



Primary Health Care: the Foundation of our Health System

Primary care supports people throughout their lives.

It is the first point of access for most people and the most frequently accessed part of the health system.

Primary health care is more than simply primary care.

It is comprehensive support for health and wellbeing.

Primary health care includes primary care. Both models offer **treatment, restoration of health & function, and referral to specialists and acute care** when necessary.

Primary health care **goes further**. Here's how:

- **Interprofessional teams** work together to provide whole-person care.
- **Care coordination and system navigation** make additional supports more accessible.
- **Preventive care** supports continuous health and wellbeing.
- Care is **co-designed with communities** to improve **population health**.
- **Clients are empowered** to make decisions and manage their health.
- **Social, environmental, and material needs** are addressed, removing barriers to health.

Primary healthcare is a landing point that **connects people to other health and social care services** and can be a **hub for communication** amongst providers.

70-75% of health needs can be met through a primary health care provider.

Primary health care is key to managing care for people with chronic illnesses.

Primary health care includes clinical and non-clinical staff

Primary health care takes a whole team. Ontario's community health centres have:

818 Family physicians and **nurse practitioners**

574 Nursing staff, including **registered practical nurses** and **registered nurses**

440 **Community health & outreach workers, health promoters, and system navigators**

361 **Social workers, counsellors, psychiatrists, and psychologists**

204 **Dietitians** and **nutritionists**

157 **Physiotherapists, occupational therapists, chiroprodists, and chiropractors**

Our teams also include **pharmacists, settlement workers, dental staff, Indigenous elders, traditional healers, administrative staff**, and more!

2018 | Declaration of Astana | World Health Organization

"We are convinced that strengthening primary health care (PHC) is the most inclusive, effective and efficient approach to enhance people's physical and mental health, as well as social well-being, and that PHC is a cornerstone of a sustainable health system for universal health coverage and health-related Sustainable Development Goals."

