

No boundaries

Celebrating No Boundaries 2017 – 2023



Table of Contents

- Introduction** 3
- The Strategy** 4
- How We Made Impact** 5
 - Personalize Pathways 5
 - Discover For Action 10
 - Connect The System 15
- Empowering No Boundaries** 18
 - Lead and Model Social Change 18
 - Evolve Client-Centred Quality and Safety 20
 - Co-Create with Children, Youth, Families and Alumni 22
 - Mobilize People and Teams 23
- Looking to the Future, Beyond No Boundaries** 24



Introduction

In 2017, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital began a journey under a new strategic plan entitled No Boundaries. The plan was built on the valuable insights of children, youth, families, staff and community partners. Over the six-year journey that followed, we were proud to have achieved significant success and impact despite facing substantial challenges, including a global pandemic.

When we began No Boundaries, we did so with a clear mission driving us forward:

In unparalleled partnership with children, youth and families to deliver outstanding personalized, inter-professional care, maximize function through cutting-edge treatment and technology, co-create ground-breaking research, innovation, and teaching, connect the system, and drive social justice for children and youth with disabilities.

We worked tirelessly towards achieving this mission, guided by our core values of courage and resilience, compassion, excellence, equity, and innovation.

And achieve it, we did.

This document serves as a testament to the ability of the Holland Bloorview team to do hard things and achieve many successes even in the face of adversity.

The accomplishments we've documented here also tell the story of exceptional community commitment to Holland Bloorview, children, youth and families. The generosity of donors make possible so much of what you are about to read.

As we move forward, we know the No Boundaries plan has provided us with the necessary learnings and insights that will serve as the bedrock for our new strategic plan, *Transformative Care, Inclusive World: Holland Bloorview 2030*.

The Strategy

The No Boundaries strategy was comprised of three impact areas and four enablers that empowered these areas.

Impact areas:



Empowering No Boundaries:



While we would love to capture all of the accomplishments over the life of No Boundaries, there are simply too many. In this document, we will do our best to highlight many core initiatives that made an impact, within the hospital and beyond its walls.

And, although we have categorized most of our initiatives under either a specific key impact or an enabler, many of our initiatives overlap, which was always the intention captured in the plan's title – *No Boundaries*.

How we made impact



Personalize Pathways

Goal: Personalize pathways for every child, youth and family at Holland Bloorview

From the moment they're greeted, to the first intake conversation, and throughout all care appointments, we have worked to transform how clients and families access, enter, and move through Holland Bloorview.

We believe in starting early when it comes to supporting children, youth, and families in planning for their futures. Our objective is to provide meaningful orientation, a personalized and evolving goal plan, and navigation supports.

That's why we committed to creating personal and individualized plans of care and services that cater to each individual's unique needs.

Because sometimes personalized pathways mean pivoting...

An aspect of personalizing pathways included the expansion of our virtual care services during the pandemic. In 2018, we had just over 100 virtual appointments.

We've now conducted over 56,000 virtual appointments.

To achieve this, we drew on a variety of sources, including the best available evidence, experts in the field and the experience and wisdom of children, youth and families and the Holland Bloorview team, to ensure that each person who entered our doors had a say in the care and services they receive.

Major highlights:

1. Welcoming and supporting families at Holland Bloorview

We delivered a host of new resources to support Holland Bloorview families including:

- ✓ new and improved welcome packages (2019)
- ✓ a [refreshed, searchable web directory](#) (2021)

- ✓ [HB Infoline and Welcome Desk \(2020\)](#) to help children, youth and families learn about and get connected to programs and services
- ✓ family communication whiteboards (2019) for inpatients to encourage children, youth, and families to share their strengths, what and who matters to them, their preferences in care, and their goals during their stay

2. Supporting families’ most pressing needs through the Family Navigation Hub.



In 2021, a systematic approach to screening and addressing social determinants of health was implemented across Holland Bloorview. A multidisciplinary team rolled out an evidence-based [Social Needs Screening Tool](#) to identify client/family social needs and level of urgency and established the [OnTrack Family Navigation Hub](#), providing interventions to link families to supports and resources. The hub provides 1:1 consultation and navigation services from a collaborative and integrated team of clinical and social support professionals. In collaboration with our family leaders, the hub also offers monthly CommunityCONNECT events and workshops focused on topics related to social needs for families of children with disabilities.

3. Resources for siblings of kids who experience brain injury, disabilities, and medical complexities



For a lot of kids with disabilities, the longest relationship in their lives will be with their siblings. More often than not, the older they get, a sibling will end up becoming a primary caregiver for a child with a disability. That’s why, in 2019, Holland Bloorview introduced [SibKits](#) for siblings of children who experience a brain injury, disabilities, and medical complexities.

Co-designed with siblings, parents, clients, and staff, the SibKit is a booklet that includes interactive tools that help siblings understand different diagnoses, feel more included, work through feelings they may experience as a sibling, and learn about what the future holds.

To date over 500 families have accessed the kits online.



4. Providing counseling services for clients and their families

When it comes to this idea of “care,” it is equally important to care for the caregiver. That is why we teamed up with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) to launch [Acceptance and Commitment Therapy \(ACT\) workshops](#) for family caregivers in the Spring of 2022.

The ACT curriculum was specifically tailored for caregivers who faced unique challenges, equipping them with the necessary tools and resources to manage their own mental well-being while still providing the best care possible.

In September 2022, Holland Bloorview [launched the What's Up clinics](#) in partnership with Yorktown Family Services. These clinics provide weekly, brief, solution-focused counseling services to ambulatory clients and their families. The services are designed to help clients and families cope with personal stress, family conflicts, and challenges at home and at school, and other issues they may be facing.

The clinics are hosted on-site at Holland Bloorview in the Grocery Foundation Resource Centre and offer in-person as well as virtual counseling sessions.

5. Assisting with transitions for our clients and families

Transitioning to adult life and adult health care services can be a confusing time, especially when it comes to changes in funding and school supports, and having to access care beyond Holland Bloorview, while also thinking about employment.

That's why a focus on transitions and a transition strategy were crucial to the No Boundaries plan.

Funded through the generosity of donors, the [Transitions Strategy](#) was originally launched in 2017 to help transform how youth with disabilities transition to adulthood. Under No Boundaries, the strategy expanded to address life transitions during childhood and adolescence and incorporated programming related to participation and inclusion, employment, life skills, youth leadership and family support.



Transition programs and resources

1. The Transition Pop-Ups

Beginning in 2019, these group events, helped clients and families prepare for the transition to adulthood by covering a variety of topics such as legal considerations, connecting with primary care, accessing the Ontario Disability Support Program and more. There are now over 100 pop-ups happening each year with over 20 community partnerships.



2. The Employment Pathways programs

These include educational workshops and work opportunities through volunteering, co-op, and paid employment, preparing youth with disabilities who are in high school for future employment. Participation has doubled from approximately 190 participants in 2020 to close to 400 in 2022.

3. Project SEARCH

This 10-month school-to-work transition program for youth with disabilities graduating high school, helps equip them with transferable skills for entry-level employment, while also teaching them about workplace culture, as well as appropriate social and professional behavior.



Project | SEARCH®

Since the program launch, 28 students over three years have graduated with 80 per cent achieving employment afterward. Holland Bloorview is now acting as a provincial coordinator for Project SEARCH, expanding the program to 11 sites in 2022 and 2023.


1,200
Youth

attended friendship
and belonging
sessions

4. The Friendship and Belonging pathway

This program provided coaching to youth with disabilities to develop social skills, while also giving them opportunities to form friendships through virtual and in-person social hangouts. In 2022 and 2023, the program saw 1,200 youth attending these events.

6. Innovating through orthotics & prosthetics

At Holland Bloorview, our orthotics and prosthetics (O&P) team is committed to enhancing the quality of care we provide to our clients. We have taken several measures to ensure that our clients receive the best possible treatment:

Use of digital technologies: We brought together a research group comprised of O&P clinicians, Bloorview Research Institute engineers and the not-for-profit organization Nia Technologies, to investigate and implement digital technologies such as 3D scanning, designing and printing for O&P. This was shown to improve client care through time and cost efficiencies.

Bioness L300 GO System to assist clients: Children and youth who experience walking difficulties as a result of conditions such as spinal cord injury, stroke, cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, and traumatic brain injury can benefit from this system. The Bioness equipment, which is a wearable cuff with internal electrodes, stimulates the peroneal nerve and activates the muscles in the foot responsible for dorsiflexion (where you raise your foot, trying to point your toes towards your shin). This allows clients to restore their walking pattern without needing to use an ankle foot orthosis.



Letting kids and youth get creative with their braces: During No Boundaries, a sublimation ink printer was added to our orthotics process. This means that clients and their families can now have more say in how their brace looks. Choosing from a wide range of designs and images, or even selecting something more personal and customized, children and youth in need of orthotic braces can now show off their individuality and creativity.



Discover for Action

Goal: Invent, discover and share new knowledge that has an impact

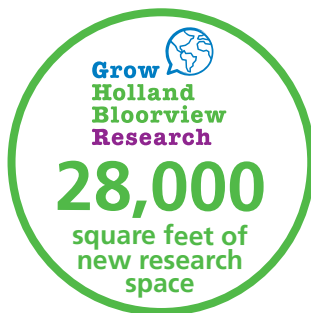
At Holland Bloorview, we embrace a “no boundaries” philosophy that drives all our research, teaching, technology development, commercialization and innovation.

It’s not just about coming up with ideas, it’s putting those ideas into action. By involving children, youth and families in every step of the process, we ensure that we are able to create new treatments and services that are truly effective and meaningful.

And it’s not just about helping the families who come through our doors, it’s about making an impact and discovering the change that can make a difference for people all over the world.

In research, we are committed to breaking down barriers and making sure that everyone’s voice is heard so that we can create meaningful and healthy futures - within our walls and beyond

And we’ve achieved this through...



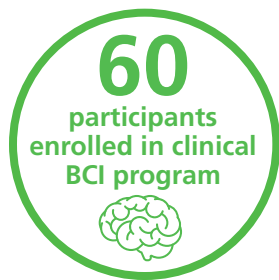
1. The Grow Holland Bloorview Research campaign

The [Grow Holland Bloorview Research](#) initiative launched in 2018. Since then, over \$32 million was raised from generous donors allowing the Bloorview Research Institute (BRI) to renovate and expand its facilities and acquire cutting edge technology. This includes:

- ✓ **An 11,000 square foot expansion and 17,000 square foot renovation**—the largest in the hospital’s history—creating innovative, collaborative, dynamic and accessible research space
- ✓ **An immersive, customizable, child-friendly and accessible research MRI unit** – a first of its kind in Canada
- ✓ **Eight [new discovery hubs](#)**, containing fully accessible, state-of-the-art research equipment
- ✓ **Two accessible playgrounds** for the Bloorview School Authority, the Kindercircle daycare and the hospital’s inpatient and outpatient clients. These new play places allow all children and youth the opportunity to play and express their creativity in a safe and accessible space.



The research conducted and shared during No Boundaries also brought many new discoveries to children, youth and families. A few are highlighted below:



2. Using the power of the brain to help kids communicate

Imagine there was a type of technology that allowed people to interact with their environment using only their thoughts. This is now possible.

After years of research, in 2019 a new, innovative, clinical, non-invasive Brain Computer Interface (BCI) program was established for children and youth with severe neuromotor disabilities. By

wearing sensors that detect their brain activity, this technology converts those signals into electrical signals that are then read by a computer. The computer can then perform the task that the user imagines by connecting with nearby technology.

This means children with conditions that significantly limit the control of movements can now participate in a variety of activities such as painting with a robotic ball, playing video games, and racing toys, using only the power of their mind. BCI allows children to engage in fun and exciting activities with their loved ones, and continues to evolve, creating new possibilities for the future.

To date, our clinical BCI program has provided opportunities for 60 children and youth.

This important program is also being shared provincially through a pilot program. Currently three children's treatment centres across Ontario are participating in the program and have received training and equipment at their sites. Learn more about the incredible impact of this work [here](#).



3. Providing key findings and practices for effective life skills programs

At Holland Bloorview, we are committed to helping children and youth with disabilities develop the life skills they need to achieve their full potential. One way we've implemented this is through the [Life Skills Program Guide](#).

Launched in March 2022, this is an evidence-based guide that summarizes a decade of research into best practices and key ingredients for effective life skills programs. The guide is intended to be used by service providers to help them create and implement effective life skills programs for children and youth with disabilities and has been accessed over 700 times.

One of the key benefits of the Life Skills Program Guide is that it provides recommendations and strategies based on research that have been shown to be effective in helping children and youth with disabilities develop the life skills they need to succeed. By following the recommendations in the guide, service providers can feel confident that they are offering the best possible support to their clients.



4. Expansion of the Social ABCs program to more families

Holland Bloorview's Autism Research Centre has developed an evidence-based early intervention program called [Social ABCs](#), a parent-mediated intervention for toddlers with autism or related social communication challenges. Parents are coached on strategies to help with their child's early development through play and social routines. The intervention focuses on social and communication skills and has been shown to significantly improve developmental outcomes. Social ABCs is a game changer for families and expanded significantly during No Boundaries when it became funded under the Ontario Autism Program, allowing more children to benefit from the intervention.



Thanks to the success of the program in Ontario, Social ABCs has expanded to Prince Edward Island and Alberta, providing access to even more families who need it. Additionally, the impact of this program has spread to three countries globally, with the program being adopted in India, Israel and Switzerland. The program has been translated to three languages to date: French, Hebrew and Hindi.

5. Talking about sex and disability



Having “the talk” is never easy. But for parents of youth with disabilities, discussing sexuality, gender identity, and intimacy can prove to be even more difficult. With many youth with disabilities not having access to the proper resources, it was time to change that.

That's why, in 2021, the Bloorview Research Institute hosted a virtual Let's Talk Disability and Sex connection day that aimed to raise awareness about the important and often overlooked issue of sex and disability. The event brought together young adults with disabilities, parents of children with disabilities, healthcare workers, and researchers to share their experiences and perspectives.

At the event, participants discussed the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities in accessing sexual education and resources, as well as the need for more open and inclusive conversations around sex and disability. As a result of the connection day, [an online hub was created](#) to provide a wide range of resources for different audiences about how to talk about sex and disability.

This resource, which was co-designed by young people with disabilities, is the first of its kind and provides evidence-informed resources for young people with disabilities, caregivers, and healthcare providers to support important and life-changing conversations around sex and sexuality. It includes information about sexuality and disability, consent, communication, and relationships, as well as links to other resources and support services.

6. Expanding access to care and services through the Teaching and Learning Institute



Our Teaching and Learning Institute is dedicated to inspiring, enabling and supporting staff to educate the next generation of health professionals. In 2016, our teaching and learning team led the establishment of the [On-Track Student Led Environments \(SLEs\)](#) program. Originally created to address gaps in the concussion program, On-Track now covers four additional programs as of 2023. One of these programs, an [award-winning student-led initiative](#), was developed to address the healthcare needs of children with autism in northern Ontario.

SLEs represent an innovative educational model that provides an opportunity for students from different healthcare disciplines to work together and co-create solutions while receiving real-world training. This collaborative approach allows them to gain valuable experience working with interdisciplinary teams to address complex healthcare challenges, develop leadership and communication skills, and turn theory to practice, and all within a supportive learning environment.

Through SLEs, students have the opportunity to work with experts in their respective fields—including clinicians, researchers, and educators—to develop and implement solutions that improve care for children and youth with disabilities.



7. Tackling a crisis in health human resources while enhancing experiences of learners

Starting in October 2022, Holland Bloorview launched an enhanced extern program to help children and youth with complex needs get better care. This program allows clinical learners to be hired as externs based on their field of study, with oversight from collaborative practice leaders. These externs provide support for clinical care activities, which helps ensure that the care given is safe, compassionate, effective, timely, and efficient. To date we have trained 35 externs across four disciplines, nursing, respiratory therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

By offering this program, Holland Bloorview is not only enhancing the care given to children and youth with complex needs, but also contributing to the development of the next generation of healthcare professionals.

8. Expanding the Ward Family Summer Student Research Program



As part of our commitment to promoting inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility and anti-racism (IDEAA) in our research and education programs, we expanded the [Ward Family Summer Student Research program](#) to increase accessibility for students with disabilities (the “lived experience” stream) and those who identify as Indigenous, First Nations, Métis or Inuit (the “Indigenous” stream).

Thousands of applicants from across Canada apply for this highly competitive program each year—and the selected students have the opportunity to work alongside some of the world’s leading scientists in childhood disability research and developmental differences. They work on projects that align with their interests and experiences, as well as contribute to the overall research efforts at the institute. Each July, the students present their research to their peers and the wider research community on Ward Research Day. During the span of No Boundaries, 120 students have participated in the program.

The lived experience stream and the Indigenous stream were launched in 2018 and 2020, respectively. To date, 19 students from these streams have participated in the program.

The program not only provides an opportunity for students to gain valuable research experience and mentorship and attract the next generation to this important field of research, but also ensures that a diverse range of voices and perspectives are included in the research efforts towards improving the lives of children and youth with disabilities and developmental differences, at Holland Bloorview and beyond.



9. Creating programs to support our students

Not only do we provide an environment to help children, youth and families thrive we also ensure we have a supportive space for the students in our community. Through student wellness programming, we give students a chance to connect and learn about mental health and wellness. This initiative was developed by students themselves, ensuring that the programming is relevant and engaging for those it is designed to serve.

Workshops cover a range of topics, including mental health, stress management, and job search skills and tools. Facilitated by professionals in the field, they provide students with practical strategies for promoting their mental health and overall well-being.

In addition to these activities, the student wellness programming also includes regular coffee chats and biweekly check-ins. These informal gatherings provide students with a chance to connect with their peers, share their experiences and learn about helpful resources. The check-ins are conducted by trained student volunteers, who provide a listening ear and offer guidance on accessing mental health resources if needed.



Connect the System

Goal: Partner to drive integration of care and services

At Holland Bloorview, we recognize the importance of a fully integrated health system that supports children and families every step of the way. Our goal is for every child and family to feel fully supported by a system of services, resources, education, and information across all areas of their lives.

We call this approach “Connect the System” and it’s something we strive for in all aspects of our work. Our goal is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential and live their best life, with the support they need to succeed.

Highlights include:

1. Launching the Inter-professional Transition Clinic



In 2021 and 2022, we started a new clinic called the Inter-professional Transition Clinic (ITC) to help kids with complex mental health and behavioral needs who haven’t had success with medication before. This donor-funded clinic provides expert advice on the best medications and behavior management strategies for each child to keep them safe and help them grow. Medical professionals like doctors, pharmacists and nurses work together to provide care for children from all over Ontario.

The program served 27 clients in its first year and 57 in its second.

2. Launching a new, unique transitional care program

In May 2022, Holland Bloorview and Safehaven launched a new transitional care program to support children with medical complexity. The program focused on providing four community-based beds and was made possible by a [\\$3.4 million funding from the Government of Ontario over three years](#). The transition from lengthy hospital stays to home and community can be extremely challenging for these children, and the program aims to provide them with the support they need to make this transition with ease.

3. Providing specialized care for vulnerable children and their families

The [Extensive Needs Program](#)—also known as the Integrated Pathway for Children and Youth with Extensive Needs pilot program—is a collaboration between Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, McMaster Children’s Hospital, and Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario. Launched in March 2023, with provincial funding of \$97 million over three years, the program offers specialized care to children and youth with extensive medical, developmental, emotional, and social vulnerabilities.

The program is designed to help families connect with the care they need and improve their quality of life. By working together and coordinating services, the program aims to provide personalized support and access to tailored services for each child and their family.

The program brings together a range of experts and resources from the three children's hospitals. This includes assessment, diagnosis, treatment, and ongoing care from highly skilled medical professionals like pediatricians, psychiatrists, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists.

Beyond clinical services, the program also helps families navigate the healthcare system and access community resources. This includes providing support for transportation, accommodation, and financial assistance for families who need to travel to receive specialized care.

\$97M
invested across
three sites



4. Tackling the backlogs in children's healthcare

In May 2022, Holland Bloorview, as part of the Children's Health Coalition, launched the [Make Kids Count action plan](#). This plan aims to tackle the backlog of surgical, clinical, and diagnostic procedures that have been made worse by the pandemic. The plan is a \$1-billion effort that aims to right-size the children's healthcare system and accelerate catching up on lost care caused by the pandemic.

The Children's Health Coalition is made up of Ontario's 5 children's hospitals, Children's Mental Health Ontario, Empowered Kids Ontario and the Kids Health Alliance.

528
community
providers
trained

5. Extending autism spectrum disorder expertise beyond the hospital walls

Holland Bloorview has launched several initiatives to extend its expertise beyond its walls and create capacity for autism diagnosis and services in the community.

These initiatives include:

- ✓ the [ECHO™ Autism program](#): Which increases community provider capacity to diagnose and treat autism
- ✓ the [Autism Summit](#): A global conference with over 2,400 participants
- ✓ the Autism Sharing Initiative: A global network for sharing genomics clinical data to accelerate research into precision care
- ✓ [ASD FEED-ED](#): An education platform for children, youth, parents, caregivers, and healthcare professionals about feeding autistic children through an ethno-culturally sensitive lens.



6. Integrating clinical health information systems

In late 2022, Holland Bloorview, in partnership with SickKids and Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario, introduced [an integrated electronic health record system](#). This system enables clinicians at the three hospitals to share information and simplifies their interactions with families, helping to smooth client transitions between hospitals.

7. Empowering nurse managers

Holland Bloorview partnered with McGill University and SickKids to create the Strengths-Based Nursing and Healthcare Leadership program. To date, 22 leaders have attended this training.

Through the program, nurses develop their leadership skills, enhance their ability to work collaboratively, and create a more supportive workplace culture.

The goal is to ensure that nurses are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to provide the best care possible. This can lead to improved care outcomes and overall satisfaction among staff and those they care for.



8. Providing evidence-based robotics programming

Holland Bloorview partnered with FIRST Robotics Canada to develop a first of its kind fully integrated and accessible robotics program for children with disabilities. The [robotics program](#) has expanded to several sites across Ontario, giving access to more children with disabilities interested in STEM programming. Six children’s treatment centres including KidsAbility, ErinOaks, Hamilton Health Sciences, One Kids Place, Five Counties and Niagara have or will be implementing the program.



Empowering No Boundaries

Lead and
model social
change

Lead and Model Social Change

Holland Bloorview has taken many steps to create and model an inclusive, strengths-based world. The goal of leading and modelling social change is to create awareness and deep acceptance of disability as part of the many facets of diversity that make each of us unique. Through hiring practices, programming, accountability, accessibility and partnerships, the goal is to create and model an inclusive, strengths-based world at Holland Bloorview.

In partnership with allies, we have also worked to influence social change, learning, and innovation so that everyone has multiple opportunities across their life span and environments to increase their capacity for equity, diversity and inclusion of people with disabilities.

From creating national disability inclusion campaigns, to creating programs that support Black researchers like the first EMBARK scientist, to creating a taskforce to ensure inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility and anti-racism (IDEAA) in all that we do, we continue to create a place where we all belong.

While there is still much work to be done, some highlights include:

1. Disability inclusion campaigns

Holland Bloorview has been a driving force in promoting disability inclusion through its successful campaigns, [Dear Everybody](#) and [Imagine Everybody](#). The campaigns, which began in 2017, have raised awareness and sparked important conversations about disability stigma and inclusion. Over 20,000 people have signed the Dear Everybody Agreement, demonstrating their support for increased representation of people with disabilities. In addition, more than 100 organizations have pledged their commitment to creating a more inclusive world by signing the agreement.

The campaigns have made a significant impact, with an average of 9 million social media impressions annually during campaign periods. Holland Bloorview has also presented anti-stigma education seminars to over 350 schools, businesses, and community groups, reaching over 28,000 people. These efforts have not gone unnoticed, as the campaigns have received five industry awards for communication excellence and advocacy. By continuing to lead these campaigns, Holland Bloorview is driving real change and promoting greater disability inclusion in society.



2. IDEAA taskforce

Over the course of No Boundaries, Holland Bloorview advanced its commitments to IDEAA including creation of a new dedicated role as part of the executive team; broadening that role for greater breadth and impact, establishing an [IDEAA taskforce](#) with representatives and subject matter experts from across the organization; and launching a new workplace discrimination, racism and harassment reporting process.



3. Understanding anti-Black racism at Holland Bloorview

In 2022, Holland Bloorview commissioned Dr. Notisha Massaquoi, a well-known expert on anti-Black racism, to investigate and document the experience of Black employees at all levels of the hospital. After extensive engagement, a report was produced in March 2023 that included clear actions to tackle anti-Black racism among staff.

4. Translating hospital materials to support clients and families



To make essential client and family information more accessible to everyone, Holland Bloorview launched the Hospital Materials Translation Project in 2019. Over 60 clinical education materials were translated into the top five languages spoken by Holland Bloorview families, giving them choice and access to important information about their care.

5. Ensuring reports of workplace discrimination, racism and harassment are heard and acted on

Holland Bloorview launched its workplace discrimination, racism, and harassment reporting process in 2021. It is a first-of-its-kind reporting process among Toronto Academic Health Science Network (TAHSN) hospitals. The reporting process enables staff, students, and volunteers to report discrimination experiences through a confidential, safe, and trauma-informed arms-length independent ombudsperson.

6. Empowering Black Researchers with EMBARK

[EMBARK](#), (**E**mpowering **B**lack **A**cademics, **R**esearchers and **K**nowledge creators) launched in 2022, is a program that supports Black researchers to advance their research beyond the post-doctoral level. Supported by the University of Toronto Black Research Network (BRN), it is the first program of its kind in Canada. Dr. De-Lawrence Lamptey is the inaugural scientist whose research focuses on the intersectionality of childhood disability and racial identity.

7. Expanding financial assistance to support families

Holland Bloorview's Family Support Fund is a program designed to assist families who may be struggling financially while caring for a child with disabilities. In response to the pandemic, the program was expanded to become Canada's largest hospital-based financial assistance program, providing about \$200,000 a year in funding put towards supporting families in need.



The fund covers essential costs such as housing, food, clothing, and hygiene products, providing assistance to a growing number of families every year. Families can apply for support through the fund regardless of their financial situation.

The support fund also offers workshops and educational resources to help families better navigate the challenges that come with caring for a child with disabilities. The program recognizes that families of children with disabilities often face unique financial and emotional burdens, and aims to provide support and resources to help alleviate these challenges.



Evolve
client-centred
quality and
safety

Evolve client-centred quality and safety

At Holland Bloorview, we are committed to providing the highest quality care and ensuring the safety of all our patients, families, and staff. This commitment is reflected in the many initiatives we have implemented.

1. Caring Safely

In 2020, we launched the [Caring Safely framework](#), joining Solutions for Patient Safety (SPS), a network of over 135 children's hospitals committed to reducing harm by preventing serious events, employee safety events, and hospital-acquired conditions. The framework aims to make Holland Bloorview a high-reliability organization that prioritizes client and family safety, empowering teams to make the safe thing the easy thing to do.



2. Advancing medical leadership in quality improvement

Building on the work of Caring Safely, medical leadership for quality improvement (QI) is now formally embedded into ambulatory and inpatient care operations with medical QI leads appointed by the vice president medicine and academic affairs.

3. Supporting families and transforming care through COVID-19 pandemic

Partnering with family leaders (volunteers) during the pandemic was instrumental in developing hospital policies and protocols during the pandemic. A rapid response team of family leaders was formed to consult, advise and advocate on changing COVID19 policies, services, communications, and participate on the COVID-19 steering committee. In sum, family leaders volunteered 311 hours of their time during the first wave of the pandemic.

Family engagement was key in facilitating the increased use of virtual care, enhanced infection prevention and control practices, and advising on sensory- and child-friendly, fully accessible vaccine clinics.

These initiatives helped support families during a challenging time and ensured that clients continued to receive the highest quality of care possible.



4. Enhancing medication safety

In March 2022, the hospital implemented a bedside medication verification (BMV) system to enhance safe and effective medication management practices for inpatient clients. The new system caused a reduction in preventable medication safety events, improving safety and quality of care.

5. Improving feeding tube connectors

In March 2023, Holland Bloorview in partnership with SickKids and Ontario pediatric specialty hospitals, led the transition to the [global ENFit feeding tube connectors](#). These connectors are designed to not be compatible with connectors for other delivery systems, such as IV lines, ensuring safety and improving quality of care.

6. Standardizing Language for Dysphagia

In March 2023, Holland Bloorview adopted the International Dysphagia Diet Standardization Initiative (IDDSI). The IDDSI was created to provide a universal language and terminology in the healthcare industry, specifically when it comes to describing food and liquid textures for clients who face challenges in swallowing or chewing certain substances due to dysphagia. The standardization of language not only promotes clarity among staff but also fosters better communication between children, youth and caregivers, leading to a significant improvement in the quality of care provided.

7. Migrating to a more efficient medical record system

In 2019, the organization upgraded to a new electronic medical record (EMR) system called Meditech Expanse. With a more user-friendly interface, improved safety and security features, access to client information was much faster. This decision also helped create a better integration with our client and family portal, connect2care, making it easier for clients and families to access and manage their health information.

Co-create with children, youth, families, and alumni

Client and family co-design is critical in shaping priorities for care, research, and learning, and it is an essential component of our philosophy. This approach recognizes that families are experts in their children's health and well-being, and their input is essential in designing effective interventions and strategies to support the best possible outcomes.

By involving clients and families in decision-making, No Boundaries ensures that the voices of those who receive care are heard, and their needs and preferences are met. Highlights include:

1. Launching connect2research

In July 2018, Holland Bloorview launched connect2research, a platform that increases awareness of new research occurring at the hospital and provides equal access for all clients and families who may be interested in learning more or participating.

connect2research

2 Expanding the Family as Faculty program



The Family as Faculty program equips family members of kids with disabilities with the skills to share their perspectives in an educational context and help others learn. Since the program's inception, 282 Family as Faculty placements across 148 co-led/co-facilitated workshops and initiatives at Holland Bloorview and in the wider community (e.g. University of Toronto, MacCaulay Centre, Toronto and Toronto Catholic district school boards, Children's Healthcare Coalition, Healthcare Excellence Canada, Ryerson University, McMaster University), generating nearly 3000 volunteer hours.

3. Implementing the Family Engagement in Research Framework

At Holland Bloorview, we know that it's important to involve clients and families in research. That's why we created the Family Engagement in Research Framework in 2021. This framework helps researchers work together with families in all stages of the research process, from planning the study to sharing the results.

The framework provides support and resources to help families get involved through training programs and workshops. The program exemplifies why family involvement in research is so important and valued.

4. Co-creating with children, youth, and families

Children, youth, and families have been co-creators in many of Holland Bloorview's accomplishments, including accreditation, the upgrading of the hospital's website, and various safety initiatives.

To learn more about how the hospital co-creates with children, youth, and families, you can access the annual [Client and Family Relations reports on their website](#).



Mobilize people and teams

At Holland Bloorview, we strive to create an environment, culture and infrastructure that fosters collaboration and excellence in all we do, while also deepening strengths-based, compassionate care.

Everyone connected to Holland Bloorview has the goal to be mobilized to innovate; seek new knowledge; improve care and service; advance inclusion, diversity, equity, accessibility and anti-racism, and rally support and philanthropy for our work.

We have made impactful change in supporting the Holland Bloorview team by:

1. Prioritizing mental health



The mental health and well-being of staff is a top priority at Holland Bloorview. Over the course of No Boundaries, we provided a wealth of resources in the new Mental Health and Wellness Hub for employees. Another initiative is the introduction of virtual and team-based Schwartz Rounds, which provides staff with a structured forum to share and process the emotional impact of providing compassionate care to clients and families. New approaches - shorter sessions, smaller panels, virtual formats - to

Schwartz Rounds acknowledged the increased time pressures and logistical barriers faced during the pandemic.

In partnership with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and our employee and family assistance provider, Holland Bloorview also provided training to leaders to better support their teams.

2. Encouraging professional development

We believe in the professional development of staff to ensure they are empowered with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed. This includes solution focused coaching training for all new staff and the launch of a new leadership academy that offers courses for leaders to develop the skills they need to manage successful teams.

3. Encouraging solutions and tackling challenges

Established in 2017, the No Boundaries Fund provides small grants to Holland Bloorview staff teams to launch solutions and tackle challenges that impact clients and families. Over 60 initiatives have been granted funds for projects like: a virtual family music concert, loaner laptops for clients, grab-and-go activity kits, and Fit N Flex physio equipment for home. Whether big or small, we actively seek ways to unleash staff creativity in supporting our mission.

60

No Boundaries
grants
administered



Looking to the future, beyond No Boundaries

As we move beyond the challenges of the pandemic, Holland Bloorview is optimistic and fueled with a renewed sense of purpose. We recognize that the pandemic has taught us many valuable lessons reaffirming our beliefs in the importance of resilience, innovation, and collaboration in meeting the needs of children, youth and families. We are buoyed by the on-going commitment of our donors and the partnership of the Holland Bloorview Foundation.

With this perspective, we remain steadfast in our dedication to delivering outstanding personalized care, driving ground-breaking research, and creating meaningful social and system change for children and youth with disabilities.

