

MEDIA RELEASE

Proposed Ontario Health Team for Northumberland one of 31 teams in the province selected to move forward

Northumberland County, ON – Thursday, July 18, 2019 – In an email notification received earlier today, the Ministry of Health advised that the local proposal to form an **Ontario Health Team for Northumberland** has moved to the next stage, with the planning committee now invited to submit a full application. The Northumberland application was one of 31 approved to move to this next step out of over 150 applications submitted.

Building on a strong history of local collaboration to deliver coordinated care for the community, health system stakeholders in Northumberland partnered on an application to form an Ontario Health Team (OHT) following a call for interest this spring.

The provincial government has introduced OHTs as a new model of health care delivery, intended to improve the coordination of care and services for patients and their families/caregivers. The aim is to better connect the often disparate parts of the health system by bringing together patients/residents, families, communities, providers and system leaders as one team, to deliver a coordinated continuum of care to people in a defined geographic area. The members of the teams, even if in different organizations or physical locations, will work together toward common goals for strengthening local services.

In response to the government's April 2019 call for interest to form an OHT, local health system stakeholders established an **Ontario Health Team of Northumberland Collaborative Planning Committee** to submit the required self-assessment by May 15th. This Planning Committee has continued to meet and expand, with the group now including:

- ✓ Local patients/caregivers
- ✓ Local primary care physicians
- ✓ Alderville First Nation
- ✓ Alzheimer Society – Peterborough, Kawartha Lakes, Northumberland & Haliburton
- ✓ Campbellford Memorial Hospital
- ✓ Community Care Northumberland
- ✓ Community Health Centres of Northumberland
- ✓ Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit

- ✓ Lakeview Family Health Team
- ✓ Local community mental health and addiction services
- ✓ Local home and community care providers
- ✓ Northumberland County
- ✓ Northumberland Family Health Team
- ✓ Northumberland Hills Hospital
- ✓ The Bridge Hospice
- ✓ Trent Hills Family Health Team

On a webcast with applicants late this morning, Minister of Health Christine Elliott and Deputy Minister Helen Angus confirmed that over 150 OHT applications had been received during the May call, far more than initially expected and—in the Ministry’s view—a demonstration of the commitment from health care providers to work together with patients and caregivers to deliver on a vision of an integrated health care system.

All teams that submitted a self-assessment have now been assessed and placed in one of the following categories:

Proceed to Full Application – These teams have partners across the continuum of care. They are highly aligned with the model, have a high level of readiness and are well-positioned to complete the full application.

In Development – These teams have partners who represent the continuum of care, are committed to the model and with a bit more work will be well positioned to complete the full application.

In Discovery – These health care providers support the model. They are encouraged to expand their partnerships and work with other local providers in alignment with the criteria outlined in the guidance documents.

“The partners were very pleased to learn this morning that the submission we put forward from Northumberland has been approved at the most mature level, to ‘Proceed to Full Application’,” said Linda Davis, President and CEO of Northumberland Hills Hospital, on behalf of the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland Collaborative Planning Committee. “We understand that, in addition to Northumberland, 30 other teams from across the province are in a similar position. Another 43 have been assessed at the ‘In Development’ stage and most of the balance have been assessed as ‘In Discovery’. A small number of ‘Innovative Models’ were identified for further discussion with the Ministry. Collaboration brought us to this stage, and we look forward to building on this further as we move forward.”

“I am extremely pleased that Northumberland was among one of the first teams selected by the Ministry of Health to proceed to the full application stage of becoming an Ontario Health Team,” stated David Piccini, Member of Provincial Parliament, Northumberland-Peterborough South. “I know that the Northumberland Collaborative Planning Committee members have worked tirelessly and I have every confidence that they will be successful. This Ontario Health Team model will build upon the already strong existing collaborative partnerships in Northumberland and will make it easier for the residents of our riding to navigate and system and transition between providers.”

The deadline to submit a full application to form an OHT is October 9th. The expanded Northumberland Planning Committee has continued to meet and move the process forward since submission of the initial application, focusing on strategies to support a target population that would initially include rural residents who face barriers to accessing health care, including those experiencing isolation, homelessness, addiction, and mental health concerns, as well as those with palliative needs and limited mobility. The population served, as well as the scope of services provided, will expand over time.

The group will now focus on the requirements of the full application process in order to deliver a final proposal for a Northumberland OHT that will further improve health outcomes, patient and provider experience, and value for Northumberland residents. The broader local health and social care community, and the people served, will be engaged to support this process.

Formal notification to 150+ OHT applicants is now underway, and public communication from the Ministry is expected. Officials have confirmed that the first OHTs will be announced this fall, with the province continuing to accept applications and evaluate interested groups over time. Background information about OHTs is available from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care at <http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/connectedcare/oht/default.aspx>.

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