

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release
November 26, 2019

Hamilton Health Team chosen as one of first in Ontario to move forward with health team model

HAMILTON, ON – The Ontario government today announced that Hamilton will be one of the first communities in Ontario to move forward with establishing an Ontario Health Team.

The Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health made the announcement today at the David Braley Health Sciences Centre, before an audience that included patient advisors and other representatives of the Hamilton Health Team.

The Hamilton Health Team is a collaboration of Hamilton health and social service partners and includes representation from more than 20 organizations, reflecting primary care, home care, hospitals, community agencies, long-term care, mental health, Indigenous health, post-secondary education, and the City of Hamilton (Healthy and Safe Communities Department, Public Health and Paramedic Services), among others.

The Hamilton Health Team is co-chaired by two patient advocates, and was built on Hamilton's rich history of working together to create a healthier community. The announcement that Hamilton's application to form an Ontario Health Team was accepted presents an exciting opportunity to further expand on that collaborative movement involving primary care and patients as partners in design, and with the ultimate goal of improving patient outcomes.

"This is a remarkable opportunity to redesign and rebuild health care, focused on improving access for patients and creating more opportunities for providers to work together. I am incredibly proud of the patients and partners who have come together from across Hamilton to bring us to this point. We look forward to working with the Ministry and other Ontario Health Teams as we move forward," said John Fleming Co-chair Hamilton Health Team.

"As a patient who has contributed to changes in health care, I've seen the impact we can have when we work with healthcare providers to make improvements. Patients see the gaps and know the opportunities to create a more integrated and seamless care system. We are grateful for the leadership and insights patients have provided in our early work and look forward to continuing to build patient and caregiver partnerships in the Hamilton Health Team," said Bernice King, Co-Chair Hamilton Health Team.

The Minister's announcement will enable the Hamilton Health Team to move forward with planning its early initiatives. This work focusses on three priority populations in

Hamilton, based on data demonstrating a need to better integrate care for an aging population and provide more accessible mental health services:

- Adults with mental health and addiction concerns
- Children and youth with mental health and addiction concerns
- Older adults with multiple chronic conditions

The early work will expand on key initiatives already in progress in Hamilton related to early identification, population areas and coordinated patient transitions between healthcare providers. This includes expansion of 24/7 navigation and care coordination services for patients and families, and increasing access to digital tools such as virtual visits and health records, implemented in phases over time. The work will benefit patients and healthcare providers and also help to address hallway healthcare.

The Hamilton Health Team will work closely with the Ministry of Health to determine how it will proceed with these initiatives and how it will work with other Ontario Health Teams.

There are no immediate changes or impacts for patients or healthcare providers at this time.

More than 200 leaders, community members, patients, and physicians took part in workshops to develop the application. Over 130 primary care physicians are already engaged, representing more than 200,000 patients. This work sets the foundation for increasing engagement and collaboration into the future.

Quick Facts

- The Hamilton Health Team submitted an expression of interest (self-assessment) in May 2019. In October, the team submitted a full application in October 2019 and took part in a Ministry site visit in November 2019.
- The Hamilton Health Team grew from the strong collaboration and leadership in health care that is well established in Hamilton. Since 2016, 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), has been working together to examine 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.
- Ontario Health Teams are being introduced to provide a new way of organizing and delivering care that is more connected to patients in their local communities. Under Ontario Health Teams, health care providers (including hospitals, doctors and home and community care providers) will work as one coordinated team - no matter where they provide care.

Additional Resources

[Hamilton Health Team website](#)

[Video - Becoming an Ontario Health Team: Patient Engagement](#)

[Ontario Health Teams](#)

Additional Quotes

“We believe that being a part of the Hamilton Health Team will result in more integrated and empathetic care for older adults facing healthcare challenges in Hamilton.”

Mary Burnett, Chief Executive Officer
Alzheimer Society Brant Haldimand Norfolk Hamilton Halton

“The City of Hamilton is proud to be part of one of the first Ontario Health Teams in the province. Through the Hamilton Health Team, we will continue working together with community partners and patients alike to create a more integrated system of care that results in better health outcomes for residents. This important work supports the City to continue advancing our vision to be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.”

Paul Johnson, General Manager, Healthy and Safe Communities, City of Hamilton

“The shared purpose and commitment that has moved us to this point of readiness is, in my experience, unheralded in Hamilton. We have already gained game changing insights simply by sharing our “stories” and dreams of what caring for a community could and should look like.”

Dr. Tamar Packer, Chief of Family Medicine, Hamilton Health Sciences and St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, Primary Care Lead, Hamilton

“As Hamilton’s largest community health and social service provider, Good Shepherd is excited to be part of the Hamilton Health Team and sees this as an opportunity to improve the health and wellbeing of our community’s most vulnerable by working together and building on our collective strengths to meet each individual’s unique needs.”

Nancy Garner, CEO, Good Shepherd Non-Profit Homes

“Hamilton health and social service providers have a long history of working together and this approval recognizes that strength in our community. Hamilton Health Sciences is committed to this initiative as we believe it will foster more integrated and seamless care, and ultimately, a healthier Hamilton.”

Rob MacIsaac, President & CEO, Hamilton Health Sciences

“Patients and their families have long been asking for care where they want it, when they need it. We know that one number to call for navigation (24/7) and one shared medical record are achievable with today’s technology. The Hamilton Health Team is a huge step forward to making these things a reality. This team is empowered by patients’ voices and incredible collaboration, and is exciting to be a part of. We are watching the future of health care unfold.”

Dr. Thomas Stewart, President and CEO, St. Joseph’s Health System, CEO, Niagara Health

"The Thrive Group, as a representative of the Long Term Care and Community Support Services sectors, has been honoured to be an inaugural member of the Hamilton Health Team. We believe our team's collaborative work holds great promise for a future that capitalizes on the opportunity for integrated, community-based solutions to many of our current health system challenges, including hallway medicine."

Steve Sherrer, CEO, Thrive Group

"As a partner agency, the Wayside House of Hamilton believes in a strong, coordinated and supported health system. A system where the client/patient is in the centre of all planning and the recipient of timely, responsible and respected care. "

Regan Anderson, Chief Executive Officer, Wayside House of Hamilton

-30-

MEDIA CONTACT:

Antonella Giancarlo
Communications Officer
City of Hamilton
905-546-2424, ext. 5293
Antonella.Giancarlo@hamilton.ca