

BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS



2019

Access to care: improving access to team-based care

Windsor Family Health Team

The TEAM is in: Adding more players to solo practitioners' teams



Windsor Family Health Team operates in Windsor, Ontario, an urban centre whose emergency departments have the province's highest rate of visits from patients with a primary diagnosis related to mental health and/or substance abuse, as well as the second-highest rate of visits from patients with complex needs.

The team conducted a needs assessment of the local population and discovered that even though mental health and substance abuse problems require a multidisciplinary approach to care, fewer than 10 per cent of local practitioners were accessing team-based models of care. Additionally, only five per cent of Windsor's population had access to team-based care, a model that generally provides better health outcomes.

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Together with non-team-based practitioners, the team designed the framework for the Windsor Team Care Centre (TCC) to provide access to team-based care to the larger population. Currently, 65 per cent of non-team-based practitioners and their patients have access to comprehensive team-based services; more than 177,000 residents have access at no cost to them.

Within the first eight months of operation TCC received over 1,200 referrals, had more than 4,000 patient encounters and surpassed the target of onboarding 50 per cent of Windsor's non-team-based practitioners into the program. These practitioners have called the TCC's services "invaluable to the management of many issues with their practice" and 100 per cent of patients have expressed satisfaction with their care.

TCC has been able to optimize the use of short-term multidisciplinary services through its partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association and memoranda of understanding with other community agencies. The FHT actively engages practitioners to evaluate the goals of the TCC program by conducting multiple Plan-Do-Study-Act cycles and maintain robust relationships.

The centre provides support to 33 teams across the province as they attempt to increase team care access. Locally, TCC holds collaborative education sessions to facilitate relevant knowledge translation.

Key Facts:

- Program established in collaboration with non-team-based physicians
- Innovative way of expanding service delivery
- Patients of 65 per cent of non-team-based practitioners now have access to multidisciplinary, comprehensive care
- Optimizes use of services through partnerships and memoranda of understanding
- Positive patient feedback
- Increased upstream access to primary care
- Expertise in team-based care shared provincially