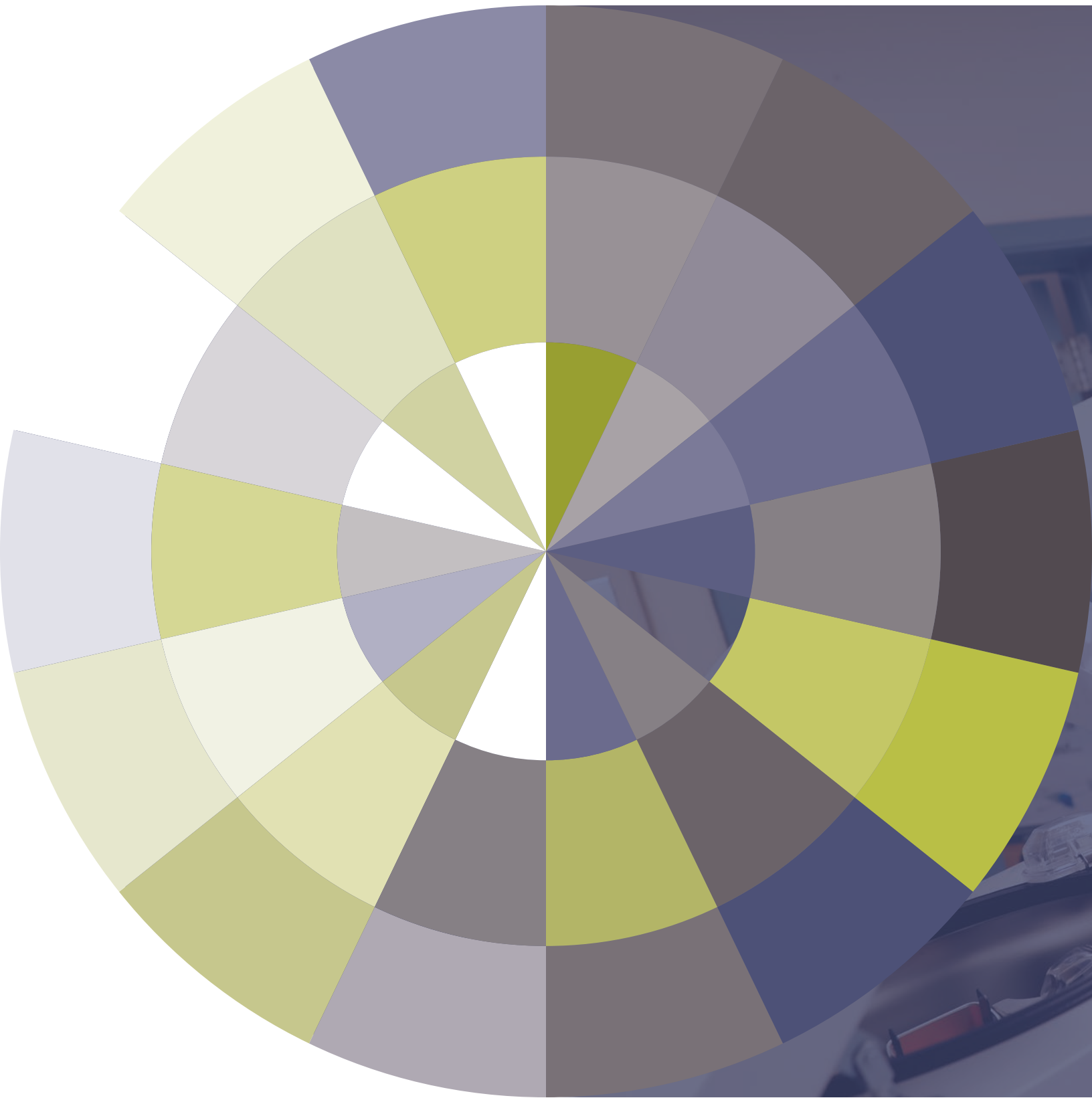




Innovative Health Care,  
Active Communities  
2023 | 2024 ANNUAL REPORT





A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a white lab coat, is smiling and looking towards the camera. He is in a laboratory setting, with a sink and various pieces of equipment visible. A blue pocket square with the CSMLS and SCSLM logos is in his lab coat pocket. The background is slightly blurred, showing a clock on the wall and other lab equipment.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Message from the President and CEO . . . .	4
Message from the Chairman . . . .	5
Purpose and Values . . . .	6
Overview of the Network . . . .	7
The Network's Territory . . . .	8
The Network's Profile . . . .	9
Human Resources Profiles . . .	10
Board of Directors, Trustee and Leadership Team . . .	11
The Network's Performance . . .	12
Continuous learning-based strategic planning and learning client programs . . .	13
2023–2024 Highlights and Achievements . . .	14
Results of the University Mission . . .	21
Activity Volumes . . .	22
Annual Salaries . . .	23
Financial Summary . . .	24

# Message from the President and CEO

It is with great satisfaction that I present Vitalité Health Network's 2023–2024 Annual Report, offering a detailed overview of the past year, highlighting the major achievements of our organization and our valued health care workers.

While last year was decisive in consolidating our major directions: patient experience, employee experience and building closer ties with our communities, this year was marked by significant advances in line with our strategic priorities: improving access to primary health care and improving patient flow and hospital performance.

Highlights of the year included the successful roll-out of the local family health team model. This innovative, patient-centred model promotes faster, more extensive access to primary health care, by prioritizing a multidisciplinary team approach rather than individual care by a doctor.

In addition, we are pursuing our continuous learning-based strategic planning and proactive strategic management, focused on improvement projects in response to needs identified in the field. This rigorous approach mobilizes our teams in the search for and implementation of concrete solutions. Their contributions have led to numerous improvements, notably in patient flow management and the reduction of waiting lists in surgery, as well as in other operational processes crucial to optimal care delivery.

In the interest of transparency, we maintain a continuous improvement performance report on our website. In addition, we publish quarterly reports so that the community can track our progress.

In conclusion, I would like to salute the unfailing commitment of our health care workers. I would also like to thank our partners, our communities, our patients and their families for their ongoing support in realizing Vitalité Health Network's purpose, which is to foster the health of our patients and communities, today and tomorrow.

Happy reading!



Dr. France Desrosiers, President and CEO





## Message from the Chairman

The publication of this annual report marks a significant milestone for our Board of Directors, which, in July 2023, took over governance of Vitalité Health Network.

For Board members, this year has been rich in lessons and discoveries, marked above all by major observations concerning our health care system. First, we became aware of the strength of Vitalité Health Network, embodied in its vision, strategic priorities and robust approach to achieving its objectives.

A second observation concerned the critical state of the health care system. Faced with an aging population, leading to a continuous increase in needs, and a shortage of health care workers, Vitalité Health Network has had to make difficult choices, which we have supported, in order to maintain a level of quality and safety in care.

Fortunately, we have seen a reversal in recruitment trends, with significantly more new hires than departures.

I salute the tenacity of the Network teams, who have remained mobilized to design and implement both local and international recruitment strategies, as well as retention initiatives aimed at ensuring the stability of existing staff.

I also praise the Network's visionary spirit, which relies not only on its human resources to meet growing challenges, but also on a renewed vision of care and service delivery to better meet present and future needs.

I would also like to draw attention to the partnerships that are developing between the Network and its communities, whether through learning communities, exchanges with local elected representatives or collaboration with interest groups. Shared vision, common goals and projects ensure a promising future for our health care system.

Finally, a big thank you to members of the public for their interest in the work of the Board of Directors and the issues facing Vitalité Health Network.

**Thomas Soucy, Chairman of the Board of Directors**

# Purpose and Values

Faced with an aging population in need of more health care and services, and a shortage of professional resources capable of delivering them, the Network has reaffirmed its commitment to excellence in care and service.

In 2023–2024, we have integrated this purpose at the heart of our facilities and with our staff, recognizing the critical importance of mobilizing our teams and collaborating with patients, partners and communities to continuously improve our health care system.

Following numerous consultations with our teams and communities, our new purpose statement and values have emerged as a shared, mobilizing action plan. These principles guide our initiatives every day, inspiring confidence and hope in our teams, our fellow citizens and our communities for the future of health care and services.

## Our Purpose

**To foster the health of our patients and communities, today and tomorrow.**

Through a collaborative, learning approach, we foster the health of our communities and ensure the best care for our patients. We are an innovative, forward-looking network, where everyone's voice counts, and where patients and families come first.

## Our Values

### Safety and respect above all

We treat our co-workers, community members, patients and their families with respect, dignity, sensitivity and compassion. We provide a health care and work environment that is caring, safe and respectful of differences.

### Humility and curiosity at the heart of a learning culture

We are curious, humble and open-minded in the face of challenges and setbacks, thereby fostering learning and growth. Everyone's creativity, energy and innovative spirit support the continuous improvement of our care and services.

### Integrity and accountability in all our action

We provide care and services that meet the highest quality standards. We act ethically, honestly and responsibly, and we keep our promises and commitments.

### Collaboration and mutual support that promote synergy

We seek and value the ideas and contributions of everyone in achieving common goals. Mutual support and synergy within teams foster a sense of belonging and empower individuals and teams.

# Overview of the Network

Operating throughout northern and southeastern New Brunswick, Vitalité Health Network is unique in Atlantic Canada given its Francophone identity. It provides health care and services in the official language of the patient's choice at nearly **60 points of service** spread across four geographic zones. These zones are designated as follows: Beauséjour Zone (health region 1), Northwest Zone (health region 4), Restigouche Zone (health region 5) and Acadie-Bathurst Zone (health region 6).

With a budget of **\$845,6 million** (excluding Medicare), the Network serves a population of **253,063 people**. Services are provided by a dedicated and committed team of **8,269 full-time and part-time employees, 589 physicians** and nearly **572 volunteers**.

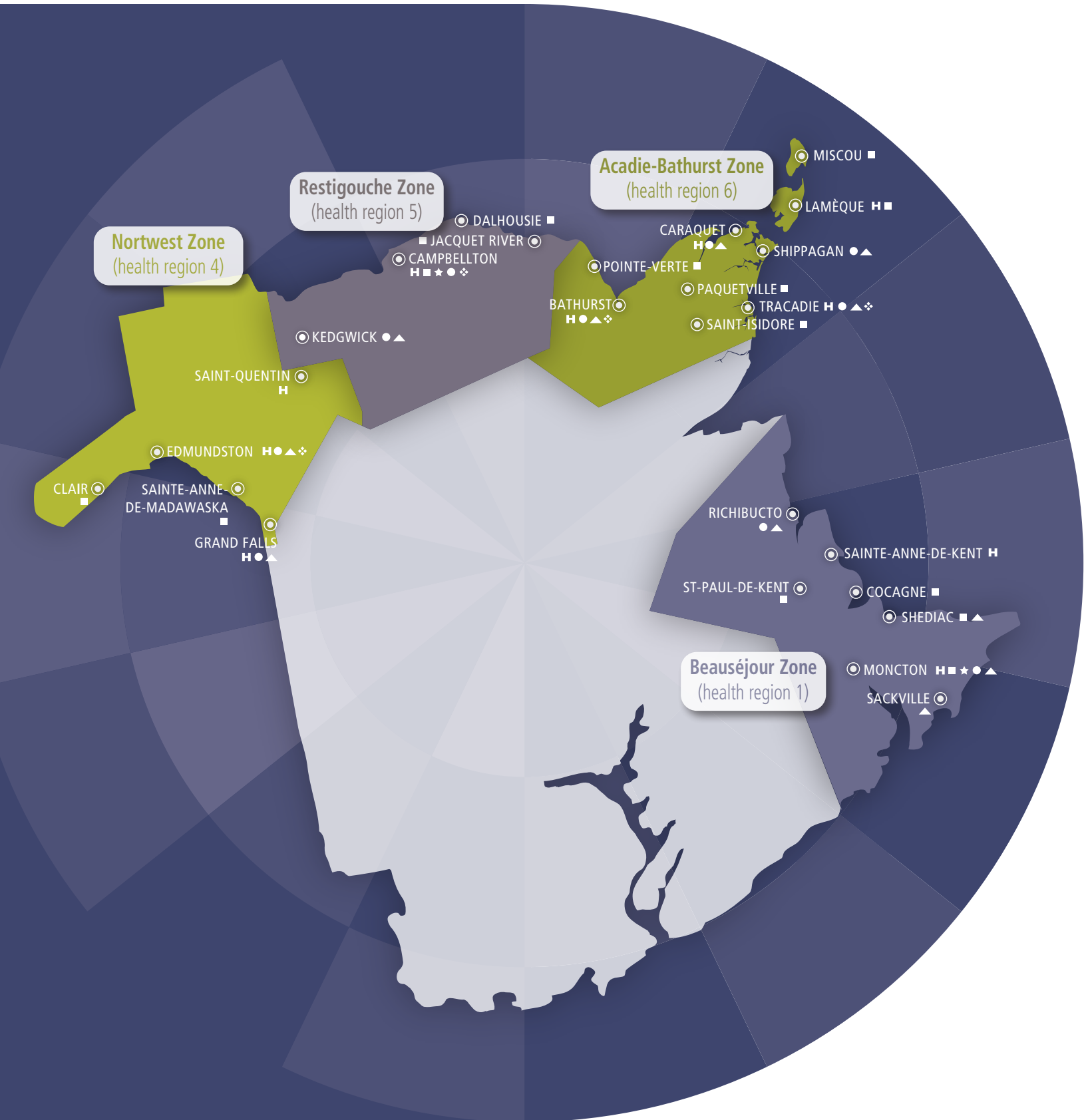
**Ten foundations** support the Network, and their contributions make it possible to finance several initiatives and projects for our patients. The close and special ties linking our foundations to our facilities and programs help improve the health and wellness of the public.

The range of services offered by the Network includes acute hospital care, clinics and community health centres, home care, public health, addiction and mental health services, long-term care to veterans, training and research, ambulatory care services, and services provided in communities by our physicians. The Network also helps provide a wide range of health services to the various First Nation communities in New Brunswick.

The Network provides leadership for some provincial health programs such as the SANE (sexual assault nurse examiner) Program, the New Brunswick Cochlear Implant Follow-Up Program, the Provincial PKU (phenylketonuria) Program, the New Brunswick FASD (fetal alcohol spectrum disorder) Centre of Excellence, the Provincial Genetics Program, the Provincial Bariatric Surgery Program, the Provincial Gynecologic Oncology Program, the New Brunswick Public Health Laboratory, and the Provincial Forensic Psychiatry Program.

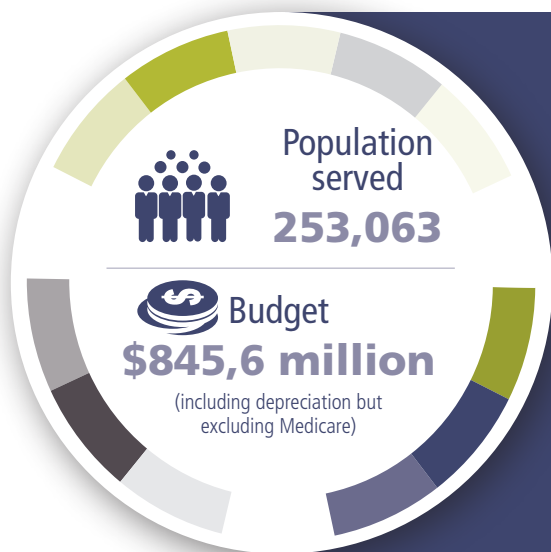
The Network is managed by the Leadership Team, made up of the President and CEO and the Vice-Presidents. The Extended Leadership Team, comprising members of the Leadership Team and invited members, holds strategic execution meetings twice a quarter (every six weeks) to take stock of the various improvement projects, identify challenges and issues, and adjust, if necessary, the continuous learning-based strategic planning to achieve the best results.

# The Network's Territory





# The Network's Profile



## Foundations (10)

Fondation Les Amis de l'Hôpital de Tracadie Inc.  
Chaleur Regional Hospital Foundation Inc.  
La Fondation de l'Hôpital de Lamèque Inc.  
Fondation Hôpital de l'Enfant-Jésus Inc.  
Les Ami.e.s de l'Hôpital Stella-Maris-de-Kent  
Dumont UHC Foundation  
Edmundston Regional Hospital Foundation  
Foundation of the Friends of the Grand Falls General Hospital Inc.  
Fondation Dr Romaric Boulay  
Friends of Healthcare Foundation (Campbellton)

## H Hospital facilities (11)

Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre  
Campbellton Regional Hospital  
Chaleur Regional Hospital  
Edmundston Regional Hospital  
Restigouche Hospital Centre  
Enfant-Jésus RHSJ† Hospital  
Tracadie Hospital  
Lamèque Hospital and Community Health Centre  
Stella-Maris-de-Kent Hospital  
Grand Falls General Hospital  
Hôtel-Dieu Saint-Joseph de Saint-Quentin

## ★ Veterans' unit/centre (2)

Veterans' Unit – Campbellton Regional Hospital  
Veterans' Health Centre (Moncton)

## ● Community mental health centres (10 + 2 points of service)

Bathurst	Kedgwick
Campbellton (point of service in Dalhousie)	Moncton
Caraquet	Richibucto (point of service in Shediac)
Edmundston	Shippagan
Grand Falls	Tracadie

## ■ Community health centres (3), health centres (7) and clinics (4)

Saint-Isidore Community Health Centre  
Lamèque Hospital and Community Health Centre  
St-Joseph Community Health Centre (Dalhousie)  
Chaleur Health Centre (Pointe-Verte)  
Miscou Health Centre  
Paquetville Health Centre  
Greater Moncton Health Centre  
Shediac Regional Medical Centre  
Dr.-Chanel-Dupuis Health Centre (Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska)  
Jacquet River Health Centre  
Cocagne Health Clinic  
Saint-Paul-de-Kent Satellite Clinic  
Haut-Madawaska Medical Clinic  
E.L. Murray Medical Clinic (Campbellton)

## ▲ Public Health – Main offices (11 + 3 points of service)

Bathurst	Moncton (point of service in Sackville)
Campbellton (points of service in Dalhousie and Jacquet River)	Richibucto
Caraquet	Shediac
Edmundston	Shippagan
Grand Falls	Tracadie
Kedgwick	

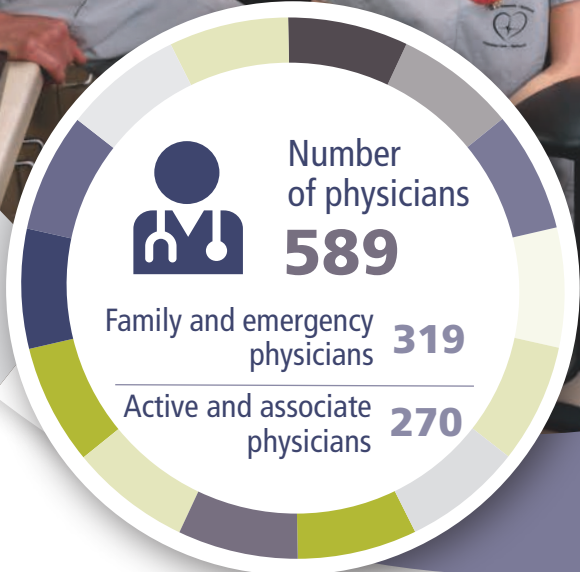
## ❖ Addiction Services (4)

Bathurst	Edmundston
Tracadie	Campbellton

# Human Resources Profile



- Women **81.1%**
- Men **18.8%**
- Other **0.2%**
- Average age of staff **42 years**



# Board of Directors, Trustee and Leadership Team

## Members of the Board of Directors (in office since June 30, 2023)

NORTHWEST ZONE  
**Thomas Soucy**, Chairman

RESTIGOUCHE ZONE  
**Julie Cyr**

BEAUSÉJOUR ZONE  
**Réjean Després**  
**Jacques Doucet**

ACADIE-BATHURST ZONE  
**Yves Francoeur**  
**Johanne Thériault Paulin**  
**Claire Savoie**

## Ex officio Members

**Dr. France Desrosiers**, President and Chief Executive Officer and Board Secretary  
**Annie Carré**, Chair of the Professional Advisory Committee  
**Dr. Éric Levasseur**, Chair of the Medical Advisory Committee

## Trustee

(in office from July 15, 2022 to June 30, 2023)  
**Gérald Richard**

## Members of the Leadership Team (as of March 31, 2024)

**Dr. France Desrosiers**, President and Chief Executive Officer  
**Patrick Parent**, Assistant CEO, Strategic Execution, and Senior Vice-President, Client Programs and Professional Services  
**Brigitte Sonier-Ferguson**, Senior Vice-President, Performance, University Mission and Strategy  
**Sharon Smyth Okana**, Senior Vice-President, Client Programs and Nursing  
**Dr. Natalie Banville**, Senior Vice-President, Client Programs and Medical Affairs  
**Yves Goudreau**, Senior Vice-President, Logistics and Patient Flow

**Ghislaine Arsenault**,  
Vice-President, Communications and Engagement  
**Frédéric Finn**,  
Vice-President, Employee Experience  
**Pierre Michaud**, Chief Risk Officer  
**Allison White**, Corporate Director of Nursing



From left to right: Patrick Parent, Sharon Smyth Okana, Allison White, Yves Goudreau, Dr. France Desrosiers, Dr. Natalie Banville, Ghislaine Arsenault, Brigitte Sonier-Ferguson, Pierre Michaud and Frédéric Finn

# The Network's Performance

Vitalité Health Network continued to implement priority initiatives and projects arising from its continuous learning-based strategic planning. Since April 1, 2023, the Network has deployed 56 projects, including 23 regional projects that will continue into the coming year, with regional deployment sequences spread over several quarters. Of the 33 projects launched and scheduled for completion in the past year, 64% have been completed or are in the control phase.

Thanks to the sustained efforts of our teams, we are seeing tangible improvements in several areas. The solutions that are emerging are realistic and sustainable because they are coming from the people who are experiencing the realities on the ground every day. We would like to thank the teams that are working hard to contribute to our improvement efforts. It is hard and demanding work, but it is paying off.

## Distribution of projects by direction



## Performance Report

In an effort to be transparent and accountable, the Network publishes quarterly reports to the community on its progress and transformation efforts.

Each publication is accompanied by a performance report that provides an overview of the Network's performance and detailed results by zone or facility, in terms of health, employee experience, patient and family experience, and organizational excellence. For each key indicator, the report provides the benchmark (national or international data for the same indicators), the target for the current quarter, the results at the end of the quarter, and the trend since the previous quarters.

Vitalité Health Network  
Vitalité Health Network Performance Report (March 2023)

Indicator	Benchmark	Target	Result	Trend
<b>1.0 Health results</b>				
1.1 Ambulatory care sensitive conditions (hospitalizations per 10,000 people)	240	240	210	○
1.2 Percentage of hip and knee surgeries performed within 182 days	85.0%	85.0%	85.4%	○
1.3 Percentage of liver and hip surgeries waiting > 365 days	0%	0%	5.6%	+
<b>2.0 Patient and family experience</b>				
2.1 Percentage of level 4 and 5 visits to emergency	31.0%	31.0%	37.7%	○
2.2 Repeated hospitalizations for mental illness	7.8%	7.8%	7.1%	○
2.3 Percentage of AIC patients in acute care	16.7%	16.7%	27.1%	○
2.4 Percentage of patients who visit the emergency who have a primary health care provider	91.9%	91.9%	78.2%	+
2.5 Measure of access to primary health care (in development)	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
<b>3.0 Employee experience</b>				
3.1 Turnover rate	10.0%	10.0%	8.2%	+
3.2 Average number of paid sick days per employee	10	10	14.9	○
3.3 Work accident rate with loss of time	2.0	4.1	3.2	+
3.4 Percentage of vacancy positions	7.1%	7.1%	9.0%	○
<b>4.0 Organizational excellence</b>				
4.1 Actual vs. CMI expected length of stay ratio	0.96	0.96	1.06	○
4.2 Percentage of surgeries waiting > 365 days	0%	0%	3.5%	○
4.3 Overall rate of hospital readmission	9.4	8.5	7.7	+
4.4 Improvement rate	Not available	Not available	-1.8%	○
4.5 Difference between actual expenses and operating budget	Not available	+/- 1%	-1.8%	○

Results: ■ Falls to meet target ■ Meets target (+/- 5%) ■ Better than target

Trends: + Positive - Negative ○ Stable

# Continuous learning-based strategic planning and learning client programs

Vitalité Health Network has adopted a continuous learning-based strategic planning model. This dynamic, systemic approach enables organizations to define and adapt their priorities to emerging changes and challenges, such as aging demographics and labour shortages.

This method goes beyond traditional planning by integrating a continuous learning process that aims to constantly improve services by taking into account the changing environment, measuring our progress on an ongoing basis, regularly reviewing our priorities and adjusting our focus where necessary. This includes integrating patient partners, recognizing the importance of research and training, learning from mistakes and raising standards, and empowering stakeholders.

Over the past year, the Network has reviewed the way it operates by defining nine learning client programs that provide care for specific clientele: surgical, emergency, intensive care and internal medicine, nephrology, oncology, seniors' health, mental health and addiction services, primary health care and the palliative approach, as well as the Mother-Child-Youth Program.

These nine learning client programs are supported by cross-cutting clinical areas (professional services, nursing, medical services, diagnostic services, pharmacy services, etc.) as well as catalyst areas (performance, university mission, quality and patient safety, information technology, human resources, communications, finance, etc.) to enable them to achieve their objectives and offer better care and services adapted to the population they serve.

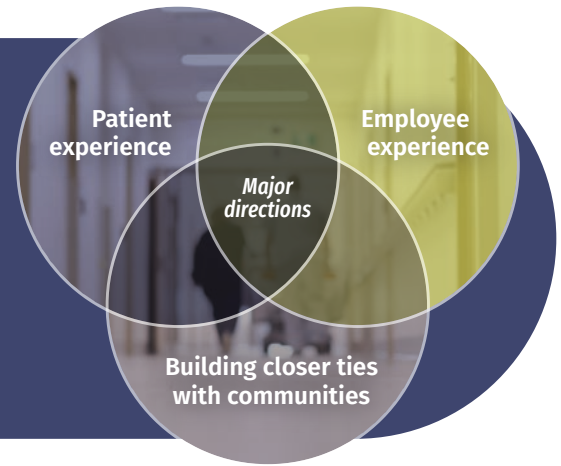
Each program has a four-year roadmap and undertakes improvement projects in 90-day cycles. Various tools are made available to programs and sectors, including performance reports, projections and modeling of future needs, risk assessments, community health needs assessments, and research on health innovations and trends.

These tools help the Network to plan for the future while remaining agile in identifying its priorities and provide it with a better understanding of the needs of the populations it serves, the reality experienced by teams in the field, and organizational and sector performance.



# 2023–2024 Highlights and Achievements

Throughout 2023–2024, the Network continued to focus its actions around its two strategic priorities, **access to primary health care** and **patient flow**, and three major directions: patient experience, employee experience and building closer ties with communities. Over the course of the year, a number of initiatives and achievements illuminated the organization, highlighting the remarkable expertise and involvement of our health care workers. Here are a few examples



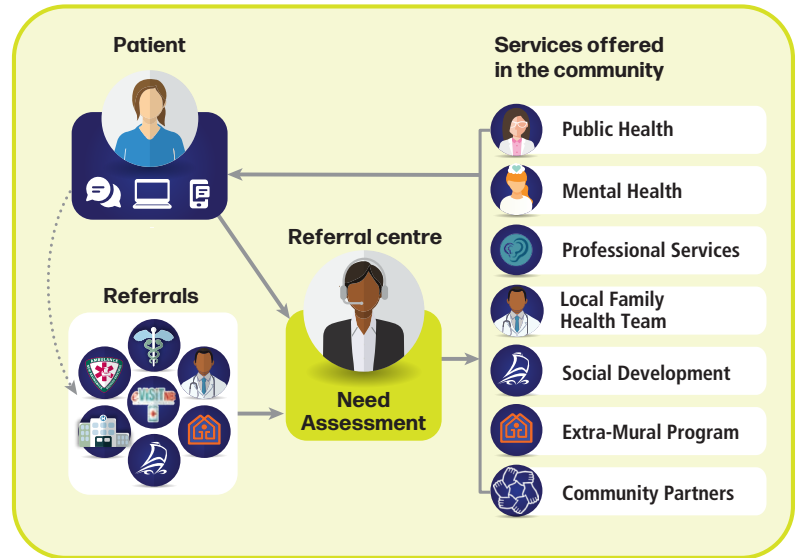
## Primary health care, palliative approach and integrated end-of-life care

### Local family health teams serving their communities

The 2023–2024 fiscal year was marked by the rapid development of a new model of care based on the formation of local family health teams.

This model is based on every patient being cared for by a team made up of various professionals rather than a single doctor.

These teams may include doctors, nurses and professional services workers (psychology, social work, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech-language pathology, audiology, nutrition). Some care performed by physicians can be delegated to other health professionals based on a patient’s needs. Every team will be connected to their own referral centre responsible for quickly guiding patients to the right service provider.



After months of consultations in the field, the first teams have been trained and have already been able to take on a greater number of patients while reducing the time needed to get an appointment. The first referral centre has been set up in the Edmundston region.

Over the next year, the Network will work to extend its model to all the regions it serves, and to integrate professional services to create a connected system. A total of 25 local teams are mobilized and involved in the implementation. By strengthening collaboration between care providers, integrating services and monitoring patients, this new approach will enable easier, more widespread access to care and relieve pressure on hospitals.

## Surgery

### ***Creation of a Surgical Short Stay Unit at the Chaleur Regional Hospital***

An 8-bed Surgical Short Stay Unit was created at the Chaleur Regional Hospital. By restricting the length of stay after surgery to between 24 and 36 hours, we were able to limit the number of admissions and reduce the volume of transfers to nursing units, thereby compensating for the facility's lack of available beds. Prioritization of patients is more effective and a larger number of certain types of surgeries can be performed. Finally, this approach helps stabilize and, in some cases, reduce wait times.



### ***ENT surgeries now performed at the Edmundston Regional Hospital***

The Network expanded access to certain otorhinolaryngology surgeries at the Edmundston Regional Hospital.

The addition of this specialty was made possible by a surgical suite optimization project launched in March 2023 designed to maximize efficiency and resource utilization.

A third operating room is now open. Waiting times and surgical cancellation rates have both fallen. These efficiencies made it possible to increase the number of surgeries performed every year and to free up operating room time for new specialties.

## Emergency departments

### ***New practices in emergency departments***

Improvement projects have been carried out in the emergency departments of the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont UHC and the Campbellton Regional Hospital to optimize efficiency and reduce waiting times.

In Moncton, patient flow coordinators now help speed up diagnostic tests and prevent overflow. Equipment and spaces have been reorganized, and visual management tools have been created for greater efficiency. Patient care attendants have been added to the teams to monitor the state of health of patients in the waiting room and ensure their well-being until they see the doctor.

In Campbellton, some cases are now assessed by a physiotherapist to lighten the physicians' workload. Improved internal communications helped reduce interruptions and improve the transmission of information within the team. Instant communication of medical imaging test results has helped save time. The process of checking the prescription files of admitted and observation patients has been reviewed to eliminate unnecessary tasks.



## Nephrology

### ***A stronger team for hemodialysis care***

In the summer of 2023, the Network created a specialized hemodialysis patient care attendant training program for the Beauséjour zone. Learners received coaching as well as theoretical and practical training for three months, while being paired with a nurse mentor.

This backing has made it possible to implement a new collaborative care model designed to respond to growing demand and a shortage of staff.

This model, which involves a redistribution of tasks and the creation of collaborative teams, helps to optimize the services offered to patients, while reducing the workload of registered nurses.



# Oncology

## ***Opening of the oncology clinic at Enfant-Jésus RHSJt Hospital***

The Network, in partnership with the Fondation Hôpital de l'Enfant-Jésus, officially inaugurated this renovated and upgraded space. This \$1,962,000 project now provides safer, more accessible and more effective care for patients. The new unit features oxygen systems and new treatment technologies. The oncology clinic has two new examination rooms, a waiting room and two offices for the unit's physicians and manager.



## ***30th anniversary of the Dr. Léon-Richard Oncology Centre***

The Dr. Léon-Richard Oncology Centre has celebrated three decades dedicated to the fight against cancer, during which it has established itself as a major player in research, prevention, screening, diagnosis and treatment of the disease.

## ***Oncology Nurse Navigator Program***

A team of oncology nurses serving the four zones has been formed. Their mission is to support and guide cancer patients and their families.

Their role is not only to provide patients with guidance to help them navigate the health care system and make informed decisions at every stage of their journey, but also to speed up diagnosis and treatment.

# Seniors' health

## ***A new seniors' services centre opens in Dieppe***

The Network's new Healthy Aging Clinic has begun welcoming its first patients at 665 Champlain Street in Dieppe.

The facility offers comprehensive assessment and rehabilitation services for people aged 65 and over. The building houses several assessment rooms, rehabilitation rooms and group training rooms adapted to the clinic's clientele.

The Healthy Aging Clinic team includes physicians, nurses, a physiotherapist, an occupational therapist, a speech-language pathologist and a social worker.

The Network plans to replicate this model in the other three zones.





## Mother-child-youth

The Mother-Child-Youth Program offers a complete range of care and services dedicated to pregnant women and to children, from birth to late adolescence.

The year 2023–2024 was marked by an increase in the number of births, particularly in the Beauséjour Zone, where the number of deliveries rose by 15% as a result of the province’s demographic growth.

According to projections, this upward trend is set to continue into 2024–2025.



## Mental health and addiction services



### ***A new addiction services centre opens its doors in Campbellton***

The Network celebrated the inauguration of the new provincially-mandated Centre for Hope and Harmony in Campbellton.

The number of beds dedicated to concurrent disorder treatment services increased from 12 to 18, which allows better access for clients from across the province. The program is designed for clients with a substance use and/or gambling problem to benefit from a 35- to 90-day stay.

The Centre for Hope and Harmony also has six beds for the detox program. Available to individuals with a substance use problem, the program is primarily designed to provide medical supervision of the withdrawal process during a 7- to 10-day stay.

### ***New multisensory room at the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont UHC***

A new Snoezelen-style multisensory room is now open to the patients of the Child Psychiatry Unit of the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre. The unit’s young people now have a comfortable and stimulating place to relax.

## Intensive care and internal medicine

### ***Early mobilization for faster recovery***

The Network has developed an inpatient mobilization program to accelerate recovery and prevent patient deconditioning, while easing the burden on nursing staff. A team of kinesiologists is on hand to help patients with their exercise needs.

The aim is to maintain muscle mass and improve mobility, as well as to reduce the risk of complications. Follow-up continues after hospital discharge to help maintain independence and prevent readmission.

The mobilization program is now established in a number of facilities across the Network’s four zones. We have seen a one-day reduction in the average length of stay for patients who have taken part in the initiative.





# PATIENT EXPERIENCE

Improving organizational performance to better serve and care for patients

## A plan to optimize hospital resources

In 2023–2024, Network teams mobilized to advance the organization’s other top strategic priority, optimizing patient flow and hospital performance.

The initiative, which will be rolled out to all hospital facilities, is designed to ensure that a bed is available as soon as a patient needs to be hospitalized for an acute problem. It involves facilitating every stage of the patient’s care, from consultation to admission, right through to discharge. The aim is to reduce occupancy rates, length of stay and waiting times for emergency, examination and surgical services.

Client program teams, as well as cross-functional areas such as laboratory services, pharmacy services and professional services, will be involved in the deployment of a wide range of strategies and new processes, including:

- The creation of discharge planning teams;
- Data collection to support the management of hospital activities;
- The creation of communication tools designed to involve families and keep them better informed about the care process, the anticipated discharge date and the steps to be taken;
- The establishment of assessment criteria at each stage of the care pathway to make it easier to identify alternatives to hospital admission, anticipate the risks of delays and determine the measures needed for the return home.



## Choosing Wisely: saving time and resources while improving patient care



Vitalité Health Network is achieving substantial savings while at the same time improving the quality of its medical care through active participation in the Choosing Wisely national campaign. By prioritizing investigations and treatments delivered based on the highest standards of care and eliminating tests and treatments that are redundant or not indicated, this innovative initiative is optimizing health resources and benefiting patients.

The Edmundston Regional Hospital has taken a leading role in this area by implementing several of the Choosing Wisely campaign’s recommendations on the appropriate use of lab tests and blood transfusions.

The Chaleur Regional Hospital and the Dr. Georges-L.-Dumont University Hospital Centre have both been designated “Using Blood Wisely” hospitals, attesting to an ongoing commitment to reducing unnecessary red blood cell transfusions.

## Rollout of the collaborative nursing model

The Network continued to implement a new collaborative nursing model, which integrates the addition of attendants as care providers working in a triad (group of three) with the nurse and licensed practical nurse.

This reorganization of the composition of the care team, involving a review of tasks and responsibilities, has been extended to medical, surgical and long-term care services throughout the Network over the past year.



# EMPLOYEE EXPERIENCE

From the candidate experience (recruitment and integration) to the existing employee experience (retention, work atmosphere, support and valorization)

## Creation of an interdisciplinary occupational health team

An interdisciplinary occupational health team has been created to support employees who are experiencing health challenges that are interfering with their attendance at work. This team, comprised of an occupational physician, a nurse practitioner, an occupational therapist and a psychologist, provides employees with timely access to primary health care professionals. All services are offered regionally, either in person, virtually or by telephone.

## Immigration Support Service

Our number of international recruits continues to climb, with 435 international employees currently on temporary work permits. This number includes candidates recruited internationally as well as students or other international candidates recruited locally. The number of international hires will continue to rise over the next few years in light of the shortage of health care workers nationwide.

The Network has developed a new immigration support service to assist internationally-recruited employees in their immigration and settlement procedures. This team is made up of four immigration support advisors, two administrative assistants and a team leader. The team ensures that immigration laws, regulations and policies are adhered to and provides newcomers with a range of essential services throughout their immigration process and settlement in the community and workplace to facilitate their smooth integration. The many services offered by the team include:

- Pre-arrival information sessions on various aspects of life in Canada (finances, housing, childcare, education, transportation, etc.);
- Evaluation of new arrivals' individual needs and development of a personalized settlement plan;
- Help finding accommodation and childcare;
- Job search support for spouses;
- Coordination with various community organizations that can provide newcomers with additional support getting settled in the community.

"I am writing to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the excellent service you provided to me – before, during and after my arrival from Senegal. Your assistance was a godsend and I really appreciated your dedication to helping me integrate and get settled in this country, where everything is much more advanced than in Senegal."

Abdoul Aziz Dia, patient care attendant, native of Senegal.



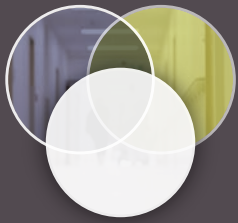
## International Staff Hosting Program



Vitalité Health Network has reached out to communities as part of its new International Staff Hosting Program, which gives individuals and families the opportunity to host newcomers who are starting a career at the Network.

The accommodation agreement of up to three months helps newcomers find permanent housing. Hosts are compensated and have the opportunity to discover a new culture and build friendships, in addition to contributing to the Network's efforts to recruit and retain health care workers in their community.

Those who wish to participate in the hosting program are asked to contact [immigration@vitalitenb.ca](mailto:immigration@vitalitenb.ca) and include their phone number.



# BUILDING CLOSER TIES WITH COMMUNITIES

Involving communities in change

## Meeting communities

Building closer ties with communities is one of Vitalité Health Network’s major directions. To that end, a number of actions have been taken over the past year. Numerous meetings were held with each of the Regional Services Commissions serving the Network’s regions. These productive exchanges have laid a solid foundation for collaboration in the area of health care. The Leadership Team has also opened a dialogue with a number of other stakeholders from the associative and not-for-profit sectors, to hear their concerns and work with them on possible improvements.



## Community health needs assessment

The community health needs assessment team also had the opportunity to finalize assessment reports for the Dalhousie, Balmoral and Belledune regions, as well as for Bouctouche, Richibucto and Saint-Antoine.

Currently, the team is active in the communities of Dieppe and Memramcook, as well as Bathurst, Beresford and Petit-Rocher. Following these assessments, communities are invited to engage in the “learning communities” approach. This concept aims to mobilize people and key stakeholders in a community to work collectively to identify solutions to priority needs that emerge from assessments.

Over the past year, the first steps in this new concept have been taken with 5 community groupings. Work will continue in 2024–2025 to support communities and foster a learning culture that takes advantage of collective intelligence.

## Launch of Planet Youth NB

The Planet Youth NB project took off in the Acadian Peninsula and Kent County. This is a community-based prevention model aimed at reducing addiction and substance use problems among young people. This program, which has proven its effectiveness in Iceland for over 20 years, will be replicated in New Brunswick thanks to the participation of numerous community partners and the involvement of Public Health teams. A series of projects designed to take action on the environment, promote a healthy lifestyle among young people or give young people access to cultural activities will be launched over the coming months.



# Results of the university mission

## *Research and health evaluation*

In 2023–2024, research and health evaluation conducted 289 research activities. This includes 78 research and evaluation projects, 65 literature and best practice reviews, and 66 knowledge transfer activities.

In addition, 21 research projects led by university researchers were carried out within the Network, in collaboration with 8 Canadian universities. This year also saw the publication of 51 scientific articles, thanks to the curiosity and dedication of our vast research community.

With the support of the clinical trials support unit, 36 clinicians have begun conducting 33 therapeutic clinical trials, funded by 12 pharmaceutical companies and 7 academic institutions. These trials enable Network patients to receive innovative alternative treatments. Eight new sponsored clinical trials began this year, including four in cardiology, three in respirology and one in internal medicine.

As an essential part of the Network’s university mission, our medical libraries carried out more than 4,000 consultations (including services such as literature search and monitoring, document and article retrieval, and bibliographic research training) to support professionals and students.

## *Training and partnerships*

In 2023–2024, Vitalité Health Network maintained 68 affiliation agreements with Canadian post-secondary institutions and welcomed 1,647 interns from 45 different programs.

The Network received 664 nursing interns, including future nurse practitioners, registered nurses, licensed practical nurses and patient care attendants.

The medical sector enabled 266 students to complete their internship, divided into 133 externships, 72 residences and 61 observation placements.

In addition, 264 clinical placements were carried out for training in professions other than medicine and nursing, including laboratory technicians, ambulance attendants, community integration advisors and social workers.

Finally, 66 non-clinical internships were offered, covering areas such as medical secretarial work, administrative support and health service management. The Network also welcomed 387 high school students.



# Activity volumes

Total for the Network	2023–2024	2022–2023
Beds	961	961
Beds - Veterans	40	60
Beds - Restigouche Hospital Centre	140	140
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,141</b>	<b>1,161</b>
Admissions (excluding newborns)	23,713	22,738
- Veterans	15	37
- Restigouche Hospital Centre	291	291
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>24,019</b>	<b>23,066</b>
Newborns	1,565	1,502
Patient days (excluding newborns)	302,819	283,320
- Veterans	13,760	20,390
- Restigouche Hospital Centre	31,473	34,357
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>348,052</b>	<b>338,067</b>
Emergency Department visits (triage codes 1 to 5)	183,596	175,313
Ambulatory Care visits	319,232	331,010
Surgical cases	17,416	15,218
Dialysis treatment	64,727	63,612
Oncology Clinic treatments (chemo) (excluding bedside treatments)	10,342	10,736
Attendance days - Radiation therapy	20,805	20,638
Laboratory procedures	10,212,785	10,152,897
Medical Imaging procedures	381,517	366,708
Respiratory Therapy and Pulmonary Clinic procedures	48,596	47,357

Total for the Network	2023–2024	2022–2023
<b>Attendance days - Rehabilitation Services</b>		
Audiology	8,628	7,214
Occupational Therapy	32,654	30,308
Physiotherapy	103,512	93,966
Speech-Language Pathology	13,528	11,914
Recreation Therapy	33,690	31,401
<b>Attendance days - Therapeutic Services</b>		
Social Work	13,676	15,850
Psychology	6,632	5,981
Clinical Nutrition	42,825	35,954
<b>Community Health</b>		
Visits	37,467	35,621
<b>Public Health</b>		
<i>Immunization: school-based vaccines - %</i>		
- Tdap	74%	81%
- HPV	71%	74%
- Varicella	-	67%
- Meningococcal	71%	71%
<i>Healthy Families, Healthy Babies</i>		
- prenatal cases admitted	55	67
- postnatal cases admitted	315	448
- Healthy Toddler Assessments	1,962	1,422
<i>Immunization COVID-19</i>	-	147,796
<b>Community Mental Health</b>		
New requests for services	10,087	9,903
<b>Addiction Services</b>		
New admissions	866	794
<b>Health Centres</b>		
Visits	77,633	76,379

# Annual salaries paid to the Leadership team

President and CEO

**\$374,617**

Senior VP, Client Programs and Medical Affairs

**\$305,968 - \$333,762**

Assistant CEO, Strategic Execution

Senior VP, Client Programs  
and Professional Services

**\$255,595**

Senior VPs

- Corporate Services
- Client Programs and Nursing
- Performance, University Mission and Strategy
- Logistics and Patient Flow

VPs

- Employee Experience
- Communications and Engagement

**\$151,892 - \$206,570**

# Financial Summary

2023–2024

For the year ending March 31, 2024, the Network reported total revenues of \$937,729,926 and operating expenses of \$1,042,701,657 for a net operating loss of \$104,971,731. This loss was offset by additional funding received from the Department of Health (DOH) that brought our operating results into balance before other financial items.

Factoring in other financial items, namely year-end adjustments for previous years, capital revenues for equipment purchases, amortization of capital assets, and accrued sick leave benefits, the Network's financial statements show a net annual surplus of \$1,536,506.

In 2023–2024, the Network focused its regular operations on its two major strategic priorities, namely improving access to primary health care and improving patient flow and hospital performance. In the pursuit of its strategic objectives, the Network was required to make human and material resource decisions that impacted the organization's financial performance.

Operating revenues for 2023–2024 showed a net increase of \$19.9 million over 2022–2023. This increase resulted from additional funding that had been agreed to in the budget plan to offset rising costs due to inflation, salary increases, and new initiatives approved by the DOH as well as a \$2 million loss of revenue from the Campbellton Veterans' Unit.

However, operating expenses showed higher growth of \$124.9 million, for a 13.6% increase over the previous year. This increase in operating expenses was related to several factors, the most important of which was the worldwide shortage of clinical staff. Difficulties conducting recruitment with traditional methods had led to decreased clinical staffing levels over the years, and these reached a critical threshold in 2022–2023.

The strategy of turning to other sources of temporary resources, such as clinical staffing agencies, was a necessary choice. In 2023–2024, total staffing agency costs amounted to \$102.7 million, an increase of \$82.0 million over the previous year. Recruitment initiatives, both national and international, had positive impacts in several areas; salary increases along with additional orientation costs and other factors increased salary expenses by around \$37.2 million over the 2022–2023 level. Inflation increases in products and services as well laboratory expense costs and new infection prevention measures totaled nearly \$6.5 million, including the cost of drugs, medical and surgical supplies, etc.

*Note: The detailed financial report for fiscal year 2023–2024 is presented in the appendix to this report.*







275 Main Street, Suite 600  
Bathurst, New Brunswick, E2A 1A9  
CANADA



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