

## **FAQ**

### **Community Engagement and Integration**

With respect to integrations under Section 27 of the Local Health System Integration Act (LHSIA), the Mississauga Halton LHIN expects that the decision to integrate has been informed by appropriate community engagement by the health service providers involved in the proposed integration. Information about community engagement is to be included in informal notice of voluntary integration to the LHIN.

The following **FAQs** have been developed as guidelines for the submissions. The application of these guidelines will vary from provider to provider and depending on the nature of the integration being proposed.

#### **1. What is community engagement?**

Community engagement refers to the methods by which LHINs and HSPs interact, share and gather information from and with the public and other stakeholders.

The purpose of community engagement is to inform, educate, consult, involve, and empower stakeholders in both health care or health service planning and decision-making processes to improve the health care system.

Community engagement is a critical input to health care decision-making. The results of community engagement, along with research evidence, help define priorities and point to solutions in health services.

#### **2. How does the Mississauga Halton LHIN define community?**

“Community”, for the purpose of community engagement by the LHIN and health service providers, has been defined in section 16(2) of LHSIA as: patients and other individuals in the geographic area of the LHIN, health service providers and any other person or entity that provides services in or for the local health system, and employees involved in the local health system.

#### **3. What are methods and techniques for effective community engagement?**

There are many methods and techniques for effective community engagement including, but not limited to; focus groups, town halls, surveys, advisory committees, etc.

#### **4. What does the Mississauga Halton LHIN consider to be effective community engagement?**

In order to help health service providers engage their communities effectively, the [LHIN's Community Engagement Guidelines](#) and Toolkit includes seven principles.

Health service providers are encouraged to consider these principles in planning their own community engagement activities, although they are not mandatory.

## **5. How can health service providers ensure they meet obligations to engage the community in integration decisions?**

Health service providers are encouraged to define their community broadly, including local residents, other HSPs or organizations providing services in the LHIN, labour and union representatives, volunteers, employees, etc. In determining the level of engagement with each stakeholder or community group, HSPs should define the interest of each group, in the proposed integration, and prioritize community engagement accordingly.

For example, the [LHIN's Community Engagement Guidelines and Toolkit](#) is based on a spectrum of community engagement: Inform, Consult, Involve, Collaborate, Empower. Community engagement approaches should be based on how much impact the integration decision will have on each stakeholder - the greater the impact the higher the level.

Effective community engagement goes hand in hand with effective communications. HSPs are encouraged to use proactive communication strategies to ensure appropriate evaluation and feedback loops with each stakeholder group they engage.