

A Framework: Older Adult Strategy for Waterloo-Wellington

Executive Summary

In February 2018, the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) engaged the Research Institute for Aging (RIA) to lead the development of the Waterloo-Wellington Older Adult Strategy (WWOAS). This work was guided by the WWOAS Advisory Committee and informed by the WWOAS Reference Group.

Report I, released in June 2018, presented a series of priority pillars, propositional statements and key enablers related to the development of the WWOAS. Importantly, the report was informed by the experiences, perspectives and voices of citizens residing within Waterloo and Wellington, including older adults themselves, their families and their caregivers. This report laid the groundwork for the next phases in the WWOAS development process and captured salient themes that emerged through a robust engagement process and environmental scan.

Foundational elements presented in Report I included:

Priority Pillars

1. Availability and accessibility of care, services and supports where and when they are needed
 - Promote and Support Healthy Aging*
 - Prevent and Manage Chronic Disease*
 - Promote Optimal Aging at Home for Older Adults with Multiple Chronic Conditions*
 - Provide Specialized Care for those Living with Frailty*
 - Support Caregivers*
2. Performance, productivity and efficiency
 - Communication*
 - Transitions*
 - Health Human Resources*
3. Linkage, coordination and navigation (includes provider awareness)
4. Equity, diversity and inclusion
 - The case for an income-adjusted sliding scale for community services*
5. Health empowerment

Key Enablers

- A. *Governance and System Stewardship*
- B. *Clinical Leadership*
- C. *Innovation*
- D. *Digital Health*
- E. *Education and Training*
- F. *New and existing models for potential partnership and service integration and expansion (i.e. integrated health campuses and community hubs, for example)*

Approach

As outlined in the Waterloo-Wellington Older Adult Strategy project charter, the co-sponsors and Advisory Committee members agreed that moving forward with strategy development and implementation be contingent on a series of grounding assumptions —a shared understanding.

Four primary lenses were used to explore potential opportunities for better health and system strengthening. They included: Lifespan; Orientation; Improvement; and, Evidence. RIA relied on guiding principles for the Strategy development process, and those offered by WWLHIN related to system design and engagement (below). Evidence to inform transformation have respected *multiple ways of knowing*.



Recommendations

Resting upon the preceding priority pillars and key enablers, Report II was finalized in November 2018. Report II was envisioned as a Strategy Framework, articulating six overarching and interrelated goals for consideration as foundational to the Waterloo-Wellington Older Adult Strategy. These important goals are offered to better support the health of an aging population, improve care experiences and increase value for the health system, those who function within it and those who rely upon it.

The goals presented as part of the Strategy Framework include:

Goal 1: Age-Friendly Society/Communities. Waterloo-Wellington citizens age well within communities that celebrate their life in society and contributions to their communities, thriving through dignity, purpose, belonging and inclusion.

Goal 2: Healthy Aging. All people living in Waterloo-Wellington are exposed to the conditions and experiences that support optimal health throughout the lifecourse/lifespan.

Goal 3: Health System Capacity. The Waterloo-Wellington health system is designed and coordinated in a way that realizes deep functional integration and the appropriate use of health resources to achieve optimal system capacity in support of an aging population.

Goal 4: Collaboration and Coordination. The Waterloo-Wellington health system fully leverages and capitalizes on intra and intersectoral collaboration, offering a whole-of-community orientation to health, well-being and quality of life.

Goal 5: Quality. Older adults living in Waterloo-Wellington have universal access to the highest quality of care, services and supports — those that emphasize excellence in safety, effectiveness, person-centredness, timeliness, efficiency and equity.

Goal 6: Empowerment. The Waterloo-Wellington health system plays a pivotal and functional role in enabling the empowerment of people as they age, their caregivers and the health and social service providers they rely upon.

Conclusion

This Framework represents the beginning of a movement that has sparked momentum and captured the wealth of goodwill, insight, effort and expertise that exist across Waterloo-Wellington. It proposes the next step in a journey toward a transformed health system that supports healthy aging and ensures a better quality of life for all people in our region.

At a regional level, collaborative leadership will mean figuring out the most effective and efficient way to cluster services according to functional roles and service dimensions. Indeed, reducing gaps and fragmentation will serve to improve multilevel outcomes related to health, patient and family experience and value. Community-based planning at the sub-LHIN region level will help to determine leadership and accountability, oversight and a model of integration appropriate to the local context.

The next phase of this important work involves the articulation of the final Strategy – a series of strategic directions, objectives, outcomes and a measurement framework designed to optimize the health and well-being of older adults in Waterloo-Wellington and strengthen the performance of our health system.

The final phase of this work is expected to build toward an integrated service delivery model and implementation plan.