

BACKGROUNDER

Ontario Health Team of Northumberland

About Ontario Health Teams

A new model of integrated health care delivery is being introduced in Ontario called Ontario Health Teams (OHTs), intended to improve the coordination of care and services for patients and their families/caregivers across multiple care settings.

The aim is to better connect the health care system by bringing together patients, families, communities, providers and system leaders as one team, to deliver a coordinated continuum of care to people in a defined geographic area. The members of this team, even if in different organizations or physical locations, will work together toward common goals for improving access to, and delivery of, local services.

More information about OHTs is available from the Ministry of Health at <http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/connectedcare/oht/default.aspx>.

Objectives

The province's vision is that, in time, every Ontarian will have access to an Ontario Health Team. This collaborative health care delivery model is expected to achieve results that are aligned with the 'Quadruple Aim' – and internationally-recognized framework for the design of effective health care systems.

The four objectives of the Quadruple Aim are:

- Improved patient and caregiver experience;
- Improved patient and population health outcomes;
- Improved provider work life experience; and
- Improved value, reducing the per capita cost of health care.

Application process and timelines

In April, 2019 the province issued a call for community networks interested in forming an Ontario Health Team to submit an initial 'self-assessment' application. All communities will, in time, adopt the OHT model, but the application process has been designed to assess the local network's current state of readiness to form an OHT.

Providers and organizations eligible to collaborate in an OHT include, but are not limited to, those that provide:

- Primary care (eg. family physician groups)

- Secondary care (hospitals)
- Home care
- Health promotion and disease prevention
- Community support services
- Mental health and addictions
- Long-term care
- Other social and community services, as needed by the population.

On July 18, the Ministry of Health finalized its review of the initial 150 applications, and invited 31 teams demonstrating a ‘high degree of readiness’ – including the Northumberland team – to move to the next stage of the process: the development of a full application.

These full applications were due October 9, with further assessment anticipated prior to the province’s announcement of the first successful OHT candidates later this fall.

The province will continue to accept, assess and evaluate groups interested in becoming an OHT, with other application submission dates expected to be announced in the future.

Collaboration in Northumberland

In April 2019, the province issued a call for applications from parties interested in forming an Ontario Health Team. Building on a strong history of local collaboration to deliver coordinated care for the community, health system stakeholders in Northumberland established an Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N) Collaborative Planning Committee to engage in this application process and ultimately form a local OHT.

The OHT-N Collaborative Planning Committee consists of local representatives from eligible organizations. It has grown as the process has advanced, and now includes:

- Local patients/caregivers
- Local primary care physicians
- Alderville First Nation
- Alzheimer Society – Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland & Haliburton
- Campbellford Memorial Hospital
- Community Care Northumberland
- Community Health Centres of Northumberland
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
- Lakeview Family Health Team
- Local community mental health and addiction services

- Local home and community care providers
- Northumberland County
- Northumberland Family Health Team
- Northumberland Hills Hospital
- The Bridge Hospice
- Trent Hills Family Health Team

This local OHT seeks to build on existing partnerships and patient, caregiver and provider perspectives to further improve health outcomes, patient and provider experience, and value for Northumberland residents.

Ontario Health Team of Northumberland proposed Year One Focus

While the province’s vision is to have all care coordinated through Ontario Health Teams in the future, the first OHTs will be expected to test local application of the integrated care concept through targeted projects serving specific populations.

In Year One, the OHT-N will focus on access to comprehensive health care services for rural populations within Northumberland County – specifically those who experience significant barriers to health care. Based on input and data gathered to date, efforts will be focused on the following proposed projects:

- **Volunteer Peer Support:** This initiative will match key volunteers with people in our community who require informal support, broadening their social network and assisting them to navigate and access the health care services they need.
- **Community Paramedicine:** Leveraging the skills and training of Northumberland Paramedics, this initiative will provide proactive services for patients who use 9-1-1 services due to system gaps/challenges/ access to community care. This will include remote monitoring for appropriate patients.
- **Rural Outreach Clinics:** Multiple partners will bring services and clinicians together to rural community locations to reduce barriers to care experienced by patients in small, rural areas, such as access, transportation and outreach challenges.

The population served, as well as the scope of services provided, will expand over time.

Patient/Caregiver Partnership and Community Engagement

The Ontario Health Team of Northumberland Collaborative Planning Committee recognizes the critical importance of partnerships with patients and caregivers in the planning, design and governance of OHTs to ensure meaningful change to current systems.

The Northumberland proposal therefore emphasizes the Team's commitment to patient/caregiver partnership and community engagement, including:

- Patient and caregiver partner representation within all OHT-N governance, planning and project team structures;
- Adoption of a Patient/Caregiver Partnership and Community Engagement Framework, reflecting international best practices and the Patient Declaration of Values for Ontario, setting out the commitment to ongoing consultation to validate proposed Year One projects, assess the local services/supports needed most and inform future year priorities;
- Creation of Northumberland's first County-wide Patient and Family Advisory Council;
- The intent to establish, in the future, a local Ombudsperson role.

How to stay informed

Background information about OHTs is available from the Ministry of Health. See: <http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/connectedcare/oht/default.aspx>

The Ontario Health Team of Northumberland Collaborative Planning Committee will continue to share updates on its progress to form a local OHT via the website and social media accounts of participating organizations. A dedicated website for the OHT-N is planned for the near future.