



### Patient Access Desk

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Over the past year, we opened a Patient Access Desk telephone line to help patients without a physician get connected to a new family doctor in Hamilton. When patients call our Access Desk, they are connected to a live person who answers any questions they may have and connects them with an HFHT physician that is accepting new patients. In the past six months, we've connected 75 people (and counting) to family doctors on our team! Our Patient Access Desk also serves as a link to other physicians in the community. When we are unable to match a patient to a physician on our team, we provide patients with the information to connect to other family doctors in Hamilton.

#### Organizational Review

This year, we are undergoing an organizational review. Since its conception 12 years ago, the HFHT has experienced several expansions, a significant change in board governance (from a physician provider model to a mixed model incorporating community members) and is now recognized as a major stakeholder in the Hamilton healthcare community. As the organization matures, it's become apparent that greater clarity and formalization in its structure and culture is required. We anticipate that this review will lead to changes in governance, clinical and administrative leadership, public accountability and more. These changes will enable us to do an even better job of improving access and integration for our patients.

#### Technology

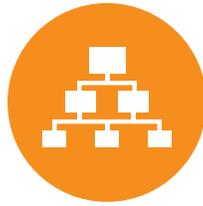
Technological advancements designed to improve healthcare are being developed at an unprecedented rate. Here at the HFHT, we are excited to take advantage of the improvements that technology can bring to patient access and healthcare integration. Here are a few things we are working on:

##### Online Booking for TB Skin Testing Clinic

We have recently launched a new online appointment booking platform on our website for our TB skin testing clinic. Patients who require a TB skin test will be able to visit our website and book a test online with just a few clicks.

##### Promoting the Use of eConsult

eConsult is a province-wide technological tool that allows a healthcare provider (such as a family physician) to ask a specialist a clinical question about their patient. Information is sent over a secure connection



### Organizational Review

and consultations are typically provided in less than three days. Not only does this save time and the inconvenience of travel to a specialist for a patient, it is also a learning opportunity for physicians and provides them with the knowledge and skills to manage more complex patients in their practice. Some physicians in the HFHT have been early adopters of the eConsult model and are working on ways to promote this service to others, including a series of newsletters called *Referring Wisely* that highlight the benefits of eConsult. Check out some of the *Referring Wisely* newsletters posted on our website!

##### Exploring Options for Email Communication with Patients

In a recent agreement with the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, we committed to make reasonable efforts to offer secure email communication to patients. Patients are interested in being able to book their own appointments and to view their bloodwork or imaging results online. There are a number of software programs available that achieve these functions and that link directly with our physicians' electronic charting systems, making communication simple and secure. One example is Well-Ex, a computer program that is integrated into the charting system and allows patients and physicians to message back and forth in a secure environment. Another software program, called Health Myself, also has secure messaging features and allows patients to book appointments online with their healthcare provider. Some physicians and a nurse practitioner within the HFHT are currently piloting these new software platforms with their patients, and it is exciting to see how well they work! We will continue to explore cost-effective communication options that could be implemented across the organization and hope to share more news about these options with our patients soon.

##### Connecting with Patients through Screenscape

One of our favourite ways to share information about HFHT programs and services and to educate patients about their health is through Screenscape, a television system that is found in over 30 HFHT practices across the city. We create short videos educating patients on how to be the healthiest they can be, reminders about our programs and information patients need to plan their visits. Then we upload these videos to televisions located in our physicians' waiting rooms. Patients all over the city are seeing our messages as they wait for their appointments, resulting in better patient care.



### Technology