



Nomination

Mental health and addictions

Welland McMaster FHT

The Launch of MHART (Mental Health & Addictions Response Team) – An innovative partnership between Welland McMaster FHT and Niagara Region’s Emergency Medical Services to reduce ED visits and improve patient outcomes.



Diverting emergency room visits for patients with mental health & addictions (MH&A) problems reduces wait times and redirects patients to community organizations better suited to address their needs. WMFHT has partnered with Niagara EMS Community Paramedics to provide a part-time Mental Health Nurse to triage patients when responding to 911 calls related to MH&A. LeeAnn Pocknell has extensive experience working in MH and primary care and comprehensive knowledge of community systems and organizations. Though still in its infancy, the program has already responded to numerous calls, providing invaluable service connections and better-coordinated care to patients.

A distinct advantage of LeeAnn’s role in MHART is the opportunity for patient follow-up. She is uniquely positioned to build relationships with patients in the community, collect patient feedback for continuous improvement, address unmet needs and educate patients about their care options. After treating an intoxicated patient diagnosed with schizophrenia, MHART followed up the next day to ensure he was taking his meds, connected him with free legal aid, provided advice regarding his ODSP and helped him find his lost OHIP card. MHART aims to improve service response time reliability and reduce low-acuity 911 calls by addressing care gaps.