

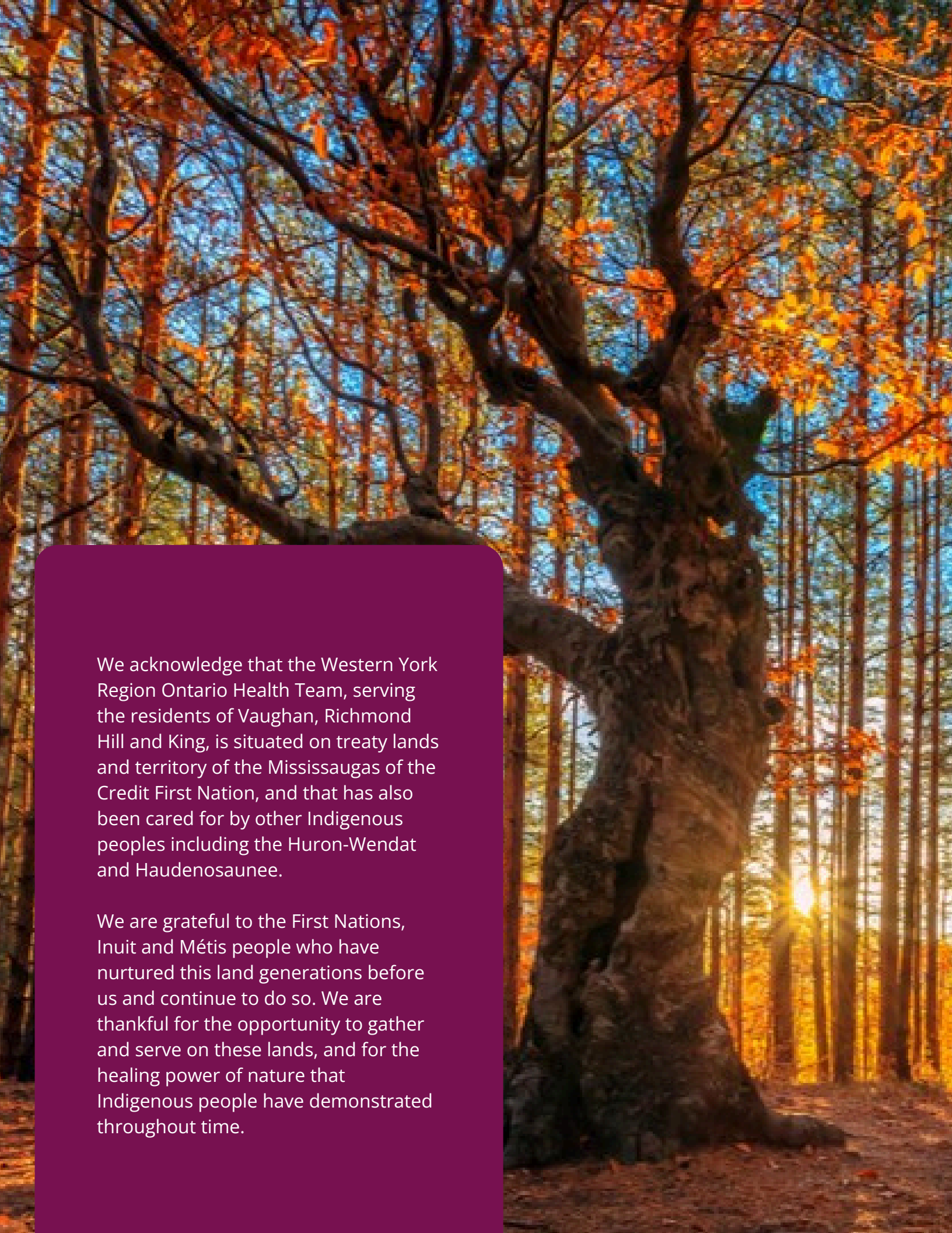


Western
York Region
ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM

Annual Report

2024/2025





We acknowledge that the Western York Region Ontario Health Team, serving the residents of Vaughan, Richmond Hill and King, is situated on treaty lands and territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and that has also been cared for by other Indigenous peoples including the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee.

We are grateful to the First Nations, Inuit and Métis people who have nurtured this land generations before us and continue to do so. We are thankful for the opportunity to gather and serve on these lands, and for the healing power of nature that Indigenous people have demonstrated throughout time.

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A message from our Co-Chairs

We are proud to share the Western York Region Ontario Health Team's inaugural annual report — an important milestone in our journey to transform how care is delivered in our communities.

Since the launch of our OHT, partners across health, community and social services have come together with a shared commitment: to create a more connected, person-centred health system. This past year has been one of continued learning, collaboration and meaningful progress. Together, we've taken important steps to improve access to care and support people across the continuum — from hospital to home and everywhere in between.

We are especially proud of the relationships we've built — with patients, caregivers, primary care providers, community organizations and many others. These partnerships are the foundation of our work and key to designing a system that works better for everyone.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on improving health outcomes, strengthening local services and making it easier for people to access the care they need, when and where they need it. A key priority in the year to come is advancing our shared vision for high-quality, team-based primary care to improve access for more people. With strong collaboration already in place, we are well positioned to launch both new and expanded interdisciplinary primary care teams that will better support residents across Western York Region.

This also marks a year of transition in our leadership. After serving as Co-Chair since our OHT's launch in 2019, Altaf will conclude his term in 2025. It has been an honour to co-lead this work and to witness the strength of our partnerships in action. As this chapter closes, we are confident in the continued commitment from our partners to carry this work forward.

Thank you to all our partners, staff and community members who have contributed to our progress. We look forward to building on this momentum together.

Sincerely,

Altaf Stationwala

President and CEO,
Mackenzie Health

Bryan Keshen

CEO, Reena

About us

Your care. Your team.

The Western York Region Ontario Health Team is focused on co-ordinating services with community partners to provide better care in Vaughan, Richmond Hill and King. Our goal is to provide more connected, accessible and patient-centred care by breaking down silos and ensuring that individuals receive the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

Our team includes **16 partner organizations** from across acute and primary care, home and community support, mental health services, seniors care, long-term care and palliative care. By focusing on collaboration and innovation, we are building a health system together that is more responsive and inclusive for patients, providers and caregivers in our communities.

Our values

Community – we are dedicated health and social service providers in the King, Vaughan and Richmond Hill communities.

Compassionate care – we provide compassionate and care services for all people in Western York Region.

Collaboration – we collaborate to deliver co-ordinated services and a pathway to better living.

Change – we see a better future for health care in our region, and with the right changes, we know it's possible.

Our community

The Western York Region OHT serves a vibrant and growing population of approximately **563,000** people across Vaughan, Richmond Hill and King. By 2051, our region's population is expected to reach over **960,000** with significant growth projected in all three municipalities.

Our community reflects a rich diversity of cultures, languages and life experiences. A high proportion of residents identify as immigrants — **47 per cent** in Vaughan, **60 per cent** in Richmond Hill and **26 per cent** in King. Many speak a non-English mother tongue, and over 100 unique foreign languages are spoken in both Vaughan and Richmond Hill.

Visible minorities represent **41, 67** and **18 per cent** of the population in Vaughan, Richmond Hill and King respectively. This cultural and linguistic diversity shapes the way care must be delivered — with a focus on accessibility, equity and culturally responsive services.

Our population is also aging. Seniors account for more than **16 per cent** of residents in each of our three municipalities, underscoring the need for enhanced services and supports to help older adults age with dignity.

Access to primary care remains a challenge for many. The 2024 **Primary Care Needs OurCare** report indicates that one in five Canadians don't have access to primary care. That equates to approximately **113,800** people in Western York Region without access — a gap that highlights the need for improved system navigation and expanded access points.

As we plan for the future, this evolving landscape reinforces the importance of integrated, person-centred care — designed in partnership with our community, for our community.

Data sources: 2022 Regional Official Plan, 2021 Census Report, York Region 2021 Census Release Report: Language, Primary Care Needs OurCare: The final report of the largest pan-Canadian conversation about primary care



Our staff team



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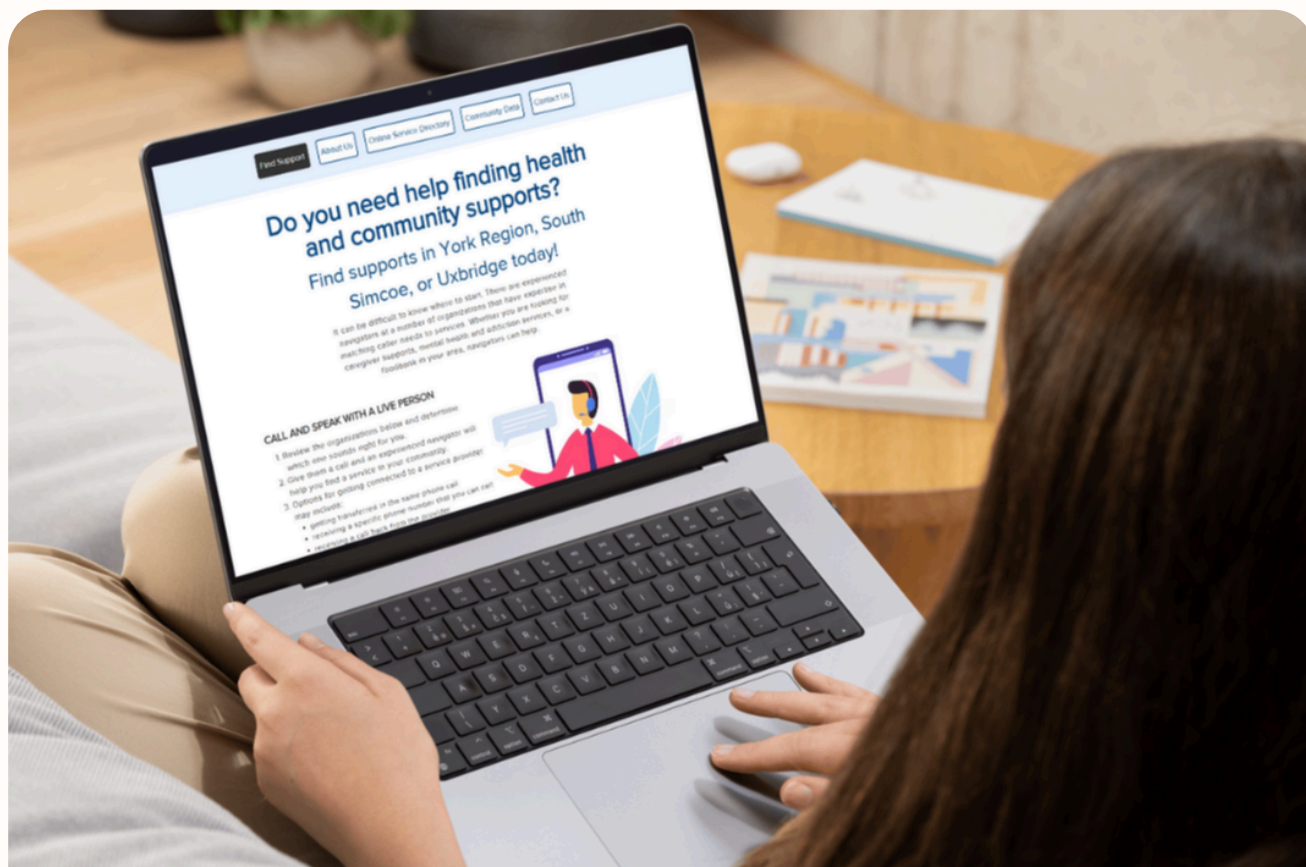
Connecting care through technology

Linking residents to the right support

In a joint effort to improve access to health and social services, we partnered with the [Eastern York Region North Durham](#) and [Northern York South Simcoe](#) Ontario Health Teams to launch a [navigation website](#) this year.

This user-friendly platform connects individuals across York Region, South Simcoe and Uxbridge with local navigation organizations that help people find the right supports for their unique needs. Since its launch in September 2024, more than 500 individuals have accessed the website.

Whether someone is seeking mental health and addiction services, caregiver supports, food banks or other community resources, the website serves as a gateway to timely, coordinated assistance in as few steps as possible.



Supporting a seamless care journey with Online Appointment Booking

In today's evolving health care landscape, digital tools are transforming how patients access care and how providers deliver it. Online Appointment Booking (OAB) is one tool playing a key role in modernizing care across the Western York Region OHT.

OAB makes it easier for patients to book appointments anytime, while reducing administrative workload and improving scheduling for providers. It's a key step toward a more connected, accessible and patient-centred health system.

This year, Ontario Health provided new funding to help eligible primary health care organizations adopt and expand OAB solutions – supporting provincial efforts to improve digital health maturity.

Thanks to this year's funding:

- **23 new OAB licenses** were issued to primary care organizations across the region
- More than **54,900 patients** gained access to OAB-enabled practices
- Over **29,000 appointments** were successfully booked through OAB solutions

These outcomes show the real-world impact of improving access for patients and helping providers manage capacity. As digital health capabilities grow, OAB remains a key tool in building a seamless care journey across Western York Region.



Shaping the future of primary care in Western York Region

Defining strategy, strengthening care

In November 2024, we held a strategic planning session with local health partners, care providers and Patient and Family Partners to improve how primary care is delivered in our communities. This work is all about making it easier for people to get the care they need – when and where they need it. The session marked an important step in shaping a strong, sustainable **Primary Care Network** that reflects the needs of both providers and the communities we serve.

By bringing together voices from across the region, including [Carefirst](#), [York University](#), [March of Dimes Canada](#), [York Region](#), [Mackenzie Health](#) and [SE Health](#), we're building a stronger, more connected network of care that reflects the real needs of both patients and providers.

The ideas shared during the session are already helping shape a plan for more accessible and equitable care – so everyone in our region can count on the right support at every stage of their health journey.



Bridging gaps in complex care: launching the SCOPE Program

With our partner, [Mackenzie Health](#), the Western York Region OHT laid the groundwork this year for launching SCOPE (Seamless Care Optimizing the Patient Experience), a program that connects primary care providers to specialized services and system navigation to better support patients with complex needs. We achieved several key milestones this year to position SCOPE for a successful launch in spring 2025.

Behind the scenes, a robust digital platform was developed to support SCOPE's daily operations and streamline navigation, with detailed workflows co-developed alongside key partners to ensure timely, seamless access to care. We also welcomed a dedicated SCOPE Navigator to our team, specially trained through Mackenzie Health and the provincial SCOPE team.

To prepare for rollout, we developed a plan to onboard local primary care providers and services in phases, beginning with diagnostic imaging for deep vein thrombosis as our first area of focus. Based on provider feedback, future services will include pregnancy assessment, mental health and addictions, home care and palliative care.

By breaking down silos and streamlining access to care, SCOPE is a key initiative helping to build a stronger, more integrated health system – one where patients and providers get the support they need, when and where they need it.

Planning today for tomorrow's care

This year, our OHT brought together primary care providers, community organizations and system leaders to co-design a new model of primary care that reflects the needs of our growing and diverse population.

This locally developed, innovative approach will integrate health and community services directly with primary care, promote full use of each team member's expertise and strengthen digital connections to support seamless care across organizations. The model also builds academic partnerships to support training and help retain health professionals in our region.

The release of Ontario's [Primary Care Action Plan](#) in early 2025 – the province's commitment to connecting every person in Ontario to primary care by 2029 – reinforces that we're on the right track. Many of the plan's key priorities, such as expanding team-based care, strengthening integration with community services and improving access through digital tools, are already embedded in our collaborative framework.

With this strong foundation already built, the Western York Region OHT is ready to lead the way in delivering accessible, connected and team-based primary care closer to home and tailored to the people we serve.



Listening, learning, leading

Our path forward in patient engagement

At the Western York Region OHT, we believe that the people who use our health system – patients, families and caregivers – should help shape how it works. In early 2024, we took an important step to strengthen how we work with patient partners by completing a self-assessment of our current approach to engagement.

This review brought together input from our Patient Partners, staff team and partner organizations. Together, we looked honestly at where we are today and how we can do better. While we found that we are in the early stages of this work, we also gained a shared understanding of what's needed to grow.

Why does this matter? Because real improvements in health care happen when people with lived experience are at the table. Their insights help us build a system that's more responsive, compassionate and effective. Based on what we learned, we co-created a clear plan to move forward.

Looking ahead, our focus will be on strengthening patient, family and caregiver engagement by increasing the number and diversity of our partners and standardizing how they'll be involved. This will help ensure that the voices of patients and caregivers are at the heart of our discussions and decisions.



Improving equity through population health management

Western York Region is home to a richly diverse population with varying health needs, cultural backgrounds and barriers to care. Because of this, not everyone experiences the health system the same way.

That's why in December 2024, we established the **Population Health Management and Equity Committee** (PHMEC). This committee helps ensure health initiatives across Western York Region are rooted in population health principles and equity through thoughtful planning and inclusive service design.

By analyzing population data and identifying health trends, the committee supports more targeted, proactive approaches to care that reduces barriers and addresses gaps.

So far, the PHMEC has helped shape a new network of primary care clinics aimed at meeting people's needs more effectively. Key accomplishments include:

- Gaining a better understanding of who lives in our communities – including their cultures, backgrounds and life circumstances
- Looking at local and provincial health data to find out where the biggest needs are
- Exploring why people need hospital care and finding ways to support them earlier, so they can avoid unnecessary visits

By making equity a guiding principle – not an afterthought – the committee is helping build a more inclusive, responsible health system that meets people where they are and delivers better care for everyone.

Advancing compassionate, co-ordinated palliative care

When facing a serious illness or the final stages of life, everyone deserves care that is compassionate, timely and aligned with their needs and wishes. That's why in January 2025, the Western York Region OHT launched the **Palliative Care Steering Committee** with local partners – to help ensure that individuals and their families are better supported during one of life's most difficult journeys.

This year, the committee reviewed palliative care services across the region and identified service gaps and unmet needs. Now, we're building a targeted strategy and plan to close those gaps – one that uses a population health management approach to ensure care is data-driven, equity-focused and responsive to the unique needs of different population groups. We also secured funding for a dedicated Palliative Care Coach to help implement strategic priorities and act as a resource for care providers across the palliative care continuum.

Our next steps include improving early recognition of health decline in people with chronic and life-limiting illnesses, promoting advance care planning and supporting patients and families in making end-of-life plans that meet their needs – helping make sure people have the right support when it matters most.



A new model for seamless stroke recovery

With Mackenzie Health serving as York Region's **District Stroke Centre**, the Western York Region OHT is uniquely positioned to lead the development of a digitally-enabled **Integrated Care Pathway (ICP) for stroke**. This work is creating a more connected experience for stroke survivors and their caregivers by bridging hospital and community care through shared tools and real-time information.

Built on best practices, the Stroke ICP will ensure safe, high-quality care throughout a patient's stroke recovery. At its core is a Shared Care Plan – enabled by Epic's Healthy Planet Link platform – which brings together hospital teams, community providers, primary care, patients and caregivers around a single, accessible care plan. By centralizing patient records, referral details and goals of care, the shared plan helps everyone stay informed and ensures patients receive more seamless, personalized support every step of the way.

This year, we made significant progress toward advancing the Stroke ICP:

- Mapped the current stroke care journey across the region to identify strengths, gaps and opportunities for improvement
- Completed a gap analysis to inform the future-state pathway and guide development priorities
- In partnership with **March of Dimes Canada** and **Mackenzie Health**, co-developed a model of care and a proof of concept for the Shared Care Plan
- Identified key performance indicators to help monitor patient outcomes and program success

Looking ahead to 2025/2026, as we continue this work, we'll focus on strengthening transitions from hospital to home and working with primary care providers to better support stroke survivors in the community. Work is also underway to improve access to mental health and caregiver supports – essential components of long-term stroke recovery.

OHT collaboration in action

Working together to manage hospital surges and keep care flowing

During periods of high demand – especially the winter months – hospitals across the province often experience surges in patient volumes that can stretch emergency departments beyond their capacity. These pressures make it harder for hospitals to provide timely care to those who need it most.

To address this, Ontario Health has continued to support regional preparedness through province-wide and community-level planning through Ontario Health Teams.

At the core of the Western York Region OHT's response is the Surge Escalation Protocol, a co-ordinated, stepwise approach that activates when our hospital partner, [Mackenzie Health](#), faces capacity challenges.

Once triggered, this protocol enables Western York Region OHT partners to step in and help transition patients back into the community or home with the appropriate supports. This might include arranging home care, helping with mobility supports or connecting patients to follow-up services.

By working together in this way, our OHT partners help ensure patients receive the right support in the right setting based on their needs. It's a team effort that keeps the flow of care moving and improves the experience for patients and families.



Partner event spotlights

UniversalCare BPSO Host Symposium celebrates equity, diversity and inclusion

This year, the Western York Region OHT was proud to take part in the third annual UniversalCare Best Practice Spotlight Organization (BPSO) Host Symposium, a signature event celebrating the achievements of UniversalCare's Long-Term Care Homes in implementing best practice guidelines.

The 2024 symposium centered on the theme of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, showcasing how UniversalCare Homes are embedding these principles into daily practice to improve care outcomes and support residents more holistically. The event served as both a celebration and a learning opportunity, bringing together champions across homes to share successes, reflect on progress and inspire continued quality improvement.

This is just one example of how our OHT partners continue to champion evidence-based practices and foster a culture of compassion, collaboration and continuous learning.



Mackenzie Health's Geriatric and Palliative Care CME builds connections in seniors' care

In September 2024, [Mackenzie Health's](#) Department of Family Practice, in partnership with the Division of Geriatrics and the Division of Palliative Care, held its second Continuing Medical Education event. This first-of-its-kind educational session brought together over 150 attendees from across the region – including family physicians, specialists, nurses, social workers and students – to build stronger connections between care providers and enhance co-ordinated approaches to care for older adults and people with complex needs.

Several OHT partner organizations participated, including [Alzheimer Society York Region](#), [CHATS](#), [Hill House Hospice](#), [Hospice Vaughan](#), [Reena](#) and [SE Health](#). Their involvement highlights the value of cross-sector partnerships in supporting person-centred care.

This event represents the kind of collaborative, cross-sector engagement that defines the Western York Region OHT. By bringing together hospital teams, primary care providers and community organizations, we are advancing our shared vision of an integrated, connected system of care — one that supports both patients and providers.



Mackenzie Health's NLOT Education and Simulation Day

In November 2024, long-term care staff, community partners and health system stakeholders came together for Mackenzie Health's first Nurse-Led Outreach Team (NLOT) Workshop, an event for long-term care staff and leadership to enhance clinical knowledge and foster stronger relationships with local health system partners.

With support from the Western York Region OHT and Mackenzie Health leadership, Mackenzie Health's NLOT and Simulation Program teams led several sessions and discussions highlighting their collaborative work with long-term care homes and community organizations.

Participants connected with clinical leads and experts in wound care, speech-language pathology, respiratory therapy and more. By bringing teams together, the event reinforced a shared commitment to person-centered, co-ordinated care for long-term care residents and strengthened collaboration across the sector.



Looking ahead

Building on momentum for a stronger health system

The progress we made in 2024/2025 has set a solid foundation for the year to come. Looking ahead, primary care will continue to be at the heart of our OHT's efforts to transform health care in Western York Region.

In 2025/2026, we will formalize our Primary Care Network (PCN), which will bring local providers together to work more closely as a connected team, and begin to facilitate attachment for the many people in our community who do not have a primary care provider.

Our shared goal is clear: every resident in our region will have timely access to a primary care provider. But it's not just about access – we're reimagining primary care to be integrated, team-based and supported by digital tools that make care seamless across providers and services.

We will also expand integrated care with the launch of our first Integrated Care Pathway to support stroke survivors as they transition from hospital to home, followed by the development of a pathway for individuals living with diabetes.

Building on the launch of the SCOPE program in early 2025/2026, we will broaden support options to meet local needs and help primary care providers offer timely, co-ordinated care.

Our work to enhance palliative care services will also continue to evolve, with a focus on improving early identification and referrals, especially for those with non-cancer diagnoses, so more people receive the right support at the right time.

Together, these priorities reflect our commitment to a health system that is integrated, equitable and centred on the diverse needs of our community. With strong partnerships and a clear direction, we're ready to take the next steps in transforming care for everyone in Western York Region.