

Developing a System of Primary Health Care

Primary care is typically considered care provided by a general practitioner or an advanced practice nurse. Primary health care (PHC) – also known as family health care – includes components of care which support primary care specialists in delivering and coordinating care and non-acute care services. Perceived as the heart and soul of health care, PHC is a cornerstone of the system where people get advice on maintaining and improving health, and link with acute care.

Unlike acute care, PHC is not truly organized as a system of care. There are many varied PHC providers and even teams working independently of one another. Few examples exist of Community Health Centres collaborating with Family Health Teams or sharing resources. PHC can be the integrator of the entire health-care system. Access to PHC can be increased in many ways such as by having interdisciplinary teams working together and sharing resources between PHC sites to best meet patient needs. Additionally, a more system-type approach to PHC could achieve more standardized access to specialty services. The South East LHIN has undertaken some early steps in this direction, but much is left to be accomplished.

Objectives:

- To support the continued development of access to primary health-care services for everyone who wants access to primary health-care services
- To reduce the use of emergency room and hospital services by patients who can be served by primary health care

Measures

- ❖ Number of people who have access to primary health care
- ❖ Number of people who are registered with Health Care Connect
- ❖ Percentage of Health Care Connect matches completed in 4 months or less
- ❖ Number of patients presenting in ER for non-urgent care

Planned Actions

- ❖ Open community health centre and satellite operation in Belleville & Quinte West.
- ❖ Support the establishment of nurse practitioner clinics or family health teams in communities with unmet primary health care needs.
- ❖ Support the establishment of nurse practitioner services on Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory.
- ❖ Work with family health teams and other primary health-care providers to encourage provision of full scope of practice/services and 24/7 access to primary health-care services outside of emergency rooms.
- ❖ Collaborate with public health units and other interested community groups (e.g., school boards) to encourage establishment of programs that facilitate reduction in obesity and inactivity.