



MEDIA RELEASE

December 19, 2025

Hamilton hospitals and the Greater Hamilton Health Network partner with The Hub for the second year, creating a warming space for people experiencing homelessness

HAMILTON, ON – During the winter, finding shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness following their hospital discharge becomes an urgent concern for physicians and hospital staff.

To address this need, St Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton, Hamilton Health Sciences, Hamilton Health Sciences Foundation, The Hamilton Hub and the Greater Hamilton Health Network, are partnering for the second year to create a dedicated overnight drop-in space to ensure that vulnerable individuals have a safe place to stay following their hospital visit.

In its first year, this model supported more than 300 individuals discharged from hospital, providing a total of 3,278 visits to the Hospital Warming Hub.

“The warming centre is a testament to the strength of Hamilton’s community partners, including the First Pilgrim United Church,” said Mike Heenan, president and CEO of St. Joseph’s Health System. “It is humbling and inspiring to see our community partners work together to fill this important need. We will all sleep better knowing that there will be dedicated space for some of our most vulnerable hospital patients following discharge this winter.”

Located at First Pilgrim United Church on Main Street, the warming centre will open on December 19, 2025. It will operate seven days a week from 10 p.m. until 9 a.m. regardless of the temperature. Spaces will be dedicated for individuals referred to the centre following their hospital visit and is set to operate until late March 2026.

“Once again, we are pleased to offer a warm and safe environment for unhoused individuals that are discharged from our emergency department,” said Leslie Gillies, vice president, post acute care, clinical practice and education and chief nursing executive at Hamilton Health Sciences. “This Hamilton-based collaborative partnership will provide an

important support for those in need of these services and we are very appreciative of our Foundation's support with this initiative”.

The Hospital Warming Hub is staffed by trained outreach workers, and students enrolled in healthcare programs such as nursing and medicine, as well as police-in-training, who are able to connect those coming in with primary care, community resources and other supports they may need. The Hub gives a unique opportunity for these students to gain essential experience and skills to bring to their future careers.

“We are excited to be running this program again, as this is a vital lifeline to our unhoused community, who are already facing so many challenges,” said Jen Bonner, executive director of The Hub. “These overnight warming spaces will help ensure some of our most vulnerable individuals won’t be left out in the cold this winter.”

“This overnight winter warming centre is a crucial component of our compassionate discharge planning and a vital resource for our community,” said Brooke Cowell, executive vice president of clinical operations and chief nursing executive at St. Joe’s. “We are deeply proud of the partnerships that have made this possible. This warming centre will offer a safe and supportive option for those transitioning out of hospital care. We are confident it will once again be a valuable resource for many individuals this winter.”

Having the Hospital Warming Hub open overnight will help emergency departments to work more efficiently, as staff no longer have to make multiple calls to shelters throughout the city to determine which may have space to take a newly discharged patient.

“As we enter the second year of the Hospital Warming Hub, this initiative continues to demonstrate what is possible when partners come together with urgency and compassion to meet local needs. Through these colder months, the overnight warming centre will be a vital refuge—providing safety, warmth, and dignity for those experiencing homelessness. With the unwavering support of our partners and a shared commitment to health equity, this program stands as a powerful symbol of care that saves lives,” said Megan Lynch, senior manager of the Greater Hamilton Health Network.

The Hospital Warming Hub is a low-barrier program, and the only service in Hamilton offering a warmup spot that includes spaces for couples and those unable to access shelters. In addition to hospital referrals, The Hub also welcomes walk-ins.

To set up an interview about this partnership, please contact Lauren Stasila at lstasila@stjoes.ca, Lillian Badzioch at badzioch@hhsc.ca, Sarah Precious at sarah.precious@ghhn.ca.