

# Press Release

ATTENTION NEWS/ HEALTH EDITORS:

## **St. Joe's Urban Family Health Team increases access to primary care services**

Access to a regular family doctor is key to good health

TORONTO, July 22, 2009 – St. Joseph's Health Centre's Urban Family Health Team (UFHT) is increasing access to primary health care services for families living in our catchment area by accepting new patients who do not have a regular family doctor. While the introduction of Family Health Teams across the province has increased the access to service for 500,000 residents, there are still approximately 1 million people in Ontario without a family doctor. Currently, the UFHT team has enrolled more than 3,600 patients and is continuing to open its doors to our community so that more families can get the care they need, when they need it and across their lifespan.

"Having regular access to a family doctor is key to your overall personal health and well being," said Alejandra Priego, Patient Care Manager. "They are the professionals who oversee your health care, when you are sick and healthy, and will have the full understanding of your and your family's health history – this helps to support continuity of care for patients. They also work collaboratively with other health professionals and connect patients to community resources that are helpful as well as provide referrals to medical specialists when necessary. Working in collaboration with the interprofessional team, family doctors and nurse practitioners also provide preventative care and educate people on how to manage their health issues."

In addition to comprehensive primary care services, the UFHT focuses on chronic disease management, disease prevention and health promotion initiatives and specializes in low-risk obstetrical care, mental health services, consultative addiction medicine, inpatient and community-based palliative care and provides home visits for frail house-bound seniors. The team's interprofessional approach to health care delivery means that patients can be connected to other health care providers including nurses, social workers, dietitians and pharmacists – all in one location.

"The UFHT provides a model of care that involves a team approach to caring for patients, to address all of their health care needs in a timely manner," said Dr. Daphne Williams, Interim Chief of Family Medicine and Physician Lead for the UFHT. "We are able to provide patient-centred care, to really focus on the specific needs of patients and their families."

In 2007, St. Joe's, together with the Ministry of Health, opened the UFHT, accommodating over 20,000 visits to date. The team operates out of two sites – The Family Medicine Centre located at St. Joseph's and the UFHT team site on 27 Roncesvalles.

[Click here to learn more about St. Joe's Urban Family Health Team.](#)

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St. Joseph's Health Centre is a full service acute care community teaching hospital in the Catholic tradition providing services in Southwest Toronto. With a vision to be Canada's Best Community Teaching Hospital, St. Joseph's is acknowledged for its commitment to community engagement and linkage that enables the delivery of outstanding quality and service to its diverse communities. The Health Centre's clinical programs include Women's, Children's & Family Health; Surgery and Oncology Services; Emergency, Critical Care and Access Services; Medicine, Ambulatory & Seniors Health; Mental Health & Addictions Services and Clinical Support Services.