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## CONFERENCE ABSTRACT

# Patient and Caregiver Handbook in the Oxford and Area Ontario Health Team

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### ***Introduction***

Tasked with improving system navigation for Oxford County and area residents, as per the Ontario Health Team model, the Oxford and Area OHT initiated, co-designed, and distributed a Patient and Caregiver Handbook with Oxford residents.

The inspiration for this work is based in evidence that patients, families, and caregivers who are active and involved in their own care not only have better experiences, but also better outcomes. Further, this can lead to health system efficiencies when individuals are historians of their own health information as they ensure health professionals have access to information upon which to base informed decisions.

### ***Aims Objectives Theory or Methods***

The Patient and Caregiver Handbook was developed with the aim of improving system navigation and health literacy. Co-designed by patient and family advisors on the Patient Engagement Action Team, we built a short plain-language document intended to provide helpful practical suggestions – by patients, for patients – to encourage active participation in their care.

To develop the Handbook, a five question survey was completed by committee members around what makes for a positive health experience, how to manage health conditions, and how to support loved ones.

### ***Highlights or Results or Key Findings***

Results of the engagement informed nine brief sections with practical advice, including how to approach Appointments, Tests, Procedures, Ongoing Care and Care Transitions, Caregiving, Taking Care of Yourself, Sharing Your Experience, Troubleshooting, and Supports/Resources. Information includes suggestions and questions to spur a conversation between patients, families, and caregivers with their health care professionals and equip individuals with tools they need to keep track of their information and successfully navigate their care between sectors.

The Handbook now resides on our OHT website in the five most used languages in this region. We promoted awareness through our OHT newsletter, Twitter account, and printed flyer in the Oxford Review.

We are in the midst of seeking feedback on usefulness to adapt the guide over time. A link to a survey exists and people are encouraged to share feelings about the Handbook.

### ***Conclusions***

Through OHT guidance, patient navigation and health literacy are key domains of an integrated health system. This handbook aimed to tackle these important areas and encourage local patients, families, and caregivers participation in their care.

Supporting navigation and enabling participation improves health system efficiencies and improves experiences and outcomes.

### ***Implications for applicability/transferability sustainability and limitations***

At the time of writing, to our knowledge, no other OHT has developed a handbook to support patients, families, or caregivers in their direct care. This document is aimed at a general audience, and is not specific to age, demographics, or Year 1 populations. It is written in plain language.