

June 19, 2023- For Immediate Release

Expanding and Enhancing Interprofessional Primary Care Teams- An Expression of Interest

HAMILTON, ON- The Greater Hamilton Health Network (GHHN), an Ontario Health Team, in partnership with the broader primary care sector across Hamilton, Haldimand and Niagara Northwest submitted a comprehensive [Expanding and Enhancing Interprofessional Primary Care Teams](#) Expression of Interest to Ontario Health that seeks the expansion of team-based care for patients across the GHHN with a focus on our most vulnerable and equity-deserving populations.

On Thursday February 2nd, 2023, the Ontario Government released the [Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](#). Per their announcement, “the plan focuses on providing people with a better health care experience by connecting them to more convenient options closer to home while shortening wait times for key services across the province and growing the health care workforce for years to come.” In this plan, there were several important announcements for primary care, including an investment of \$30 million to expand team-based primary care across Ontario. The money will be allocated to create new and/or build upon current interprofessional primary care teams and to help bridge the gap in accessing team-based care for vulnerable, marginalized, and unattached patients.

The Greater Hamilton Health Network (GHHN) is one of the province’s first Ontario Health Teams. The vision of the GHHN is to co-design a healthcare system that is equitable, accessible, and addresses the Quintuple Aim (five objectives critical in the design and delivery of an effective health care system). Over the last three years, the GHHN has worked to establish a progressive blueprint for this system and has leveraged our Primary Care Network to advance this work. We are using a robust health equity, inclusion, diversity, and anti-racism framework that will guide our collective efforts in confronting barriers to equitable health for all. Our application aims to improve equitable access for our community to team-based care by increasing the number of interdisciplinary health professionals in our region. Success with this application for funding will allow us to move closer to our goals, recognizing the significant gaps many Ontarians face in access to primary care in every corner of our province.

This is the first time in our region a joint proposal has been put forth for and with Primary Care Providers across Hamilton, Haldimand, and Niagara Northwest. The proposal comes with a letter of support signed by over 67 GHHN partners and collaborators, including patients and families. The joint proposal is an indicator of the work that has been done to build partnerships, grow capacity and work together to address the significant needs of our communities, such as improving access to team-based primary care and increasing the number of residents who have a regular primary care provider, particularly for equity-deserving populations. Current statistics illustrate the need for more equitable access to team-based care, numbers are approximate:

- ~53,000 unattached patients within the GHHN and an unknown number of uninsured people:



- Data from 2016 indicates 130,360 immigrants within Hamilton proper.¹
- ~4,000 individuals from equity-deserving, priority populations served by three agencies in Hamilton and who currently lack access to team-based care—Shelter Health Network, REFUGE: Hamilton Centre for Newcomer Health, Hamilton Social Medicine Response Team (HAMSMaRT).
- ~1,500 individuals sleeping rough.
- ~11,600 undocumented individuals within Hamilton proper (based on Canada-wide estimates but this is likely to be much higher as Hamilton is an urban setting).
- ~250 new mothers and babies lack access to primary care yearly.
- ~21-year difference in life expectancy between the North End neighbourhood in Hamilton and Ancaster.² The North End is a lower-income, higher-needs, underserved community, whereas Ancaster is a higher-income, better-resourced neighborhood. This highlights a need for comprehensive team-based care focused on neighbourhoods and populations with the greatest health needs to address health inequities.
- Within the GHHN, rural communities have rapidly growing populations compared to urban settings, (i.e., Haldimand population increased by 7.9% from 2016 to 2021, West Lincoln by 6.6%, Town of Lincoln 8.1%, compared to Ontario's average of 5.8%), with disproportionate primary care coverage.
- Of the ~369 active family physicians within the GHHN, ~37% are without comprehensive team-based care, which equates to approximately 164,000 patients.³

The GHHN also signed a letter of support for De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre's Expression of Interest for Primary Care Expansion for culturally safe care across all sites operated by De dwa da dehs nye>s. We recognize that De dwa da dehs nye>s application presents an opportunity to advance Truth & Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action (Health) and Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQI+ People Calls to Justice (Health and Wellness) and look forward to continued opportunities to partner and collaborate through the potential grant.

We are excited about the possibilities for meaningful change that this funding could support; we have no doubt that the impact on the well-being of our communities would be profound.

The GHHN will release a GHHN Talks (interview series) episode next month to continue the conversations about Primary Care work across the GHHN and our expression of interest.

For more information about our work please visit: <http://greaterhamiltonhealthnetwork.ca>

¹ Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council – New Canadians in Hamilton: Fact Sheet 2: Where do Immigrants Live?

² The Hamilton Spectator - Code Red Part 1: Worlds Apart (<https://www.thespec.com/news/hamilton-region/code-red/2022/09/20/worlds-apart.html>)

³ Patient numbers are calculated based on average roster sizes of 1,200. Please note the GHHN's attributed population is roughly 608,000 patients, meaning roughly 140,000 patients are not accounted.



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health together.*

For media inquiries, more information or to book an interview, please contact:

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