



*Saskatoon
Community
Clinic*

Patient and Member Profiles

Stories about your health care co-operative in action



Providing primary health care to
Saskatoon and area since 1962

Spring 2010



**Saskatoon
Community
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Member Profile

Carla Atherton

Age: 35

Occupation: Writer/Editor and Full Time Mom

Member since: 1995

Carla Atherton likes the wide variety of health care services provided at the Community Clinic and believes that the Clinic's philosophy takes into account the whole person.

"As a patient at the Clinic, I can see a doctor who has training in integrative medicine and the focus is more on the root cause of health conditions and how they can be treated alternatively," said Carla. "It's a progressive place, and as a patient, you feel that more of your health is being taken into account."

As a busy mother of three children, Carla and her family have used many of the services at the Downtown Clinic. "We see the doctor, the nurses, use the Pharmacy, Lab and X-ray and we used to use the optometry services, as well. The feeling of the Clinic is different from a typical doctor's office, and the staff is terrific. They all know us," said Carla.

Her experience as a patient and a member motivated Carla to participate as a member of the Editorial Committee of the Community Clinic's member newsletter *Focus* from 2004 to 2010. "*Focus* is an important way to keep the Clinic's 4,000 plus member families informed about health topics, Clinic news, and upcoming events" said Carla. "The stories are written from a co-operative perspective and offer lots of insight into important health issues and health programs that are unique in Canadian health care."



Saskatoon Community Clinic



Member Profile

Alex Brooks

Age: 49

Occupation: Computer Programmer

Member since: 1998

Community Clinic member Alex Brooks appreciates the wide range of services offered at the Clinic and believes his health care is enhanced by the interdisciplinary care he receives. “One of the best benefits about being a patient at the Clinic is not having to see a doctor all the time. I can consult with other health professionals at the Clinic – including the nurses, nurse practitioners, pharmacists and physiotherapists and know that they all have access to my health information and talk to each other about my care,” said Alex.

He contrasts this with his previous experience in another province where he believes health care focused mainly on specific health problems and involved a different provider for each problem. “Here I feel there is a continuity of care and I feel I am treated as an individual with a variety of needs. I am treated as a whole person with a past and a future.”

It was the concept of co-operative health care that drew Alex to run for the Board of Directors in 2009. “I believe that the co-operative aspect of the Clinic has the potential to extend the notion of full engagement of the patient out to the whole community. “This is the least visible aspect of the Clinic but it is the backdrop against which all of the services operate,” said Alex. “I participate in meetings about the Clinic’s business and direction and as a patient here, this helps the Clinic stay rooted in its whole person philosophy.”

Alex finds the preventative aspect of the Clinic’s approach to be of great value. “I believe we must be at the forefront of delivering nutritional and preventative health information to people that are at risk of developing chronic health conditions,” said Alex. “In helping me to manage my own health the Clinic’s staff makes me feel there are lots of things I can do to make my life better – I am the person who gets to say what happens next.”



Saskatoon Community Clinic



Member Profile

Evan Carlson

Age: 56

Occupation: Community Outreach Worker

Member since: 1996

The philosophy of co-operative health care and the wide range of health care services available drew Evan Carlson to become a patient and active member of the Saskatoon Community Clinic.

“When you look at the history of the clinic – that it started during the Medicare Crisis of 1962 and has continued to provide good service to the community since then – I can see that it is an organization that I want to support and that also needs our support as members to continue,” said Evan.

As a patient at the Downtown Clinic, Evan likes the “one stop shopping” concept. “I can visit the Clinic – see my doctor, have my lab tests, go to physio and pick up a prescription from the pharmacy. It’s very convenient.”

His experience as a member motivated Evan to run for the Board of Directors, serve as Chair of the Political and Social Action Committee, and also become a Director on the Saskatoon Community Clinic Foundation. He believes strongly in the Clinic’s role as an advocate to speak on behalf of those who don’t have the capacity to speak for themselves.

“The Clinic has a long history of taking stands on issues, and in fact our members expect that type of advocacy from their Board. It’s very important that we continue to advocate to keep the principles of Medicare to ensure that everyone has access to affordable, comprehensive and accessible primary health care services,” said Evan.

Pedestrian safety and affordable housing are two issues that Evan is particularly passionate about. He is actively involved in advocating for affordable housing and emergency shelter space for families through the Clinic and other organizations, and was very active in the pedestrian safety campaign.

“I feel it is important for me to give back to the community by participating in groups and organizations that reflect my values – that’s why I’m a member of the Saskatoon Community Clinic.”



Saskatoon Community Clinic

Member Profile

Harold Chapman

Age: 92

Occupation: Retired Co-operative Educator

Member since: 1962



Harold Chapman was one of the founding members of the Saskatoon Community Clinic in July of 1962 and has been actively involved in the Clinic ever since. He was on the Board of the Saskatoon Community Clinic Foundation for 30 years and continues to play a vital role as a Membership Volunteer.

“I truly believe I get the best medical services available in Saskatoon. The Community Clinic is unique in providing a wide range of services under one roof,” said Harold. “I like the way the whole staff work together in providing care. I can see the nurse, the doctor, have X-rays, bloodwork, receive physio and foot care or get my prescriptions filled.”

Harold is a firm believer in the concept of people establishing co-operatives to provide themselves with services. “As a member this gives me the opportunity to feel it is my organization and I can give it guidance. I can be a board member or elect someone who I feel is competent. I can attend meetings and make comments about policies and plans for the clinic that I own.”

As one of the original staff members of the Saskatchewan Department of Co-operation and Co-operatives in 1945, Harold worked to develop co-operative farms and machinery co-ops for retiring World War II Veterans. He also helped to organize fish marketing and muskrat trapping co-operatives. He has a unique perspective on the role of co-operatives and was a co-operative educator with the Co-op College for 18 years. It moved locations in July 1962 to make way for the Community Clinic to establish itself in the Avenue Building.

“I was aware of the conflict in getting Medicare established and aware of the problems people had in paying for medical services. When the doctors went on strike and plans were established to start a co-operative clinic I just asked myself what I would tell my children if I didn’t support it,” said Harold.

“It’s important for people to have control over their own destiny and have ownership and control of services that are important to them. We fought wars to live in a democracy – so when folks have needs we ought to have a say – have a vote.”



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Member Profile

Gary Evjen

Age: 57

Occupation: Retired Educator

Member since: 1970

Gary Evjen credits his life to his Saskatoon Community Clinic Physician Dr. Margaret Szott and to the care that he receives from staff at the Saskatoon Community Clinic. Diagnosed with a brain tumour in April 2006, he underwent several surgeries and radiation treatments and although he officially retired last year, he is now well enough to work as a substitute band teacher, teach drum lessons, conduct a jazz band and perform in two jazz ensembles and a Klezmer band.

“My doctor listens to my problems and she is honest. She tells it like it is. She is absolutely wonderful. I have seven different doctors and specialists taking part in my care but she is always the head doctor. There is such good co-ordination between the care providers,” said Gary, who has used most of the services at the Downtown Clinic and uses the Clinic’s Personal Health Record to keep track of medications.

Gary also credits his wife Karen Kowalenko-Evjen for playing an active role in his care, and together they co-convene the Saskatoon Brain Tumour Support Group, which they have been members of for the last two and a half years.

“I’m a strong supporter of the community clinic concept. The mission and values statement is meaningful to me. When I walk in the door I read that sign and I nod and say, yes that’s how I feel,” said Gary. “I want community clinics to continue and be available to every citizen, rich or poor. Everyone should have a chance to have health care like I receive here at the Clinic.”



Saskatoon Community Clinic



Member Profile

Jean Hopkins

Age: 88

Occupation: Retired Farmer

Member since: 1962

Saskatoon Community Clinic member and volunteer Jean Hopkins gives thanks to all of her caregivers for the excellent health care she receives at the Downtown Clinic and has high praise for the Clinic's Physical Therapy Department as well as Foot Care, Counselling, Laboratory and Pharmacy.

Jean credits Clinic staff for helping her with her recovery after she was struck by a car and broke her leg in the fall of 2000. "The Physical Therapy Department has been just wonderful. They convinced me to use a cane, which I believe has kept me from falling on many occasions. Why not use something if it helps, especially when streets are slippery or the pavement uneven," said Jean.

Jean, an active member of the Clinic's Senior's Advisory Council for the past 17 years, has been working with Clinic staff, Board Members and others to lobby for improvements to make Saskatoon streets safer for pedestrians. Pedestrian safety is now on the public agenda due to the efforts of members like Jean, who demonstrate the value of working together co-operatively for a common cause. Jean has also been active in promoting foot care and personal alarms for seniors.

Jean has also participated as a Membership Volunteer and has family members who belong to the Clinic and are active members and supporters.

"Our Community Clinic doctors are very concerned about their patients," said Jean. "We need more community clinics in Saskatchewan. People need to understand the philosophy of the Clinic – a one stop health care co-operative. We need more government financing for our Clinic and to establish other clinics in the province. It would be wonderful if everyone could get their health care at a community clinic."



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Member Profile

Tammy Lavigne

Age: 34

Occupation: Special Needs Teacher

Tammy Lavigne, new mother of baby Grace, is delighted with the pre-natal and post-natal care she has received at Westside Clinic.

“As a first time mom I was really nervous and didn’t know what to expect. Both the doctor and the nurse practitioner were fabulous. I love that they care and it’s not just a quick visit,” said Tammy.

Tammy, who also has an underlying medical condition, praises the staff for taking the time to hear her concerns. “There were many times when I wasn’t sure whether I needed to come in but the staff took the time to listen to me on the phone and if I needed to come in I could come in on a drop-in basis.”

She also credits the staff at Westside with creating a warm, welcoming environment. “This is a great service for everyone. I like that people are accepted and treated with respect no matter who you are,” said Tammy.

“When I come to Westside Clinic I feel important and I feel that I am heard.”



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Member Profile

Evelyn Linklater

Age: 66

Occupation: Community Volunteer

Patient at Westside Clinic for 21 years

Evelyn Linklater credits the Fitness, Food and Fun Program (Triple F) at Westside Clinic with helping her to get control of and manage her Type II Diabetes.

“Now I feel more in control – I can see the improvements in my test results. The Triple F program is my community and I love it. Every day I have to eat right. I have to exercise. A lot of small changes can make a big difference,” said Evelyn who has been a group member since 2005, and is now a peer leader within the group.

Evelyn speaks highly of the Westside staff and feels comfortable there as an Aboriginal person. “I feel welcome at Westside Clinic. When I walk in I see a receptionist who’s Aboriginal and a diabetes worker who is Aboriginal. I feel a connection. There is an outreach worker there I can speak to in Cree. I have lots of family and friends that go there. It’s a community centre as well as a health clinic.”

Evelyn is also a volunteer with the Canadian Diabetes Association, a peer leader in the Live Well with Chronic Conditions Program, and a participant in the Saskatoon Community Clinic’s Aboriginal Grandmothers (Kokum’s) program, which is dear to her heart.

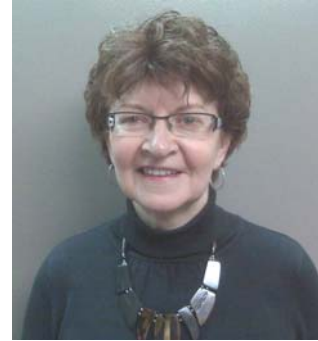
“I joined the Kokum’s group 12 years ago. We get together and talk about our health and how people are treated. It feels good because I can talk my language and we have Native foods that we like, such as moose meat stew and bannock. The Native spirituality is there and there is a support system in place for us,” said Evelyn.

Since being diagnosed with diabetes Evelyn has made it her mission to raise awareness about diabetes in the Aboriginal community. This mother of 6, and grandmother of 30 children and 6 great grandchildren, has participated in two biking treks with the Police Peddling with Aboriginal Diabetes in 2008 and 2009. “I want to do everything I can to educate our young people on healthy eating so they can avoid diabetes. I am a Kokum – which means ‘everybody’s grandmother’.”

Evelyn is a Saskatoon Community Clinic member and believes that the programs and services offered have enriched her life and the lives of others in the community.



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Member Profile

Gertie Paul

Age: 61

Occupation: Accountant/Auditor with Canada Revenue Agency

Member since: 1974

Long-time Clinic member Gertie Paul believes that the care she receives at the Community Clinic enhances not only her life, but the lives of others in the community.

“The Clinic is more than just health services for me – it is services to the community,” said Gertie, who is a strong believer in the philosophy of the Clinic and the community clinic model of primary care.

“I first began coming to the Clinic as a young mother and over the years I’ve used a wide range of services at the Downtown Clinic including Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, and the Lab. When Optometry and Optical services were offered I used those too. I’ve used the Health Information Centre to research health conditions and the Saturday morning clinics were very helpful when my children were younger,” said Gertie.

“I’m a strong supporter of the Clinic because it offers services that make it much more than a doctor’s office. Whenever I had any questions I could always go to Member Relations for answers or help finding a doctor. When I had questions about menopause I was able to attend a support group that helped prepare me. And I always find that I receive excellent health care from our doctors, who are on a salary and not fee for service. I also appreciate that our doctors believe that lifestyle and preventative care is important. They don’t push a lot of medication.”

Gertie finds that reading the Clinic’s newsletter *Focus* helps keep her informed about Clinic activities and provides useful health related information. She also likes that there are services for seniors, such as the seniors groups, which she believes enhanced and prolonged the life of an elderly neighbour. Her thoughts on the Westside Clinic: “I think it’s important that Westside Clinic provides services to people in the inner city community in a respectful way that addresses their needs and in a way that they feel comfortable with. I feel good about that.”

“It’s important to me that the Clinic makes a difference in people’s lives. That’s why I’m a member.”



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Member Profile

Betty Sammy

Age: 49

*Occupation: Educational Assistant – Westmount School
Patient at Westside Clinic for 29 years*

The Saskatoon Community Clinic has played an important role in Betty Sammy's life. Betty has been a patient at Westside Clinic for 29 years. Her children, and her grandchildren are all patients at Westside Clinic as well.

"There are so many things I like about Westside Clinic – the services, the staff, the programs, and especially the nice atmosphere. You aren't made to feel uncomfortable because you are an Aboriginal person," said Betty.

"They have programs like Fitness, Food and Fun to help people prevent and manage diabetes – that's a fabulous program. The pre-natal and post-natal care is excellent and there is counselling if you need to talk to someone."

She also likes the fact that the Clinic is also a drop-in centre for the community. "You can have coffee or read the paper. People are lined up to get in even before it opens."

Betty has seen firsthand some of the issues affecting the inner city community as a volunteer in the community, the Friendship Inn, the schools and through St. Thomas Wellesley Church. "Addictions, diabetes, poverty, solvent abuse and now, more than before, homelessness are issues facing the community. I see people taking their blankets and finding a place in the bush on the riverbank to sleep, especially the special needs people. There needs to be more help for them."

Betty praises the Clinic staff for the good care received by all of her family members. "I am a healthier and happier person because I go to the Clinic."