# Virtual Home and Community Care Program Funding
## FY2021/22 Funding Criteria

### 1. Introduction

The Ministry of Health is providing one-time funding support to help frontline home and community care organizations to strengthen and optimize their virtual care capacity. This funding is intended to support the recovery of the health system by increasing access to publicly funded home and community care services, transforming how care is delivered, and building digital maturity for new or enhanced virtual services delivered through Ontario Health Teams (OHTs).

Organizations that are members of an approved OHT should submit a coordinated proposal that demonstrates alignment with the OHT model. Members of In Development Teams may also submit a proposal and demonstrate how their proposal aligns with the OHT model. Organizations are encouraged to collaborate on multi-OHT or regional proposals. A multi-OHT submission should demonstrate how the proposal aligns with the OHT model.

Home and community care provider organizations that are not yet part of an approved OHT may submit a proposal that aligns with the provincial priorities outlined above.

Service Provider Organizations working under a client services contract with a Home and Community Care Support Services (HCCSS) organization to provide home care services, and Health Service Providers funded by Ontario Health to provide community support services, are both eligible to apply for this funding. At this time, HCCSS organizations and public hospitals that have been approved under the HCCSA as approved agencies for professional services are not eligible for this funding.

Ontario Health welcomes proposals from Indigenous community organizations, including those serving First Nations, Inuit, Metis and Urban Indigenous persons.

Interested home and community care provider organizations should discuss this opportunity with their Ontario Health Regional Digital Lead, who is responsible for identifying initiatives that best meet the criteria and align with regional clinical priorities. Upon the endorsement of the Ontario Regions, submissions will be submitted by the Regional Digital Health Leads. Funding approvals will be overseen by the Ontario Health Digital and Virtual Care Secretariat.

### 2. Objectives

There is strong evidence that virtual care can improve patient and caregiver experience by facilitating more convenient, timely and equitable access to care. In addition, virtual care programs can be designed to improve other Quadruple Aim objectives, including improved patient and provider experience, efficiency, and population health outcomes. In most cases, virtual care is most effective when it complements in-person care in the context of established provider-patient relationships.

The objectives of this funding are:

- Providing patients with more choice in how and when they navigate the system and access their care.

- Improving access to care in the most appropriate setting, including facilitating transitions from hospital to home, post-acute care or other congregate settings.

- Enhancing care for priority populations, including frail seniors, patients with mental health and substance use disorders, palliative care and chronic diseases.
- Evaluating innovative approaches to delivering virtual home and community care services that improve the patient experience and provider efficiency.

### 3. Project Requirements

All successful proposals **must**:

- Be led by an OHT or one or more eligible home and community care provider organizations that would agree to signing a funding agreement with Ontario Health that includes performance targets and reporting requirements.

- Propose a new or enhanced virtual care program intended to improve how patients navigate the system and access care. The proposal must include a description of the program model, clear articulation of how virtual care solution(s) will be incorporated into the program model, including any referral processes, patient onboarding, clinical staffing, and patient communications (if relevant).

- Confirm that funding will be used to support the virtual delivery of home and community care services funded by the Ministry of Health or Ontario Health.

- Provide an estimate of the number of patients and caregivers that can be supported up to March 31, 2022.

- Propose a sustainable operating model that demonstrates how virtual care investments will enhance health human resource capacity. Proposals that include clinical staffing funding requests must propose matching in-kind contributions.

- Be designed with input from patients with mechanisms to measure and improve the patient experience.

- Demonstrate how services will be provided equitably for patients who face barriers to accessing virtual services due to a lack of devices, internet connectivity or digital literacy.

- Describe how the program will meet the language needs of the communities it serves (e.g., offer communications in different languages, integrate translation services into clinical workflows). Organizations within areas that are designated or partially designated under the FLSA should describe how services will be provided in French to the Francophone community.

- Be willing to participate in an evaluation.

- Be reviewed, submitted, and endorsed by the OH region; and

- Acknowledge that funding is only available for FY 2021/22

#### *OHT Proposal Guidelines*

Health care organizations that are members of an approved OHT should submit an OHT proposal. Members of an in-development team seeking to become an OHT can also submit an OHT proposal. OHT proposals must demonstrate one or more of the following criteria:

- The proposal was developed by the OHT according to processes outlined in their Collective Decision-Making Arrangement(s) and submitted with the OHT as signatory (e.g., leadership council).

- The proposal aligns with OHT priorities and OHT-specific performance indicators.

- The proposed program involves an active collaboration between OHT members.

- Funds will be flowed to and managed by a fundholder nominated by the OHT on behalf of all beneficiary OHT members.

- The proposal aligns with ministry direction to In Development teams, if applicable, (e.g. to join with other teams).

Health care organizations are encouraged to collaborate on a multi-OHT or regional proposal.

4. **Technology Criteria**

- Any funding requested for technology, including infrastructure, solution licenses, set-up or configuration costs, devices, voice or data plans, must support the delivery of health care resources and services to patients.

  - Eligible virtual care tools include tools for patient navigation and screening, online appointment booking, videoconferencing, audio, asynchronous messaging, and remote care solutions that support evidence-based care pathways and the secure collection and exchange of patient biometric or self-reported data.

  - Digital self-care tools that support health promotion or disease prevention and chronic disease management, and provider-to-provider messaging tools, are also eligible if they are part of a broader program that supports the delivery of virtual care services to patients.

  - Proposals for device lending programs, with or without data plans, must be cost-effective, targeted at individuals who face barriers to accessing care, and include a sustainability plan.

- Successful proposals that include requests for technology licenses or services for virtual care solutions using video or secure messaging will be required to use a verified solution (https://otn.ca/providers/verified-solutions/) or use a solution provider that is actively participating in the verification process by December 31st, 2021.

- Ontario Health has qualified vendors of record (VoR) for wound care solutions that are Broader Public Sector (BPS) directive compliant and reduce procurement timelines that can be leveraged as appropriate. More information is available here: https://www-origin.otn.ca/providers/wound-care-vor/

5. **Approvals Process**

Interested OHTs and home and community care provider organizations should contact their Ontario Health Regional Digital Lead (contacts in application template) to discuss their proposal. Ontario Health Regions are responsible for facilitating proposal development and determining which should be submitted for funding approval.

Proposals must be documented using the approved Home & Community Care Proposal Template.

Proposals which are approved by the Ontario Health Transitional Executive Leads will be submitted to Ontario Health Virtual Care Secretariat for funding review and approval. The Secretariat will oversee the allocation of funding to eligible proposals according to a criteria-driven process.

Ontario Health's Population Health & Valued-Based Health Systems team can also be engaged during proposal development as a subject matter expert on virtual care models, (OH contact Christine Meyer: Christine.meyer@ontariohealth.ca).