

# Elgin Ontario Health Team Patient/Client, Family and Caregiver Partnership and Engagement Strategy<sup>1</sup>

The Elgin Ontario Health Team's (Elgin OHT's) vision is to *“provide the best experience for patients/clients, families, and caregivers; deliver high-quality and sustainable services; provide the best experience for providers; and achieve the healthiest community with equitable access to care for all.”*

## PURPOSE

The Elgin OHT Patient/Client, Family and Caregiver Partnership and Engagement Strategy (the Strategy) is intended to ensure that high-quality partnership, collaborative design, and engagement with patients/clients, families and caregivers are at the core of all Elgin OHT activities.

This Strategy provides a plan to help achieve our goals. It will evolve as circumstances change, and as we learn from our experiences. It will also take time to implement. This document will be part of our annual review to ensure the principles are updated and reflected in our work and planning.

## STRATEGIC GOAL

The Elgin OHT weaves meaningful engagement into all aspects of our work. We engage and partner with patients/clients, families, and caregivers in a collaborative way, so they feel valued and heard, and their input guides and informs our actions. This ensures what we do aligns with the strengths and needs of the community.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Strategy's Guiding Principles support us to successfully engage and partner with patients/clients, families and caregivers. The principles are informed by and align with the [Patient, Family, and Caregiver Declaration of Values for Ontario](#)<sup>2</sup>

<https://files.ontario.ca/moh-patient-family-caregiver-declaration-of-values-for-ontario-en-2021-08-31.pdf> and the Elgin OHT's [Guiding Principles and Values](#) for how we work together.

- **Person-Centric** – The person is at the centre of our work so we build on the strengths and meet the needs of the whole person (physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual). Our work reflects what matters to patients/clients, families and caregivers.
- **Diversity and Inclusion** – We engage, consider, and learn from many perspectives. We appreciate the value of each person's experiences and realize people come from different circumstances.
- **Innovation and Courage** – We are driven by innovation, creativity, and a willingness to change the status quo to improve health outcomes and experiences. We consistently prioritize the unique strengths and needs of the people and communities we serve.

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<sup>1</sup> This Strategy is adapted from Health Quality Ontario's [Patient Engagement Framework](#). The terms “patient”, “client”, “family”, and “caregiver” are used temporarily as they are commonly used in the sector and generally well understood; however, we recognize the need to engage stakeholders to determine the most appropriate language to use for the OHT going forward.

<sup>2</sup> The [Patient, Family and Caregiver Declaration of Values for Ontario](#) was originally developed by the Minister of Health's provincial Patient, Family and Caregiver Council in October, 2019 and updated in July, 2021. It is aligned with the principles defined in this Strategy and endorsed by the signatory partner organizations of the Elgin OHT. We are committed to aligning future revisions to this Declaration with our Strategy and assuring it reflects the expectations of the patients/clients, families, and caregivers and unique characteristics of our region.

- **Collaboration and Meaningful Engagement** – We engage patients/clients, families, and caregivers deliberately at all stages of our work. Empathy and compassion are essential components to our engagement approach. We work to ensure equitable opportunities for participation.
- **Respect and Trust** – We treat patients/clients, families, and caregivers fairly and with dignity. We listen with humility and seek to understand and appreciate divergent opinions. We communicate with transparency, honesty and openly.
- **Accountability and Integrity** - We are accountable to the population we serve for the principles identified above. The community guides our decision-making and we ask for continued feedback to inform improvements and ensure we remain accountable to those we serve and support.

## ENGAGEMENT DOMAINS

We support meaningful and effective engagement of patients/clients, families, and caregivers across the following domains:

- Policy, Strategy, and Governance
- Program Planning, Service Design, and Implementation
- Community Education and Service Delivery

## ENGAGEMENT APPROACHES

We use a range of approaches to involve people in our work<sup>3</sup>:

- **Inform** – “Here’s what’s happening.”
- **Consult** – “Here are some options, what do you think?”
- **Involve** – “Here’s a problem, what ideas do you have?”
- **Collaborate** – “Let’s work together to solve this problem.”
- **Empower** – “You care about this issue and are leading an initiative, how can we support you?”

## STRATEGIC ENABLERS

We facilitate meaningful patient/client, family, and caregiver partnerships by:

- Leveraging existing community relationships, resources, and partnerships
- Providing clear and understandable information that:
  - Considers accessibility
  - Reduces barriers to involvement
  - Is offered through a variety of formats (written, oral and visual) and channels
  - Includes technical support for various communication platforms
  - Is consistent and ongoing
  - Includes virtual and in-person opportunities for input
- Measuring, evaluating, and sharing outcomes of our work, including our engagement efforts
- Seeking diverse representation (such as age, gender, ethnicity, health condition(s), caregiver type) to design innovations and improvements for the OHT community we serve
- Promoting and supporting an environment of learning and continuous improvement, including as related to cultural considerations, inclusion, and diversity

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<sup>3</sup> This continuum was developed by the [International Association for Public Participation \(IAP<sup>2</sup>\)](#) and adapted by [Tamarack Institute](#).

