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# Family Health Teams

*Advancing Primary Health Care*

## Guide to Patient Enrolment

July 4, 2005

## **Patient Enrolment in a Family Health Team**

Family Health Teams (FHTs) will include physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses and a range of other health care professionals who are committed to working together to provide comprehensive, accessible, coordinated primary health care services to their enrolled populations. The teams will emphasize prevention and healthy living as much as treating illness. Patients can be enrolled either to an individual family physician or to the group.

Enrolling with a FHT ensures that patients have access to primary health care treatment or advice, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through a combination of regular and extended office hours, and a nurse-staffed Telephone Health Advisory Service (THAS).

### **Who Should be Invited to Enrol?**

Physicians in a FHT who previously enrolled their patients while practicing in a Family Health Network, Primary Care Network or other harmonized model do not need to re-enrol their patients. Patients enrolled to Family Health Group physicians who are transitioning to a FHT do not need to re-enrol their patients.

All patients in the practice of a Family Health Team physician, regardless of their health status, must be invited to enrol, provided they are not otherwise ineligible.

In order to enrol in a FHT, patients will complete the Patient Enrolment and Consent to Release Personal Health Information form (the enrolment/consent form). Once the enrolment/consent form is completed, the physician acknowledges it and sends it to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (the ministry) for processing.

It should be noted that enrolling is voluntary; patients are not required to enrol to continue receiving services, nor will they be refused enrolment due to their health status or need for services.

## **New Patients**

Family physicians are also encouraged to take new patients into their practices. A premium is available to physicians when they enrol new patients. In order to claim this fee, the physician, in addition to formally enrolling the patient, must co-sign with the patient a New Patient Declaration form.

### **Who qualifies as a new patient?**

New patients are those people who do not have a family physician due to one or more of the following circumstances:

- their family physician has moved to another community;
- the patient has moved to another community;
- their family physician is no longer available due to illness, death, retirement or a change in practice type;
- up until this time the patient has not had or felt they needed a family physician.

## Patient Enrolment Requirements

By completing and signing the Patient Enrolment and Consent to Release Personal Health Information form, patients commit to the following:

- To seek treatment from their family doctor or the group first, unless they are travelling or find themselves in an emergency situation;
- To allow the ministry to provide their doctor or the FHT with information about services they have received from family doctors outside the FHT, and some preventive care services;
- To not switch the doctor or FHT they are enrolled with more than twice per year.

Patients remain enrolled unless they are no longer eligible for OHIP, move outside of the geographic area of the FHT, enrol with a primary health care physician in another group, or choose to cancel their enrolment. Physicians may choose to discontinue acting as a patient's family doctor in accordance with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) guidelines. Enrolment may also end when: the physician to whom the patient is enrolled leaves the FHT; the patient consistently fails to meet the obligations set out in the Patient Commitment on the enrolment form; or when the patient becomes a resident of a nursing home or chronic care facility.

## Enrolment Assistance

When the FHT is ready, the ministry will provide detailed information to assist Family Health Teams with their enrolment activity. To date, almost three million Ontarians have enrolled with family doctors who are members of Primary Care Networks, Family Health Networks, and Family Health Groups. Enrolment activity is also being undertaken for additional primary care models.

## Where to Get More Information

All potential Family Health Teams will be assigned a ministry FHT coordinator. This ministry contact person will be your guide to assist you to work through the details and options of establishing a FHT.

If you have not yet been assigned a coordinator, please contact the ministry at:

E-mail: FHTinquiry@moh.gov.on.ca  
Address: Primary Health Care Team  
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care  
1075 Bay Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Toronto, ON M5S 2B1  
Telephone: 416-212-6155  
Toll Free Phone: 1-866-766-0266

For more information on Family Health Teams in general, please refer to the Family Health Team Fact Sheets or the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care website at: [http://www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/fht/fht\\_mn.html](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/fht/fht_mn.html)

