

**New Southlake Community Ontario Health Team to provide more connected care**

*Healthcare partners will work closely together to improve access to care and reduce gaps in the system*

For immediate release

**November 28, 2019, East Gwillimbury ON**

Residents of northern York Region and south Simcoe County are one step closer to truly connected care, as today the Honourable Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health announced that the Southlake Community Ontario Health Team will be one of the first Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) in the province.

OHTs are teams of local healthcare providers that, under the provincial government's new healthcare reforms, will work as one team to create a seamless local healthcare system. OHTs are part of the province's plan to end hallway health care.

The Southlake Community OHT is a partnership of a number of healthcare organizations who share both a rich history of collaboration and an exciting vision for the future of healthcare in our communities. The partners have worked closely together over the years to provide high-quality services to the patients, families and communities who rely on them for care. Building on existing successful partnerships, the team has been planning for eight months to bring connected care to the communities we serve.

The Southlake Community OHT's vision is a local healthcare system that:

- Provides coordinated care for patients, reduces wait times and leads to better health outcomes at the population level
- Takes the guess work out of navigating the healthcare system for patients, families and caregivers
- Improves access to secure digital health tools, including online health records and virtual care options
- Reduces clinician burnout (a healthcare system that also cares for the people who care for patients)
- Improves efficiency and lays the foundation for sustainability into the future

Initially, the team will focus on older adults with complex healthcare needs and adults with mental health and addiction challenges.

With today's announcement, the partners will shift their focus to preparing for implementation. This will include continued community and stakeholder engagement, further co-design with patients and families, and the ongoing development of innovative new integrated care models to address the biggest challenges our local healthcare system faces.

For more details about the Southlake Community OHT, visit [southlakecommunityOHT.ca](https://southlakecommunityOHT.ca).

**Quotes:**

"Primary care will be the centre of our OHT. In the future, care coordination and navigation supports will be embedded within your family doctor or nurse practitioner's office. This will lead to a better patient experience, less wait times and better outcomes."

*Dr. David Makary, primary care physician at the Southlake Academic Family Health Team*

"Once care coordination is available at their nurse practitioner's or family doctor's office, patients will have one number to call for support and they'll know where they need to go next for care."

*Beth Cowper-Fung, Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Director of the Georgina Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic*

“One of our objectives is to strengthen the supports that the community sector provides for the most complex patients we care for, in order to help them stay safely and with dignity at home for as long as possible.”

*Christina Bisanz, CEO of CHATS*

“By collaborating in an OHT, we can collectively achieve so much more than by working in silos.”

*Heather McDonald, CEO of LOFT Community Services*

“Collaboration can have a huge positive impact especially when it comes to community mental health, addictions and supportive housing.”

*Rebecca Shields, CEO of CMHA York Region and South Simcoe*

“We have experienced the dramatic improvements for patients, families and providers associated with collaboration through the innovative Southlake@home model, the first of its kind in Ontario.”

*Stuart Cottrelle, President of Bayshore HealthCare and Shirlee Sharkey, President and CEO of SE Health*

“Community paramedicine programs can help reduce the number of people who need to go to the Emergency Department for care and can also provide more integrated supports for people living with chronic conditions. York Region is excited to be part of this OHT.”

*Wayne Emmerson, Chairman and CEO, York Region*

“Southlake is one of the most overcrowded hospitals in Ontario. We know that by collaborating as an Ontario Health Team we can make significant progress towards eliminating hallway healthcare in the communities we serve.”

*Arden Krystal, President and CEO of Southlake Regional Health Centre*

“Extendicare is delighted to partner with healthcare service providers in this OHT to work towards creating a seamless experience for residents, patients and clients. As a provider of long-term care, home care and retirement services across the province, we support this effort to achieve a new level of integrated care.”

*Dr. Michael Guerriere, President and CEO, Extendicare*

**The Southlake Community Ontario Health Team partners are:**

- Aurora-Newmarket Family Health Team
- Bayshore HealthCare
- Canadian Mental Health Association York and South Simcoe
- CHATS
- Enhanced Care
- Extendicare
- Georgina Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic
- LOFT Community Services
- SE Health
- Southlake Academic Family Health Team
- Southlake Regional Health Centre
- The Regional Municipality of York
- Over 140 local family physicians

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