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Expanding and Enhancing Interprofessional Primary Care Teams Investment Announcement

HAMILTON, ON- The Greater Hamilton Health Network (GHHN), an Ontario Health Team serving Hamilton, Haldimand and Niagara Northwest, is proud to announce that the Ontario government is investing \$2.2 million to expand primary care teams across the GHHN, as part of a larger effort to bring the province one step closer to connecting everyone in Ontario to primary care.

“We are thankful for investments into expanding the beginning of a comprehensive vision for primary care in our communities. We look forward to working with the primary care community to expand roles, access, and primary care attachment for those most in need,” says Melissa McCallum, Executive Director at the Greater Hamilton Health Network.

Gloria Jordan, Chief Executive Officer at the Hamilton Family Health Team shares that “having a trusted community-based primary health care team who know you and your loved ones over the course of a lifetime is invaluable, both scientifically in terms of health outcomes and in terms of the health care experience. This investment in expanding team-based care means we can hire more professionals who are passionate about working in the community, increase access to creative ways of delivering primary healthcare, and help reduce the burden on hospitals. Primary healthcare is a core foundation of a healthier community. We are grateful for this investment for our community. “

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.

This was 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 was submitted in June 2023 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.

These new funds will focus on improving equitable access for our communities to team-based care by increasing the number of interdisciplinary health professionals in our region. The funds will support the expansion of team-based care with a focus on women's health, unattached patients and those experiencing poverty and homelessness.

Interprofessional primary care teams connect people to a range of health professionals that work together under one roof, and could include doctors, nurse practitioners, registered and practical nurses, physiotherapists, social workers and dietitians, among others. Timely access to primary care helps people stay healthier for longer with faster diagnosis and treatment, as well as more consistent support managing their day-to-day health while relieving pressures on emergency departments and walk-in clinics.¹ Locally, this work is also done in an outreach capacity throughout our community.

On 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 February 2024 an expanded investment of \$110 million (originally \$30 million) was announced to support the expansion of team-based primary care across Ontario and connect up to 328,000 people to primary care teams across the province. The money is 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.

We are excited about the meaningful change that this funding will support in helping us build community health together.

¹ [Ontario Connecting Over 300,000 People to Primary Care Teams](#)