

## BRIEFING NOTE: POPULATION HEALTH

### SPRING 2018

#### Our vision for a healthier city

Hamilton is undergoing an exciting renaissance, with growth and diversification. Our population is also aging, with an increasing amount of chronic disease, and we have long-standing challenges with poverty. Hamilton Health Sciences (HHS) is planning for the future with these opportunities and needs in mind. Our vision includes:

- More focus on preventing health problems
- Helping people to better manage their health
- Providing care that is closer to home and easier to access
- Redeveloping selected hospital sites over the next 20 years

#### A population health approach

A person's health is often affected by social determinants such as income level, housing stability, education, social supports and more. A population health approach takes these social determinants into account and seeks to strengthen the entire web of health and social services – not just within hospital walls – so that people aren't forced to turn to hospitals for all their needs.

Using a population health approach means there is a greater focus on preventing health problems and addressing social needs, and supporting people to better manage their health outside of the hospital.

HHS will work in partnership with health and social service providers and primary care to identify and intervene with people most at risk of disease or preventable hospital stays. We will bring our services closer to the people who need them most, providing more care at community-based hubs and clinics.

This approach depends on a more coordinated system of care between the hospital and community-based providers.

## An example of a population health approach

Hamilton Health Sciences has an Outreach team focusing on people who repeatedly visit the Emergency Department for non-emergent health issues. Outreach team staff visit patients in their homes and work with health and primary care social services to help patients manage their health better. Early results show Outreach participants are showing healthier outcomes while reducing their use of the Emergency Department by almost 50 per cent.

## Why are we adopting this approach?

- The urban core population of Hamilton is unique in Ontario for its above average use of hospital resources. It has a high rate of poverty and related social challenges such as uncertain housing, low education and unemployment.
- People living in Hamilton's urban core often have multiple chronic conditions that make them significantly less healthy than people living in other parts of the greater Hamilton and West Niagara areas.
- Proactively intervening and helping at-risk people to better manage their health will create a healthier community with reduced hospitalization. In turn, this will reduce pressure on hospital bed capacity and improve service time, while preserving hospital space for those who need it most.

## How can I learn more?

Receive the Our Healthy Future e-newsletter. Email [ourhealthfuture@hhsc.ca](mailto:ourhealthfuture@hhsc.ca).

Ask a question or make a comment. Call **905-521-2100** ext **75387** or email [ourhealthfuture@hhsc.ca](mailto:ourhealthfuture@hhsc.ca).

Visit our web site: [www.OurHealthyFuture.ca](http://www.OurHealthyFuture.ca).

Invite HHS to speak to your organization. Contact Mary Siegner at **905-521-2100** ext **49428**, or [siegner@hhsc.ca](mailto:siegner@hhsc.ca).