

## RHC Abstract for the North American Refugee Health Conference:

Responding to the Syrian Refugee Influx:  
Collaboration with a Medical Centre, Reception Centre and Community Agencies

Wende Bedirian RN Lynne Griffiths-Fulton MSc. Stephanie Ngai BScN RN MSc  
Barbara Ruby RPN Carolyn Beukeboom MSc RN (EC) Lee-Ann Murray BScN MA  
Neil Arya\* BAsc MD CCFP FCFP D. Litt.  
\* corresponding author

**Background:** Since 2008, the Center for Family Medicine (CFFM) Refugee Health Clinic (RHC) has partnered with Reception House Waterloo Region, annually screening essentially all 200-250 Government Assisted Refugees (GARs). Over the past year, the RHC was challenged with responding to the recent influx of over 1000 Syrian refugees in the region.

**Methodology:** The patient screening process included a thorough intake and problem identification, test management, the initiation of appropriate referrals and follow up visits. Novel techniques were implemented to facilitate the large number of patients requiring screening including a medical camp style process involving community health professionals who were trained onsite, support for test interpretation and management, increasing clinic hours and personnel such as physicians, nurse practitioners and nurses. A new collaboration with the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) was also formed to connect refugees to primary care.

**Results/Impact/Outcomes:** The RHC was successfully able to respond screening the four-fold increase in GARs. Through collaboration with CCAC, nearly 100% of all GARs were connected with a primary care provider.

**Conclusions and Discussion:** Despite challenges with Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) funding structures, political leadership and the lack of infrastructure to manage acute needs, with community education, the RHC successfully screened and linked to primary care 800+ GARs in 2016. This exemplifies the importance of inter-professional and multiagency collaboration which might be applied to other settings.