

Topic Overview

Improving Care and Support for People with Multiple Chronic Health Conditions in Ontario

**Citizen panel
1 February 2014**

The McMaster Health Forum convened a citizen panel on the subject of improving care and support for people with multiple chronic health conditions in Ontario. The panel was organized with the support of McMaster University's Labarge Optimal Aging Initiative and the Government of Ontario (through a Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Health System Research Fund grant entitled Harnessing Evidence and Values for Health System Excellence). The panel brought together 11 citizens from across the region covered by the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network to examine the problem, options for addressing it, and key implementation considerations.

Discussing the problem

Panel participants discussed the shortfalls in the care and support provided to people with multiple chronic health conditions in Ontario and the causes of these shortfalls. In particular they focused on five challenges:

- 1) an aging population with increasingly complex care needs;
- 2) fragmentation of care;
- 3) burden on informal/family caregivers;
- 4) lack of informational support; and
- 5) lack of focus on health promotion and disease prevention.



The views expressed in the panel summary are the views of panel participants and should not be taken to represent the views of the Government of Ontario, McMaster University, McMaster University's Labarge Optimal Aging Initiative, or the authors of the panel summary.





Eleven citizens from across the region covered by the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network gather during a McMaster Health Forum event on 1 February 2014.

Discussing the options

Participants reflected on three options (among many) for improving care and support for people with multiple chronic health conditions in Ontario: changing the way care is organized and delivered (option 1); supporting patients to engage in conversations with their healthcare providers (option 2); and supporting patients to manage their own care (option 3). Six values-related themes emerged throughout the discussion about these options, including: 1) patient- and caregiver-centredness (care and support must be attuned to the complex needs of people with multiple chronic health conditions, as well as the needs of their informal/family caregivers); 2) access (to reliable and timely information, as well as to coordination support); 3) collaboration (to mobilize all those who can provide needed support and services beyond what is provided by the health system); 4) solidarity (to ensure we do not leave the most vulnerable to fend for themselves); 5) empowerment (to equip people to engage in conversations with healthcare providers and manage their own care); and 6) trust (between patients and providers).

Panel deliverables

To learn more about this topic, consult the [citizen brief](#) that was presented to participants before the panel and the [summary](#) of the panel. For an electronic copy of the citizen brief or panel summary, visit our website www.mcmasterhealthforum.org and click on 'Products' along the sidebar.

Discussing the implementation considerations

When turning to potential barriers and facilitators to moving forward, participants mostly emphasized the challenges associated with implementing new care models for people with multiple chronic health conditions (e.g., possible resistance from the provincial medical association), as well as the challenges associated with implementing a comprehensive and intersectoral approach to reduce the burden of chronic health conditions. Panel participants expressed a desire to move forward in three ways. First, they called for greater communication among healthcare providers as well as between healthcare providers and patients. Second, participants called for health-system stakeholders to “speed up the change” to implement new care models that are aligned with the needs of people with multiple chronic health conditions. Lastly, participants reiterated the need to invest more efforts in health promotion and disease prevention.



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