

## Overview of the selected intervention in Ontario

### Primary care patient navigator to improve Access to Resources in the Community for patients experiencing social barriers

**Rationale:** The local health authorities in the Champlain region in eastern Ontario have invested in community-based primary health resources to support broader health needs of the population, as well as social determinants of health such as transportation, housing and outreach support services. Despite the breadth of existing community resources, including health and social services that can help individuals overcome barriers to improving health, there is a serious lack of awareness about these resources and they are underutilized. In addition, despite considerable evidence demonstrating the importance of language consideration in care delivery, disparities exist for Franco-Ontarians who face linguistic barriers limiting their access to social and health care services in their mother tongue. While further investment at the provincial level has been made to develop and maintain websites and tools to assist Ontarians and physicians to identify community resources, uptake of these by primary care providers has been lower than anticipated, with the consequence that patients are not getting access to a comprehensive range of primary care services. Consequently, the Local Innovation Partnership is putting in place an intervention to support primary care practices to improve referrals to community resources and support individuals with social complexities, including Francophones living in minority situations, to overcome barriers to equitable access. Patient navigators will be established in four practices to assist patients to reach the health and social services available in the community to which they have been referred. Focused effort will be applied to meet the needs of Francophone (minority) primary care patients, as this is a priority in the Champlain region. The implemented strategy should enable more individuals from vulnerable populations to reach the variety of existing community-based primary health resources that can help to address their health concerns or determinants.

**Targeted population:** Primary care patients, with a focus on individuals with social vulnerability and Francophones living in minority situations.

**Intervention:** The intervention has three parts: (1) orientation for practices about available community resources and training on using tools to identify the appropriate resources to which they can refer their patients; (2) practice facilitation to enhance uptake of community resources including ways that referrals to health, social and community services can be integrated into the practice routines; (3) patient navigator to support individuals with social complexities to overcome barriers to access and reach the resources. The Navigator will meet with patients and assess their ability to seek and reach services including access in their language of choice. The Navigator will provide information and practical assistance to help patients get to the referred programs, as well as identify appropriate social services to overcome access barriers like transportation and cost.

The intervention will result in more collaborative relationships between primary care practices and health/social/community services as well as appropriate referrals. Patients will get more appropriate and comprehensive primary care.

**Links with primary healthcare:** 4 practices serving populations with high levels of social vulnerabilities.

**Local Innovation Partners:** The local health authority, university, community and home care services, community, social and public health services, community health centres, information resources, primary care providers and community members.