

## **Summary of the Kincardine Family Health Team’s Expression of Interest for the Expansion of Primary Care Services**

### **Introduction:**

The Kincardine Family Health Team (Kincardine FHT) is submitting an Expression of Interest to Ontario Health in partnership with the Ministry of Health to expand our team to improve equitable access to Team Based Primary Care Services, including Nurse Practitioner, and Allied Health programs and Services.

The Expression of Interest introduction provided by the Ontario Health and the Ministry of Health states the following:

*“The creation or expansion of IPC teams aligns with ongoing efforts to strengthen primary health care as the foundation of the health care system in the province, ensuring Ontarians receive the right care in the right place. Accordingly, the ministry and Ontario Health are requesting proposals that demonstrate alignment with the following principles:*

- *Increasing access to care for unattached patients, patients with poorer health outcomes/health status.*
- *Ability to provide care to equity deserving populations with a demonstrated focus on reaching patients with poorer health outcomes.*
- *Efficient, effective and skills-based governance.*
- *Team based models of interprofessional primary care that maximize efficacy, scope of practice and how the team works together.*
- *Integration and collaboration with the broader health care system, including through Ontario Health Teams, as well as a commitment to participate in population-based planning for health service delivery.*
- *A commitment to using available data and evaluation for continuous quality improvement.*
- *The use of digital health to support care delivery and provide Ontarians with choice in how they interact with the health care system.”*

### **Kincardine FHT’s Current State:**

The Kincardine Physician’s Group (FHO) does not have enough physicians to increase enrollment of patients, which puts added strain on our Emergency Department and existing family practices. The Kincardine FHT has continued in our commitment to ensure that our community has access to Team Based Primary Care through our FHT regardless of enrollment with our physician group. Our Same-Day Appointment clinic run by Nurse Practitioners helps to alleviate health system burden by avoiding unnecessary Emergency Department visits and providing timely access to care for urgent concerns and can increase appointment availability for primary care physicians as well. Our target population includes any enrolled patient, any patient

residing in or visiting Kincardine and Huron-Kinloss at the time of needing Team Based Primary Care (regardless of enrollment status), any patient residing in a neighbouring community who cannot access the specific care need in their community or does not have the means (financial, transportation, insurance) to access appropriate private services. Despite the best efforts of our team, capacity is limited within our current funding and this can impact access to service. Our team approaches caseload management with a health equity lens to minimize eligibility “silos” which often impact the most vulnerable patients.

The Kincardine FHT is committed to improve equitable access to care at the right place and right time, which benefits the health of the community we serve and reduces strain on the healthcare system as a whole (reducing Emergency Department visits for non-urgent concerns, providing health promotion and allied health services to decrease hospital visits or re-admission, delaying need for supportive services or Long-Term Care).

### **Kincardine FHT Expansion Proposal**

The Kincardine FHT is aiming to address the local shortage of physicians and ER diversion by increasing Nurse Practitioner access, through a combination of increasing Same-Day Access appointment availability and providing attachment to a Nurse Practitioner as a Primary Care Provider for a portion of unattached patients in the region. This would require an increase to our current Nurse Practitioner complement.

The Kincardine FHT Expression of Interest proposal includes increasing our Nursing and Allied Health Professional Staffing, including: Nurse Practitioners, Registered Practical Nurses, Registered Nurse, Social Worker, Kinesiologist, Dietitian, System Navigator, and associated administrative roles. These increases would allow us to expand current programs, and introduce new program and services as listed below:

- Expand Existing Programs
  - Same-Day Appointment (Nurse Practitioner)
  - Chronic Disease Management
  - Fall Prevention
  - Prevention and Primary Rehab Exercise groups (Boosting Balance, Stride Alive, Neuro exercise)
  - Cardiac Rehab
  - Memory Clinic
  - Mental Health Counselling and Groups
  - Occupational Therapy (including vestibular assessment, home visits, insomnia and sleep)
  - Dietitian Services
  - Team Unbreakable (in partnership with local schools)
- Create New Programs
  - Attachment of vulnerable or priority patients to Nurse Practitioner as a primary care provider

- System Navigation (connecting providers and patients with health and social service supports to improve quality of life and health outcomes)
- Addictions Support (in partnership with RAAM)
- Palliative Care Navigation (Remote Care Monitoring)

Our expansion plans would also depend on access to space for the growth of our team. We have been in discussions with Huron-Kinloss about the needs of the community and opportunities to have a full-time presence at the Ripley Medical Clinic, by rotating our staff and services through that site. This would be essential to increase our staffing and programs, and would provide access closer to home for many who live closer to the Ripley Medical Clinic than to the Kincardine Family Health Team location in Kincardine.

The Kincardine FHT is seeking support of Huron-Kinloss for our Expression of Interest for expansion. The above outline is subject to some modification as we prepare to submit by the deadline of June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 and is subject to the approval of the Kincardine FHT Board of Directors.