

May 22, 2020

Ontario Health  
Matthew Anderson  
President and CEO

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Dear Mr. Anderson,

On behalf of the Guelph & Area Ontario Health Team (G&A OHT), we are writing to express our gratitude and support for the incredible partnership of Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph Public Health (WDGPH) during the COVID-19 pandemic. In a time when many Canadians feel their physical and mental wellbeing is at risk, it is vital to have strong and confident leadership to guide the actions and behaviours of both our healthcare organizations, as well as our broader community.

From before the onset of this pandemic, WDGPH's anticipatory leadership was evident. As you are aware, Guelph was one of the first communities in the province to plan and launch a COVID-19 assessment centre. This was made possible through consummate WDGPH guidance, alongside strong collaboration with municipal partners, and the leadership of primary care providers.

In those early days of testing, communicating results and tracing contacts, WDGPH excelled as a communications leader. Their organization established a COVID-19 call centre to help answer questions and to provide information to individuals, businesses and local organizations. In addition, its website, [www.wdgpublichealth.ca](http://www.wdgpublichealth.ca) became a destination for reliable and timely information and statistics about local COVID-19 cases. Moreover, organization-specific WDG liaisons were deployed across the community, providing real-time and tailored public health guidance, exactly when we needed it.

Amidst a time of ambiguity and worry, here are some specific examples of how OHT members felt supported:

- Early in the pandemic, our Public Health liaison, worked with Guelph Community Health Centre (CHC) leadership into the weekend, guiding the organization's testing approach and isolation planning with staff at a time before provincial guidelines had been released.
- Public Health worked alongside Guelph and Area community partners to develop and launch our Supported Isolation Centre by literally working around the clock and through the weekend. As we designed the initial Supported Isolation Centre model, WDGPH informed IPAC cleaning standards, assisted with training and guided site selection. This has resulted in our community being one of the first in the province to launch safe and supported spaces for our community's homeless population to self-isolate.
- In March when Guelph General Hospital experienced an outbreak, WDGPH worked very closely with us to manage the outbreak and complete contact tracings. Together we were able to declare the outbreak over in about 14 days.
- The expert guidance WDGPH provided during a COVID-19 St. Joseph's Health Centre Guelph was instrumental in containing the outbreak and preventing the spread. Additionally, WDGPH supported universal testing of asymptomatic patients, residents and staff at St. Joseph's, which entailed testing over 800 individuals over a 72-hour period; asymptomatic testing would not have been possible without the leadership of this public health unit.
- As the number of COVID-19 positive grew in our community, the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Nicola Mercer, was available at all hours to assist our organizations to manage during this stressful and unprecedented time. The excellent advice provided was always ahead of what the province released.
- WDGPH also assumed the responsibility for universal testing, working with Guelph and Area partners to plan and implement testing strategies for all staff and residents in our congregate care settings. In total, 1090 staff and 743 residents were tested across all G&A long term care homes.

When required, WDGPH worked quickly and efficiently to perform outbreak assessments and ensure facilities had access to appropriate PPE and infection and prevention control resources. This work proved so successful that, this week, G&A OHT issued a news release celebrating the end of all recent outbreaks at congregate care settings in our region (see attached). We are thrilled that our hard work and collaborations have paid off, and that we have good news to share with our community.

Mr. Anderson, our challenges relating to COVID-19 are far from over, but we believe strongly in giving credit where credit is due. The G&A OHT was still in the early stages of building its partnership when COVID-19 pandemic hit. Thankfully, we had established trust and cooperation amongst our healthcare community partners, and those trusting relationships were able to be relied upon and leveraged when we needed them most. This is owing largely to the strong leadership from our many core partners, including WDGPH.

Thank you for your continued support,

cc Bruce Lauckner, Ontario Health West Region  
cc G&A Core Steering Committee

G&A OHT – Core (Direct) Partners



Canadian Mental Health Association WW  
Helen Fishburn, Executive Director



East Wellington Family Health Team  
Kim Bell, Executive Director



eHealth Centre of Excellence  
Ted Alexander, VP Partnerships & Clinical Innovation



Guelph Community Health Centre  
Raechelle Devereaux, Executive Director



Guelph Family Health Team  
Ross Kirkconnell, Executive Director



Guelph General Hospital  
Marianne Walker, CEO



Hospice Wellington  
Pat Stuart, Executive Director



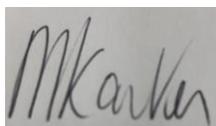
Sanguen Health Centre  
Dr. Chris Steingart, Executive Director



St. Joseph's Health Center Guelph  
David Wormald, CEO



Stonehenge Therapeutic Community  
Kristin Kerr, Executive Director



The Elliott Community  
Michelle Karker, CEO



Traverse Independence  
Toby Harris, CEO

Guelph & Area OHT – Core Steering Partner Committee

Canadian Mental Health Association WW  
eHealth Centre of Excellence  
Guelph Community Health Centre  
Guelph General Hospital  
Homewood Health Centre  
St. Joseph’s Health Care Guelph  
The Elliott Community  
University of Guelph  
Wellington Dufferin Guelph Public Health

East Wellington Family Health Team  
Guelph & Area Physician Association  
Guelph Family Health Team  
Hospice Wellington  
Sanguen Health Centre  
Stonehenge Therapeutic Community  
Traverse Independence  
Home & Community Care (WW LHIN)