

# Expansion and Enhancement of Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) Services

Team Members: Timmins and District Hospital (TADH) and Timmins Academic Family Health Team (TAFHT)

## Project Aim

- The Timmins Academic Family Health Team (TAFHT) and the Timmins and District Hospital (TADH) expanded and transitioned the Outpatient Ontario Telemedicine Network (OTN) Program from TADH to the TAFHT
- The decision to transfer out-patient OTN services from TADH occurred over multiple meetings with the TAFHT, TADH and another primary care organization. Meaningful relationships between the partners pre-existed which helped when discussing how to improve patient access.
- With the transfer, the organizations were aiming to:
  - Accommodate more patients
  - Reduce wait time
  - Extend the reach to underserved populations
  - Increase flexibility in scheduling
  - Reduce travel requirements for patients
  - Provide seamless virtual access to specialist consultations and follow-up care

## The Changes Implemented

- Addition of one full-time RPN to the existing one full-time RPN
- The existing RPN was managing one system, and now both RPNs will be managing a total of four
- RPNs provide each other coverage minimizing the impact on appointments
- In a Memorandum of Understanding, the enhanced partnership was detailed, maximizing an opportunity to provide a strengthened community-based focused experience.
- Increased funding was provided to support a second full-time Registered Practical Nurse (RPN) working collaboratively on-site at the TAFHT, the current OTN RPN, patients and community partners. The model provides timely equitable access for all community members requiring OTN services.
- The TAFHT advocated for an additional accessible parking space to be added in front of the building, and the City of Timmins approved the request.
- Timmins and District Hospital will continue to provide virtual access to specialists for all admitted patients unable to attend the TAFHT including outpatient preoperative assessment, mental health and strokes

## Sustainability

- All OTN services are being offered through one-site, that operates four units. This set-up allows for the RPN to switch the patient units in the event there is a scheduling conflict. Patients have reported they appreciate to have to attend only one-site and seeing the same staff at appointments. Patients also have the option of attending their appointments from home, which the RPNs assist with the scheduling.
- With the additional units, the organization will determine how further relationships can be formed with specialists to expand services (ie mental health support, group educational sessions).
- The OTN RPNs work closely with organizations within the community and with specialists. For patients who are affiliated with the TAFHT, their primary care provider can submit a question to a specialist via the RPN who submits the question through the OTN Hub. The RPNs develop relationships with the specialists and know what type of question to send to whom.

## Spread

- The TAFHT operates a primary care clinic in Gogama, and collaborates with a primary care organization that has a site in a nearby community. If a request for a patient with an address in those locations is received, the staff communicates with the sites and the patients to determine if they can be seen nearer to home.
- The TAFHT partners with Timmins and District OTN sites, the Timmins Primary Care Network and the Équipe Santé Ontario Cochrane district Ontario Health Team to ensure best practice principles are implemented to facilitating quality outcomes and increased patient satisfaction.



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