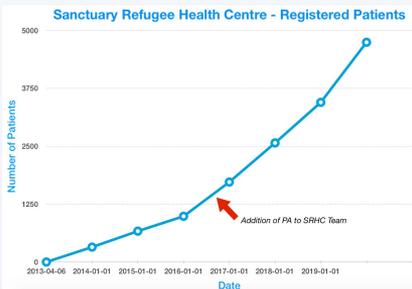


### Introduction

Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre (SRHC) is an interdisciplinary family health clinic located in Kitchener, Ontario. SRHC is the only health centre in the region that manages the ongoing health needs of government-assisted & privately sponsored refugees, as well as refugee claimants. The team at SRHC provides evidence-based, trauma-informed, patient-centred medical care and social & settlement services. Founded on Canada's Refugee Rights Day, April 4th, 2013, the clinic has 4745\* rostered patients, with a current wait list of over 1000 individuals.



The patient population at SRHC is demographically unique for a family medicine practice in Southern Ontario

- Mostly young, large families
  - 47.5% of our patient population is under the age of 20
  - Majority of scheduled appointments are antenatal or well child check ups
- Our patients identify 74 countries of origin
- Over 30 different first languages

In November 2016, SRHC hired a new graduate CCPA in order to expand women's health services, particularly antenatal care, provided at the clinic.

Due to an overwhelming need for culturally-sensitive, gender-congruent and language-specific antenatal care options in the community, SRHC partnered with a local family obstetrics physician in June 2017, and developed a unique PA-MD antenatal care model at Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre.

\*All data accurate as of October 7, 2019

### Methodology

It is well-documented that the refugee experience can create unique complications in the provision of antenatal care:

*"Childbearing and other aspects of reproductive health add an additional burden on female refugees, which places them in a particularly disadvantaged position." (Gagnon, Merry & Robinson 2002:6)*

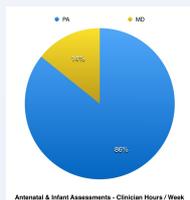
*"Their [refugee women] poorer health outcomes are due to a range of factors, including barriers to accessing health services and the lack of culturally appropriate support." (Hach 2012)*

SRHC has developed an antenatal care program that utilizes the role of the PA to address the often complex antenatal care needs of local refugee patients.

The following data and discussion is reflective of the second annual antenatal care clinic review at SRHC.

### Key Components of SRHC's PA-MD Antenatal Care Model

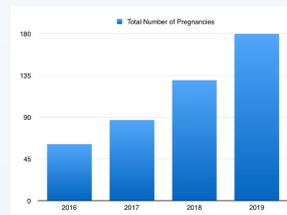
- All pregnancies are triaged and followed by family-OB PA
- Medically-appropriate care models are offered to each patient: midwifery, OB/GYN, or SRHC's PA-MD antenatal team
- PA-MD team can manage all normal risk pregnancies at SRHC; care is culturally-sensitive, gender-congruent, and language specific (fluent in Arabic, in-house interpretation available for all other languages)
- SRHC's T3 Antenatal Clinic runs every Thursday from 1-5pm - this is the only time the supervising physician is in clinic
  - PA role optimizes specialist MD time in clinic:



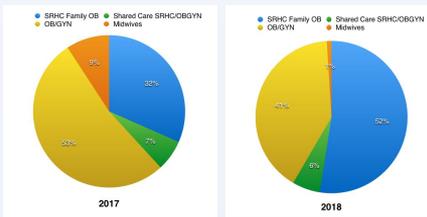
- Family-OB MD provides 24/7 call for SRHC deliveries at Grand River Hospital, Kitchener, ON
- Mother and infant discharged directly to SRHC PA for postpartum and newborn care

### Quantitative Outcomes

Since the addition of the Physician Assistant at SRHC, the number of pregnancies managed per year has increased significantly, especially since the formation of the PA-MD antenatal care model in June 2017. SRHC has become a referral centre for antenatal care for refugees & newcomers in the Kitchener-Waterloo region.



The following data illustrates the antenatal care models accessed by SRHC patients in the first two years of the PA-led antenatal care model. Currently more than two-thirds of pregnancies are managed by our PA-MD team to term.



### Data Projections for 2019

- Anticipating >200 deliveries in 2019
- Accepting minimum one new refugee antenatal patient from community referrals each week
- Minimum two new pregnancy diagnoses in clinic per week
- >60% of 2019 pregnancies managed through to delivery by SRHC PA-MD antenatal team thus far

### Qualitative Outcomes

- Increased patient satisfaction with antenatal care
  - When all options are medically available, 85% of patients choose to stay with SRHC's PA-MD antenatal care team
  - 100% of patients have requested SRHC's PA-MD care model for subsequent pregnancies
- Reduced burden for local OB/GYNs - able to accept more high-risk patients & urgent referrals
- Improved clinic efficiency
- Increased capacity for fee-for-service billings for physicians
- Improved attendance of pre-booked antenatal appointments
- Improved adherence to well-baby check ups & vaccinations schedules postpartum
- Opportunities for advocacy for PA role

### Conclusions

SRHC has developed an innovative prenatal care model that uses the Physician Assistant role to bridge primary care and obstetrical care in the family medicine setting. This model of practice allows for full-time antenatal care services, while optimizing specialist time in clinic and improving patient outcomes. At SRHC, we aim to minimize post-migration stress in the peripartum period through the provision of culturally-sensitive, trauma-informed, and accessible antenatal care options, to which the Physician Assistant role is uniquely adaptable. Our hope is that our care model will help to facilitate resettlement for Canadian newcomers as their families grow.

### Acknowledgements

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- Joanna Wu, RN - Nursing Lead, SRHC Antenatal Clinic
- Kendra Weerheim, NP, SRHC
- Canadian Association of Physician Assistants (CAPA)
- Special thanks to the staff & volunteers of Sanctuary Refugee Health Centre

### References

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