

## **BACKGROUND**

### **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' – an 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 cost of health care.

#### **Collaboration in Northumberland**

In April 2019, the province issued a call for applications from parties interested in forming an Ontario Health Team (OHT). 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 complete an application and ultimately form a local OHT.

Following confirmation as a formal OHT on December 6, 2019, the OHT-N Collaborative Planning Committee transitioned to become the OHT-N Collaboration Council. This Council has evolved as the process has advanced, and now includes:

- Local patients/caregivers
- Local primary care physicians
- Alderville First Nation
- Campbellford Memorial Hospital
- Community Care Northumberland
- Community Health Centres of Northumberland
- Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit
- Lakeview Family Health Team
- Northumberland County
- Northumberland Family Health Team
- Northumberland Hills Hospital
- Rebound Child & Youth Services
- 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.

## **Application process and timelines**

The journey to form an Ontario Health Team (OHT) for Northumberland involved many steps.

In April, 2019 the province issued a call for community networks interested in forming an OHT to submit an initial 'self-assessment' application. All communities will, in time, adopt the OHT model, but the application process was 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 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, and Ministry of Health representatives conducted a site visit with Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N) partners on November 15 as part of the application review process.

On December 6, 2019, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health Christine Elliott visited Northumberland to announce the OHT-N as one of the first 24 OHTs in the province.

The province continues to accept, assess and evaluate groups interested in becoming an OHT.

### **Ontario Health Team of Northumberland proposed Year One Focus**

While the province's vision is to have all care coordinated through Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) in the future, the first OHTs are expected to test the concept through targeted projects serving specific populations.

In Year One, the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N) has been focusing 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 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 is providing proactive services for patients who use 9-1-1 services due to system gaps/challenges with accessing care. This includes 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.

Formed prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the OHT-N is also proving to be a very effective table through which to quickly mobilize community resources around this unprecedented public health challenge.

OHT-N partners are implementing a proactive, phased approach to care delivery that is currently focusing health human resources where they are needed most (in Northumberland's two COVID-19 Assessment Centres) while preparing to quickly increase additional testing capacity as local needs require and provincial direction permits.

### **Patient/Caregiver Partnership and Community Engagement**

The Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N) Collaboration Council 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 OHT-N is committed to meaningful community engagement, as well as partnership with patients and caregivers, to shape health care service delivery in Northumberland.

This includes:

- 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. This framework sets 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 Experience Partner 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 will continue to share updates via our website ([www.ohtnorthumberland.ca](http://www.ohtnorthumberland.ca)), our Twitter account [@OHT\\_Nthld](https://twitter.com/OHT_Nthld), and through the social media accounts of participating organizations.