



RAPID ACCESS ADDICTION MEDICINE CLINICS

THE CHALLENGE

Rapid Access Addiction Medicine (RAAM) clinics in Mississauga, Rexdale, Brampton, Bolton and Orangeville either had to be closed or modified in response to COVID-19 and physical distancing. No walk-in clients could be seen and in-person follow ups were reduced. Since COVID-19, there has been an decrease in demand for the program. However, clinics have seen an increase in substance use and prevalence of relapse among typically-stable clients.

PARTNERSHIPS

- The Mississauga clinics are in partnership with Services and Housing In The Province (SHIP), Peel Youth Village (PYV) and Peel Addiction Assessment and Referral Centre (PAARC).
- The Rexdale clinic is a collaboration with Rexdale Community Health Centre.
- The Bolton clinic is a collaboration with the Dufferin Area Family Health Team (DAFHT).
- The Brampton clinic at Peel Memorial Centre for Integrated Health and Wellness is a collaboration with William Osler Health System.

THE SOLUTION: RAPID ACCESS ADDICTION MEDICINE (RAAM) CLINICS

Typically, the RAAM clinic model provides low-barrier, immediate access and care to those 16+ experiencing addiction concerns, is very flexible and can be adjusted to suit a variety of contexts:

- **Low-barrier** – Clients with substance use disorders who are often struggling with multiple health and social challenges.
- **Walk-in** – Clients without referrals or booked appointments (pre-COVID-19). The walk-in model gives clients the flexibility to attend when they are able to, without the pressure of having to make and keep a scheduled appointment.
- **Client-centred** – There is no single approach to substance use disorder treatment; gives each client a voice in their own care, allowing them to set their own goals and co-develop a treatment plan with the clinician. The role of the clinician is to give the client a range of options (including harm reduction advice, counselling and referrals to psychosocial treatments) and help them decide what would work best for them. Once stable, clients are transferred to a primary care provider for long-term management.

In normal circumstances, clients can call for information or simply walk in to any one of the RAAM locations. Intake is done on site the same day. Due to COVID-19, now the client calls the RAAM medical admin for a screener, and intake is done over the phone with a concurrent disorder specialist, registered nurse and nurse practitioner. The client then visits one of the RAAM clinics and assessment is reviewed and validated.

The program is available in Central West Region (Brampton, Bramalea, North Etobicoke, Woodbridge, Orangeville, Bolton) as well as Mississauga at no cost to the client. Service is also available in Punjabi and Gujarati, and there is also access to interpretation services if/when needed.



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Innovations:

- Intake assessment completed over the phone and virtually.
- The model of care changed to include role clarity between registered nurses, nurse practitioners and concurrent disorder specialists. The intake form has specific tasks assigned to specific disciplines. This reduces duplication and the client flows more easily through the intake process with a smooth hand over to the next discipline.
- Team transitioned care to virtual where possible to mirror the experience clients would normally have in person at the clinic.
- Physical distancing measures and notices were put in place, including signage on floors and walls, access to hand sanitizer, and plexiglass dividers at reception and in the client interview rooms.
- Where clinics were closed, clients were provided transportation to the nearest clinic still operating.
- All staff were trained on how to work safely on site to continue offering same-day appointments where needed.

WHO IS THIS PROGRAM FOR?

- Anyone who is experiencing challenges with substance use related to opioids or alcohol, and wants to explore addiction medicine as a part of their recovery plan.

CONTACT US

For services call:
905-451-2123 or **1-877-451-2123**
(Monday to Friday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m.)

For 24-7 crisis supports call:
905-278-9036 or **1-888-811-2222**
(Caledon & Dufferin)