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Renfrew County Is One Step Closer To Having An Ontario Health Team

As part of the provincial initiative to make health care more collaborative, integrated and patient-centred, a local team comprised of dozens of health and social service partners has now submitted an application to become an Ontario Health Team (OHT) for this area.

Once approved, it is hoped that the new Ontario Health Team will make it easier for people to get the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

Recognized currently as “Network 24”, the team that developed the region’s application includes representation from hospitals, long-term care, paramedic services, primary care providers, agencies that provide social services, palliative care, homecare, community care, as well as mental health and addictions care and public health. In addition, input was received from both our Indigenous and francophone populations, as well as patients and families within the represented communities.

The proposed OHT will have a catchment area that includes a broad and diverse set of communities in and around the Ottawa Valley. The area stretches from Renfrew to Deep River, and includes the communities of Calabogie, Barry’s Bay, Eganville, Cobden, Pembroke, and Petawawa, as well as those along Highway 60 to South Algonquin Township.

A new name for the region’s OHT will be selected once its development is complete.

The Network 24 partners already enjoy a vast array of collaborations and partnerships across their shared areas of expertise, which will be an essential foundation in both the development and success of the new OHT. In addition, the unprecedented coming together of health care partners in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has put in place many of the structures that will be helpful and necessary to roll out the work of the OHT.

Backed by provincial funding, Network 24 will spend its first year in operation focused on enhanced care for two priority groups within our population – frail seniors and those struggling with mental health and addictions.

Areas of focus for the OHT will include increasing the number of individuals who have a primary care provider, whether family doctor or nurse practitioner. It will also work to improve awareness of the available services in our region that support our aging population to live healthfully in their home, and improve connectivity through appropriate referrals and matching patient needs to the correct service. This also holds true for those with mental health and addictions issues who should be able to access the care they need in the community in order to avoid emergency visits – particularly readmissions.

The OHT will also work to advance digital health and information sharing which will not only help family doctors, nurse practitioners, and other providers to coordinate patient care but will allow the OHT to

measure the number of referrals to services, wait times, and other metrics to make sure improvements are being made.

More information about the specifics of the work to be done and how this will benefit those in our community will be rolled out as our team advances through the development process.

In terms of next steps, pending approval of the application, the Ontario government will conduct an in-person assessment to decide if Network 24 is fully ready to become an Ontario Health Team. It is expected that the application review process will take several months.

For more information, please contact the Ontario Health Team Communication and Engagement Group for Network 24:

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