PINE RIVER
Institute

Hope is a place.

Pine River Institute Strategic Plan 2022–2027

PRI is a place of hope.

Pine River Institute (PRI) is a place of hope where youth and their families find a safe, nurturing, professional environment where they begin to heal. We combine wilderness therapy, residential treatment and family-centred programming to reduce substance use and improve the well-being of the youth we work with.

Every year, hundreds of concerned family members, physicians, therapists, and other professionals contact PRI seeking a treatment option for a young person they care about who is struggling with an addictive behaviour. Often times, by the time they arrive at PRI, they have exhausted other treatment options in their communities – PRI provides the comprehensive approach to meet their needs.

Research has shown that our program works. Parents credit PRI for being there for families in a time of crisis and for saving their youth's life. The vast majority of youth who have completed our program have been able to address their substance use issues and maintain those gains over time. After PRI, most young people improve their mental, behavioural, and relationship health and successfully engage with school or work. Families begin to function at new levels of acceptance and communication. Hospitalizations for mental health, substance use and contact with the law and the courts are greatly reduced. Students have successfully re-engaged with their education and developed healthier relationships with their families.

PRI is entering a new phase in its ability to deliver programming for youth and families in need of support and create an impact in the youth addictions system. With the recent opening of Moffat House and the additional funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health, we are doubling the number of publicly funded beds at PRI to 59. We are humbled by the opportunity to further serve more youth at our facilities.

Even with these additional beds, the demand for youth residential addiction services in Ontario will continue to be above our capacity. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a devasting impact on youth addictive behaviours and mental health and we anticipate the demand for treatment will continue to increase. We are committed to working with our health system partners to address this increasing need for services and this strategic plan is part of that commitment. This plan will guide us into the future as we continue to deliver on our mission and fulfill our vision of helping youth and their families deal with addictions and related mental health issues.

At the heart of this plan, as in everything we do, are the youth we support and their families. Through treatment excellence, research, education and the exchange of knowledge, we are committed to being a leading voice and helping youth struggling with addictive behaviours.

Edyta Pacuk
Board Chair, PRI Board of Directors

Vaughan Dowie
Chief Executive Officer, PRI

Our Future

In developing Pine River Institute's 2022-2027 Strategic Plan:

We listened to the families whose youth received care at our facilities, our employees and donors, our health leaders and health partners.

We reviewed what we are doing now, how we might be able to help more youth and their families in the future and the best way to get us there.

We looked at what other organizations were doing, reviewed the changes that are now transforming Ontario's health system and identified best practices in youth addiction and related mental health services.

WHO IS PINE RIVER IN 2027?

We asked "Who is Pine River in 2027?". The five strategic priorities that follow and one central take away emerged:

PRI is a Canadian leader in youth residential addictions treatment, delivering high-quality, evidence-informed, compassionate care to youth and their families. PRI has an opportunity and an obligation to build on its experience and expertise, opening its doors to more youth and their families and sharing knowledge, education and research to advance youth addictions treatment.

OUR MISSION

We are committed to helping adolescents struggling with addictive behaviours, frequently combined with other mental health challenges. By fostering maturity in a family-centred program, we help young people get their lives, their relationship and their futures back on track. We are dedicated to treatment excellence, research and evaluation, continuous improvement and the exchange of knowledge.

OUR VISION

A society with the knowledge, will and compassion to help struggling adolescents and their families who are in need of effective treatment.

OUR VALUES

Compassion, Integrity, Accountability, Courage, Respect.

2022–2027 Strategic Plan

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

ADVANCE THE DELIVERY OF HIGH-QUALITY, EVIDENCE-INFORMED CARE

We will continue to deliver high-quality addictions and related mental health programs. We will enhance the quality and delivery of our programs by embedding research, evaluation and the youth and family voice into clinical decision-making.

PRI is a recognized leader in youth addictions services evaluation and research. We conduct evaluations with the youth and families who have participated in our program until the youth turn 25 to determine whether their gains have been maintained not only in the short-term, but over the longer-term as well.

Our outcome data clearly demonstrates our model of care works for the vast majority of young people across a range of indicators. Youth who have participated in our program showed a decrease in daily substance use from 58 per cent to 12 per cent. School attendance rates among participants in our program show increases from 37 per cent to 90 per cent. Youth who participate in our programs and their families consistently rate their level of satisfaction at more than four out of five.

HOW WE WILL BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

We will use our established research capacity to better inform decision making to further enhance the quality of care we provide to youth and their families. By leveraging the outcome measures we currently collect, we will determine the efficacy of programs we offer and make needed changes. As a leader with sector expertise and a proven model of care, PRI is also in a position to inform care beyond our walls and support the future direction of youth addictions treatment in Ontario and beyond.

There is an imperative to involve the youth and family voice in this process. At PRI we believe in walking along side youth and their families on their path to well-being and are committed to engaging youth and their families to inform the future of our programs.

BY 2027, PRI WILL

- Use assessments, research, and evaluation to continuously inform and refine programs, training, communications and future initiatives.
- Have a youth and family advisory council(s) actively engaged in decision-making.
- Have improved communication with youth following discharge to enhance reporting on sustained long-term program outcomes.
- Be sharing up to date data with government, stakeholders and prospective families on an on-going basis.
- Have experts actively involved in the development of provincial policy for youth mental health and addictions in Ontario.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

EXPAND OUR REACH TO SERVE MORE YOUTH AND FAMILIES

We will expand access and evolve our services to reach more youth including more youth of diverse backgrounds, offering specialized treatment when necessary.

PRI now serves 36 youth and families annually. With a commitment from the Ontario Government to support an additional 30 new beds, completion of the Moffat House and initiation of planning for the Transition House, we will significantly increase our capacity over the next five years.

Even with this, PRI will not be able to meet the increasing demand for youth mental health and addiction services. We are committed to growing existing programs based on committed funding and evolving programming to provide access to more youth while not compromising the quality of care we provide.

HOW WE WILL BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

In addition to increased on-site capacity, PRI will explore how it can build on the virtual programs it successfully piloted to support youth and families throughout the pandemic.

PRI recognizes that the current population served on campus does not fully reflect that of Ontario. Addressing equity, diversity and inclusion will be essential for PRI and we are committed to working with partners in the sector, such as Addictions and Mental Health Ontario, to better understand inequities in access. We will identify existing frameworks that could be leveraged to serve more communities and demographic groups to be more reflective of the diversity of youth across the province.

BY 2027, PRI WILL

- Support an additional 30 more youth on campus at any one time through the expansion of government-funded beds, the opening of Moffat House and Transition House, and partnership with other residential treatment centres.
- Support significantly more youth and their families through technology, partnerships, training and other PRI-led initiatives.
- Connect to more communities in need including LGTBQ+ and racialized youth, families and communities to reflect the diversity of Ontario.
- Have developed and implemented specialty services such as opioid agonist therapy and explore how PRI can support youth with more complex mental and physical health needs.
- Be training others on the Pine River model and actively exploring the viability of a new campus to meet the demand for residential youth addictions services.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

POSITION PINE RIVER AS A PLACE WHERE TOP TALENT WANT TO WORK, LEARN AND GROW

We will focus on supporting our people and creating a positive work environment so that staff and volunteers feel recognized and valued for their contributions to the organization. We will grow our team and attract top talent in youth addictions to advance our mission and vision.

The strength of PRI is the team that works together to support youth and families and who share our knowledge outside our walls. We have a committed team of highly engaged employees who, according to staff surveys, look forward to coming into work every day.

We recognize that there is a general staffing shortage across the health system and specifically the lack of qualified staff in the youth addictions sector. We are committed to supporting our staff with training and development and ensuring they feel recognized and valued by the organization. We are also committed to contributing to the training of future cohorts of specialized youth addiction workers.

HOW WE WILL BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

To achieve our objectives for 2027, we need to ensure we have the capabilities and teams needed in place. We will provide more structured career, training and development opportunities to promote the growth of our existing staff while identifying opportunities to recruit new team members. PRI will adapt our recruitment processes to live up to our commitment to diversity and inclusion.

We will enhance the quality of work life for our PRI team so they feel excited to grow and develop their careers with us. This includes taking a critical look at how we recognize and demonstrate the value of individual team members through a focussed effort to improve compensation and benefits.

BY 2027, PRI WILL

- Be recognized as a leading employer in the community addictions and mental health sector.
- Have grown, diversified and strengthened our team to support expanded access to PRI services and enhance our ability to share our expertise to help more youth and families.
- Ensure that PRI team members feel supported to succeed and valued by the organization through competitive benefit and compensation packages as well as training, learning and growth opportunities.
- Have developed and implemented a proactive approach to workforce and succession planning to ensure continuity and consistency of services.
- Have created a pipeline of potential new recruits through partnerships and increased awareness of PRI's unique offering among educational, training institutions and health organizations.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

ELEVATE PINE RIVER'S ROLE AS A LEADER IN YOUTH ADDICTIONS, PRACTICE AND RESEARCH

We will share our research and build awareness of the PRI model, expanding access to our proven treatment methods and establishing PRI as a sought-after thought leader in youth addictions.

PRI is a recognized leader in youth addictions services and is respected for its research and evidence-informed decision making. We are often approached by our partners in the health system for support on health-system projects, particularly in research and evaluation.

We were proud to launch the Centre for Families Initiatives (CFI) to further support our research and education initiatives in family-centred care. In addition to the work of the CFI, PRI and its experts have published 13 research papers on youth addictions over the last five years and look forward to further advancing this work over the next five years.

HOW WE WILL BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

We will look to spread research findings and knowledge of the Pine River model to expand access to the proven methodology to advance our vision. This will require a commitment to the research activities necessary to make this vision a reality.

PRI will more actively engage in communications and knowledge sharing activities to build awareness of its program and expertise beyond its current partners, and make its clinical outcomes and research more accessible to help more youth with addictive behaviours.

BY 2027, PRI WILL

- Be viewed as a thought leader in youth addiction programs, and be called upon by government for advice on shaping policy and by partners to shape programs.
- Be internationally recognized for research in youth addictions.
- Be sought after by Canadian experts for training in family-centred care and the Pine River residential treatment model.
- Have secured a long-term research grant in partnership with an academic institution.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

GROW PARTNERSHIPS AND FURTHER COLLABORATE TO STRENGTHEN THE YOUTH ADDICTIONS SYSTEM

We will build on our involvement in improving youth addiction and mental health services through collaboration and partnerships, coordination, research, training and education.

PRI has strong relationships with several health organizations and agencies delivering mental health and addiction services in Ontario.

We are involved with an Ontario Health Team and focus on evidence-informed care, aligning PRI with health system priorities. We have nine existing partnerships with universities and other research centres, an increasing number of partnerships with foundations, donors and corporations and are developing new relationships and partnerships with schools and school boards.

HOW WE WILL BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

The youth mental health and addiction sector is fragmented and disconnected with many providers and access points. We alone cannot address this fragmentation, but we will be a leader and active participant in the necessary health system transformation to improve coordination of services and access to addictions and mental health treatment for the youth we serve.

There are opportunities for new partnerships within and outside the health system that can be explored including those with community-based providers, wellness hubs and the education system. In addition, partnerships with post-secondary institutions and corporations could further support the research and training agendas and expansion of services envisioned over the next five years.

BY 2027, PRI WILL

- Have clearly defined its role within the broader Ontario health system that is being restructured under the current health system transformation.
- Have strengthened relationships with health system partners, including community mental health and addictions organizations and hospitals to ensure that youth have coordinated access to help across the continuum of care.
- Have established formal partnerships and joint research programs with academic institutions.
- Be engaged with school boards and partnering on projects to educate youth and their families about addictions and PRI.
- Be engaged in strategic partnerships with organizations and/or corporations with shared values to help PRI reach its strategic objectives.

STRATEGIC ENABLERS

COMMUNICATIONS

PRI has a compelling story to tell and experience and expertise to share with the broader health system, government, donors, educational institutions, families and youth. An increased focus on communications and advocacy will advance the goals of this strategic plan and support the vision of PRI.

BY 2027, WE WILL

- Be actively communicating with a variety of audiences with a clear and compelling narrative.
- Be seen as a leader and actively advocate on issues that have an impact on youth with addictions and related mental health issues.
- Have a team of experts who are regularly commenting on mental health and addiction issues publicly and in media.
- Be known and recognized by stakeholders across the health sector, government, social services, and education.

TECHNOLOGY

Through technology, PRI can better connect and collaborate across sites, with partners, youth and families, share information and expertise and support the expansion, evolution and delivery of care and enable back office and human resources processes. PRI has embraced technology through COVID-19 with success in providing family therapy and parent support. PRI's ability to take full advantage of technology is limited by broadband access and its existing systems and platforms.

BY 2027, WE WILL

- Have the systems and infrastructure in place to be prepared for Ontario's direction of integrating digital and virtual services into treatment.
- Be using and assessing the role and efficacy of technology and virtual care to advance strategic priorities including supporting PRI staff, expanding access to services, connecting youth and families both during and following treatment.
- Have enabled TeleHealth on site to expand access to specialized treatment and new health care professionals and providers.
- Have secured a technology partner(s) to support the upgrading and maintenance of digital infrastructure required to innovate care.

STRATEGIC ENABLERS

FUNDING

The ability of PRI to advance the mission, vision and priorities outlined in this strategic plan largely depend on the availability of resources to support the work required over the next five years. A focussed approach on fiscal responsibility and diversifying funding streams in partnership with the Pine River Foundation will ensure the longevity of the program and the ability to invest where needed.

BY 2027, WE WILL

- Be able to support programs through diversified funding streams including, but not limited to, government funding.
- Have developed innovative partnerships with donors and corporations where appropriate.

Pine River Institute's 2022-2027 strategic plan will guide the PRI community for the next five years. We will advance our mission to provide and expand access to high-quality, evidence-informed, treatment for youth, and their families, struggling with addictive behaviours through research, education and leadership.

PINE RIVER
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