

# BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS



## 2022

### WAWA FAMILY HEALTH TEAM

**Award: Spotlight Award**

**Achievement: Providing Vital Access to Virtual Medical Abortions for an Urban Population as a Small Rural Team**



In a twist on the traditional rural-to-urban referrals, Wawa FHT, a small rural team, received a request for help from a nearby urban centre. There were no providers delivering medical abortions in the city or surrounding area, so Wawa FHT expanded its medical abortion program to include a virtual program to provide care to this underserved urban population. It's the only rural clinic in Ontario to be certified by the National Abortion Federation (NAF).

The virtual program was created using information/evidence from NAF; SOGC guidelines; and assistance from a Southern Ontario centre where virtual services were being provided. During the 2021-2022 fiscal year, the program was led by nurse practitioners, and it assisted four local women and 80 from out of town. To this day, the clinic continues to collect statistics.

The program hasn't reached capacity for handling cases, and it continues to have a no refusals policy as a way to improve access in the region. Clients are included in the evaluation of the initiative and a formal survey is being developed. Wawa FHT staff seek to provide education and support to other health care providers to facilitate access to medical abortions in other small surrounding communities. They have EMR resources that can be easily shared and are

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confident that all primary care teams can shape their Women's Health program to harmonize with the health human resources available.

The team mentors a broad range of learners, including registered nurses, nurse practitioners and undergraduate and post-graduate medical students and encourage them to emulate their program or something similar. The clinic also serves as a role model for other rural sites.

### **Key Facts:**

- Wawa FHT added a virtual program to its medical abortion clinic
- The virtual program assists urban neighbours without access to medical abortions locally
- The goal is to improve access to medical abortion throughout the province and particularly in the rural setting