



MEDIA RELEASE

West Toronto Ontario Health Team Receives Approval

Newly approved Ontario Health Team has been working together throughout the Pandemic, most recently mobilizing to offer outdoor flu shot clinics

TORONTO, November 19, 2020—Yesterday, the Ministry of Health announced the approval of the West Toronto Ontario Health Team (WTOHT), as part of the province’s second round of Ontario Health Team (OHT) approvals.

Ontario Health Teams are a new way of delivering health care in Ontario. By coordinating care between hospitals, primary care, home and community care services, long-term care homes, congregate settings, and other services, OHTs will offer an improved and seamless health care experience for patients, caregivers, and the community. Shorter wait times, easier transitions from one provider to another and help navigating through the system are a few examples of how Ontario Health Teams will improve the patient experience. ([Read more about Ontario Health Teams](#)).

The members of the newly appointed West Toronto Ontario Health Team look to achieve this together by providing coordinated and integrated health care to all residents in West Toronto. The WTOHT will provide residents with services closer to home in their community.

“Seamless integration of health services meets the needs of patients, clients, families and caregivers to receive coordinated care and strengthens the response of providers – so that we are working in partnership to achieve better health outcomes for everyone in our community” said Gillian Bone, Lead Strategic Projects & Integration, Four Villages Community Health Centre.

While working toward the application to become an official OHT, member organizations collaborated to support one another through the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through weekly teleconferences and more structured communication, organizations were able to share much needed personal protective equipment

“I was thankful to the WTOHT member organizations for their quick collaboration,” said Deborah Gold, Executive Director, BALANCE for Blind Adults. “Their support meant we were able to stay open throughout the first wave which was important to us and our patients.”

This flu season, the WTOHT worked together with Toronto Public Health, to create opportunities for residents to receive flu vaccinations. Leadership from physicians and primary care providers within the group led to the delivery of two weekend flu clinics offered in West Toronto to anyone who wanted to receive a vaccination – no appointment or family doctor necessary. Through this collaborative effort, 1,804 community members were able to receive a flu vaccination.



WEST TORONTO
ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

In its first year, the WTOHT will focus on supporting people living with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), frail seniors, and adults 18 years and over living with mental health and addictions needs.

Over time, integrated care will be available to all residents in through WTOHT's partner organizations which includes providers from Lawrence Ave. West to the North, Ossington Ave. to the East, Lake Ontario to the South, and Etobicoke Creek to the West. Some residents in the area have already played a leadership role within in the team including Carole Ann Alloway, Co-Chair of the WTOHT Patient and Family Advisory Committee.

Alloway states, "Working with the OHT through COVID, I've seen, first-hand, the collaboration among organizations and I am excited for the future. A meaningful result of this collaboration was the outdoor flu clinics to accommodate seniors and those who are immunocompromised and didn't want to go to their doctor or a pharmacy."

Dr. Nadine Laraya, family physician, adds, "Our West Toronto Outdoor Flu Vaccine Clinics were the result of an amazing collaboration between our partner organizations, Toronto Public Health and our outstanding community of local Family Physicians. Together, we pooled together administrative, logistical, and clinical expertise to plan a weekend clinic where West Toronto residents of all ages could access flu vaccines safely and easily."

The implementation of Ontario Health Teams is a substantial system change; the tangible benefits are starting to be realized in our community through initiatives such as the flu clinics. To learn more about the West Toronto Ontario Health team visit www.wtoht.ca

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