

## **New Ontario Health Teams Will Transform The Province's Health Care Delivery System, Providing Patients With The Kind Of Service They Need And Deserve**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 20, 2019

Patients, their caregivers and their families will benefit greatly from the creation of Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) and a system-wide transformation that will improve and enhance the way health care is delivered throughout the province.

“Not only will these changes make it easier for patients to navigate the system in local communities, but they will help to connect all those involved in patient care so that the transition between providers is seamless and coordinated,” said Dr. Declan Rowan, a leader in the local primary care community and partner for the Upper Ottawa Valley OHT, who added that patients and communities will be engaged throughout the process to ensure that local needs are met.

Under the new system, patients will be a part of an OHT where health care providers including those in primary care, hospitals, rehabilitation, home and community care, residential long-term care and mental health and addictions will work together to meet their needs. Dr. Rowan said strengthening access to primary care services and working to grow team-based models for care is a major focus of the work that is being done.

The future vision for OHTs is patients having access to their own personal health information and the ability to be able to make healthy choices by accessing preventive services in the community after talking with their primary care provider about their health needs.

They will have access to care where and when they need it including digital access to their medical records and 24/7 assistance in navigating the public health care system.

While it will take years to make this transition, the initial steps have been taken and in the meantime, patients can continue to access the care they need and the providers they trust.

Recently, those who have come together to form the Upper Ottawa Valley OHT received word that their application has been reviewed and designated “in development” by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care.

“Our application is one of 43 in the province to receive this designation which speaks volumes to the commitment we as a group have to working together,” Dr. Rowan said.

The “in development” designation refers to those teams with participants who represent a continuum of care and have demonstrated a commitment to the OHT model and a strong degree of readiness to implement. Though they are not yet ready to complete a full application, they will prepare for a future full application submission.

“Upon review of our submission, the Ministry noted that we are committed to partnering with a wide range of organizations, and establishing new partnerships in order to ensure that our region is well served and supported. They also acknowledged the strength in our plan to use

existing mechanisms for patient and community engagement within the region,” said Pierre Noel, President and CEO of Pembroke Regional Hospital.

The local team will now have approximately six months to address some of the areas identified for improvement on their application including the status of digital health in the region and how this can be enhanced, and the development of more clearly identified priorities and objectives for year one as an OHT.

With improvements in these areas, it was noted by the Ministry that the team will improve their readiness to implement the Ontario Health Team model and be in a better position to complete a full application at a later date.

The Upper Ottawa Valley Ontario Health Team (OHT) will be comprised of family physician groups, community and home care providers, long term care homes, mental health services, paramedic services, representatives from the Algonquins of Pikwakanagan, and PRH.

“Being a step closer to creation of our region’s OHT is great news for all involved. As we all stated from the outset, the work we are doing through greater collaboration with our partners can only mean better care for our patients,” Mr. Noel said.

Regardless of the timeline, the group will continue to meet, explore opportunities and learn from the others in the province who are moving on to the full application process while they make the necessary amendments to advance to that same position.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:**

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