

Topic Overview

Building a Primary-Care 'Home' for Every Ontarian

Citizen panel
6 February 2016

The McMaster Health Forum convened a citizen panel on the subject of building a primary-care 'home' for every Ontarian. The panel was organized with the support of the Ontario College of Family Physicians and McMaster University's Labarge Optimal Aging Initiative. The panel brought together 13 citizens from across the region covered by the Region covered by the Local Health Integration Network for Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant, Toronto Central, Central, Mississauga Halton, Waterloo Wellington, and South West to examine the problem, elements of a comprehensive approach for addressing it, and key implementation considerations. The purpose of the panel was to guide the efforts of the Ontario College of Family Physicians to promote the implementation of the patient's medical home model in Ontario.

Discussing the problem

Panel participants identified five challenges related to building a primary-care 'home' for every Ontarian (and their experiences with primary care more generally): 1) lack of coordination and communication between primary-care providers, specialists and other care providers in a care team; 2) limited use of patient-friendly technology that is accessible to patients and their families; 3) difficulty accessing care when needed; 4) the system not always focusing on the perspective of the patient; and 5) the need for primary care to be more than just 'healthcare'. In addition to these challenges, one participant questioned if 'home' is the best way to describe these initiatives and suggested "healthcare hubs" instead. There was general agreement amongst the other participants about the confusion with terminology, as many felt 'home' has a special meaning separate from healthcare.



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





Thirteen citizens from across the region covered by the Region covered by the Local Health Integration Network for Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant, Toronto Central, Central, Mississauga Halton, Waterloo Wellington, and South West gather during a McMaster Health Forum event on 6 February 2016.

Discussing the elements

Participants reflected on three elements of a comprehensive approach to address the problem: ensure all Ontarians receive the care they need when they need it (element 1); put the patient at the centre of care (element 2); and ensure the full range of care is seamlessly linked across providers, teams and settings (element 3). Several values-related themes emerged during the discussion about these elements, with five emerging with some consistency: 1) access (e.g., using triage procedures to ensure the sickest patients are seen first and offering a range of appointment booking options); 2) competence/expertise (e.g., additional education and support to teach primary-care providers how to better communicate with patients); 3) trusting relationships between patients, doctors and other providers (e.g., making greater use of shared-decision making and nurse practitioners); 4) collaboration among patients, providers and organizations within the health

system (e.g., team-based care and integration of primary, secondary and allied health providers); and 5) collaboration between the health system and other sectors (e.g., between health and education to integrate personal health decision-making into grade-school curricula).

Discussing the implementation considerations

When turning to potential barriers and facilitators to moving forward, participants focused on the need for incentives to encourage care providers, and especially physicians, to work more collaboratively with each other and patients, and to adopt new booking, referral and communication platforms. Participants identified integrated and accessible electronic health records as being critical for the effective implementation of many components of the elements.

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.com and click on 'Products' along the sidebar.



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