

Ontario Health Highlights

2021/22

In 2021/22, Ontario continued to battle with successive waves of the COVID-19 pandemic. Throughout the year's significant challenges, Ontario Health's focus steadfastly remained on providing system-level leadership and on-the-ground support to coordinate the province's pandemic response and protect the overall integrity of Ontario's health care system.

At the same time, we looked ahead to the pandemic entering a more stable endemic phase and planned for equitable health system recovery with our partners. This included providing clear

operational direction to Ontario's health care system and continuing to advance our clinical program priorities in areas such as cancer, kidney and cardiac care, transplant services, and mental health and addictions support.

As these pages highlight, Ontario Health team members, working with our partners across the province, made significant progress towards our mandate to better coordinate and connect Ontario's health care system, make it more efficient and support the delivery of the best possible patient-centred care.



Pandemic Response

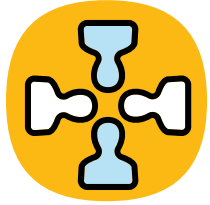
We worked closely with Ontario Health Regions, government, public health, health system and other partners to actively contribute to the government's pandemic response, ensuring coordination and best use of resources as a province-wide system to slow the spread of virus and save lives.

- We provided leadership at the regional and provincial levels and deployed structures in each of the Regions to support the health system in acting as a single, unified system in COVID-19 response.
- Our daily data reports and analytics supported the local, regional and provincial COVID-19 response.
- As COVID-19 strained Ontario's health workforce, we worked to minimize the disruption to critical health care services as (e.g., covered **3,328** urgent physician shifts in small and rural hospital emergency departments at risk of closure due to a lack of physician staffing).
- Enhancements we made to the COVID Results Patient Viewer enabled **958,802** subscribers to receive over **one million** COVID-19 results.
- Local-level sociodemographic data guided equitable access to vaccines, testing and antiviral therapies among high-priority communities, including Black and racialized people, essential workers and people living in hotspot areas.

Community Ambassadors, as part of the Ministry of Health's High Priority Communities Strategy, helped thousands of people get vaccinated against COVID-19. Many times, it was not that people didn't want to get vaccinated, but they needed support. For example, they needed information in their language or help getting an appointment outside of their work hours.



Razia Rashed
Community Ambassador
with The Neighbourhood
Organization



Equitable System Recovery

Health system recovery was an area of heightened and ongoing focus through 2021/22. We worked with hospitals and the ministry to actively monitor surgical volumes and acceptance of patient transfers to assess compliance with directions and ensure equitable access to care for patients.

- Working through our Regions, we helped maximize recovery efforts by determining the best way to allocate **\$300 million** in surgical recovery funds invested by the Ministry of Health to help tackle the backlog of surgeries as a result of the pandemic.
- Despite the dramatic impact the pandemic had on overall surgical capacity, we continued to prioritize cancer surgeries; by March 31, 2022, cancer surgeries were at **105%** of pre-pandemic (2019) volumes.
- We enhanced cancer screening, COVID-19 regional monitoring and planning tools with data on cancer incidence, and Ontario Breast Screening Program participants who were overdue for mammogram rescreening. By March 31, 2022, volumes for cancer screening tests exceeded pre-pandemic levels: **130%** for fecal tests; **102%** for Pap tests; **111%** for mammograms.

As we recover from the pandemic, we are focused on helping patients who have been waiting overly long for surgery. We monitor wait times, work with facilities or hospitals to help them get patients in on time and work with surgeons to ensure patients are prioritized appropriately.



Ordeena Linton
Clinical Liaison, Surgical
Information Program,
Ontario Health



Enhanced Access to Quality Care

We continued to focus on the delivery of high-quality care and positive health outcomes for the people of Ontario by advancing evidence-based care, engaging with clinicians, setting standards, and supporting integration and equity.

- We released four new quality standards to enhance clinical care: Prediabetes and Type 2 Diabetes; Type 1 Diabetes; Diabetes in Pregnancy; and Transitions From Youth to Adult Health Care Services.
- In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, a new cardiac services funding model was implemented at 20 advanced cardiac hospitals serving approximately **90,000** cardiac patients in Ontario.
- **1,184** lives were saved through organ transplantation, and many more lives were enhanced via **2,175** tissue donors.
- **230** people received a living kidney donor transplant.
- **26.2%** of chronic dialysis patients were dialyzing at home.
- More than **82%** of eligible chronic dialysis patients and **77%** of Multi-Care Kidney Clinic patients received their third dose of the COVID-19 vaccine, well above the third dose rates in the general population.

The Quintuple Aim – which encompasses enhanced patient experience, improved population health, enhanced provider experience, improved value and enhanced health equity – is central to our health system planning at Ontario Health. As a framework, it ensures we look holistically at our programs, services and strategy, building a better system for Ontarians.



Stephanie Lockert
Chief, Strategy & Planning



Enhanced Access to Quality Care – Spotlight on Cancer

Our Cancer Program supports providers, policy makers and health care organizations in the provincial cancer system to achieve the best outcomes for patients through continual improvement in the quality, safety and accessibility of cancer services from diagnosis through to long term follow-up and end-of life care.

- We developed or released **27** new or updated clinical guidance documents (with an additional 20 guidelines initiated and in development) and two cancer pathway updates were completed, setting the standard of care and advancing quality in the cancer system.
- Funding for four new drugs will treat approximately **525** patients with acute leukemia in both the inpatient and outpatient setting annually.
- The Bayshore symptom management nursing tele-triage services averaged over **2,000** calls per month from close to **1,400** unique patients, providing timely support to cancer patients managing symptoms at home and reducing inappropriate emergency department visits.
- More than **7,000** low dose CT scans were performed through the Ontario Lung Screening Program, Canada's first organized lung screening program.

In July, a small oncology team from The Ottawa Hospital offered our first-ever clinic in Nunavut. Thanks to this program, patients can go home on oral chemotherapy and have a follow-up appointment in Iqaluit instead of having to fly back to Ottawa with their escorts and be housed for up to a week or more. This is far less traumatizing for patients and much less costly for the health system.



Carolyn Roberts
First Nation, Inuit and
Métis nurse navigator
for the Ottawa Hospital
Cancer Centre



Enhanced Access to Quality Care – Spotlight on Mental Health & Addiction

The Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence works closely with the Regions and sector partners to improve quality, expand existing services, implement innovative solutions and improve access.

- **\$30.3 million** was invested across the province, in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Ontario Health Regions, as part of the government’s Roadmap to Wellness. This includes investments for bed-based services, Rapid Access Addiction Medicine and peer supports.
- With our Regions, we supported the rollout of the government’s Addictions Recovery Fund investments (**\$90 million** over three years).
- Four new mobile mental health and addictions clinics were launched to provide access to a range of services in hard-to-reach communities.
- The Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program enrolled **12,600** new clients through 10 network lead organizations.
- Breaking Free Online opened to all Ontarians ages 16+, with about **3,000** client assessments completed.
- **1,800** front-line health care workers enrolled for online peer groups and one-on-one mental health and addiction supports through the Frontline Wellness Program.

There needs to be more capacity for mental health services for people who live with chronic illness, especially chronic illnesses like diabetes that lead to life-altering complications. Their families need support, too, because their life is turned upside down as well.



Robert Little
Patient representative
with the Lower Limb
Strategy Project



Support System Transformation

We have focused on several areas that will fundamentally advance health system integration and care for patients.

- In partnership with the ministry, we supported the approval of nine new Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) and helped advance several of these applications.
- Digital and virtual care funding was provided to support **226** projects led by OHTs.
- The Leading Projects initiative was launched to identify opportunities to establish new models of integrated care and provide insight into various planning options and complexities that will need to be addressed in home and community care modernization.
- We developed a long-term care (LTC) and aging care internal governance structure and LTC operating model to support regions and portfolios in the delivery of programs for LTC (e.g., quality, palliative care).

The Ontario Health East and North West Regions took the lead in adapting the OHT model to recognize the uniqueness of our regions. This made-in-the-North model considers the connection of local OHTs with regional specialized services, which will result in comprehensive OHT coverage and better coordinated care and value for all.



Brian Kytzor
Chief Regional Officer,
Ontario Health North East
& North West



Digital & Virtual Care Investments

Ontario's Digital First for Health strategy reimagines the way we think and work to create an integrated, sustainable and person-centred health care system.

- Health 811 launched on March 31, 2022. This health care navigation service, which includes a call centre (811) and website, allows people to use an online symptom-checker, chat with navigators and clinicians, and look up information about health care services in their area as well as trusted information about health conditions.
- Additionally, OHTs received funding for digital and virtual care projects, with a median amount of over **\$300,000** each. The virtual care projects are estimated to support over 103,000 patients with Remote Patient Monitoring and Virtual Care, and over **1,500,000** patients with new availability to book an online appointment with their primary care provider.
- While virtual care visits levelled off to see more balance to in-person visits, there were **789,828** unique patients accessing virtual visits on Ontario Health-supported platforms through the year.

Virtual health care is a multichannel universe, with services offered by phone, video, online chat or in person. Ontario Health's approach is to work with health care providers and the public to ensure individuals can access the right channel for their needs.



Dr. Sacha Bhatia
Population Health and
Value Based Health
Systems Executive,
Ontario Health



Reducing Health Inequities

We are reducing health inequities by embedding equity in all our activities. To achieve better outcomes for all, Our Equity, Inclusion, Diversity and Anti-Racism Framework highlights the need to explicitly identify and address the impacts of racism in all its forms, with an emphasis on anti-Indigenous and anti-Black racism given the disproportionate impacts of racism on these communities.

- We published “Tracking COVID-19 Through Race-Based Data,” which called for a persistent anti-racism approach to addressing systemic health inequities, standardizing sociodemographic data collection through OHIP, and using race-based data to inform health system recovery.
- The Black Health Plan Working Group, a community of health sector leaders and health equity experts, was established to advance health outcomes for Black populations.
- We began creating the Indigenous Data Governance Matters process for all uses of Indigenous data across Ontario Health to ensure data is accessed and utilized appropriately in accordance with Indigenous data governance principles.
- We disseminated the Indigenous Cancer Care Unit’s province-wide Impact Assessment of barriers and opportunities within the cancer system to First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous communities, the Political Territorial Organizations and the Regional Cancer Programs.

I’m very happy that Ontario Health is listening to people who have lived experience with the health care system.

We need to plan our health system to work for the most marginalized, the poorest, the most diverse populations that we can. If we make our health system function for all those folks, then it will function for everybody.”



Teri Henderson
Patient & Family Advisory Council member, Ontario Health Toronto Region



Strengthen Ontario Health

This year, we advanced our agency integration and unification mandate, moving forward with a transformation plan aimed at creating an integrated, high-performing and efficient organization.

- We achieved full integration and unification of 22 separate health organizations into one Ontario Health.
- Trillium Gift of Life Network and CorHealth joined Ontario Health (April 1, 2021, and December 1, 2021, respectively).
- Digital Excellence in Health restructured into an integrated digital service delivery model with defined key capabilities needed to meet our mandate of creating an integrated, coordinated digital and virtual service to enable and support health care delivery across the province.
- Our regional model allows us to identify regional and local health care needs, while also promoting the sharing of best practices and quality improvement within all regions and communities across Ontario.
- We created two northern Regions – North East Region and North West Region – to better support diverse needs in the North.
- Our strong financial performance throughout 2021/22 achieved **0.7%** variance to budget.

We work in partnership with the hard-working clinical teams at rural and Northern hospitals across Ontario. When we avert a short-term staffing crisis or contribute to a longer-term staffing solution, we all celebrate.



Cheryl B.
Manager, Emergency Department and Northern Specialist Locum Programs

About Us

We are an agency created by the Government of Ontario to connect, coordinate and modernize our province's health care system. We work with partners, providers and patients to make the health system more efficient so everyone in Ontario has an opportunity for better health and wellbeing.

We oversee health care planning and delivery across the province to build a person-centred health care system.



Our Vision

Together, we will be a leader in health and wellness for all.



Our Mission

To connect the health system to drive improved and equitable health outcomes, experiences and value.



Our Values

Integrity, Inspiration, Tenacity, Humility and Care

We are very grateful to our team members across Ontario Health, our Board of Directors, and our partners across the province, including the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Long-Term Care. Thanks to their many contributions, ongoing tenacity and commitment over this extended and unprecedented period, we are achieving our goal to improve the health and wellness of all Ontarians.



Matthew Anderson
President & CEO,
Ontario Health