

MEDIA RELEASE

Final proposal submitted for formation of Ontario Health Team of Northumberland

Northumberland County, ON – Wednesday, October 9, 2019– Following months of intensive planning and discussion, the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland Collaborative Planning Committee (signatories and affiliates listed in attached backgrounder) will today submit a final-stage application to the province to form the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland (OHT-N).

With participants including patient, caregiver and First Nation representatives, both county hospitals, primary care providers and physician specialists, community health centres and family health teams, long-term care, home and community care support services, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), hospice palliative care, housing and mental health representatives, this Northumberland group was one of 31 invited by the province in July to develop a full application, following submission of a self-assessment this past spring. The proposal being submitted today seeks to amplify patient and caregiver voices within the health care system and better align health care stakeholders and providers, closing gaps and improving the coordination of care and services.

The provincial government introduced OHTs in March as a new model of health care delivery. The aim is to better connect different 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 programs and services, improving access and quality of care.

While the province's vision is to have all care coordinated through OHTs in the future, the first OHTs will be expected to test local application of the integrated care concept through targeted projects serving specific populations. In Year One, the OHT-N will focus on access to comprehensive health care services for rural populations within Northumberland County – specifically those who experience significant barriers to health care. Based on input and data gathered to date, efforts will be focused on the following proposed projects:

- **Volunteer Peer Support:** This initiative will match key volunteers with people in our community who require informal support, broadening their social network and assisting them to navigate and access the health care services they need.

- **Community Paramedicine:** Leveraging the skills and training of Northumberland Paramedics, this initiative will provide proactive services for patients who use 9-1-1 services due to system gaps/challenges/ access to community care. This will include remote monitoring for appropriate patients.
- **Rural Outreach Clinics:** Multiple partners will bring services and clinicians together to rural community locations to reduce barriers to care experienced by patients in small, rural areas, such as access, transportation and outreach challenges.

Recognizing the critical importance of partnerships with patients and caregivers in the planning, design and governance of OHTs to ensure meaningful change to current systems, the Northumberland proposal also emphasizes the Team's commitment to patient/caregiver partnership and community engagement, including:

- Patient and caregiver partner representation within all OHT-N governance, planning and project team structures;
- Adoption of a Patient/Caregiver Partnership and Community Engagement Framework, reflecting international best practices and the Patient Declaration of Values for Ontario, setting out the commitment to ongoing consultation to validate proposed Year One projects, assess the local services/supports needed most and inform future year priorities.
- Creation of Northumberland's first county-wide Patient and Family Advisory Council
- The intent to establish, in the future, a local Ombudsperson role.

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 at <http://health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/connectedcare/oht/default.aspx>.

Quotes

"I applaud The Northumberland Collaborative Planning Committee for their hard work and collaborative efforts to date in their journey to becoming an Ontario Health Team that is specifically tailored to the needs of our rural community. The committee has demonstrated a true understanding of the government's intent with the OHT model by co-designing this proposal with patient and caregiver representatives, and ensuring these voices are embedded in governance, advisory and consultation plans for this OHT. OHTs will improve how people connect to, and navigate, our health care system,

closing gaps and improving patient and caregiver experience.” **David Piccini, Member of Provincial Parliament, Northumberland-Peterborough South**

“I believe, profoundly, in the positive change we can effect across our health care system by truly placing the patient at the centre of system design and implementation. The province confirmed that Northumberland’s initial self-evaluation, submitted in May, demonstrated a strong commitment to the vision of a patient-centered, integrated health care system, and a high state of readiness to move forward collaboratively. As a moderate-to-heavy user of the healthcare system since my youth, I have appreciated the opportunity to contribute my perspective and key learnings to this process, and I look forward to facilitating future implementation.” **Scott Macpherson, Patient Representative**

“Over 90 per cent of the primary care physicians in Northumberland have signed on to support the Ontario Health Team of Northumberland. This is a welcome opportunity to improve both service delivery and patient experience through enhanced integration and coordination of care across the health care continuum.” **Dr. Erin Pepper, Primary Care Physician, Northumberland Family Health Team**

“The government’s announcement of the Ontario Health Team model presented a unique opportunity for local organizations to go beyond our previous partnerships to actually co-design, with patients and providers, specific, tangible improvements to enhance the delivery of care in our community. We believe we have developed a proposal for service delivery that will improve health outcomes, patient and provider experience, and value for Northumberland residents. We are excited to take this next step, and look forward to demonstrating measurable progress in fulfilment of the government’s Quadruple Aim.” **Linda Davis, President and CEO of Northumberland Hills Hospital, on behalf of the OHT-N Collaborative Planning Committee**

- 30 -

For more information

Jennifer Gillard
Senior Director, Public Affairs and
Strategic Partnerships
Northumberland Hills Hospital
1000 DePalma Drive
Cobourg, Ontario K9A 5W6
Tel: 905-377-7757
Email: jjillard@nhh.ca

Kate Campbell
Director, Communications
Northumberland County
555 Courthouse Road
Cobourg, ON K9A 5J6
Tel: 905-372-3329 ext. 2335
Email: campbellk@northumberlandcounty.ca