

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**July 2, 2020**

### **Primary Care remains open to support the health needs of the community**

**Chatham-Kent, ON** – Primary care partners within the Chatham-Kent Ontario Health Team (CKOHT) are continuing to provide services to patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

While many health and community support services, including primary care providers, have needed to make adjustments to service delivery over the last few months, primary care services have remained available, though with a different look or feel.

The Chatham-Kent Family Health Team, Thamesview Family Health Team, Tilbury District Family Health Team and Chatham-Kent Community Health Centres have all taken an approach to care delivery that keeps the safety of all patients and staff top of mind.

“Our teams have remained open during the pandemic to serve our patients; it just looks different with the majority of our visits being done by phone or virtually,” said Kelly Griffiths, Executive Director of Tilbury District FHT. “We are still offering some programming, however, some group and other specialized services are temporarily on hold. We are still supporting same day urgent care visits which are now phone appointments instead of walk-in. Providers will arrange in-person visits as needed.”

According to Jason Bartell, Interim Executive Director at the Chatham-Kent FHT, all sites remain open. “We are still here to provide care during our regular business hours. We continue to offer After Hours Clinics and most programs with the exception of all groups. Patients may not be seen in person but are being well-supported by phone and other virtual care options.”

Approximately 80 percent of daily appointments at Thamesview FHT are being completed by phone and video. “We are offering virtual appointments where possible and when appropriate, which also allows us to preserve our personal protective equipment and ensure we have adequate supply to continue to offer in-person visits when needed, for months to come,” said Executive Director Denise Waddick. “Thamesview is also offering online booking for some appointment types, including suture removal, certain shots and bloodwork.”

All partners within the CKOHT have safety precautions in place due to COVID-19. “We are trying our best to safely provide medically necessary in-clinic services during this time,” said Sherri Saunders, Executive Director of CKCHC. “However, this also means putting some of our group programs on hold as well as limiting our hours at the Walpole

Island CHC for in-person clinic care. We continue to offer virtually based services at all sites Monday through Friday and we are using our [YouTube](#) channel to provide new learning segments aimed at keeping active and inspired by healthy eating. We encourage the community to regularly visit our website and social media accounts for updated information on services, new program offerings, hours of operation, and for online resources to help maintain health and well-being during this difficult time.”

Dr. Briana Yee-Providence, co-chair of the CKOHT Steering Committee, says patient care remains a high priority. “While many appointments and services may not be delivered through traditional in-person settings, we remain committed to high quality patient care. To keep our patients and staff safe, we have had to significantly change the way we deliver care but our priority remains to provide care to our patients. We are utilizing telephone and video conferencing to help support interactions and care delivery between providers and patients. We encourage our patients to continue to reach out to their primary care providers for both acute and chronic care.”

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To learn more about the Chatham-Kent Ontario Health Team, visit [www.ckoht.ca](http://www.ckoht.ca).

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