

Primary care expansion aims to reach thousands in Dufferin, Caledon

By Sam Odrowski

The Hills of Headwaters Collaborative Ontario Health Team (HOHC OHT) and the Dufferin Area Family Health Team (DAFHT) are expanding primary care services to help residents of Dufferin and Caledon access care while waiting for a family doctor.

The expansion will use a 'hub-and-spoke' model of care, working to establish care clinics where residents without a family doctor can access a primary care team while waiting to be matched with a local physician. It looks to connect more than 6,500 people in Dufferin County and Caledon to primary care by early 2027, with the remaining residents targeted for connection by 2029.

'This implementation plan represents a collaboration between a number of HOHC OHT community partners committed to expanding primary care delivery in our community,' said Dave Pearson, Executive Director of HOHC OHT. 'Through this 'hub-and-spoke' model of care, we aim to enhance our local health care system with multidisciplinary teams to deliver better care to more people across our vast geography.'

Through the expansion, physicians and nurse practitioners will be assisted in connecting patients to specialized programs and providers. This is aimed at freeing up physician time so they can take on more patients.

The expansion is also intended to improve access to diabetes and memory clinics.

It will be implemented in consultation with HOHC OHT's Primary Care Network, led by Dr. Michael Gagnon and Dr. Sonya Caruso.

'The creation of new care service entry points in our community will provide consistent, convenient, and reliable care for every Dufferin and Caledon resident outside of regular weekday business hours, affording greater continuity of care and further reducing preventable Emergency Department presentations,' says Lianne Barbour, Executive Director of DAFHT.

'We are proud of the quality of care we have been able to offer our existing patients and are thrilled with the opportunity to expand access to primary care and DAFHT programs and services to the rest of the Dufferin and Caledon community.'

To be matched with a primary care physician in Dufferin or Caledon, visit: hillsofheadwaterscollaborative.ca/accessprimarycare.