

OHTN Quarterly Report: Q1

April 1 – June 30, 2018



STRATEGIC DIRECTION ONE: Gather and Analyze Data on the HIV Epidemic and HIV Programs and Services

Monitoring HIV Testing in Ontario

A new report, [HIV testing in Ontario, 2016](#), analyzes testing trends in Ontario from 2007-2016. HIV testing increased 19% over the last three years after having been relatively stable for the past decade. The increase in testing likely reflects the success of recent testing campaigns and other promotion efforts, improved availability of testing, and implementation of the Ontario HIV Testing Frequency Guidelines created in 2012. The newly released report also allows the reader to see trends in HIV testing rates by age, sex, exposure category and region, as well as the number of positive tests in each category. While 95% of HIV tests in Ontario are done using the person's name, the report also includes information about anonymous and coded testing. Anonymous testing presents challenges for tracking demographic trends, but it is most attractive to those at high risk. The data shows that positivity rate of tests done anonymously are 4 to 5 times higher than the positivity rate for nominal and coded tests.

Short-term outcomes:

Readily available data about trends in testing and positivity rates gives insight on:

- The success of HIV testing initiatives
- The sub-populations at highest risk
- Regional testing success and areas of concern

This data will help guide Ontario's HIV response as per goal 5.2a of the HIV/AIDS Strategy for Ontario.

Vendor Identified for OCHART and OCASE

The OHTN supports accountability reporting at over 100 Ontario ASOs (the OCHART system) as well as the case management tools used by 30 ASOs (OCASE). These electronic systems are also important tools for program planning and evaluation at local agencies and across the province. In January 2018, OHTN began a systematic gap analysis and consultation with stakeholders to improve the systems and issued a Request for Proposal. After extensive analysis, a common vendor for both systems (Perceptible Group Inc.) was chosen and approved by the Board in late June. This initiative will allow OHTN to develop and maintain a fully integrated and optimized system for OCHART and OCASE web applications – with significantly reduced cost estimates for the next five years.

Short-term outcomes:

- A cloud-based data system with more immediate access to data and reports that is also more stable and secure
- Integrated systems for OCASE and OCHART - user agencies will only need to learn one system and less manual manipulation will be needed
- Cost reduction – five-year estimates will be reduced by more than half

These changes are consistent will goal 5.3c of the HIV/AIDS Strategy in Ontario to work with provincially funded HIV programs and services to strengthen their capacity to monitor and evaluate their services.

View from the Front Lines Released

In Q1, the [2017 View from the Front Lines](#) report was released. This report highlights key service trends of programs funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, including 69 community-based HIV/AIDS programs, 15 provincial-wide service and capacity-building organizations, as well as the province's 15 hepatitis C teams and some anonymous testing sites and community-based HIV clinics.

The report provides statistical data about services provided as well as summaries of emerging trends and responses.

Short-term outcomes:

Monitoring data about the trends in HIV service use helps:

- Identify and address gaps in services
- Provides a "big picture" overview to activity across the province

This data will help guide Ontario's HIV response as per goal 5.2a of the HIV/AIDS

Follow-up from Previous Reporting

- Data from the revised public health lab forms is being used to refine Ontario’s new diagnosis data and remove people who had previously tested positive in other jurisdictions from the newly diagnosed data. This will provide more accurate information about HIV risk in Ontario



STRATEGIC DIRECTION TWO: Conduct Targeted High-Impact HIV Research

Oahas Memorandum of Understanding

In Q1, OHTN signed a memo of understanding (MOU) with the Ontario Aboriginal HIV/AIDS Strategy (OAHAS) to define an ongoing working relationship to implement an Indigenous approach to data collection, research and evaluation. The MOU will establish a new position at Oahas that will work with staff at OHTN and elsewhere to support Indigenous programs and services in Ontario with needed evidence and data. Oahas and OHTN will work with organizations that serve Indigenous People to identify best practices in HIV prevention and harm reduction, as well as support and care. This agreement will re-shape OHTN’s current efforts to build research and knowledge use capacity in Indigenous communities emphasizing Indigenous ownership of data, and the value of an Indigenous-led approach and worldview to support improved outcomes for Indigenous communities living with, affected by or at risk of HIV/AIDS. The MOU provides a formal structure to regularly bring OHTN and OAHAS together to set specific deliverables and desired outcomes aligned with the provincial strategy on HIV/AIDS, as well as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action 19 to “establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities.”

Short-term outcome:

- A new approach to working with Indigenous communities that emphasises Indigenous-led approaches and data ownership

This is consistent with the HIV/AIDS Strategy for Ontario goal 1.b, to work with priority population networks to “set timely and relevant strategic priorities for serving populations” and goal 5.2 to collect data and evidence to monitor programs and identify evidence-based interventions.

Follow-up from Previous Reporting

- Following evaluation of the existing research funding program, staff proposed a new suite of funding mechanisms, which was presented at the June Board meeting. The new suite of programs is informed by the OHTN’s commitment to take action on its strategic priorities and to develop a rapid learning HIV health and social system within our sector. The new programs will include salary and training awards, as well as classes of grants that provide timely evidence supporting the information needs of our stakeholders. Details of the programs will be presented to the Board in September for approval and made public in November, as part of a staged launch.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION THREE: Support the Use of the Best Available Data and Research Evidence

Establishing an HIV Mental Health Network Community of Practice

The OHTN is supporting the Toronto HIV Mental Health Network to understand and serve the knowledge needs of its membership. The OHTN has led development of a membership survey to identify the education, training and peer support needs of the network. The group is also exploring the possibility of holding monthly meetings (instead of the current quarterly schedule) to support the group’s learning and peer support objectives.

Short-term outcome:

- Create a community of practice to address learning needs among HIV mental health providers

This is consistent with goal 1.d of the HIV/AIDS Strategy for Ontario to strengthen existing HIV and other health, community and social service networks

Brief Evidence Reports Emerge as a Tool

The OHTN’s Knowledge Synthesis unit is increasingly engaged in producing brief evidence reports for OHTN-supported partnerships and to serve the knowledge needs of the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care. Less comprehensive than the Rapid Response program and without a formal written report, this service provides summaries of: specific evidence-based models and frameworks, specific interventions or the information presented at a conference or event on a specific topic. Such reports may also help clarify the evidence behind reports published in the media or other information sources.

Short-term outcome:

- Reliable evidence-based information for the decision-making of policy makers and strategic planning groups

This is consistent with goal 52.d of the HIV/AIDS Strategy for Ontario to monitor and share new developments in the field around HIV interventions.

Endgame 3: Breakthrough Initiatives

The OHTN has announced ENDGAME 3: Breakthrough Initiatives, a clinically-focused conference planned for December 6-7, 2018 to promote evidence-informed best practices in HIV care in Ontario. Working with the Ontario Clinic Network and the pharmacist’s group, the event will combine structured CME-credit plenary and educational sessions, with discussions of innovations in care and support. The conference is also an important element of promoting Ontario’s new HIV Clinical Care Guidelines. Save the date notices and a call for abstracts for presenters have been circulated and registration will open in Q2. The program will focus on evidence-based interventions and approaches to care that build on Ontario’s strengths. It will highlight unique partnerships between clinicians and community-based service providers and between HIV and other sectors (e.g. housing, mental health, addictions). [Abstracts are being solicited](#) in ten topic areas identified by our clinical partners.

Short-term outcome:

- Dissemination of evidence-based practices in clinical care

This is consistent with goal 51.d of the HIV/AIDS Strategy for Ontario to establish clinical care guidelines for Ontario and promote best practices.

Follow-up from Previous Reporting

- The OHTN Intranet was launched in Q1. The communications team will continue to work to help provide content for this resource.



STRATEGIC DIRECTION FOUR: Help Create the Backbone for Collective Impact in the HIV Sector

Clinical Initiatives

PrEP Consultations

PrEP consultations held with Toronto and Hamilton-based providers as well as additional information from Ottawa meetings helped to shape a rapid learning approach to support the scale-up of PrEP services in Ontario in Q1. The meetings helped to describe the current status of PrEP programs, identify trends, issues and barriers and suggest possible strategies for scale-up. OHTN has already committed to support several PrEP implementation initiatives, and will participate in monitoring of PrEP uptake in the province.

Short-term outcome:

- A rapid learning plan to support PrEP scale-up in Ontario

This supports goals 2.2b of the Strategy to increase PrEP access and awareness among people at high-risk of HIV infection.

ASO and Community Initiatives

Harm Reduction and Supervised Injection

The OHTN continues to support communities across the province that are working to provide supervised injection and overdose prevention services within their communities. This group of agencies has become a community of practice learning from each other’s experiences and providing support and solutions as needed. Thirty-one individuals associated with projects across Ontario now exchange ideas in a secure online forum hosted by the OHTN. The OHTN also supports agencies in the data collection, and community consultations needed to gain approval for supervised injection sites, and in securing funds to do this work. With OHTN support, Elevate NWO in Thunder Bay has now completed the needed community consultations and reports for a supervised injection site. Thunder Bay, Sudbury and Barrie have all applying to the Substance Use and Addiction Program Fund (SUAP) to undertake this work. Niagara is interested in OHTN support for data collating and analysis later in Q2.

Short-term outcome:

- Greater availability of harm reduction services in Ontario communities

This supports goals 1.1e of the Strategy.

Policy and Systems Initiatives

The Fast Track City

World-wide more than a quarter of all people living with HIV live in just 200 cities. [Fast Track Cities](#) is an international movement of “high HIV burden” cities who have pledged to mobilize health care resources to address HIV and to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. While each city develops plans and strategies unique to its needs, cities all use common dashboard tools provided by the International Association of Providers of AIDS Care to monitor their progress. OHTN has been working with key champions in Toronto to explore fast-track city status and to develop a measurable plan and targets for better coordinated care and services. A Fast Track City Champions Committee has been formed

Short-term outcome:

- A process for coordinated action to end AIDS in Toronto
- A model for the collection of regional planning HIV metrics

All goals of the HIV/AIDS Strategy emphasize systems integration and coordination including strategies to integrate prevention and care into other community, health and social services creating networks of stigma-free service (1.1d), improved access to high-quality integrated HIV care (4.1) and the development of standards and guidelines for HIV care coordination (5.1d).

bringing together representatives of government, community, health and social service providers, coordinating organizations and the private sector. Long-time HIV community advocates Darian Taylor and Murray Jose-Boerbridge have agreed to serve as co-chairs. A draft plan includes activities and targets in five areas:

- 1) Drive down new HIV transmissions
- 2) Launch innovative, accessible treating programs
- 3) Link and retain people with HIV in Care
- 4) Improve the health and well-being of people living with HIV
- 5) Stop HIV stigma

Development and implementation of the plan relies on the actions of multiple specific Task Groups, who will develop action plans through broad consultation with communities across the cities. At the request of the Champion's committee, OHTN will fund and house a coordinator for the initiative and support ongoing development. Further work to define the plan and the consultation process will be done before it is presented to the Mayor for endorsement and signature. The OHTN is also supporting the development of metrics for Fast Track Cities and hopes to use much of this development work as a model for local planning reports to be used in regions across Ontario.

Follow-up from Previous Reporting

- Emerging from the Gay Men's Mental Health Summit hosted by GMSH, OAN and the Ministry in March 2018 is an effort to form a network for people who provide mental health support to cis & trans gay, bi, queer, 2 Spirit, and other men who have sex with men. The network will aim to develop and enhance provider's professional skills, improves access to services for gay, bisexual and queer men, promotes collegial relations, and provides support to providers. GMSH and OHTN remain partners in this effort, with GMSH taking the lead.
- Preliminary evaluation plans have been established with both the incubator projects (Linkage to Care Coordinator Toronto, and the Maple Leaf Medical Nurse-led Interventions) and work is now underway to implement these plans.
- A proposal was submitted to the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care Health Systems Research Fund in support of the Patient Reported Outcomes project.