

Media Release

Ministry of Health and St. Joseph's Health Centre Toronto Enhance Access to Primary Care Through the Urban Family Health Team

TORONTO, Monday, September 24 – The Ministry of Health, in partnership with St Joseph's Health Centre (SJHC) Toronto, are proud to launch the St. Joseph's Urban Family Health Team (UFHT). Family Health Teams are a key component of the government's plan to build a health care system that delivers on three priorities - keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses. Working in conjunction with the Health Centre's existing Family Medicine Centre, the UFHT is one of the first in the province to integrate the academic, interprofessional and collaborative components of primary care in a community setting.

The UFHT will complement services currently offered in SJHC's Family Medicine Centre. The addition of the UFHT interprofessional team will improve the quality of chronic disease management programs, health promotion and disease prevention programs. The UFHT will also offer patient education programs, enhanced home visit services to frail elderly and palliative care patients, improved service coordination and referral, case management and specialized access to pharmacist services. A key role of the UFHT is the training and development of the next generation of primary care professionals, to improve access to high quality services for members of our diverse communities.

"We are proud to officially open the UFHT today. Family Health Teams are a key component of the Ministry of Health transformation and primary care renewal plan," says Trish Crawford, Administrative Program Director, Women's, Children's and Family Health. "Through this team, the diverse patient populations we serve will greatly benefit from the interprofessional collaborative approach to primary health care. Family Health Team patients will have access to an interprofessional team made up of Family Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Pharmacists, Dietitians, Social Workers."

47-year old Mary Lynn Higgins has been a patient at SJHC's Family Medicine Centre for eight years. With the arrival of the UFHT, she can easily access primary care designed to meet her unique needs. The UFHT helped her cope with the death of her father in June and Mary Lynn is thankful for the care that she has received from the team. What Mary Lynn likes most is that she can receive high quality care in one location. "It's a bonus having all of these individuals located in one unit, part of one team. They can book joint appointments for me with the social worker and dietitian and the information is relayed back quickly to my family doctor. In the past, my doctors have always had to wait for reports." Mary Lynn feels that making the trip to SJHC's Family Health Team is well worth it. "I like my doctor, I am comfortable and I'm extremely happy with the care I get from the team."

The St. Joseph's Urban Family Health Team is located at 27 Roncesvalles Ave. (corner of Roncesvalles Ave. and Grafton Ave., just north of Queen Street W.). Hours of operation are Monday to Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

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