

## Benefits of OHTs for family doctors and specialists

Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) are a new way of planning and delivering patient-centred care that will meaningfully impact the care experience for both you and your patients.

Some benefits are immediate, while others will be experienced when OHTs are fully developed.

Ontario Health Teams have the potential to :

- 1 Improve your work experience
- 2 Help you deliver enhanced patient care
- 3 Help you develop stronger relationships with other health professionals
- 4 Provide you with the opportunity to influence how care is delivered in your region
- 5 Give you more opportunities for learning and leadership development

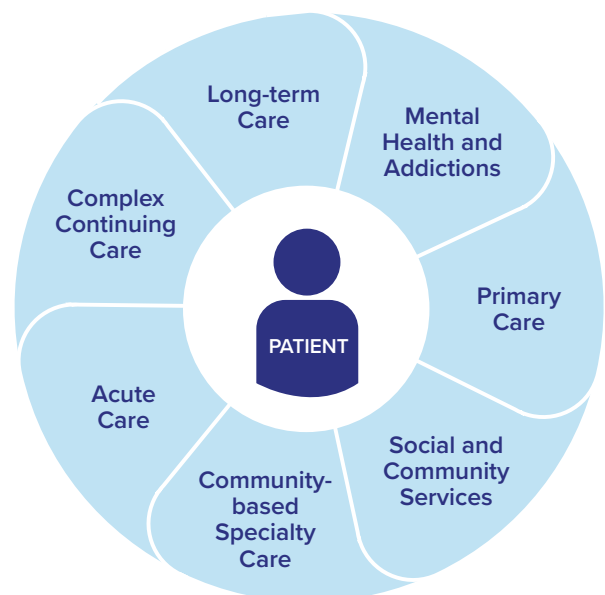
**Ontario Health Teams are a model of integrated care.** OHTs bring together clinicians, including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses and interprofessional health teams, community programs and services, along with patients and their families to focus on a shared purpose: to provide co-ordinated, effective, efficient and high-quality care to patients. OHTs are intended to be designed together with physicians, patients and families to ensure that they are truly meeting patients' needs.

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“It’s a great opportunity to get the people around the table – family doctors and other specialists – and talk about how we could better serve the patients in our community and how we could better interact together.”

-Dr. Robert McKelvie, cardiologist, Western OHT

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## 1 OHTs will improve your work experience:

- ✓ Better integration among care providers will lead to **stronger connections** to other physicians, interprofessional health teams, home care services, mental health and addiction services and other local supports that will help you better manage complex patients
- ✓ More seamless co-ordination at the system level will lead to **shorter wait times**
- ✓ IT solutions will enable **digital communication** among all members of the care team and reduce your administrative workload.

### Family Doctors

- ✓ Better integration will **reduce hours spent finding referrals** and follow-ups allowing you to focus more on your patients.

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My day-to-day work as a physician has been much easier in many respects. For example, working with patients who have complicated situations related to the social determinants of health has been much easier. Reaching out to team members across different organizations to co-ordinate and to establish a care plan for my patients has become more seamless over time.”

-Dr. Catherine Yu, family doctor, East Toronto Family Health Partners OHT

### Specialists

- ✓ Centralized referral lists and processes mean more **accurate referrals** the first time with the right information.

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I can see how [OHTs] will make life easier for me; easier for taking care of my patients, access to more resources, better resources and more timely resources.”

-Dr. Darren Cargill, palliative care physician, Windsor Essex OHT

## 2 OHTs will help you deliver enhanced patient care:

- ✓ Better co-ordination between health sectors and care providers will enable a **better experience** for both patient and provider
- ✓ A population health approach to planning and delivering care will result in more **equitable access** to care and services
- ✓ Centralized digital records will give you access to co-ordinated, comprehensive information about your patients and help you **avoid unnecessary repeat tests and referrals**.

### Family Doctors

- ✓ Access to care co-ordinators will help your patients navigate the system so you spend **more time with your patients** and less time locating referrals and following up on care
- ✓ Directories will allow you to easily **identify the right specialist** for your patients, so they can get the right care as soon as possible
- ✓ Improved access to supports and programs, like **mental health or home care services**, will help your patients receive more timely care.

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Imagine having a whole team of nurses and other interprofessional care team members as part of your immediate team. Imagine not having to fax or send a referral to an external provider to get your patients looked after. I think if you can imagine that, then you should really consider being part of an OHT.”

-Dr. Catherine Yu, family doctor, East Toronto Family Health Partners OHT

### Specialists

- ✓ Getting the right kinds of referrals means you will have **shorter wait times**
- ✓ Support from family doctors to co-manage patients where appropriate will lead to better patient care and free up time for you to **see more patients**.

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The whole [OHT] model at the end of the day is a collaborative system. It's trying to design a system that's patient-centred, allows the patient to flow through the system with the management plan following them along the way, and the specialists [and primary care physicians] looking after these patients collaboratively.

There's plenty of data suggesting that when primary care and specialist physicians collaborate with regards to heart failure patients, the patient does better than if they're looked after only by the family or the primary care physician or only by the specialist.”

-Dr. Robert McKelvie, cardiologist, Western OHT

**3 OHTs will help you develop stronger relationships:**

More awareness of **community-based resources** will help your patients get the supports they need.

**Family Doctors**

- ✓ Stronger relationships will support **faster, more effective referrals** that improve transitions in care
- ✓ A more organized primary care sector, in addition to increased interactions with other providers, allows you to build **meaningful connections** with your peers

**Specialists**

- ✓ Stronger relationships with family doctors have **many benefits** including better patient management through shared care, the right referrals the first time and improved transitions in care
- ✓ **Built-in networks**, such as physician associations, including both family doctors and specialists will allow you to build strong and valuable relationships with your peers that can lead to more seamless patient care.

**OHTs will help Family Doctors and Specialists develop stronger relationships with:**

- Other physicians, including family doctors and community- and hospital-based specialists
- The physician community as a whole
- Home and community care
- Long-term care

- Mental health and addictions services
- Community support services
- Interprofessional health teams

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The relationship with other care providers on the front line has really been much better when it has been backed up by the concept of the OHT as a structure that we all work in.”

-Dr. Catherine Yu, family doctor, East Toronto Family Health Partners OHT

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It’s interesting how when you get into your own specialty, you don’t often think about what’s going on in other areas, and this open dialogue helped me better understand, for example, how family doctors are working, and certainly it allowed for better dialogue between respirology and myself.”

-Dr. Robert McKelvie, cardiologist, Western OHT

#### 4 OHTs will allow you to influence decision-making:

- ✓ Opportunities for physicians to have **meaningful input** into delivery of care and decision-making at the local level
- ✓ Dedicated positions with compensation for physicians at the OHT leadership table will ensure the **physician perspective** is considered in all regional decisions
- ✓ Being part of a physician network or association will allow physicians to come together and have a stronger, more **unified voice**.

#### Family Doctors



By being organized as a primary care sector and organized as physicians, we can really speak with one unified voice and make incredible change. The OHT gives us an avenue that we never had before, where we have all of these partners working together to really have system-wide change.”

-Dr. Vineet Nair, family doctor, Western OHT

#### Specialists



In a mature, well-functioning OHT, there is absolutely the opportunity for that grassroots message to get amplified. . . If people truly embrace the OHTs for what they are, it’s an ability to transform the healthcare system. The OHTs are the perfect opportunity to sample the grassroots and have your opinion heard.”

-Dr. Darren Cargill, palliative care physician, Windsor Essex OHT

**5 OHTs will give you more opportunities for learning and leadership development:**

- ✓ Formal and informal opportunities for physicians **to learn from each other** through local physician associations/networks, communities of practice and other groups
- ✓ More time for patient care will lead to **experiential learning**
- ✓ Opportunities for **leadership training** and support may be available for physicians taking on leadership roles within the OHT
- ✓ **Cultural competency** training opportunities and experiences working with Indigenous partners in the community can provide you with greater understanding of the barriers faced by some of your patients.

**Family Doctors**

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Being involved in an OHT has provided learning opportunities I wouldn't have had otherwise. I learn so much about the patient experience and am reminded how very important it is to provide health care and social care that is relevant and culturally informed to the best of our ability.”

-Dr. Kim McIntosh, family doctor, Couchiching OHT

**Specialists**

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I envision the OHT as a community of communities with multiple teams working together and working effectively so that everybody can feed off each other and learn on a daily basis.”

-Dr. Sandip SenGupta, pathologist, Frontenac, Lennox and Addington OHT

## Family Doctor

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There are opportunities here for physician input and involvement that can be very rewarding professionally and for your patient care... The only way that OHTs will be successful is if physicians are involved to give our voice and make sure they understand our perspective as well.”

-Dr. Vineet Nair, family doctor, Western OHT

## Specialist

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This truly should be a collaborative specialist-primary care endeavour”

-Dr. Robert McKelvie, cardiologist, London OHT

“You can’t have one without the other [family doctors without specialists]”

-Dr. Darren Cargill, palliative care physician, Windsor Essex OHT

## Get involved

As a physician, getting involved early will allow you to stay informed about what is being developed and implemented in your region. If you choose, you can also participate in the co-design of the OHT.

To learn more about your local OHT and how to get involved, contact your OMA Regional Manager: [www.OMA.org/regional-managers](http://www.OMA.org/regional-managers)