

To: Executive Directors, Ontario's Family Health Teams  
From: Phil Graham, Manager, Family Health Teams & Related Programs

Re: Additions to Interprofessional Health Care Providers in FHTs

Ontario's Family Health Teams (FHTs) are making significant progress in expanding access to quality, comprehensive primary health care programs and services across the province that are based on the needs of patients and communities. From time to time we hear from you that parameters set by the ministry can raise barriers in delivering these person-centred programs and services. Although work is on-going to address a number of these barriers, the purpose of this message is to inform you of an interim step of allowing FHTs more flexibility to provide patients with the care they need, where they need it.

Effectively immediately, the ministry is expanding the types of professions that are eligible to provide services within the FHT. This expansion includes: Chiropractors, Physiotherapists and Respiratory Therapists. This is in addition to Physician Assistants, who were added at the beginning of the fiscal year. These are explained below:

#### Chiropractors:

The integration of a Chiropractor in a Family Health Team can bring expertise in the management of many conditions including back pain, neck pain, headaches and joint injuries and complaints, and can broadly contribute to interprofessional primary health care programs in the areas of chronic disease management, seniors' care, injury prevention and health promotion. Chiropractors will also be included in the upcoming Primary Care Low Back Pilot Call for Applications that will be communicated shortly to FHTs, Nurse Practitioner Led Clinics, Community Health Centres and Aboriginal Health Access Centres.

#### Physiotherapists:

The integration of a Physiotherapist in a Family Health Team can bring expertise in the assessment of physical function and the treatment, rehabilitation and prevention of physical dysfunction. With this expertise, Physiotherapists can contribute broadly to interprofessional primary health care programs in the areas of chronic disease management, seniors' care, disease prevention and health promotion. As many FHTs will know, Physiotherapists are being integrated into interprofessional primary health care settings as part of the provincial physiotherapy reforms through a Call for Applications process. Final decisions with respect to this are expected this Fall/Winter. Physiotherapists will also be included in the upcoming Primary Care Low Back Pilot Call for Applications that will be communicated shortly to FHTs, Nurse Practitioner Led Clinics, Community Health Centres and Aboriginal Health Access Centres.

#### Registered Respiratory Therapists:

The integration of Registered Respiratory Therapists in a Family Health Team can bring specialized expertise in a wide range of therapies and diagnostic services related to lung

health to the interprofessional team. Registered Respiratory Therapists can make meaningful contributions to chronic disease management programs offered by FHTs, particularly chronic respiratory disease, in addition to disease prevention and health promotion. Several Registered Respiratory Therapists are working in FHTs through involvement in the Primary Care Asthma Program and various COPD initiatives but this change formalizes this arrangement to facilitate broader inclusion.

Additional information related to roles and compensation can be found on the ministry's website in the [Guide to Interdisciplinary Health Provider Compensation](#). Note that other web content is currently being updated to keep pace with these and other program changes.

It is important to note that outside of the current or planned call for applications for Physiotherapy and Primary Care Low Back Pain, no additional funding is available in 2013/14 to support these new additions. Should FHTs wish to fill existing vacancies, please contact your assigned ministry representative.

Sincerely,

Phil Graham  
Manager, Family Health Teams & Related Programs