

# BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS

2021

**INNER CITY FAMILY HEALTH TEAM; ST. MICHAEL'S HOSPITAL  
ACADEMIC FAMILY HEALTH TEAM AND SHERBOURNE HEALTH CENTRE  
FAMILY HEALTH TEAM**

**Award: Community Response to COVID-19**

**Achievement: Collaborative Response to Care Needs in Downtown East Toronto**



As the pandemic unfolded, three family health teams worked collaboratively and led efforts to meet the needs of the most vulnerable in Downtown East Toronto. Inner City FHT, St. Michael's Hospital Academic FHT and Sherbourne Health Centre FHT, all members of the Downtown East Toronto OHT, stepped beyond their organizational mandates to ensure that the most vulnerable received care in locations that included encampments, shelters, boarding houses, and Toronto Community Housing buildings. Thanks to their concern and caring, these patients had access to primary care, COVID-19 assessments, navigation to recovery sites and community resources, safe spaces for isolating and vaccines.

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These three teams provided invaluable aid to an area that has the highest residential instability and highest percentage of people living below the low income cut off in the province; higher rates of diagnosed mental health and substance use in Toronto; higher rate of hospitalizations for mental health and addictions; a large number of community housing units and shelter beds; and the highest level of encampments. Opioid deaths in the area had tripled during the pandemic.

With this knowledge they set up specialized approaches that included: mobile outreach for COVID-19 testing, the first Canadian isolation site for shelter residents, a family recovery site, and wraparound support post-testing. The teams also provided vaccines for vulnerable individuals, conducted vaccine outreach, and established two mass vaccination clinics.

The three FHTs continue to be involved in two important COVID-19 sector tables that were integral in testing and vaccinating these vulnerable populations. This work would not have been possible without the support and collaboration of dozens of organizations and individuals working in the downtown east Toronto including key partnerships with Inner City Health Associates, Unity Health and Regent Park CHC.

## Key Facts:

- Collaboration among three FHTs provided care and support to the most vulnerable populations living in Downtown East Toronto.
- The teams provided mobile outreach for COVID-19 testing, the first in Canada isolation site for shelter residents, a family recovery site and wraparound support post-testing.
- Four documented deaths from COVID-19 in the shelter system, a testament to the collaboration and care provided by these three FHTs.
- Teams continue tackling opioid crisis in innovative ways, creating a Substance Use Hub in partnership with Inner City Health Associates.
- Administered approximately 90,000 vaccine doses.
- Created a Vaccine Playbook for Shelters- provided it to Toronto Public Health and Ontario Health and shared provincewide.