

Durham Ontario Health Team  
**Patient, Family and Care Partner  
Partnership and Engagement Strategy**  
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## Dedication

Randy Filinski used to always end his emails with the phrase "Do What You Like....Like What You Do!" .

Randy, a long-time Pickering resident, husband, father and grandfather, liked a lot of things – golf, travel, meeting new people. But he was especially passionate about two things, his family and advocating on ways to improve the local health care system.



After retiring from IBM in 2003, Randy began volunteering with a local health care organization to drive patients to their appointments.

Looking for a way to share the stories he was collecting on their experiences, he accepted opportunities to volunteer at emerging health planning tables and for the next seventeen years devoted his time and expertise to making a difference.

His contributions at the national, provincial, regional and local level are immeasurable and in 2018 Randy was recognized by the Minister of Health for his sustained commitment and perseverance to improving outcomes and experiences for patients, families, and care partners at an individual and system level.

In March 2020, just as the pandemic got underway, Randy let his colleagues know that he needed to step away from his healthcare advocacy work with the many groups he was involved with and that he planned on continuing with a more personal view as he battled a blood disorder first diagnosed in 2019.

Randy strongly believed that the health care system could always be improved through collaboration and better communication between health care providers, patients, their family members and care partners and he was excited to see what could be achieved through the formation of the Durham Ontario Health Team.

Sadly he passed away on May 28, 2021.

This Strategy is dedicated in his memory and builds on the strong foundation that he left behind.

The outcomes it will achieve are part of his legacy and the legacy of so many other patients, family members and care partners who continue to demonstrate his passion and courage.

# **Durham Ontario Health Team Patient, Family and Care Partner Partnership and Engagement Strategy Working Group membership**

Joyce Perrin, (co-chair), Durham OHT, Patient, Family & Care Partner Advisor

Anne-Marie Yaraskavitch (co-chair), Durham OHT, Patient, Family & Care Partner Advisor

Dane Clarke, Assistant Vice President, Partnerships, CBI Health

Denyse Newton, CEO, Alzheimer Society Durham Region

Heather Smith, Vice President, Partners in Community Nursing

Lisa Kitchen, Durham OHT support, Lakeridge Health

Diana Raymond-Watts, Durham OHT support

Katie Cronin-Wood (facilitator)

## Introduction

The Durham Ontario Health Team (Durham OHT) is a collaborative group of organizations and patient, family member and care partner advisors (PFCPAs) working together to improve access and the delivery of coordinated health services across Durham region.

Through OHTs, local health care and social care and support providers work as a connected team, making it easier for people to access services and transition between providers, and empowering patients, their families and care partners in their personal health care management.

Durham OHT organizations come from across the care continuum, including primary care providers, hospitals, mental health, home care and community organizations.



As the Durham OHT, these organizations, together with patients\*, family members and care partners, are creating a co-designed system with a vision of becoming one connected system of health and social care and support for residents of Durham region, filling gaps in service, reducing duplication, improving patient, family and care partner experience and demonstrating a successful integrated model of health care provision.

*\*The use of the term patients refers to individuals accessing care and support in hospitals, primary care settings, community-based settings or in their homes, including long-term care.*

To support the achievement of this vision, the Durham OHT Patient, Family and Care Partner Partnership and Engagement Strategy has been developed by a Durham OHT working group, co-chaired by two patient, family and care partner advisors and with representation from three Durham OHT health care organizations.

**This is an evolving document that will continue to be updated as the Durham OHT develops and implements its vision.**

The Strategy is intended to ensure that partnership, co-design and engagement with patients, families and care partners are at the core of Durham OHT operational activities and sets out overarching principles that will guide the equitable inclusion of these essential partners in all work of the Durham OHT, its organizations and health care professionals.

## **Strategy Elements**

Based on guidelines from the Ministry of Health\*, the Durham OHT's Patient, Family and Care Partner Partnership and Engagement Strategy includes four foundational elements.

*\*The Strategy refers to "care partners" in place of the Ministry's use of the term "caregivers" in recognition of the key role played by non-professional individuals who jointly partner with family and friends in their care journey.*

### **Element # 1: Strategic Goal**

A high-level vision statement outlining what the Durham OHT aims to achieve with respect to patient, family and care partner engagement within its network over time.

### **Element # 2: Guiding Principles**

An outline of the core values, principles, and commitments that will serve as the foundation for the mutually beneficial outcomes that are possible through strong patient, family and care partner partnership.

### **Element # 3: Engagement Domains and Approaches**

Identification of areas in which engagement will occur across various stages and domains in Durham OHT planning, implementation, and operations.

### **Element # 4: Enablers**

Identification of key enablers that will facilitate meaningful patient, family and care partner partnership and co-design within the Durham OHT.



## Strategy on a Page

<b>Durham Ontario Health Team</b>		
<i>The Strategic Goal</i>		
<b>Engagement and partnering with patients, families and care partners are the building blocks of all Durham OHT activities in order to improve the system of health and social care and support for Durham Region residents.</b>		
<i>The Guiding Principles</i>		
<b>Collaboration and Partnership</b>	<b>Empowerment and Advocacy</b>	<b>Transparency</b>
<b>Respect</b>	<b>Learning</b>	<b>Responsiveness</b>
<i>Across the Engagement Domains</i>		
<b>Policy, Strategy, and System Level Discussions</b>	<b>Program and Service Design</b>	<b>Personal Care and Health Decisions</b>
<i>Enabled by</i>		
<b>A Culture of Continuous Quality Improvement</b>	<b>Ongoing Orientation, Education and Communication</b>	<b>Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, Health Equity and Cultural Competence</b>
<b>Minimizing Barriers</b>	<b>Skillset Matching</b>	<b>Rigorous Research and Evaluation</b>

## Element # 1: Strategic Goal

Since its inception the Durham OHT has actively engaged and partnered with patients, families and care partners:

- patient, family and care partner advisors are members of all Durham OHT collaborative decision-making structures;
- patient, family and care partner advisors provided input into the establishment of year 1 priority populations for the Durham OHT; and,
- patient, family and care partner advisors supported the development and implementation of new Durham OHT services for two initial priority populations - older adults living with complex and chronic health conditions including frailty and children with complex care needs.

As the Durham OHT continues to mature and evolve to encompass all populations, it will ensure that:

**Engagement and partnering with patients, families and care partners are the building blocks of all Durham OHT activities in order to improve the system of health and social care and support for Durham Region residents.**

In late fall 2021, this will include the recruitment of additional patient, family and care partners to launch a Durham OHT Patient, Family and Care Partner Advisory Council to represent the diverse communities served by the Durham OHT.



## **Element # 2: Guiding Principles**

The Durham Ontario Health Team Collaborative Agreement, signed by partner organizations in September 2020, contains Guiding Principles that support the achievement of the Durham OHT's vision to "become one connected system of health and social care and support for residents of Durham region; filling gaps in service, reducing duplication, improving patient, family and care partner experience, and demonstrating a successful integrated model of health care provision."

Similarly, the following Guiding Principles will support the Durham OHT in engaging with patients, family members and care partners:

### **Collaboration and Partnership**

The Durham OHT will actively invite, engage, consult and embed patients, family members and care partners in the identification, prioritization, development, implementation and evaluation of all health and social care and support initiatives impacting Durham residents. Meaningful and effective partnerships and co-design with and between patients, family members, care partners and the Durham OHT will be informed by authentic, timely and ongoing engagement.

### **Empowerment and Advocacy**

Patients, family members and care partners will be enabled to openly express their perspectives, needs, concerns and recommendations in an environment of acceptance.

### **Transparency**

Durham OHT members will acknowledge there are many opportunities to improve engagement with patients, family members and care partners and will demonstrate the willingness to commit resources to improving patient, family and care partner engagement both within their organizations and across the OHT.

### **Respect**

Patients, family members, care partners and Durham OHT health care professionals and organizations will show mutual respect by actively demonstrating appreciation for each other's time, ideas, knowledge, lived experiences, worldviews and cultural backgrounds.

### **Learning**

Patients, family members, care partners and Durham OHT health care professionals and organizations will be willing to actively listen and learn from and about each other with a unified goal of creating an integrated system of care. Learnings may include other participants' lived experiences and perspectives, facts

about the issue at hand, or how the system and the care delivered within it can be improved.

## **Responsiveness**

The Durham OHT will measure, demonstrate and communicate how it is responding to the value and positive impact of the input of patients, their families and care partners and the public.

## **Element # 3: Engagement Domains and Approaches**

The Durham OHT also affirmed its desire to work together, in partnership with patients, families and care partners, to advance integrated care in Durham and to fulfill the Ministry of Health's expectations for year one through to beyond maturity as one of its guiding principles.

The Durham OHT is committed to actively engaging and partnering with patients, family members and care partners at all levels – Policy, Strategy, and System; Program and Service Design; and, Personal Care and Health Decisions:

### **Policy, Strategy, and System Level Discussions**

The Durham OHT and its members, including patient, family member and care partner advisors, will partner together to enable system level improvements. By using the provincial leading practice of including more than one patient, family member or care partner advisor in policy, strategy, and system level discussions and structures, the Durham OHT will focus on actionable and population-driven health priorities.

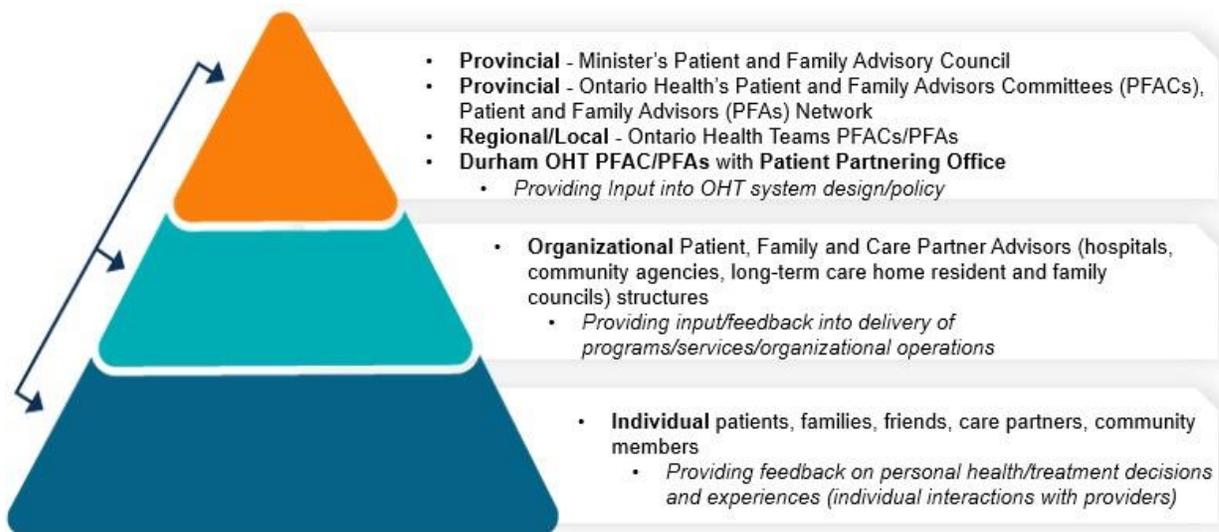
### **Program and Service Design**

The Durham OHT will initiate engagement activities that partner with patients, family members and care partners to improve specific multi-organizational health and social care and support programs, services or other projects such as quality and safety improvement initiatives to help ensure the work is guided first by the needs of the communities and the residents it serves. These activities may be ad hoc or time-limited and, by using the provincial leading practice of including more than one patient, family member or care partner advisor in program and service design structures, will draw upon their unique experiences in relation to the program or service being developed or redesigned.

## Personal Care and Health Decisions

Durham OHT members will ensure that patients, family members and care partners are proactively and meaningfully involved in personal care and health decision conversations with Durham OHT health care professionals and social service and support providers to support shared decision making and shared care. Discussions will include options for individualized plans of care to best reflect a patient's needs, wants, circumstances and lived experience.

### Provincial, Regional and Local Engagement Domains



The Durham OHT will also actively participate in engagement and partnership activities at the provincial level, regional level and across OHTs.

## Element # 4: Enablers

As the Durham OHT continues to build momentum on existing partnerships and projects to realize the full extent of its vision and beyond, its approach to meaningful patient, family and care partner partnership and co-design will be supported by:

### A Culture of Continuous Quality Improvement

An ongoing commitment to continuously improve and to use the experiences, perspectives and needs of patients, family members and care partners to identify and implement continuous improvement activities.

### Ongoing Orientation, Education and Communication

An ongoing commitment to creating an environment for PFCPAs to thrive by thoughtful consideration to onboarding them into all new and existing structures, creating respectful environments for them to share their lived/living experiences,

ensuring the use of inclusive/non-exclusionary language, providing ongoing training, support, tools, and resources for all Durham OHT members, including advisors, to enable advisors to meaningfully partner, engage and contribute..

## **Commitment to Diversity, Inclusion, Health Equity and Cultural Competence**

An ongoing commitment to engage with – and respond to – the unique needs of Indigenous, Black, or other racialized and/or Francophone and/or disabled patients, family members or care partners through the lens of health equity, recognizing those who have been disadvantaged by the health system. This will include a concerted effort to include and highlight the voices of the diverse range of urban and rural populations in Durham region.

## **Minimizing Barriers**

An ongoing commitment to consider and address barriers to participation such as financial and logistical (i.e. time and length of meetings); minimizing any chronic/systemic barriers related to factors such as language, race and disability; addressing barriers to participation through other enablers such as education, resources, training, technology support, etc.

## **Skillset Matching**

An ongoing commitment to ensuring that the right PFCPAs are sought for the diverse spectrum of work in each of the three engagement domains that can occur within the Durham OHT and recognizing that advisors with specific lived experience, knowledge, and advisory skill sets will be better positioned to contribute meaningfully when matched with the appropriate role or capacity.

## **Rigorous Research and Evaluation**

An ongoing commitment to establishing key performance indicators and evaluating the processes, outputs, and impacts of engagement activities through a lens of continuous quality improvement in order to demonstrate value and build a case for new and improved ways of partnering with patients, family members, and care partners.

## **Conclusion**

The Durham OHT has developed an ambitious roadmap to improve the delivery of health and social care and support for Durham region residents. Implementing and operationalizing the elements in this Strategy will ensure that the Durham OHT continues to actively engage and partner with patients, family members and care partners now and into the future.

## **List of Durham OHT members:**

- Patient, Family & Care Partner Advisors (PFCPAs)
- Alzheimer Society Durham Region
- Brock Community Health Centre
- Carea Community Health Centre
- CBI Health Group
- Clarington Family Health Organization
- Community Advantage Rehabilitation
- Community Care Durham
- Complex Injury Rehab Inc.
- Durham Mental Health Services
- Grandview Children's Centre
- Lakeridge Health
- March of Dimes Canada
- Medical Associates of Port Perry
- North Durham Family Health Team
- Oshawa Clinic Group
- Partners in Community Nursing
- SE Health
- The Regional Municipality of Durham
- Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada, Ontario Branch, Durham Site (VON DURHAM)