



# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Mayor and Members Public Health Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	September 30, 2024
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Collective Impact: Healthy and Safe Communities and the Greater Hamilton Health Network – 2024 Update (BOH24023/HSC24044) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Erin Walters (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6793
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Grace Mater General Manager Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC Medical Officer of Health Public Health Services

## COUNCIL DIRECTION

Not Applicable.

## INFORMATION

Following the June 12, 2023, Public Health Committee Report BOH23020, this information report and presentation aims to provide an update on the collaborative work between the Healthy and Safe Communities Department and the Greater Hamilton Health Network. This annual update describes how the Greater Hamilton Health Network has evolved over the past year and provides examples of collective outcomes achieved through this partnership. An update on the Physician Retention and Recruitment Program will be shared with Public Health Committee members through a separate correspondence at the September 30, 2024, Public Health Committee meeting.

### Transforming Ontario's Health System

In recent years, the Ontario health system has undergone significant changes to

---

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

improve patient and provider experience and increase efficiencies. To streamline decision-making and resource allocation across the province the 14 Local Health Integration Networks were replaced with a single centralized agency known as Ontario Health.<sup>1</sup> This new agency oversees planning, delivery, and performance, while the Ministry of Health continues to be the steward of the health system, focusing on legislation, regulation, and funding.<sup>1</sup> To support the implementation of provincial priorities and directives at a local level, Ontario Health Teams were also established.<sup>1</sup> Ontario Health Teams, which report to Ontario Health, are responsible for organizing health services in communities in a way that is responsive to both provincial guidance and local needs.<sup>2</sup> The teams bring together local health and social service providers to collectively drive initiatives and enhance the coordination and integration of services for more connected and more convenient care.<sup>2</sup>

Ontario Health Teams continue to evolve and establish their role in communities. At full maturity, they will be responsible for:

- Ensuring patients have access to care when and where they need it;
- Ensuring patients have access to a full and coordinated continuum of care with seamless transitions between care providers;
- Adapting care delivery to meet the current and emerging health needs of the patients and community;
- Partnering with patients, families, caregivers, and communities in a meaningful way;
- Using digital health solutions to support effective healthcare delivery;
- Measuring and reporting on performance based on patient experience, provider experience, population health outcomes, and spending; and,
- Allocating resources from an integrated funding envelope based on community need.<sup>2</sup>

The Greater Hamilton Health Network serves as the Ontario Health Team responsible for supporting approximately 700,000 residents living across Hamilton, Haldimand, and Niagara Northwest. Their role in building partnerships, fostering collaborations, and integrating services across these communities requires substantial time and resources. The Greater Hamilton Health Network is driving this transformation with an annual base funding of \$750 K and a team of eight full-time and two part-time staff members. These staff members are essential in supporting and coordinating network partners, helping to

---

<sup>1</sup> Ministry of Health. (2019). Ontario Health Teams <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontario-health-teams>

<sup>2</sup> Ministry of Health (2019). Ontario Health Teams: Guidance for Health Care Providers and Organizations <https://www.ontario.ca/files/2024-01/moh-oht-hcp-guidance-doc-en-2024-01-22.pdf>

drive key initiatives and advance community health priorities across the region. With their limited resources, the Greater Hamilton Health Network staff work closely with network members to leverage and share resources to advance common goals. By fostering strong partnerships, the Greater Hamilton Health Network can maximize the impact of its initiatives, ensuring that resources are used efficiently to meet the healthcare needs of the population.

### **Evolution of the Greater Hamilton Health Network**

Since their establishment in 2019, Ontario Health Teams have been continuously learning, adapting, and refining their approaches as they evolve toward full maturity. The Greater Hamilton Health Network is a recognized leader in this process, setting precedents and paving the way for the other Ontario Health Teams.

Given their leadership role, the Greater Hamilton Health Network was one of 12 Ontario Health Teams selected in September 2023 to implement an accelerated work plan.<sup>3</sup> This means the Greater Hamilton Health Network is working towards designation at a rapid rate.<sup>3</sup> Upon designation, the Greater Hamilton Health Network will have reached full maturity, allowing them to enter into a more advanced accountability agreement with Ontario Health, where they will be responsible for managing an integrated funding envelope for the entire community. To support this accelerated work plan, Ontario Health has set the following priorities:

- Implementation of integrated care pathways to support people with multiple or complex chronic conditions;
- Establishment of primary care networks; and,
- Implementation and uptake of local digital tools that support virtual care.<sup>3</sup>

### **Healthy and Safe Communities Role in the Greater Hamilton Health Network**

The Greater Hamilton Health Network remains committed to developing and strengthening local partnerships. With over 50 health, community, municipal, charity, and social service sector partners, each organization brings its unique expertise and scope, enhancing the network's collective strength. These diverse partnerships enable the Greater Hamilton Health Network to address a wide range of community needs and foster a comprehensive and integrated approach to care.

The Greater Hamilton Health Network has built strong connections with several teams and divisions across the Healthy and Safe Communities Department. As this partnership continues to develop, three clear roles have been established:

---

<sup>3</sup> Ministry of Health. (November 2023). Accelerating Ontario Health Teams to deliver better care <https://www.ontario.ca/document/connected-care-updates/connected-care-update-november-28-2023>

1. Involvement in the Greater Hamilton Health Network’s governance structure, with both the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities and the Medical Officer of Health serving on the Board of Directors;
2. Participation in various Greater Hamilton Health Network councils and working groups, supporting the planning, delivery, and evaluation of local initiatives. This includes representation from Public Health Services, Paramedic Services, Housing Services, and Lodges Division (Appendix “A” to Report BOH24023/HSC24044); and,
3. Annual submission of a joint report to the Public Health Committee, sharing updates and highlighting collective impact (Report BOH23020 and Report BOH24023/HSC24044).

The relationship between the City and the Greater Hamilton Health Network will evolve as the Ontario Health Team continues to mature.

### **Examples of Collective Impact**

Through collaborative efforts, the Greater Hamilton Health Network has made significant progress in advancing patient-centred care in Hamilton, Haldimand and Niagara Northwest. The examples below highlight the collective impact achieved by the Greater Hamilton Health Network and Healthy and Safe Communities Department based on their common goals.

#### **1. Health Equity as a Foundation**

Since its inception, the Greater Hamilton Health Network has embedded health equity principles into its planning and operations, ensuring all initiatives are designed to promote equitable health outcomes for our community. During its initial two years, the Greater Hamilton Health Network engaged with populations experiencing systemic discrimination or marginalization to better understand how these factors impact their access to care. This informed the development of the Greater Hamilton Health Network’s Health Equity Framework with 136 recommendations for equitable action.<sup>4</sup> These recommendations, many of which have been actioned, relate to engaging the community in meaningful ways, applying a segmented approach to tailor initiatives, strengthening relationships with providers serving equity-deserving populations, and ensuring the Greater Hamilton Health Network’s governance and operational structures reflect its commitment to equity.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Greater Hamilton Health Network. (June 2021). Health Equity Framework: An anti-oppression, anti-racism, sex/gender based, intersectional approach. [https://greaterhamiltonhealthnetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/GHHN-Health-Equity-Report-FINAL\\_Jan-2023-copy.pdf](https://greaterhamiltonhealthnetwork.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/GHHN-Health-Equity-Report-FINAL_Jan-2023-copy.pdf)

Over the past year, the Greater Hamilton Health Network prioritized four health equity initiatives:

- Coordinating local partners to submit funding applications for projects focused on supporting people who are trans, gender diverse, Black, or who use drugs. These projects aim to tailor programs and services that meet these communities' unique health needs and address the systemic barriers they experience;
- Ensuring language accessibility within all clinical services. This involves leveraging translation and interpretation services to promote effective communication between patients and providers and equitable access to care for linguistically diverse individuals;
- Creating a positive space assessment toolkit to support partners create a supportive and inclusive environment for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities; and,
- Advancing the collection of health equity data across Greater Hamilton Health Network partners.

The Greater Hamilton Health Network's Health Equity Council provides the infrastructure necessary to advance these initiatives and ensure the work of the network is evaluated through an anti-oppressive and anti-racist lens. Various Healthy and Safe Communities staff participate in this council or its sub-groups, such as the Positive Space, Health Equity Data Collection, and Black Health working groups.

The Healthy and Safe Communities Department shares the Greater Hamilton Health Network's commitment to advancing health equity. While Healthy and Safe Communities is dedicated to the overall well-being of all Hamilton residents, many initiatives focus on communities disproportionately impacted by health and social conditions. The 2024 Healthy and Safe Communities Budget highlights several examples, including: the development of the Biindigen Well-Being Centre, an Indigenous space that integrates health, family, social, and housing services; the expansion of affordable housing; and investment in community-led initiatives that address violence among youth. Within Public Health Services, health equity is identified as a community priority and the division has been committed to advancing the Health Equity and Anti-Racism Strategy since 2022. Progress on this work can be found in Public Health Committee Report BOH24001, 2024 Annual Service Plan and Budget and Public Health Priorities.

## **2. High Need Community Initiative**

In July 2023, as part of the High Need Community Fund, the Greater Hamilton Health Network received a \$1.4 M investment to enhance services for Hamilton's most vulnerable populations. The Greater Hamilton Health Network partners

---

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

collectively identified priority populations and their most pressing needs. This led to the funds being used to support a variety of initiatives tailored for refugees, newcomers, individuals experiencing homelessness or precarious housing, and those with mental health and addiction issues. Some examples of how the funds were used include:

- Supporting Women's Health Days and Men's Health Day events to offer barrier-free health services to unhoused or precariously housed individuals;
- Covering costs for urgent dental care for children from low-income families to reduce the financial barrier for essential services like anesthesia and nursing fees;
- Creating smart vending machines (HealthBoxes) to provide harm reduction, hygiene, and health supplies 24/7 at no cost, which were strategically placed to support priority populations including those experiencing homelessness, poverty, and using substances;
- Developing an Indigenous Outreach/Peer Worker role to deliver culturally appropriate support through mobile van outreach. The role offers traditional medicines and harm reduction supplies and connects individuals with healthcare services;
- Improving referral pathways to primary care, especially among newcomers and individuals experiencing homelessness or precarious housing, through health fairs and connector roles to address access issues; and,
- Expanding access to wraparound services, such as wound care, diabetes education, and harm reduction, through enhanced partnerships with initiatives like Health on Wheels and Harm Reduction Navigator positions.

Healthy and Safe Communities was among the partners involved in implementing these initiatives. More specifically, Public Health Services supported the efforts to cover the additional costs for Healthy Smiles Ontario clients needing specialized paediatric dental services, as well as the initiative to ensure 24/7 access to free harm reduction, hygiene, and health supplies through HealthBoxes.

### **3. Primary Care Network**

In the Fall of 2023, Ontario Health announced that all Ontario Health Teams are required to develop Primary Care Networks.<sup>3</sup> These networks aim to connect, integrate, and support primary care providers within Ontario Health Teams.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Health (January 2024). Primary Care Network in Ontario Health Teams: Guidance Document. <https://www.ontario.ca/files/2024-01/moh-primary-care-networks-guidance-en-2024-01-23.pdf>

With the well-established group of primary care providers in Hamilton, known as Hamilton Family Medicine, the Greater Hamilton Health Network was well-positioned to undertake this initiative. The coordination of this group of providers has transitioned to the Greater Hamilton Health Network, where it will serve as their Primary Care Network.

Since being formally incorporated into the Greater Hamilton Health Network structure, this group has taken a more collaborative approach to primary care planning locally. In June of 2023, the Primary Care Network submitted a collective proposal to the Ministry of Health to expand team-based care locally. In March of 2024, the Greater Hamilton Health Network was awarded an investment of \$2.2 M to begin this work. This initiative marks the first cross-sector collaboration where resources were jointly planned and distributed among multiple primary care organizations across our community. With representation on the Primary Care Network Executive Committee, Public Health Services is actively involved in discussions around how to best allocate these funds to enhance access and attachment to primary care among equity-seeking groups. Additionally, Public Health Services has committed to supporting this work by collaborating on large-scale clinics and events with other Greater Hamilton Health Network members. These events bring together various health and social service providers to offer comprehensive, convenient support to individuals without a primary care provider or those facing barriers and discrimination when accessing care.

#### **4. Health Care at Eva Rothwell Centre**

A primary goal of Ontario Health Teams is to develop innovative solutions that reduce barriers to care and ensure all residents have access to a regular primary care provider. Locally, this is being addressed through the establishment of primary care hubs in underserved neighborhoods with demonstrated health disparities. These hubs will integrate a variety of health and social services in a patient-centered manner, addressing common barriers to care.

The first primary care hub has been set up at the Eva Rothwell Centre, an established, trusted, and reliable hub in the community. This initiative, which is co-led by the Greater Hamilton Health Network and the Hamilton Family Health Team, aims to provide primary care and other complimentary services to children of Wards 2 and 3 who are not connected with a primary care provider, and their families. Public Health Services has been involved in this process from the outset by providing critical population health and demographic information about the neighbourhood to ensure the services respond to the needs of the community. Additionally, Public Health Services is exploring opportunities for co-location with the Hamilton Family Health Team at this site to respond to the identified needs

---

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

and improve access to important public health services. Through the co-location of different providers and partners, patients will have access to psychiatrists, physiotherapists, registered dietitians, pharmacists, certified respiratory education, and health promotion groups in addition to primary care. This initiative will undergo an evaluation to assess its impact, effectiveness, and efficiency, and to identify ways to enhance this partnership. The results of this evaluation will inform the expansion of the Primary Care Hub model throughout the community.

### **Next Steps**

This Information Report highlights key examples of the collective impact achieved through the Greater Hamilton Health Network, with the support of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department. As the Greater Hamilton Health Network continues to evolve and strengthen its role in the community, it will create more opportunities for collective impact. The collaborative nature of the Ontario Health Team model is well-suited to address the complex health issues and inequalities in our community. By engaging diverse partners and the communities disproportionately impacted by these issues, and applying innovative problem-solving, Ontario Health teams can implement an “All of Society Approach” to tackle these complex issues more effectively. Through these collective efforts, we can improve the health of Hamilton residents, reduce health inequities, and build a healthier, more resilient community.

### **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Appendix “A” to Report BOH24023/HSC24044

Greater Hamilton Health Network  
Councils and Working Groups  
with Healthy and Safe  
Communities Participation by  
Division