



# Guelph Wellington Ontario Health Team

## **Our Commitment to Diversity, Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression**

In recognition of recent global attention to Black Lives Matter partners of the Guelph Wellington OHT have paused to ask ourselves - What does it mean to stand in solidarity against racism and other forms of oppression?

The Core Partners GW OHT recognize that there is systemically-rooted power and privilege assigned to dominant groups in our society based on their gender, sexual orientation, race, economic status, language ability, religion preference, age, size, and ability. We also understand that the resulting sense of superiority, conscious or not, by dominant groups serves as a foundation for oppressive behaviours such as racism, xenophobia, classism, sexism, homophobia and heterosexism, transphobia, ableism, and ageism.

Systemic oppression is experienced by many of our clients and patients, and perpetuates barriers in and across social systems, including education, employment, housing, social services, and within our own health care system. Our OHT recognizes that systematic oppressive barriers within our workplace can prevent opportunities for our employees to gain access to many of the benefits that those with privilege take for granted, including safe and inclusive work spaces, opportunities to have their ideas heard and advanced, promotions and other job opportunities, and others.

### **Our Commitment:**

**As leaders within the GW OHT 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, patients and employees of the Guelph Wellington Ontario Health Team will experience inclusive, accessible and welcoming health care spaces and services that are free from systemic barriers.**

### **How Will We Understand the Problem?**

- In order to challenge or change something, **you must first acknowledge and understand that it exists.**
- As a first step, we commit to **listening to** and **learning from** our clients and their family members in our community, as well as to our employees and community stakeholders.

- As we listen to these personal experiences, we can better understand the systemic, organizational and individual experiences of racism and oppression, and how they are creating barriers for those we serve.
- Knowledge generated from our inquiry will help us to inform and prioritize our action steps to challenge and address these barriers.

### **Where Will We Start?**

1. An **OHT Anti-Oppression Advisory Team (OHT-AOAT)** will be established to inform, guide and support the data gathering process, and will include multiple voices from marginalized communities.
  - We ask that staff who are interested in helping to guide this critical work do so by first connecting with your direct supervisor, along with your organization's Executive Director/CEO, who will put your name forward.
  - Priority for these leadership roles will be given to those individuals from racialized and/or marginalized communities, as well as those with experience and understanding of anti-oppression.
2. Over the next several months, the GW OHT, under the guidance of the OHT-AOAT and leadership of Royal Roads Masters student Tracey Dun, will begin by conducting an **engaged action-oriented inquiry with patients and their family members, community stakeholders and employees** to gather data on their lived experience of oppression within our health network.
3. Data gathered from the research process, as well as a best practice review, will be reviewed and analyzed by the GW OHT Core Partner Steering Committee to inform and guide future actions.
4. The GW OHT Core Partners will then create an Action Plan, which will be incorporated into the GW OHT Strategic Planning process, to ensure the resources and commitment are invested to address the identified issues.

Please reach out to Raechelle Devereaux, Guelph CHC CEO, at [rdevereaux@guelphchc.ca](mailto:rdevereaux@guelphchc.ca) with any questions that you might have about this incredibly important work that we are about to embark on.