

Ontario Health Team

Primary Care Communications Protocol: Enabling Success through Connecting Primary Care and Physician Partners

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Element # 1: Strategic Goal
<p>A clear and unifying statement outlining what the communications protocol is intended to achieve for the benefit of the WOHT’s advancement.</p> <p>Connecting primary care and physician partners through meaningful engagement and co-design, and effective communications efforts will allow the Western OHT (WOHT) to build a solid foundation and will be essential to undertake the significant health system transformation required to achieve the quadruple aim.</p> <p>WOHT will establish and maintain mechanisms for communication with all providers (and their associated administrative supports) responsible for patients and working in primary care settings, including <u>nurse practitioners, team-based physicians, fee-for-service physicians, interprofessional health care providers, and Indigenous traditional health practitioners, as well as both community and hospital-based specialist physicians.</u></p> <p>The WOHT will partner together with current WOHT members and Cluster Representatives, and other existing organizations and professional associations to identify relevant stakeholders, determine communication needs and attract new members.</p> <p>The purpose of the communication protocol is to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure relevant, targeted, useful, and digestible information about the WOHT is shared across a broad range of partners, in a manner that respects those partners’ preferences. • Ensure population health needs are commonly understood and there are shared priorities across providers; • Foster meaningful participation from providers in community and hospital settings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With providers that are not yet aware of WOHT or its benefits, the goal is to raise awareness and attract them to participate in the WOHT ○ With providers who understand the value and are interested, the goal is to attract them to participate by making it clear and easy to do so. ○ With providers already participating in WOHT, the goal is to sustain or increase their participation. • Provide targeted messaging about what WOHT has done and will do for providers, patients, and the broader health care community and why.

- Inform providers of opportunities to contribute to or lead WOHT activities;
- Enable providers to communicate with each other to advance the WOHT’s aims.

Element # 2: Enablers

The WOHT will commit to upholding the following enablers to advance primary care and physician partner connection.

Culture of transparency and trust

- Focus on developing mutual respect and mutual purpose
- Provide clarity and transparency in decision making
- Evaluate progress and provide regular feedback

Physician leadership

- Incorporation of formal and informal physician leadership/champions in co-design, operations and governance including development and implementation of communication protocols

Leverage existing relationships and partnerships

- Work with cluster representative members and other professional associations to understand communication needs, co-develop communication channels and materials, relay information, and provide feedback to allow ongoing improvement
- Gradually build opportunities for cross-organization/cross-specialty interactions and relationship building

Inclusion and Demographic Diversity

- Understand the diversity of primary care and specialty providers, practice settings and work context and ensure that all voices and perspectives are considered and represented; make it safe and easy to have a voice

Opportunities for Learning and Continuous Improvement

- Provide a forum for shared learning and dissemination of best practice evidence and research; continuously seek feedback for what could be improved

Sustain Relationships and Involvement

- Balancing ad hoc communication with ongoing updates on Western OHT activities and outcomes; continuing to work to “close the loop” and provide feedback on how stakeholder feedback and involvement contributed to system improvements

Element # 3: Tactics and Continuous Review

Based on the needs of the WOHT’s primary care and physician partners, these are the tactics that will serve as the foundation for the communications protocol.

Culture of transparency and trust

- Having awareness of different contexts and challenges of primary care providers and other physician partners and adapting the “why, what and how” of communications to meet those diverse needs e.g., meeting times, clearly defining the ask, identifying the value proposition
- Providing opportunities for interactive dialogue to identify shared values and purpose and co-develop strategy
- Using the RAPID decision-making framework to clearly articulate when requesting input vs decision making; being clear on constraints and what the Western OHT can and cannot do
- Using a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches to provide feedback on how input has been incorporated and goals and objectives met

Physician leadership

- Operations team includes a Clinical Lead (Specialist, 0.4 FTE) and a Digital Health Clinical Lead (Primary Care provider, 0.1-0.2 FTE)

- Formal partnership with London Middlesex Primary Care Alliance (LMPCA) through the Cluster Membership Agreement; Clinical Lead sits on LMPCA Executive
- Primary care providers on Coordinating Council
- Physician reimbursement policy allows physicians to participate in Western OHT development activities without loss of income
- Sharing opportunities for physician leadership training and development that are offered through the OHT network and OHT member organizations

Leverage existing relationships and partnerships

- Ensuring Cluster Membership Agreements include language around communication protocols
- Consult with Cluster Representatives to determine their communication needs when recruiting new members and providing information about the WOHT and opportunities to be involved
- Leverage existing meetings/events for formal and informal opportunities to network
- Work with other established organizations/associations who have existing relationships with primary care and other physician partners e.g., Partnering for Quality, OMA Section representatives and manager, London Academy of Medicine

Inclusion and Demographic Diversity

- Use of an equity matrix to ensure diversity of representation in co-design activities
- Engaging with Indigenous, Francophone and other cultural communities; gathering feedback on our communications, co-designing Name, Branding, Website content
- Providing a range of options for meeting times and both synchronous and asynchronous communication
- Always ask “who else needs to be part of this conversation?”

Opportunities for Learning and Continuous Improvement

- Providing opportunities for accredited Continuing Professional Development
- Explore and co-design opportunities for learning networks and learning health systems
- Seek formal (focus groups, surveys) and informal feedback on the work of the Western OHT and its communication tactics

Sustain Relationships and Involvement

- Providing regular formal and informal communication through newsletters/status reports and participation at regular meetings/events; ensuring information is clear, succinct, and contextualized to meet the needs of diverse stakeholders
- Providing clear contact information on how to contact members of the Western OHT and ensuring timely follow-up

Next Steps:

Enablers and tactics listed above are based on preliminary feedback and resources from the Ontario Medical Association (OMA), Ontario College of Family Physicians (OCFP) and London Middlesex Primary Care Alliance (LMPCA) and a small number of other provider stakeholders. Enablers and tactics will continue to be validated and refined as WOHT representatives continue meeting with each stakeholder group to identify their specific engagement and communication preferences. Each stakeholder meeting will focus on the following questions and inform WOHT’s operational communications plan:

1. Your knowledge and understanding of the work of the WOHT. Your perspectives on the role of the WOHT i.e. What excites you? What concerns you?
2. What do you see as potential challenges or barriers to participating in WOHT planning or initiatives (*for example, negative experience with similar initiatives, best and worst time of day to meet, etc.*)?

3. Are there pain points or challenges you experience in your work and/or opportunities for improvement that can be addressed by the WOHT?
4. How would you like to be involved in the work of the WOHT?
5. Key information you would like to receive from the WOHT
6. Communication channels that WOHT can utilize to communicate with you (*existing newsletters, meetings, etc.*)

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