



# Maximizing Community-Based Dementia Care

To Support Pandemic Recovery and System Transformation

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PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION 2022

# MINT Memory Clinic supports post-pandemic recovery and improves dementia care

Even before the pandemic, Ontario's health system was overburdened by hallway health care. After two years of fighting COVID-19 and now the Omicron variant, it's reached the breaking point. Hospitals are facing overwhelming surgical and diagnostic backlogs; long-term care (LTC) facilities are stretched beyond capacity with new facilities years away from completion; patients are left waiting for urgently needed treatment; and health care professionals and caregivers are experiencing burnout at unprecedented rates.

Dementia is a key contributor to these pressures, accounting for 50% of Alternative Level of Care (ALC) hospitalizations. MINT Memory Clinic delivers community-based dementia care to tens of thousands of Ontarians living with dementia and their caregivers, with proven impact to help them stay home and out of hospitals and long-term care. In turn, we help alleviate capacity pressures and support the government's work to rebuild and transform Ontario's health care system.

Government has made strategic investments to help alleviate mounting capacity pressures, however, more efficient dementia care is vital for pandemic recovery and health system transformation. With a ROI of up to 10:1, MINT Memory Clinic makes investments go further, faster. Our innovative, made-in-Ontario model ramps up efforts to rebuild capacity quickly, helping government reduce surgical backlogs and long-term care waitlists.

People want to age at home and our model makes it possible. We leverage primary care and integrate specialists and community services to deliver timely access to complete dementia care and support in the community, closer to home. People depend on this service and 96% of MINT Memory Clinic patients and caregivers would recommend it to others.

"He lived at home for five years after the diagnosis. I would not have been able to do that without their support."

- Pat, Caregiver

Throughout the pandemic, MINT Memory Clinic sites have helped patients stay home and stay healthy. But a lack of sustainable funding, exacerbated by withdrawal of in-kind support to address COVID response, has resulted in 22 sites no longer able to operate, leaving thousands of Ontarians without access to care and adding pressure to hospitals, long-term care and providers. Without urgent funding in 2022, more people are likely to lose access to this vital dementia care. Modest investment in MINT Memory Clinic will ensure no further site closures, and will make a significant impact toward pandemic recovery and system transformation – all at a lower cost.

## Providing an essential service for Ontarians

Today, tens of thousands of people depend on MINT Memory Clinic sites to receive local dementia care and support within their community. The MINT Memory Clinic model is the only one of its kind providing dementia care within primary care, with demonstrated impact, improved outcomes, better experiences for people and health care providers and cost savings.

There are more than 100 clinics across Ontario, in rural, remote, underserved and urban settings, caring for more than 26,000 patients – plus the same number of caregivers. Each one of these patients is saving the system \$26K annually, a total of nearly \$700M each year.

Throughout the pandemic, MINT Memory Clinic sites have helped patients stay home and stay healthy while getting the vital care they depend on. However, a lack of sustainable funding, exacerbated by withdrawal and reallocation of in-kind supports to address COVID response, has resulted in 22 sites no longer operating, affecting thousands of patients and families and adding to pressures faced by hospitals, long-term care and health care providers.

**URGENT RECOMMENDATION: Make a one-time, urgent investment of \$1.4 million to prevent further MINT Memory Clinic closures and ensure that no more patients or caregivers lose access to this vital dementia care.**

**Communities impacted by MINT Memory Clinic site closures and suspensions due to lack of sustainable funding and COVID response resource reallocation.**

- Brampton (1)
- Etobicoke (1)
- Oakville (2)
- Orangeville (1)
- Mississauga (1)
- Toronto (1)
- Niagara (2)
- Windsor (1)
- Newbury (1)
- Ilderton (1)
- Strathroy (1)
- Tillsonburg (1)
- Haliburton (1)
- Lion's Head (1)
- Markdale (1)
- Sudbury (1)
- Ottawa/Champlain (4)

“It would be a shame if this program did not grow.”



- Lisa, Caregiver, Oshawa

**WATCH: LISA'S EXPERIENCE**



## Better dementia care is essential to pandemic recovery and health system transformation

In their lifetime, nearly every Ontarian will be impacted by dementia or know someone who is.

The number of people living with dementia is growing. It is estimated that 240,000 Ontarians are currently living with dementia – a number that is expected to double by 2040.

With COVID-19, Ontario's health and long-term care system is under more pressure than ever, overwhelmed with COVID case loads, surgical and diagnostic backlogs, LTC waitlists, staffing challenges and caregiver burnout. Not to mention the hallway health care problems we faced prior to the pandemic.

Dementia is a major contributor to these capacity issues, accounting for nearly 50% of Alternative Level of Care (ALC) hospitalizations and up to 90% of LTC beds.

Government has made important, strategic investments to fight against mounting system pressures, including funding to enable more surgeries, procedures and diagnostic imaging, building new LTC beds, hiring and temporary compensation increases for Personal Support Workers, and mental health supports for frontline health care workers and more. However, investment in dementia care is vital to reduce health system gridlock and free up space for those who need it most.

MINT Memory Clinic is a proven solution for Ontario's most pressing health concerns now and into the future.

**Sustainable funding is essential to leverage MINT Memory Clinic as a vital part of Ontario's health care system in 2022 and beyond.** Without funding, more clinics will be forced to close their doors and the opportunity to leverage this Ontario-made model will be lost.

**Nearly 50% of all ALC beds** in hospital are occupied by persons living with dementia, reducing access to surgical beds and contributing to hallway health care.

**90% of LTC residents live with dementia** or other forms of cognitive impairment. Poorly managed dementia in the community contributes to overwhelming demand for LTC beds and long waitlists, preventing ALC patients from transitioning out of hospital and into LTC.

**Nearly 25% of dementia caregivers** visit the hospital for their own health concerns within a 6-month period, adding to existing health system pressures.

### MINT Memory Clinic helps relieve COVID-19 pressures and rebuild system capacity, right now

- Makes more surgical beds available by averting emergency room visits, hospitalizations and ALC days
- Makes more LTC beds available and reduces waitlist by delaying transition into LTC for those in the community, enabling hospital ALC patients to move into LTC
- Maximizes hospital resources by reducing hospital costs for dementia patients by more than 50%
- Makes room in the system for those who need it most

# Somewhere to Turn

## *Vivienne & Ben's Story*



"It's not what we expected our retirement years would be like," says Vivienne, who lives in the Kitchener-area with her husband Ben. Vivienne and Ben met at Expo '67 in Montreal and have been caring for one another for over 50 years. Recently, the couple faced a new care challenge, one that is increasingly familiar to many Ontarians: a dementia diagnosis.

Vivienne and Ben were referred to their local MINT Memory Clinic, where they met with a team of primary care providers including a doctor, a nurse, a social worker and pharmacist. They received an assessment and care plan, and were connected with the Alzheimer's Society and other resources.

Surrounded by a trusted circle of support, Vivienne and Ben no longer had to navigate the system on their own. "An emergency room is not the place for people with dementia. [At MINT Memory Clinic,] their only concern is for the well-being of the patient and family. It's given us confidence in our ability to manage and handle the disease as it progresses."

**"An emergency room is not the place for people with dementia."**

- Vivienne, Caregiver,  
Kitchener

**[WATCH VIDEO: Vivienne and Ben's Story](#)**

# PROVEN IMPACT

In 2019, the Ministry of Health published an evaluation of MINT Memory Clinic demonstrating substantive health system impacts. [Read the evaluation.](#)



## RELIEVING HOSPITAL CAPACITY PRESSURES

- Fewer, shorter hospital stays and emergency room visits
- **Fewer ALC hospitalizations** and more patients discharged home
- 50% cost reduction for dementia care costs in hospitals



## IMPROVING CAPACITY IN LONG-TERM CARE

- **Delaying transition into long-term care** by nearly 6 months
- Enabling seniors to remain home longer



## BETTER PATIENT AND CAREGIVER EXPERIENCE

- **Reducing wait times for dementia care** by 50%
- Earlier diagnosis and ongoing care and support
- One-stop access to complete care, within their own community



## MORE EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

- Able to provide **care for 90% of dementia cases** within the community
- Reducing specialist referral rates from 100% to just 10%
- Specialists can focus on the most complex conditions



## SAVING MONEY FOR THE SYSTEM

- **Up to 10:1 ROI** – estimated \$5M in savings for \$500K spent on Kitchener-Waterloo regional MINT Memory Clinic, based on MOH evaluation data. ROI may be less in regions with smaller catchments
- Nearly \$26K in annual savings for every MINT Memory Clinic patient
- 38% reduction in overall system costs for persons living with dementia

## One-stop dementia care that helps patients stay at home

A dementia diagnosis can be the beginning of a stressful and bewildering journey for patients and caregivers. Care is fragmented and difficult to navigate, often requiring long wait times and travel to see specialists.

With MINT Memory Clinic, people can have all of their dementia care needs met in one location, closer to home.

We leverage Ontario's strong primary care system and integrate specialist care and community supports like local Alzheimer Societies and Behavioural Supports Ontario. This creates a one-stop, compassionate dementia care experience that is seamlessly integrated with the rest of the health care system. Patients and caregivers gain timely access to an accurate diagnosis and complete, ongoing care and navigational supports within their local primary care setting – typically a family doctor's office.

Primary care providers, nurses, pharmacists, social workers and other team members receive training through a nationally-accredited program to provide high-quality dementia care within primary care. Specialists are available locally via virtual technology on an as-needed basis.

This interprofessional, team-based approach encircles patients and families to provide complete, ongoing care when and where they need it. That's why 96% of MINT Memory Clinic users recommend this model.



### ONTARIO-MADE MODEL BEING ADOPTED BY PROVINCES ACROSS CANADA

Ontario's success with MINT Memory Clinic is getting noticed by provinces across the country. In 2021, seven new clinics opened in Alberta, B.C. and Saskatchewan, with four more set to open in 2022.



Adrian Dix  
@adriandix

Two new primary care memory clinics, located in Victoria and [#Nanaimo](#), will provide interdisciplinary support to adults concerned about cognitive changes, such as memory loss. [@VanIslandHealth #YYJ](#)



Dementia Dialogue  
@dementiadialog

Mint Memory Clinic model is a effective response to diagnosis issues identified in [@AlzDisInt](#) report. One reason is partnership with award winning First Link of [@AlzheimerSK](#)



barbilindsay  
@barbilindsay

What a wonderful opportunity, to have the MINT Memory Clinic come to B.C., bringing your [#dementia](#) care model and educating clinicians, social workers, pharmacists, nurses, specialists AND [@AlzheimerBC](#) team members, with [@Interior\\_Health](#) and [@VanIslandHealth](#).



Dementia Network YYC  
@DementiaCalgary

A wonderful addition to Calgary! This will help families with diagnosis, support and navigation

## MINT Memory Clinic supports health system transformation

MINT Memory Clinic is a made-in-Ontario solution that serves as a template for care that is more integrated, cross-sectoral and connected – all at a lower cost.

Aligned with Ontario Health Team objectives, we have the opportunity to integrate this important model of care within the Ontario Health Team framework to raise the standard of dementia care and ensure equitable access for all Ontarians, including marginalized, underserved and rural populations.

With a ROI of up to 10:1, MINT Memory Clinic is ready for rapid spread and scale and supports the government's vision of system transformation.

**RECOMMENDATION:** Work with MINT Memory Clinic and OHT leaders to integrate the MINT Memory Clinic model within the Ontario Health Team framework with an investment of \$4 million.



**WATCH VIDEO:** Hear from patients, caregivers, specialists and care providers in this video.

“Every Ontarian should have access to quality dementia care. Bringing MINT into the OHTs is the best way to ensure equity. As our population ages, Ontario can’t afford *not* to implement a solution like this”

**Dr. Joseph Lee**, Clinical Lead, KW4 Subregion, Ontario Health; Chair, Steering Committee, KW4 Ontario Health Team

“Our goal is to provide the best patient and caregiver experience. In concert with our primary care and community support sector partners, MINT Memory Clinic’s multi-disciplinary approach can help deliver on that promise.”

**Steph Ouellet**, Vice President of Strategic Partnerships, Middlesex Hospital Alliance

“MINT Memory Clinic has made an invaluable impact on the care and quality of life of the patients and families that I work with.”

**Michelle Martin**, Executive Director, Alzheimer Society Waterloo Wellington

## Conclusion

MINT Memory Clinic provides high-quality, comprehensive, and integrated care for people living with dementia and their caregivers. Delivered in the community through primary care, the MINT model helps Ontario's most vulnerable seniors remain safely in their homes.



MINT Memory Clinic is a proven model of dementia care that is helping to maximize capacity in our health system through community alternatives to hospital and long-term care. We are delivering on a key part of Ontario's goal to end hallway health care, provide collaborative and integrated care, reduce health system costs and, most importantly, improve the patient and caregiver experience.

As we continue to push through COVID-19 and rebuild a better health system, we have a unique opportunity to provide better dementia care for thousands of people, while helping to rebuild our health care system by enabling seniors to remain in their homes and out of hospitals and long-term care settings longer.

Unfortunately, all this success is at risk. 22 MINT Memory Clinic locations have already been forced to close their doors due to a lack of funding, exacerbated by COVID response resource reallocation, resulting in thousands of patients and caregivers losing access to our services and millions of dollars in additional costs to our already stretched health system. MINT Memory Clinic is the only model of its kind. Without urgent additional funding from the Government of Ontario, more locations will be forced to close and the opportunity to leverage this needed resource will be lost.

As a proven, made-in-Ontario solution with a ROI of up to 10:1, MINT Memory Clinic must be a key part of Ontario's plan to transform our health care system into one that is more integrated, cross-sectoral, cost effective, equitable, and accessible for patients and families in all regions of the province.

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To learn more about MINT Memory Clinic and our impact, or to see more experiences from patients, caregivers and health care professionals, visit [www.mintmemory.ca](http://www.mintmemory.ca).

## Budget 2022 Recommendations Summary

**URGENT RECOMMENDATION:** Make a one-time, urgent investment of \$1.4 million to prevent further MINT Memory Clinic closures and ensure that no more patients or caregivers lose access to this vital dementia care.

A modest investment of **\$1.4M** will allow people to access the dementia care they depend on.

- Implement stabilizing infrastructure, including regional coordinators, to ensure doors stay open in 2022
- Deliver necessary annual training to support capacity within MINT primary care teams

**RECOMMENDATION:** Work with MINT Memory Clinic and OHT leaders to integrate the MINT Memory Clinic model within the Ontario Health Team framework with an investment of \$4 million.

An urgent, stop-gap solution is critical to ensuring that MINT Memory Clinic continues to exist and serve the people who depend on it. However, longer-term investment is needed to sustain the model beyond 2022 and leverage MINT Memory Clinic as a vital part of Ontario's health care system to support pandemic recovery and drive system transformation.

We are an Ontario-made, proven solution that aligns with the government's vision of health system transformation through Ontario Health Teams. An investment of **\$4M** will support OHT integration following the program outlined below, which has been developed with input and support from Ontario Health and OHT leadership.

- Pilot integration of existing MINT Memory Clinic sites with four OHTs (Kitchener-Waterloo & Area, Middlesex-London, Niagara, and Brantford Brant)
- Expand access to dementia care for these four OHT regions by Q2 2022, which will nearly triple the numbers of persons served by MINT Memory Clinic
- Establish the necessary infrastructure for evaluation and accountability and set the template for roll-out across all OHTs
- Develop OHT integration for two more GTA-based sites
- Disseminate best practice similar to Ontario Structured Psychotherapy, another Ontario-made program currently conducting roll-out of OHT integration, with funding flowing through OHTs