

Subject: Local development of an Ontario Health Team

May 2019

Dear Community Stakeholder,

On May 15, 2019, a Hamilton-based steering committee chaired by two local patient advocates and co-signed by twenty local health and social service providers, submitted a formal expression of interest (a self-assessment proposal) to the Government of Ontario to be considered as an early implementer of the province's new Ontario Health Team (OHT) model. We, John Fleming and Bernice King, were invited as patient advocates to jointly co-chair this committee of local agencies that includes hospitals, primary care, home care, community agencies and the City of Hamilton Healthy & Safe Communities Department. We feel strongly that our primary task is to always keep the people being served at the forefront of this transformational planning process.

Given Hamilton's strong and innovative healthcare system and history of collaboration, this community is well positioned to be an early implementer of this new model of care designed to serve patients better. The proposal integrates work led by a formalized group of health and social service providers - the Hamilton Community Health Working Group (HCHWG), which was born out of Hamilton's Anchor Institution Leadership Group (HAIL). The Working Group has been examining how to improve health and well-being of the population in Hamilton through better coordination of services with a view to making patient care experiences more seamless and integrated. Building on this, the Hamilton Health Team (HHT) team was formed to explore local implementation of the OHT concept, and to prepare and submit the initial expression of interest to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC). Planning is proceeding with the assumption that this initiative will not receive new government funding.

Patient and partner engagement is central to the success of this initiative and a key area of focus. The team is committed to meaningfully engaging patients, families, caregivers, a broad array of partners and the communities we serve. Engaging more community partners will be essential to this process as we move forward. Being selected as an early implementer of the OHT concept will present significant opportunities for Hamilton's health and social service sector to be more coordinated and integrated than ever before - expanding the collective impact and efforts of the systems to advance ideas for stronger population health approaches.

The MOHLTC will be reviewing the initial submissions made from across Ontario and will provide a formal response in June. Successful applicants for this first stage of the process will be invited by the MOHLTC to submit a full application. This work is still at an early stage with many conversations to follow related to key components of the model as outlined by the MOHLTC. The HHT steering committee continues to move confidently forward with the planning process and preparation for the next phase of OHT readiness. In the interim, we remain committed to providing ongoing and transparent communications with all interested parties. If you wish to receive updates, please provide your contact information through this [survey link](#).

Sincerely

Bernice King and John Fleming, Hamilton Health Team Steering Committee Co-Chairs/Patient Advocates

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND

In February, 2019, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) announced plans to better connect the healthcare system by implementing local OHTs. OHTs are groups of health service providers and organizations that are clinically and fiscally accountable for delivering a full and co-ordinated continuum of care to a defined geographic population. In April, the MOHLTC released a prescribed, multi-phased process for formal applications by health and social service agencies seeking to be selected as an early implementer of the OHT concept. Ultimately, the MOHLTC intends that all publically-funded health service providers in the province will be part of one of these teams, operating under a single accountability agreement with Ontario Health.

ABOUT THE SUBMISSION

Signatories to the initial proposal include the following organizations:

- Alzheimer Society of Hamilton
- Canadian Mental Health Association – Hamilton Branch
- City of Hamilton Healthy & Safe Communities Department
- De Dwa Da Dehs Nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre
- Department of Family Medicine, McMaster University
- Good Shepherd Centres
- Hamilton Family Health Team
- Hamilton Health Sciences
- Indwell
- Lynwood Charlton Centre
- McMaster Family Health Team
- McMaster University (Digital Health focus, School of Nursing)
- Ontario Telehealth Network
- Patient Representatives (co-chairs)
- St. Joseph’s Health Care Hamilton
- St. Elizabeth’s Health Care
- Thrive Group
- Wayside House of Hamilton
- Wesley Urban Ministries

The expression of interest submitted was developed following the MOHLTC’s guidelines and requirements. It outlines a plan to work towards long-term improvements in the overall health and well-being of the whole community, while balancing a short-term focus on improving access to care, transitions between care settings and, initially, the overall coordination of care for two priority populations for our community. In the short term (Year 1) the Hamilton Health Team proposes to focus on the following populations:

- individuals (adults, youth, children) with mental health and addiction concerns;
- seniors with multiple chronic conditions.

The HHT steering committee’s submission profiles and proposes to build on successful, local, integrated care delivery programs that focus on symptoms of poor population health and improve patient experience.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT ONTARIO HEALTH TEAMS

[Link for more information about OHTs.](#)