Pediatrics in Haldimand-Norfolk

The Pediatric Ambulatory Care Program at the Delhi Community Health Center (DCHC) is an award-winning academic consultative clinic and urgent care clinic. Delhi is located in the rural community of Norfolk County, located an hour’s drive from both London and Hamilton. Within the Delhi Family Health Team, the program serves the complex longitudinal outpatient and urgent health needs of children and youth in the broad Lake Erie community. With strong linkages to McMaster University, the ambulatory pediatric service attracts diverse referrals for acute, chronic, and complex problems in the Haldimand-Norfolk region, as well as many surrounding areas. Some of the families are vulnerable and have limited access to primary or pediatric care. Several of the at-risk or isolated groups are also distinct and offer unique opportunities for trainees. These groups include children of Mennonite communities, Indigenous peoples, and migrant workers.

Since 2011, this accredited pediatric training site at DCHC has offered year-round rotations for clerkship-level medical students and residents from McMaster University. Learners participate directly in care to advance their skills in assessment and management of many conditions affecting infants, children, and youth. Up to two undergraduate students and one postgraduate trainee are present at any time. This collegial and supportive environment provides a rich and well-supervised clinical experience with a community-based child and adolescent health focus. Particular clinical themes in the consultative clinic include common chronic pediatric conditions, complex or multi-system pediatric disorders, prematurity and neonatal issues, feeding and growth problems, failure to thrive, adolescent issues including sexual health, infant and child developmental issues, obesity, behavioural problems, social health determinants, and learning difficulties. Examples of complex conditions are genetic and syndromal disorders, chronic gastrointestinal conditions, complex seizure disorders, congestive heart failure (e.g., due to congenital heart defects, rheumatic heart disease), and autism.

Education is strong in disciplines that are often limited in other parts of training, such as child and adolescent mental health, clinical epidemiology, management of chronic and complex disease, and pediatric dermatological complaints. Evidence-based care is also taught for a broad range of pediatric conditions presenting in primary care setting. In the urgent care clinic, learners assess multiple acute problems such as infectious and respiratory conditions, ENT disorders, ocular complaints, pediatric UTI, urgent referrals from family physicians, and follow-up consultations after emergency or hospital care. The experience is particularly salient for learners planning careers in general pediatrics, family medicine, psychiatry, community health, and academic medicine.

For interested learners, the clinic placements can be combined with pediatric in-hospital shifts at Brantford General Hospital, a regional acute care centre and affiliate teaching site of McMaster University’s School of Medicine.

The preceptor is an experienced educator and an Associate Clinical Professor at McMaster University, and has completed a Master of Public Health from Harvard University and academic fellowship training in the UK.