

November 27, 2007

COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES IN ONTARIO

Community Health Centres (CHCs) are non-profit organizations that provide primary health care for individuals, families and communities. They also address other factors that affect wellness, such as education, employment, income, social support, environment and housing.

Current Status in Ontario

CHCs are an important part of the province's primary care renewal strategy, complementing Family Health Teams and other models in place to meet the family health care needs of Ontarians.

There are currently 54 CHCs and 10 satellites CHCs operating in Ontario: 27 in large urban centres, 14 in smaller urban centres and 13 in either northern and/or rural communities. CHCs currently have approximately 350,000 active clients.

Satellite CHCs are sponsored by existing CHCs to either serve a different neighbourhood or town, or to serve a distinct priority population, for example, at-risk youth. Satellite CHCs are smaller than CHCs and offer a smaller range of programs that are tailored to meet the needs of that community.

In November 2005, the government announced \$74.6 million to support a three-year expansion of the CHC program, funding 22 new CHCs and 17 new Satellite CHCs by 2007-08.

Programs Overview

CHCs use a community development approach to health care that ensures Ontarians who face access barriers such as race, language, poverty, physical disabilities or geographic isolation have access to family health care and community health programs.

The centres have teams of health care professionals including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counsellors, community workers and dieticians who deliver a range of services.

The services offered by each CHC vary depending on the needs of the local community. A CHC will identify local needs and then offer programs and services to meet those demands. These can include:

- Family health care
- Primary mental health care
- Nutrition workshops
- Housing security and homelessness
- Access to employment
- Supports to immigrants and refugees
- Seniors drop-in
- Multilingual programming on a variety of topics

- Women's support group

THE UNITED WAY OF GREATER TORONTO

United Way of Greater Toronto (UWGT) is a registered charity and community impact organization dedicated to improving lives and strengthening neighbourhoods across Toronto. The United Way identifies needs and takes action to create a better, safer, stronger city through research, partnerships and support of a network of 200 health and social service agencies. These agencies deliver quality services and programs to every corner of Toronto to impact the following areas: employment, health care support, hunger and homelessness prevention, neighbourhoods, newcomers, people with addictions, people with HIV/AIDS, people with disabilities, women who have been abused, seniors and young children. In 2007, United Way remains focused on three priority areas—strengthening neighbourhoods, creating opportunities for youth and helping to fulfill the potential of newcomers.

THE STRONG NEIGHBOURHOODS TASK FORCE REPORT

The United Way of Greater Toronto's Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force report (released in October, 2005) identified the need for local non-profit organizations that can address the needs of their area in a multi-purpose, holistic way. The report also called for increased infrastructure in thirteen priority neighbourhoods in the City.

As part of the United Way of Greater Toronto's Neighbourhood Strategy, it will support the development of community hubs in eight of the priority neighbourhoods. Community hubs will enhance infrastructure in these under-served neighbourhoods and create a central place that will bring together local residents and a broad range of services and programs to strengthen neighbourhoods. Hubs are envisioned as locally responsive and accessible to the diversity of people living in the neighbourhood.

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