for First Nations, Manitoba 2SGBQ+ Men's Health Study, Methamphetamine Use in Manitoba Evidence to Action and more.

Finally, thank you to staff members Jennifer Seguin, Kim Witges, Rayne Foy-Vachon, Roger Procyk, Stephanie Van Haute, Tammy Reimer, Tania Weibe and Teri Stevens, who have moved on to their next adventure. Thank you so much for your contributions to Nine Circles and the community.

Mike Payne, Executive Director
Ken Bristow, Board President

2020-2021: A YEAR IN REVIEW – AN UNEXPECTED ROLLER-COASTER

The COVID-19 pandemic had everyone at Nine Circles doing things differently this year. Whether it was creating new COVID-19 friendly procedures, shifting to a virtual Red Ribbon Walk & Run, or serving clients virtually over Zoom, it has been a year of confronting new challenges and creating new solutions. Nine Circles continued to find success throughout the obstacles and create change even in this roller-coaster year. Here are just several of the projects and initiatives we've been working on during the past year and their impact on our community.

LAUNCHING THE PIT STOP

"We're here to work with you to help get you to your next stop, judgement-free."

The Harm Reduction Services team at Nine Circles is always looking at ways to increase access and reduce harm, and our Health Educators and Health Education Facilitators were busy doing just that. Our Health Educator Facilitators launched The Pit Stop, a point of contact for referrals and harm reduction supplies at Nine Circles' main reception. Clients and community members can access an assortment of free items, such as hygiene and menstrual items, footwear, wound care kits, food and beverages, as well as drug use supplies and seasonal items like toques, hats and baseball caps. The team also redesigned the Naloxone refill and distribution process to make it easier for first-time users to access the lifesaving drug and remove barriers.

The new hub has quickly caught the attention of clients, who have left rave reviews.

"Y'all are always so nice and welcoming and I love that there's no judgement whatsoever. Thank you guys for doing this for the people who are in need of the supplies and other things you offer," and,



Nine Circles staff collect a donation of menstrual products from Shoppers Drug Mart

"thank you for your services – they are greatly appreciated."

These are just some of the many comments from users highlighting the impact of the service.

The Pit Stop has also partnered with other projects, notably with the Meeting the Moment Project and creating the Test That Sh*t: Drug Testing Study, aimed at understanding the impact of increasing the accessibility of providing BTNX fentanyl strips to those who use synthetic substances.

Other Pit Stop initiatives have caught the attention of local news outlets and prominent Winnipeg politicians. The Harm Reduction Services team's Trench Foot Prevention Shoe Drive received dozens of donations of socks and shoes and even a donation from Winnipeg Mayor Brian Bowman. Nine Circles held the shoe drive to prevent trench foot, a painful condition caused by having wet feet for an extended period. Providing proper footwear reduces the likelihood of developing the condition, especially for our under-housed community members, a community that the Harm Reduction Services team has been laser-focused on supporting during this challenging year.

REMOVING BARRIERS FOR STBBI TESTING

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Nine Circles has had to adjust the services and programs offered to ensure the safety of our community. One of the most recent adjustments made was the return of our STBBI testing initiative in our harm reduction supply distribution room. For this initiative, our STI/HIV testing nurses are on hand for an hour a day to build relationships with people who come to Nine Circles to receive harm reduction supplies, such as needles or crack kits. Our STI/HIV testing nurses offer walk-in STBBI testing, allowing clients to connect with resources, testing and care. This initiative helps remove barriers such as the need for an appointment that may otherwise limit someone from accessing health care. At Nine Circles, we recognize the need for low-barrier services and are always looking for new ways to meet our clients where they are at.

COVID-19 VACCINE DISTRIBUTION

Nine Circles staff worked together to provide COVID-19 vaccines this spring, as staff had to identify eligible patients for the AstraZeneca vaccine from a list of over 1400 clients. While doses administered were limited due to supply, we successfully administered all doses within just two days and helped protect our community from COVID-19.

Nine Circles holds its first COVID-19 vaccine clinic offering AstraZeneca to clients this spring.



IT'S OFFICIAL: LAUNCHING MEETING THE MOMENT

Nine Circles Community Health Centre launched a new multi-year project, Meeting the Moment: Integrating Street Health, Addictions Medicine and Primary Care, this past year. Partnering with Main Street Project and funded by Health Canada, Meeting the Moment is working to create a roadmap for providing primary care for people who inject drugs and live in Winnipeg's Point Douglas and Downtown neighbourhoods. Systemic barriers can make it difficult for this population to access the care and services they deserve, and this project is working directly with the community to address their needs.

"All too often, health and social systems are designed in a way that institutionalizes barriers to care for the individuals who need it most. Meeting the Moment is an exciting initiative that allows Nine Circles and its community health partners to meaningfully engage populations who have long been isolated and work together to build a model of care that will work for the client, service provider, and community."

– Mike Payne, Executive Director, Nine Circles Community Health Centre.

The project seeks to answer several key questions: What is the best way to connect people who use methamphetamines and other drugs with the services and programming we offer? How can we adapt our partnerships with other agencies to best address the needs of this priority population? What is the best practice when providing services for people who use drugs who are marginalized, isolated, and have unstable housing in Winnipeg's downtown core?

At Nine Circles, we know that we need to adapt to this population's needs and find better ways to provide primary care without barriers. This project uses community member evaluations to directly influence the direction we take

& Run to a safe virtual event. With the primary goals of reducing HIV stigma and raising funds for people with lived experience, we adapted the Red Ribbon Walk & Run into an entirely online event, featuring seven days of awareness activities to bust HIV stigma and a 50/50 ticket draw to raise funds. Awareness activities included actions such as displaying a red ribbon, painting your face with HIV awareness-themed makeup, going for a walk or run while detailing why you support those living with HIV, and sharing educational graphics about the impacts of stigma on those who use drugs. We are thrilled to report we surpassed our donation goal of \$10,000 to raise \$12,203 to support people living with HIV. As COVID-19 continues to

the 'Isms' Collectively," to share their stories of stigma. Their powerful stories helped remind event participants of the impact stigma has on people living with HIV, and the domino effect stigma has on creating barriers to accessing health care. Thank you to all peers who continue to speak up and tell their stories – your powerful voices are helping to alter our systems and fuel the drive for change.



The Nine Circles Board of Directors with the Executive Director

to ensure people who use drugs will have improved outcomes. By harnessing activities like street outreach, community-led management of methamphetamine psychosis and withdrawal, addictions medicine, cultural programming, and social support and housing services, we can meet the needs of people who use drugs in the moment.

At Nine Circles, we believe in continuing to push for services and programming free from systemic barriers and using a grassroots approach that ensures we can meet our clients where they are at. By creating a roadmap for how to best provide primary care, we can equip service providers across Winnipeg to provide service for people who use methamphetamines. The moment is now to make a difference, and Nine Circles is working to meet it.

GOING VIRTUAL EDITION: THE RED RIBBON WALK & RUN

Like many other events held during COVID-19, Nine Circles had to get creative and pivot our annual Red Ribbon Walk







and Run to a safe virtual event. With the primary goals of reducing HIV stigma and raising funds for people with lived experience, we adapted the Red Ribbon Walk & Run into an entirely online event, featuring seven days of awareness activities to bust HIV stigma and a 50/50 ticket draw to raise funds. Awareness activities included actions such as displaying a red ribbon, painting your face with HIV awareness-themed makeup, going for a walk or run while detailing why you support those living with HIV, and sharing educational graphics about the impacts of stigma on those who use drugs. We are thrilled to report we surpassed our donation goal of \$10,000 to raise \$12,203 to support people living with HIV. As COVID-19 continues to



THE COLLECTIVE IMPACT NETWORK AND LIVED EXPERIENCE ADVISORY UNITE FOR CHANGE

Nine Circle team members continue to collaborate across all departments, and this year was no different. Lived Experience Advisory members partnered with the Manitoba HIV-STBI Collective Impact Network for their spring event, "Opening the Curtain on Stigma: Tackling

FAST TAKES

- 1,800 + PIT STOP CONTACTS FOR HARM REDUCTION SUPPLIES 
- DR DAVID WILLEMS RECEIVED AN AWARD OF EXCELLENCE BY THE COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS 
- 400 NALOXONE KITS DISTRIBUTED SINCE JANUARY ALONE 
- 2325 RAFFLE TICKETS SOLD FOR THE RED RIBBON WALK & RUN 
- 1564 STI APPOINTMENTS 
- 6,879 FOLLOWERS ON OUR SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS 

MARKING 20 YEARS OF DEDICATION & SERVICE

We would like to recognize three staff members marking 20+ years of employment at Nine Circles this upcoming year. Thank you to Shannon Boyle, Berni Lopko and Chris Driscoll for their deep commitment to this organization and our community members. Your skills and insight continue to help our organization improve the services and programs we offer, and we are deeply grateful you choose to work at Nine Circles.

THANK YOU

Adam & Eve
 Ainslie Schroeder
 Andrew Roberston
 Andrew McLaren
 Annick & Fred Carstens
 APTN
 Asia Reyes
 Banville & Jones
 Booke & Partners
 Bria Sharkey
 Callie Bouchard
 Canadian Footwear
 Catherine Card
 City of Winnipeg
 Clear Concepts
 CUPE Manitoba
 Dennis Persowich
 Dr. Albert McLeod
 Dr. Gayle Restall
 Dr. Linda Larcombe
 Dr. Marcia Anderson
 Dr. Rusty Souleymanov
 Dr. Sean O'Rourke & REACH 3.0
 Elizabeth MacGregor
 Erin Lamb
 Etoile Stewart
 George Harris
 Gisele Winter
 Hailey Harrison
 Helene Lavigne
 Ian Ledger
 Jayde Shaw
 Jeremy Regan (Hunter & Gunn)
 Jesse Jordan
 Jesse Snyder
 Jim Kane
 Ka Ni Kanichihk Inc
 Kelsey McCue
 KhalsaAid
 Kira Sagan
 Kirstin Stokes

Laurie Ireland
 Leah Gazan
 Lesley Rempel
 Lyle & Lexie Derry
 Maria Evaristo
 Martin Bajt
 Michael Payne
 Manitoba Harm Reduction Network
 Manitoba HIV/STBBI Collective Impact
 Stewardship Committee
 Manitoba Liquor & Lotteries
 Nine Circles Volunteers
 Nine Circles' Lived Experience
 Advisory, PRAs & PEAs
 Pamela & Bryan Harmer
 Pat MacRae
 Patricia Thille
 Payworks
 Public Health Agency of Canada
 Rhonda Chorney
 Rosa Muller
 Rosa Colavito-Palao
 Sam Dixon
 Santina Lee
 Sari Rosenberg
 Sean Ross
 Sexuality Education Resource Centre
 Shelley Rupert
 Shoppers Drug Mart
 Sisters of Fire
 Susan Cuvelier
 Tanice Houston
 The Winnipeg Foundation
 The University of Manitoba
 Tony Neustaedter
 Trevor Doner
 Tricia Rittaler
 Trina Larsen
 Winnipeg Harvest
 Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
 Women's Health Clinic



Top photo: Nine Circles staff accept a donation from KhalsaAid. Middle photo: Nine Circles staff and clients participate in a drum circle gathering. Bottom photo: UpHouse and Nine Circles team up to film "STI Testing at Nine Circles - What To Expect."



HAVE YOUR VOICE HEARD:
ninecircles.ca/getinvolved



GET OUR E-NEWS:
ninecircles.ca/subscribe



FOLLOW US:
 @ninecircleshc