



What is Primary Health Care?

Primary health care is comprehensive, fully integrated care.

- ✿ Primary health care **encompasses primary care**, and it goes **further**.
- ✿ Primary health care supports **all aspects of health and wellbeing** for **individuals, communities, and populations**.
- ✿ Primary health care includes **interprofessional clinical care, health promotion, and community development**.
- ✿ Primary health care supports the **social, economic, environmental, and structural determinants of health**.

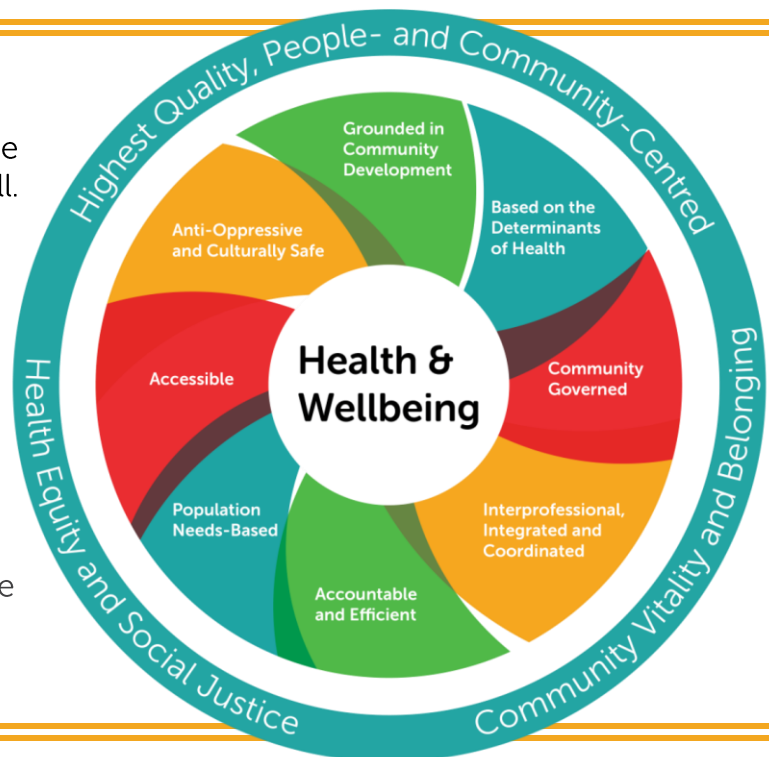
“Health is a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.”

– Constitution of the World Health Organization, 1948

The Model of Health & Wellbeing

Like the World Health Organization, the Alliance members’ goal is to achieve better health for all. To reach this goal, our model champions transformative change for people and communities facing barriers to health. Our [Model of Health and Wellbeing](#) outlines the three principles and eight attributes that guide our work.

[Evidence continues to emerge](#) which demonstrates the value of this model: CHC serve a more [socially & clinically complex clientele](#), demonstrate superior chronic disease management & cancer screening, and foster a superior client experience.



The Many Determinants of Health

Our health is largely determined by **social, economic, environmental, and structural factors** known as the determinants of health. These factors include income, education, employment, built and natural physical environment, experiences of discrimination, and more. In Ontario, there are many cases of **avoidable illness and premature death** because thousands of people simply cannot access the necessities to keep them healthy, or the health care they need when they are sick.

Connecting clinical, non-clinical, and community supports

System Navigation & Care Coordination

Primary health care teams develop care plans, address the medical and social needs of their patients, and provide better coordination of care.

System navigators identify and reduce barriers to care, diagnosis, and treatment. These staff identify, anticipate, and alleviate barriers to health and ensure that all internal and external services are coordinated.

Health Promotion

Health promotion means empowering people and communities to increase control over, and to improve their health.

Health promotion goes beyond focusing on individual behaviour. It is grounded in supporting all of the determinants of health by implementing social and environmental interventions and advocating for healthy public policy.

Community Development

Community development means helping communities build their capacity to take action and create solutions to shared problems.

This can lead to long-term, sustainable improvements to the health of whole communities.

This process respects the unique values, needs, and assets of each community and builds on existing strengths.

Social Prescribing

Social Prescribing is a tool that unites the social and medical models of health and wellness. It enables clinical care providers to address the diverse determinants of health through the familiar process of writing a prescription.

Social prescriptions are co-designed with clients, based on their unique interests, goals, and gifts. **Clients improve their health** by developing new skills, participating in meaningful activities, and becoming more connected to their communities.

Alliance members **pioneered Social Prescribing in Ontario** and are helping it spread across Canada through **Communities of Practice**.

TeamCare

TeamCare began in Toronto as Solo Practitioners in Need (SPIN), a project which connected the patients of solo primary care providers to the range of services offered by Alliance member organizations. It has spread to over 30 communities throughout Ontario.

TeamCare is not a referral program. It's a collaborative approach built on trusted relationships between primary care providers, their clients, and the teams they work with.

Over 1300 community family physicians and nurse practitioners have connected **over 20,000 clients** to comprehensive primary health care through TeamCare initiatives.

The Foundation of a Sustainable Health System

Comprehensive primary health care is recognized as the foundation of an integrated health care system by the **World Health Organization**, the **Commonwealth Fund**, and the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**. **Strengthening primary health care** makes health systems more sustainable, leads to better client and provider experiences, and improves population health and health equity.

