

## **Patients of Community Health Centres report significantly fewer visits to the Emergency Department.**

*Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences Report Confirms Effectiveness of CHCs in Caring for Disadvantaged Populations*

The five Community Health Centres (CHCs) funded by the SE LHIN are keeping non-urgent patients away from hospital Emergency Departments (EDs), providing shorter waiting times for patients experiencing more serious medical emergencies, according to a study by the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES).

In its study, [Comparison of Primary Care Models in Ontario](#), ICES examined patients enrolled in several models of primary care being introduced in Ontario, including Community Health Centres (CHC), Family Health Networks (FHN), Family Health Groups (FHG), Family Health Organizations (FHO), and Family Health Teams (FHT).

While all groups were shown to offer different advantages in their respective methods of care, CHCs were identified as effectively serving populations that resided in lower income areas, had higher proportions of individuals receiving social assistance, served more new residents, and had more patients with identified mental illness and chronic health conditions.

The study also confirmed that patients of CHCs report significantly fewer visits to the ED. ICES further reports that an increase of immigrants to Ontario, paired with unequal distributions of income among populations have reinforced the importance of preventative care, which CHCs offer.

CHCs characterize their model of care as comprehensive, accessible, client and community-centred, interdisciplinary, integrated and community-governed. CHCs strive to be inclusive and responsive to the social determinants of health, and ground themselves in an overall community development approach.

Currently, there are 73 CHCs in Ontario that serve approximately 357,000 people. Here in the South East LHIN, there are 5 CHCs, serving Belleville, Quinte West, Tweed, Kingston, Rideau Lakes, Smiths Falls, and Merrickville. Together, they receive a total of \$22 million from the SE LHIN. CHCs can differ from other forms of primary care as they are governed by community boards; demonstrate a focus on the needs of special populations; are dedicated to significant health promotion and outreach; and strive to invest in the community through continuous education.

For more information about Community Health Centres in Ontario, visit [www.aohc.org](http://www.aohc.org).

ICES is a non-profit, independent organization that aims to produce knowledge that will enhance the effectiveness of healthcare in Ontario. Evidence garnered from ICES studies is intended to support the development of health policy and guide changes to the delivery of health care in Ontario. For more information, visit [www.ices.on.ca](http://www.ices.on.ca).

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