
Family Health Teams

Advancing Family Health Care

Roadmap to Implementing a Family Health Team

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Introduction

The implementation of Family Health Teams is part of the government's Family Health Care for All Strategy to improve access to comprehensive family health care for all Ontarians.

Family Health Teams are a successful model of improving access to family health care that is providing care to over 1.9 million Ontarians, including more than 270,000 who previously did not have a family doctor.

The government remains committed to increasing access to family health care for all Ontarians is moving to create and continues to move forward on creating another 50 new Family Health Teams.

Through Family Health Teams, patients are able to establish a continuous relationship with a family care provider close to home, for comprehensive, family health care. As a collaborative team practice Family Health Teams emphasize health promotion and improved management of chronic disease, through both treatment and monitoring, as well as support of patients in improving self management skills. Keeping patients healthier and better management of chronic disease are key to reducing Emergency Department visits.

Family Health Teams are locally driven family health care delivery organizations that include family physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses and a range of other interdisciplinary health care providers who are committed to working together collaboratively to provide comprehensive, accessible, coordinated family health care service to a defined population, including patients who do not currently have a family health care provider (e.g. unattached patients).

This approach allows physicians to work as part of a team with other health care providers to focus on keeping patients healthy. The vision allows physicians, nurse practitioners and other members of the team to practice together in a positive working environment, sharing and benefiting from the complementary knowledge and skills of their colleagues.

New Family Health Teams will support other Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (ministry) initiatives including: enrolment of unattached patients, integrated cancer screening, chronic disease prevention and management with a focus on diabetes in support of Ontario's Diabetes Strategy.

The Role of Family Health Teams

1. Provide increased access to family health care to patients without a family health care provider (unattached patients).
2. Provide comprehensive family health care services through an interdisciplinary team of family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses and a range of other health professionals each working within their scopes of practice.
3. Serve as a central catalyst for the development of new comprehensive community based chronic disease management and self-care programs.
4. Emphasize health promotion, illness prevention, early detection/diagnosis.
5. Provide system navigation and care coordination – linking patients to other parts of the health care system such as acute care, long-term care, public health, mental health, addictions and community programs and services.

6. Provide patient-centred care where the patient is a key member of the team and uses information and support to make informed decisions on how to manage his/her self-care needs.
7. Link with other health care organizations at the community level and, in general, be adapted to the needs of the specific community.
8. Use information technology as the backbone of system integration, linking patient records across different health care settings giving providers timely access to test results and other important data.

Support for new Family Health Teams

Once awarded, the new Family Health Teams will have resources to help guide them through development and implementation. These support tools are designed to help new Family Health Teams navigate the start up phase more efficiently, and to reach operational status in a shorter period of time. Resources will include:

- Development grant to hire a consultant to assist the Family Health Team through to the operational stage
- List of consultants with experience working with Family Health Teams (available through Quality Improvement Innovation Partnership)
- Guides that will assist you in the development of your plans
- Mentorship opportunity through the Quality Improvement and Innovation Partnership, to assist Family Health Teams as they move to a new model of family health care
- Team of trained implementation specialists at the ministry

Stage One: Applying to become a Family Health Team

The first step is to determine if your group is interested in becoming a Family Health Team.

More information about Family Health Teams and their role in providing comprehensive and collaborative care within the Ontario community can be found at www.health.gov.on.ca/familyhealthteams or contact the ministry at (416) 212-1741 or 1-877-830-1808

Once you decide your group is interested in participating in a Family Health Team project, the first stage is the application process.

Applications are received through a formal Call for Applications by the ministry. 150 Family Health Teams have been implemented since April 2005. They were created in three waves in both urban and rural parts of the province: 69 in April 2005 (Wave 1); 31 in December 2005 (Wave 2); and 50 in March 2006 (Wave 3).

The Call for Applications for Wave 4 was made on June 22, 2009.

When a Call for Applications is issued, everything you need to apply will be posted on the ministry's website. This will include an Application Kit containing the application form and support tools to help guide you to fill out the form.

When establishing a Family Health Team, the following five factors will inform the evaluation of applications in Wave 4, and are the foundational building blocks to support an enhanced state of readiness:

1. **Governance:** All Family Health Teams must incorporate as a non-profit corporation. The following governance models are available:
 - i. Physician-Led – non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors with physician representation.
 - ii. Community-Led – community-based non-profit corporation governed by a Board of Directors including local community representation.
 - iii. Mixed governance model – a mix of community and provider-based groups coming together through a non-profit corporation with a Board of Directors.
2. **Human Resources:** Family Health Teams are interdisciplinary teams of providers that include family physicians and a range of other health professionals working collaboratively within their scopes of practice. The make-up of these teams will be tailored to the size of the population served and its health care needs. Team composition must include family physicians, and will include other Interdisciplinary Healthcare Providers such as nurse practitioners, registered nurses, and others who are committed to working together collaboratively to provide comprehensive, accessible, coordinated family health care service to a defined population, including patients who do not currently have a family health care provider (e.g., unattached patients).

Groups should also have a commitment from physicians who are presently in or willing to move to a Family Health Team-eligible physician compensation model¹, and to enrol unattached patients.
3. **Accommodations:** To promote collaboration, health care providers are expected to co-locate at one or more sites that include physicians, Interdisciplinary Healthcare Providers and administrative staff. Proponents who have identified space that can accommodate the proposed team and requires little or no remodelling/renovation will be ready to implement the proposed Family Health Team more quickly.
4. **Knowledge and Integration of Family Health Care services in the community:** Demonstrate knowledge of the number of unattached patient population in the catchment area of your proposed team; community population health (prevalence of chronic diseases), and of existing or planned integration/coordination of family health care services within the community (i.e. no duplication of services with hospitals, Community Health Centres, Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics, Community Care Access Centres, Long-Term Care Homes, Public Health Units etc.).
5. **Information Technology:** An implemented Clinical Management System with Electronic Medical Records for patients is an asset.

The more advance planning you do towards addressing these five key factors, the greater your state of readiness will be to enable an efficient, effective and accelerated path through implementation to become a fully operational Family Health Team.

The Application Form must be submitted by the deadline clearly indicated when the Call for Applications is announced.

¹ Family Health Team eligible physician compensation models include: blended complement (Rural and Northern Physician Grant Agreement), blended capitation (Family Health Network or Family Health Organization), or Blended Salary Model.

One of the forms in the Application Kit is the Application for Financial Assistance (Seed Funding). There is a maximum \$2,000 grant in one-time seed funding available to hire the support you may need to complete the application. It should be submitted along with your full application. The grant funding cannot be provided in advance of an application submission.

Thus, in the application stage, a prospective FHT will:

- ☒ Submit a completed Family Health Team Application Form
- ☒ Apply for Seed Funding (optional)

Reference materials to support you in this stage are listed in Appendix 1, Stage #1.

If your group is selected to become a Family Health Team, you will receive a letter of confirmation from the ministry providing your Family Health Team with conditional approval to proceed to the formative stage. At this time, you will also be assigned a ministry contact who will support you in moving through the required stages to implement your Family Health Team.

How the Roadmap Can Help

The Roadmap to Implementation has been developed to help groups, such as yours, understand what is involved in establishing a Family Health Team and to serve as a guide through the seven stages of planning and development to become a fully operational Family Health Team.

Depending on the current status of your group, you may be further advanced in your planning and may be able to bypass one, or more, of the stages, however we encourage you to speak with your ministry contact first.

A set of guides has been prepared to assist you through each of the planning and development stages. The guides are listed under the corresponding stage and can be found in Appendix 1. The guides can be found on the ministry's website: <www.health.gov.on.ca/familyhealthteams>.

Stage Two: Formative Stage

In this stage, you will have been invited by the ministry to proceed in the development of your Family Health Team. At each stage of development, you will be required to do additional work, and will be provided with support and guidance from your ministry contact.

In the formative stage, you will establish your governance structure that sets out the responsibilities for managing your Family Health Team. A governance framework includes provisions for financial management. This is necessary so the ministry can provide you with funding, and ensure a sound structure for accountability and reporting.

You are now asked to:

- ☒ Obtain the ministry's *Guide to Governance and Accountability*.
- ☒ Review governance options and decide on the framework that is best suited for your organization.

- ☑ Establish a local Family Health Team Development Committee (this could include other health care/community organizations that will be involved with the Family Health Team during the development and/or operational stage)
- ☑ Set up an inaugural meeting with your ministry contact, and ensure all current Family Health Team guides/toolkits have been made available to your group, and review the development process steps and timelines (roles and responsibilities of the ministry and Family Health Team proponents).
- ☑ Review the ministry's *Guide for Development Grant Application* and complete the application for Development Grant Funding.

Reference materials to support you in this stage are listed in Appendix 1, Stage #2.

Development Grant funding will enable you to hire appropriate resources to complete your business and operational plans, as well as governance and incorporation-related activities.

To receive this grant, you will need to enter into a contract/agreement with a project manager/consultant or subject matter experts. Recipients of the grant are expected to observe due diligence and fiscal prudence and any unspent funds relating to the grant must be returned to the ministry.

Once you receive funding, these are the steps you should follow:

- ☑ Open a separate bank account in the name of your Family Health Team where developmental funding and future operational funding will be held, and provide the necessary banking information to your ministry contact.
- ☑ Engage a consultant to help you develop your Business Plan and Operational Plan. A list of consultants with experience working with Family Health Teams is available on the Quality Improvement and Innovation Partnership website at www.qiip.ca.
- ☑ You may wish to consult various reference sources provided in the ministry guides to assist you in making a decision on appropriate governance arrangements [if you are a physician-led group, you may also consult with Ontario Medical Association legal counsel who will provide guidance and template governance agreements].
- ☑ Take appropriate steps to formalize the legal arrangements for your governance option – this includes incorporation for non-profit and professional groups..
- ☑ Develop by-laws that will assist your decision-making processes.

Reference materials to support you in this stage are listed in Appendix 1, Stage #2.

Stage Three: Strategic and Program Planning Stage

Strategic planning is a part of governance that focuses on planning for the goals of your Family Health Team.

The strategic planning process will establish a vision for your Family Health Team, setting long-term objectives, developing plans and procedures to achieve these objectives, and determining if these objectives have been met. Planning for the long term assists Family Health Teams to develop an approach to services, including how the team will address population health needs and determine if they are met. At this point:

- ☑ Refer to the ministry's *Guide to Strategic and Program Planning* for more information [this guide includes a link to the Statistical Profile of Canadian Communities maintained by Statistics Canada to assist in determining community demographics];
- ☑ Further develop, together with your Development Committee, the Family Health Team vision, mission and goals to help define what your Family Health Team's role will be in your community
- ☑ As new members join your team, you will want to ensure that all members understand and share the vision, mission and goals of your Family Health Team];
- ☑ Further define the population you will be serving, including demographics and health needs, and your plan to address these needs [refer to the *Guide to Chronic Disease Management and Prevention* and the *Guide to Health Promotion and Disease Prevention* for more information]; and
- ☑ Develop a list of programs and services your Family Health Team wishes to provide addressing the health needs of your patient population, setting realistic objectives to improve health outcomes.

Reference materials to support you in this stage are listed in Appendix 1, Stage #3.

Your list of programs and services should reflect a 12-month development plan to become fully operational.

Stage Four: Business and Operational Application Stage

At this stage, with the aid of a project manager/consultant you will be required to develop a business and operational plan for your Family Health Team. This plan may initially be at a general level. As you acquire resources, refine program needs and continue to consult with your community and health delivery partners, it will evolve and become more refined.

Your next steps are to:

- ☑ Review the ministry's *Guide to Business Plan and Operational Plan Development*

At this stage you will also be required to develop staffing plans and make choices on compensation models for providers. You should refer to the following: the *Guide to Physician Compensation*, *Guide to Collaborative Team Practice*, *Guide to Interdisciplinary Provider Compensation*, and the *Guide to Interdisciplinary Team Roles and Responsibilities*. The ministry will closely monitor the forecasts and projections made in the business and operational plans.

- ☑ Prepare a detailed Business Plan and an Operational Plan.

This plan will set staffing requirements for your Family Health Team and will indicate resource supports coming from your community – refer to the *Guide to Community Funding Partnerships and Program/Service Integration* and the *Guide to Transitional Funding* for further information.

- ☑ Once the ministry has approved your staffing complement, plan and submit a detailed overhead budget, space plans, including site renovations, and final one-time costs for program/medical equipment, IT equipment, office furnishings and associated equipment.
- ☑ A specific transitional (facility improvement, furnishings and equipment) funding request, based on your Family Health Team's approved staffing complement, will need to be prepared soon after your team's Business Plan has been approved by the ministry.

Reference materials to support you in this stage are listed in Appendix 1, Stage #4.

Once submitted, your Business Plan and Operational Plan will be assessed by the ministry. Your ministry contact will meet with you to discuss your plan and may request some revisions.

Stage Five: Pre-Operational Stage

By this stage, you will have completed all of your plans, held discussions with your community and other local providers. You will begin to acquire resources and space to run your Family Health Team.

The ministry will have reviewed your Business Plan and Operational Plan, and your Family Health Team will have received approval for the interdisciplinary health care provider and administrative staff complement. You will have met with your ministry contact to discuss your Business Plan and Operational Plan approval, and will have the key tasks required to implement your Family Health Team. Each Family Health Team will need to prepare an implementation plan based on its own unique set of circumstances.

The key steps involved in making your Family Health Team operational include:

- ☒ Your Family Health Team will be requested to provide a revised first year overhead and one-time cost budget request, based on the approved complement of interdisciplinary health care providers and administrative staff.
- ☒ Your Family Health Team should recruit and hire an administrative lead early in this stage to carry out and/or lead the key activities required to make the team operational.
- ☒ This could include such tasks as human resources recruitment, as well as acting as a key contact for communications with your Family Health Team's internal and external stakeholders, including the ministry.
- ☒ Your Family Health Team will need to acquire appropriate space to accommodate your approved first year staffing complement, as well as complete and document your space plan and related capital improvement costs on the Facility Improvements Phase 1 Checklist found in the *Guide to Transitional Funding*.

These two tools will guide you in preparing floor plans, space utilization charts and document details concerning your lease arrangements at each team site. Your ministry contact will be available to assist you through this process.

Reference materials to support you in this stage are listed in Appendix 1, Stage #5.

Some teams may need to find and enter into interim space arrangements pending the completion of a detailed facility expansion/improvements plan. Your ministry contact will answer questions, discuss alternatives, and advise on the information required to consider and approve appropriate interim space arrangements for your team.

Your ministry contact will prepare an operational funding agreement following approval of your business and staffing complement for the first year.

The funding agreement will be tailored to your Family Health Team's governance model. The agreement will include a service plan outlining the current number of patients and provide a target for the number of patients to be enrolled for the fiscal year. The preliminary budget also usually includes the salary and benefits for your team; approved staff complement. One-time funding is also included for appropriate recruitment costs. Once the agreement is completed, funding can flow to your team to assist in your recruitment efforts and pay your approved interdisciplinary health care providers and administrative staff.

Additional funding for overhead and one-time costs will be approved and provided to your Family Health Team through a budget amendment to the operational funding agreement, once the ministry has reviewed and approved your revised overhead and one-time funding request for operations; and

If participating in a patient enrolment model is new for your Family Health Team's physicians and support staff, consider requesting your ministry contact to arrange an orientation session on patient enrolment, billing, and payment activities.

If you have successfully recruited additional physicians to your Family Health Team, you will need to obtain the appropriate forms and materials required for patient enrolment – refer to the *Guide to Patient Enrolment* and the *Guide to Telephone Health Advisory Service* for further details.

Other pre-operational stage activities include:

- ☒ Select and acquire an appropriate employee benefits package.
- ☒ Ensure you have established personnel policies and procedures.
- ☒ Plan and arrange for appropriate training to meet staff needs.
- ☒ Acquire supplies and equipment and as approved by ministry.
- ☒ If you haven't already done so, determine your clinical information needs and select your team's clinical information systems

Refer to the *Guide to Information Technology* for more details (and see the Operational Stage section below, third bullet point).

- ☒ Once your team has selected a clinical information system, please forward a detailed non-physician IT funding request to your ministry contact.
- ☒ Once you have completed your competitive search process for insurance, please forward a listing of your insurance coverage and related costs to your ministry contact.
- ☒ Arrange for a certified external auditor to audit financial statements and compliance with agreements – you are required to submit annual audited financial statements to the ministry.
- ☒ Establish systems and processes for physicians and other clinical staff to complete required information for ministry reporting and payment purposes.
- ☒ Consider establishing:
 - a) a Community Advisory Board to assist in advising your Family Health Team, and
 - b) an internal committee structure to facilitate communication and decision-making for your team.

Reference materials to support you in this stage are listed in Appendix 1, Stage #5.

Stage One: Operational Stage

By this stage, your Family Health Team will have acquired its health providers and will be building a collaborative team. Key activities at this stage include:

- ☒ Develop and implement programs for targeted patient populations based on defined needs;

- ☒ Ensure that programs include defined and measurable objectives to enable your team to assess results and adjust programs as necessary;
- ☒ Ensure service delivery systems and administrative operations are in full compliance with terms set out in the Family Health Team Agreement; and
- ☒ Submit periodic service, financial and other reports to the ministry according to schedules set out in signed funding agreements.

Reference materials to support you in this stage are listed in Appendix 1, Stage #6.

Where to Get More Information

All Family Health Teams will be assigned a ministry contact. This ministry contact will be your guide to assist you and work through the details and options of establishing a Family Health Team.

If you have not yet been assigned a ministry contact, please visit ministry's website at: www.health.gov.on.ca/familyhealthteams, to obtain ministry contact information.

Appendix 1: The Seven Stages of Development and Associated Activity

Stages of Development and Associated Activity	
Stage	Associated Activity and <i>Relevant Reference Materials</i>
1. Initial Application Stage	Obtaining information to submit your initial application to the ministry
	<i>Introduction to Family Health Teams</i> <i>Family Health Team Wave 4 Application Form</i> <i>Guide to Completing a Family Health Team Application Form</i> <i>Application for Financial Assistance (Seed Funding)</i>
2. Formative Stage	Establishing your Family Health Team governance structure
	<i>Guide to Governance and Accountability</i> <i>Guide for Development Grant Application</i>
3. Strategic and Program Planning Stage	Planning for a long-term approach to services and how your Family Health Team will address population health needs
	<i>Guide to Strategic and Program Planning</i> <i>Guide to Chronic Disease Management and Prevention</i> <i>Guide to Health Promotion and Disease Prevention</i> <i>Guide to Collaborative Team Practice</i>
4. Business Plan Application Stage	Developing your Family Health Team's business plan
	<i>Guide to Business Plan and Operational Plan Development</i> <i>Business Plan and Operational Plan Examples</i> <i>Operational Plan Funding Application Template (Budget/Service Plan Schedules)</i> <i>Guide to Physician Compensation</i> <i>Guide to Collaborative Team Practice</i> <i>Guide to Interdisciplinary Provider Compensation</i> <i>Guide to Interdisciplinary Team Roles and Responsibilities</i> <i>Guide to Integrating French Language Health Services in Family Health Teams</i> <i>Guide to Community Funding Partnerships and Program/Service Integration</i> <i>Guide to Information Technology</i> <i>Guide to Communications</i> <i>Visual Identity Guidelines Introduction Letter</i> <i>Family Health Team Visual Identity Guidelines</i>
5. Pre-Operational Stage	Starting to acquire resources and space to run the Family Health Team after having received approval of your business plan
	<i>Guide to Physician Compensation</i> <i>Guide to Interdisciplinary Provider Compensation</i> <i>Designing Channels for Health</i> <i>Guide to Transitional Funding</i> <i>Guide to Information Technology</i>
6. Operational Stage	Developing and implementing targeted programs for patients based on defined needs, after having hired your Family Health Team's health providers
	<i>Guide to Patient Enrolment</i> <i>Guide to Telephone Health Advisory Service</i> <i>Guide to Independent Health Facilities Licensing</i> <i>Guide to Information Technology</i> <i>Designing Channels for Health</i> <i>Guide to Transitional Funding</i>

Appendix 2: Family Health Team Implementation Roadmap

