

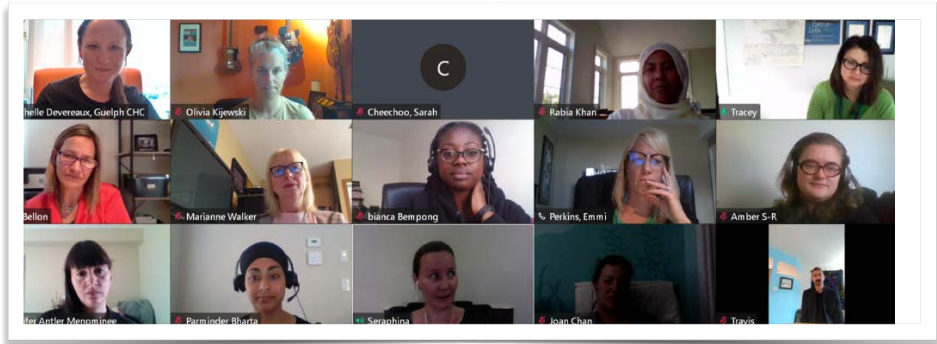
Anniversary of Our Commitment to Build an Inclusive Health Care System

Guelph Wellington Ontario Health Team

July 9th marks a very important day in Guelph Wellington Ontario Health Team’s (GW OHT’s) journey together. It was one year ago that a unanimous commitment to Diversity, Anti-Racism, and Anti-Oppression was made by the GW OHT partners. This commitment reads:

“As leaders within the health care system, we are committed to understanding and challenging oppressive systems and behaviours, so that regardless of the organizational door that they enter, all residents, clients, patients, and employees of our Ontario Health Team will experience inclusive, accessible, and welcoming health care spaces and services that are free from systemic barriers.”

Within our commitment, we acknowledge the need to **listen and learn** from clients, patients, families, employees, and community stakeholders about their experiences of systemic, organizational, and individual racism and oppression, and to **use the information collected to inform and prioritize our actions**. Furthermore, it was agreed the formation of an Anti-Oppression Advisory Team was needed such that **equity-deserving voices guide and direct our steps forward**.



A virtual meeting of the Guelph Wellington OHT Anti-Oppression Advisory Team.

And so what has happened in the past year? Steps forward. As the Guelph Wellington OHT embarked on our Strategic Planning process, the newly formed **GW OHT Anti-Oppression Advisory Team (Advisory Team)** got right to work, designing questions to learn more about the experiences of racism and oppression within the health care system. The Advisory Team also began assembling a suite of learning resources for organizations to better understand the existence of oppression and racism while simultaneously considering the best approach to a comprehensive, system-wide, anti-oppression, training curriculum for healthcare staff, leaders, and Board members across the OHT.

The Steering Committee learned from the Advisory Team that dedicated resources would be required to make the necessary transformative changes across the healthcare system. The Advisory Team advocated for funding to create an Equity Manager position. Once approved, Advisory Team members participated in the design of the job description and recruitment processes. As a result, Don Mahleka was hired in June of this year as GW OHT’s new Equity Manager. Since coming on board, Don has been busy meeting health and community partners and patients. He is leading foundational discussions to **advance our commitment to build inclusive, accessible, and welcoming healthcare services in Guelph and Wellington**.



Don Mahleka, Equity Manager, GW OHT.

Please share this newsletter broadly. If you have any questions or comments, please contact Don Mahleka at dmahleka@guelphchc.ca or Emmi Perkins at emmi.perkins@guelphfht.com