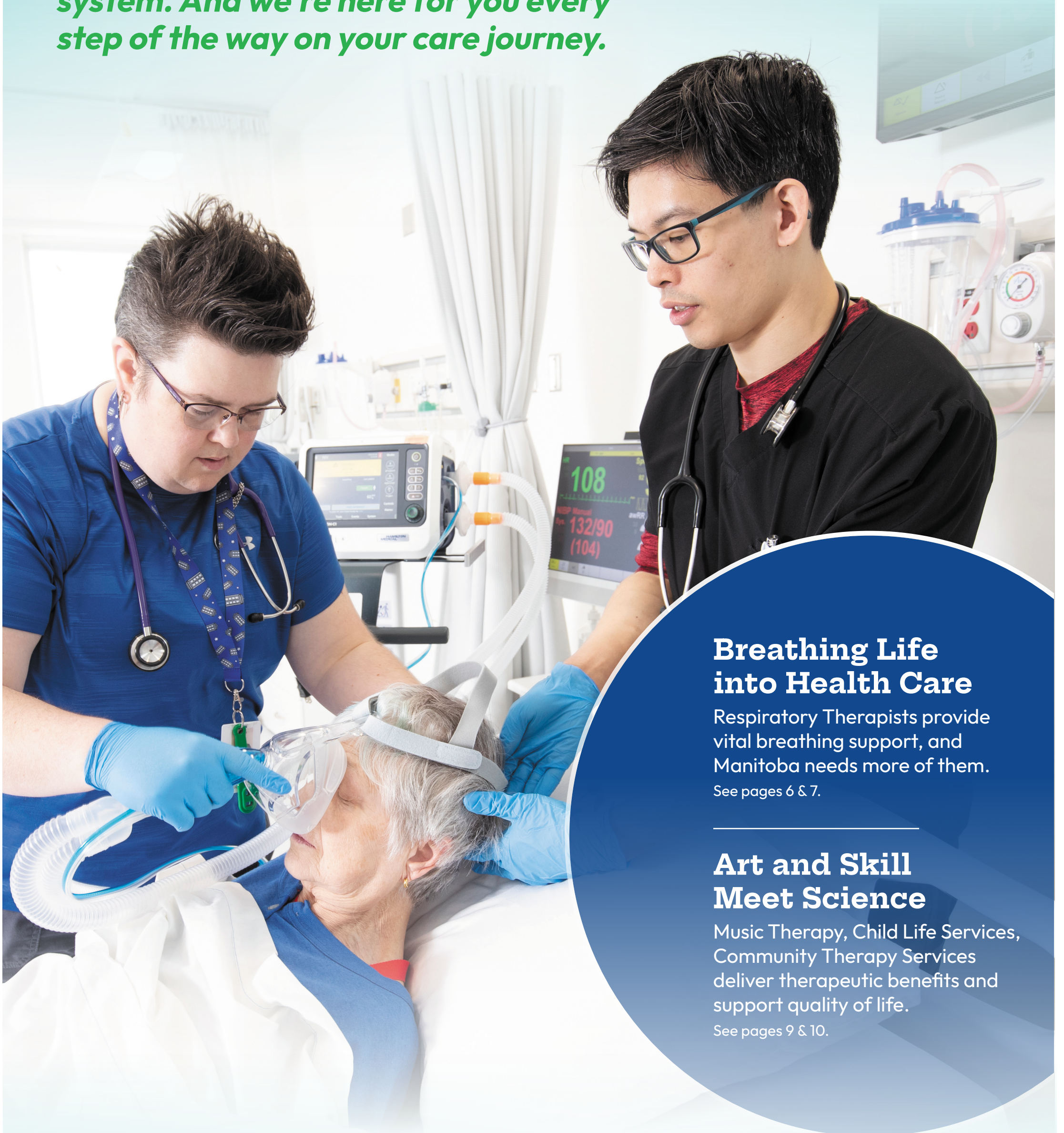


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Breathing Life into Health Care

Respiratory Therapists provide vital breathing support, and Manitoba needs more of them.

See pages 6 & 7.

Art and Skill Meet Science

Music Therapy, Child Life Services, Community Therapy Services deliver therapeutic benefits and support quality of life.

See pages 9 & 10.

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Community Therapy Services Supports Rehabilitation Where You Live

BY KRISTIN MARAND

What started as a mobile service some 60 years ago, with a lone therapist visiting the homes of patients with arthritis and rheumatism, has grown into a robust non-profit agency with nearly 50 service providers. Today, Community Therapy Services (CTS) focuses on physiotherapy and occupational therapy with the goal of enhancing quality of life and optimizing the health and independence of clients by providing direct services, consultation and education.

"We provide occupational therapy and physiotherapy in the community, whether that be in people's homes, or in a community resource, or in a long-term care facility. We are the boots on the ground in terms of providing these essential services to folks living in Winnipeg," explains Valentina Cornejo, executive director of CTS. "These services can support anyone at any age whose ability to function has been interrupted, whether that be through injury, illness or aging."

Through collaborative partnerships with government, regional health authorities, health care providers and other organizations, CTS serves adults of all ages and at various life stages. Some clients seek out physiotherapy (PT) or occupational therapy (OT) following a surgery, others require support navigating chronic illnesses such as multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, arthritis or mental health. Many seniors rely on PT and OT either proactively to maintain their strength and prevent falls, or as part of a recovery plan if they have had a major health event such as a stroke or heart attack.

"Team based care in health care has been evolving and growing over the years. Physio and OT and other allied health professionals, really bridge between the medical stability of someone's life and someone's quality of life. There's a synergy between disciplines and OTs and physios are known to work alongside doctors, speech language pathologists, social workers, and everyone is contributing with their own lens and lending their expertise to ensure that once the



TOP: Andrew Sonnasinh, Laurie Mackenzie, Brad Snyder, Val Cornejo, Katia Wlasiuk, Lindsay Koehn, Gord Neufeld, Patrick Wu, Gwen Penner. PHOTO BY DARCY FINLEY



Ivan and Sam from Community Therapy Services work with patients in their homes. PHOTOS BY DARCY FINLEY

medical plan is executed, that there's a life plan in place too," Cornejo says.

PTs are experts in musculoskeletal and neurological systems in the body. They help people manage pain, navigate and restore movement, strength and basic functions such as walking, sitting and standing. An OT on the other hand, focuses more on the functional aspects of daily living; how a person gets dressed, how they transport themselves, if they require modifications in how they interact with the world. OTs ensure that people can function beyond their limitations through strategies, equipment or different ways of doing, so that they can still fully participate in their lives. In other words, according to Cornejo, physiotherapy helps you walk, and occupational therapy gives you a life worth walking for.

"Community care meets people exactly where they are, literally and figuratively. The goal is to empower people to reclaim their daily lives, ensuring that they are safe and can live to the fullest in their current environment. It's not quantitative, it's qualitative, and maybe that's why community

based services are sometimes overlooked or undervalued," Cornejo offers.

Cornejo describes community based care as the invisible string that supports the sustainability of the healthcare system. It reduces repeat or recurring hospital visits and helps keep people in their homes and community instead of occupying critical spaces in hospitals or crisis centres.

"Community practice is not glamorous, splashy or dramatic, but we definitely see a lot of wins in our everyday that are deeply meaningful, like the stroke survivor who finally manages to button their favourite shirt, on their own, in their bedroom. We've got personnel files full of thank you letters from families with glowing remarks for all of our clinicians, with how much of a difference they made." ●

To learn more about Community Therapy Services visit: ctsinc.mb.ca.

More Than a Melody: How Music Therapy Supports Health and Well-being

BY KRISTIN MARAND

Imagine seeing a child or an older adult smile for the first time in weeks because they've been isolated in a hospital room, noticing anxiety subside during examinations or tough conversations, or seeing the glimmer of recognition in the eye of a dementia patient. This is the power of music therapy. And these outcomes are just the tip of the iceberg in an allied health practice that is vast, adaptable and highly personalized.

Music therapy uses music as a tool to achieve non-musical goals. Music therapists are trained to assess patients to set goals, and determine what course of action might best support a person's mental, cognitive, physical, emotional, social or spiritual well-being. Music therapy can be used in various settings and across all age groups.

In educational settings, music therapy can support learning social skills such as making eye contact and taking turns. It can also help attain or maintain developmental milestones such as learning to follow directions, or naming colours and animals. In a health care setting, it can be used to improve quality of life for patients, to decrease anxiety when they're in a vulnerable state in an unfamiliar setting such as a hospital and to help them relax.

Music therapy is also used to work towards rehab goals, to strengthen injured body parts or reinforce the mind-body connection after a traumatic event. Music therapists can work with patients or clients in the community as well, to give them an opportunity for social interaction and to build community and relationships. It also has a place in palliative care.

Cecilia Bellingham pioneered the music therapy program at Health Sciences Centre Children's Hospital, the first of its kind at an acute pediatric hospital. She uses music to provide psychosocial support, assess how children and families are coping and determine what is needed in the moment.

"Music has that magical ability to connect quite quickly with patients and family. Because it provides familiarity, it promotes connection, and it also brings some humanness to the experience," she says. "Music, is such a natural, non-threatening part of childhood and play, and so we use the music and the tools of music in order to promote that in our interactions."

Similarly, Heitha Forsyth, a music therapist at Misericordia Health Centre who works with transitional and long-term care patients, describes her profession's ability to break through isolation and foster connection, as a superpower.

"I can break down barriers a little bit and get them talking by playing some songs and fostering conversation that way. It's a really great tool for reducing anxiety, supporting engagement and giving people a way to express themselves. Especially in transitional care, where there are a lot of unknowns, music therapy can be something to help patients engage in their care, and help my colleagues also engage in care by supplementing them."

Loghan Puhach, a music therapist at Riverview Health Centre, uses his skills to foster social connections in group settings, support dementia patients and hold space for those in palliative care through music.

"Sessions can involve a mix of receptive music intake, active music making, and engaging with the material of the lyrics or the way the song sounds, that might be through verbal processing or working with creating the sound itself. There are some exciting things on the horizon for respiratory patients. Research has shown that people who engage in deep breathing, singing and instrument playing with their lungs, who have conditions like COPD or lung cancer, have a higher respiratory function at the end of a six-week period of doing music therapy regularly," he says. ●

To learn more about music therapy and read in-depth interviews with practitioners visit mahcp.ca.



Cecilia Bellingham. SUBMITTED PHOTO



Heitha Forsyth. PHOTO BY DARCY FINLEY



Loghan Puhach. PHOTO BY DARCY FINLEY

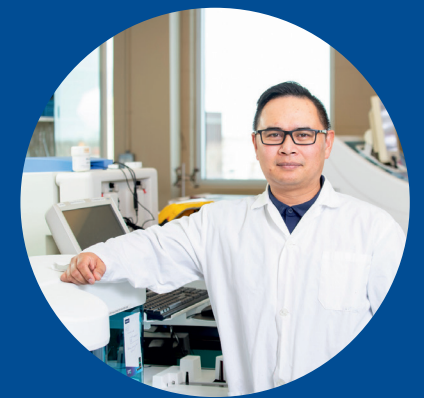


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