Ottawa Health Team-Équipe Santé Ottawa

Community COVID-19 Response

January 26, 2021

Ottawa Health Team - Équipe Santé Ottawa

COVID-19 Community Response 2020

Executive Summary

Building on lessons learned in Phase 1 of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as municipal, provincial, and federal initiatives, the Ottawa Health Team - Équipe Santé Ottawa (OHT-ESO) has designed a strategic and targeted COVID-19 Community Response Strategy. The goal of this strategy is to mitigate the transmission and impact of COVID-19 in disproportionally affected, equity-seeking communities, particularly racialized, immigrant and low-income individuals and families. It is a multi-pronged strategy that uses a community development approach to address the social determinants of health that are implicit in the transmission and impact of COVID-19 and is designed to evolve as we learn more about community needs and priorities.

The OHT-ESO COVID-19 Community Response Strategy has four main components:

1. Supporting individuals and families identified by Ottawa Public Health who face barriers to isolation
2. Conducting neighbourhood engagement blitzes in collaboration with community leaders
3. Implementing targeted testing resources to support those not well served by the assessment centre model
4. Connecting people to wrap around supports to encourage testing and support isolation when necessary

Our work requires coalescing the excellent COVID-19 response work of diverse health and social service providers in Ottawa into a singular, coordinated effort focused on deploying resources to stop the transmission of COVID-19 and support those communities facing the most challenges related to the pandemic. It is an exercise in building stronger relationships around a shared mission and a desire to do "more together" in recognition of the structural inequities impacting certain populations.

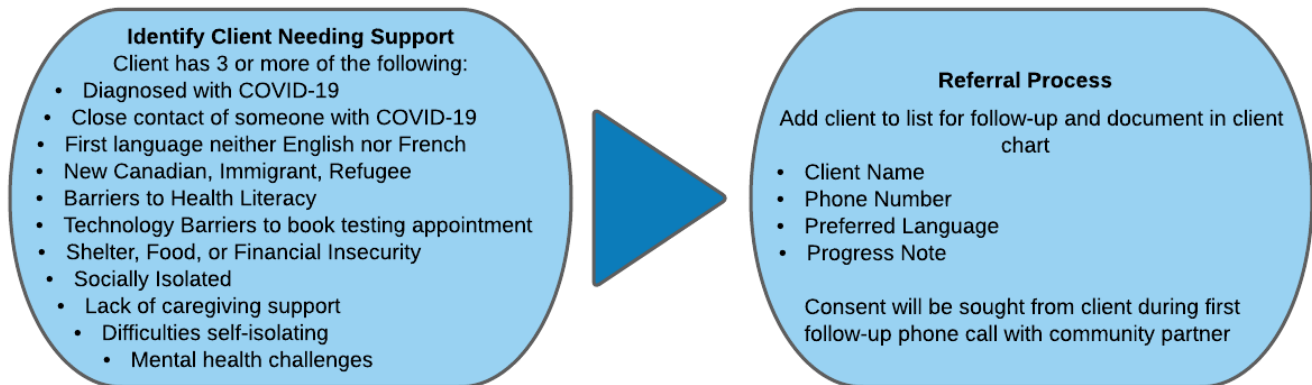Our strategy requires a "one team" approach that includes:

- local residents in affected communities, as well as community leaders, faith leaders
- health, community and social service agencies,
- assessment and testing centre infrastructure, and
- city-wide public health measures and messaging.

Support for Individuals and Families Facing Barriers to Isolation

Six Community Health Centres in Ottawa signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Ottawa Public Health (OPH) to receive direct referrals and provide additional supports to individuals and families that OPH had identified, through contact tracing and case management work, as requiring additional support to safely isolate at home (see Appendix A).

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Identify Client Needing Support
Client has 3 or more of the following:
- Diagnosed with COVID-19
- Close contact of someone with COVID-19
- First language neither English nor French
- New Canadian, Immigrant, Refugee
- Barriers to Health Literacy
- Technology Barriers to book testing appointment
- Shelter, Food, or Financial Insecurity
- Socially Isolated
- Lack of caregiving support
- Difficulties self-isolating
- Mental health challenges

Referral Process

Add client to list for follow-up and document in client chart
- Client Name
- Phone Number
- Preferred Language
- Progress Note

Consent will be sought from client during first follow-up phone call with community partner
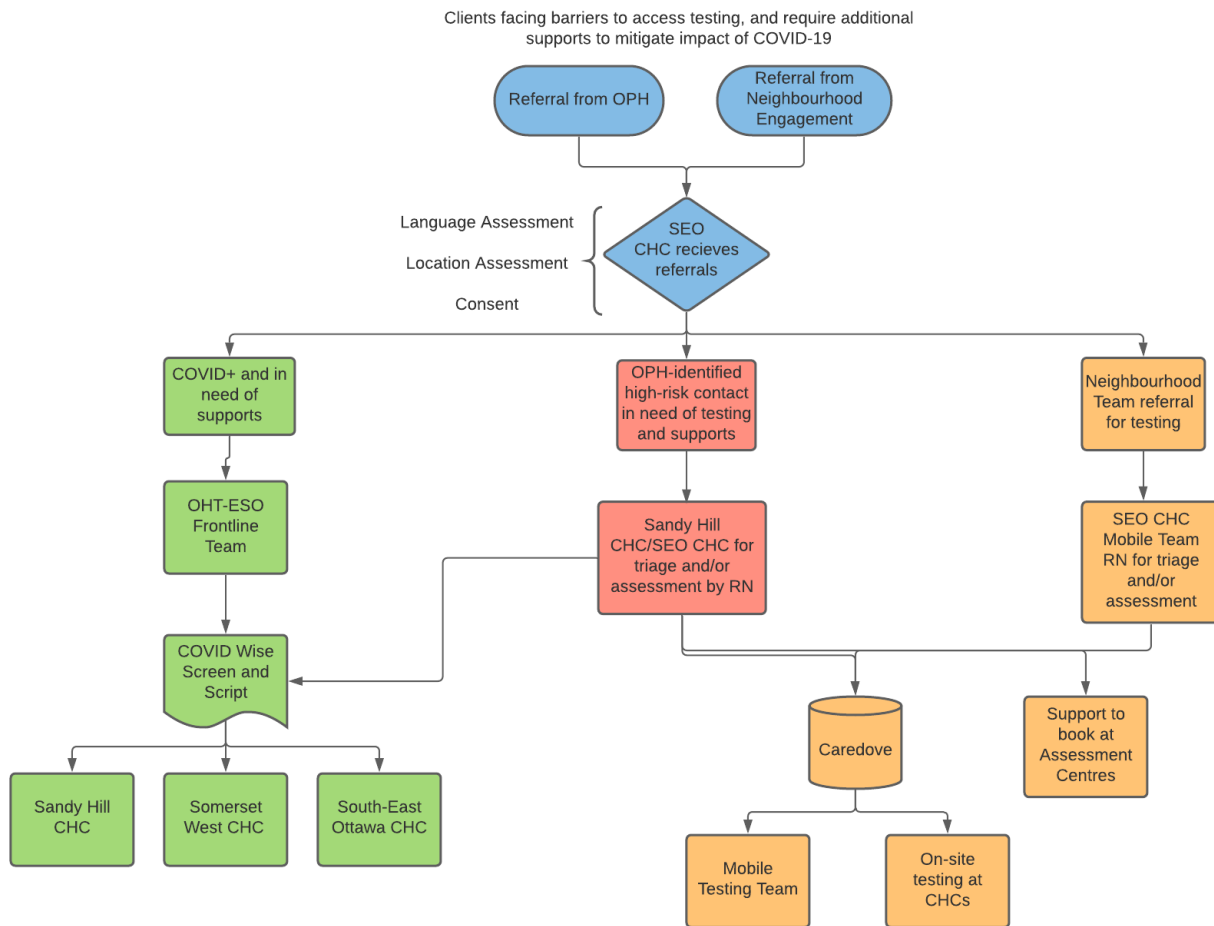
All referrals are triaged through a 'central intake,' managed by the South-East Ottawa Community Health Centre.

Referrals are sent to one of the three CHC partners via Caredove to connect with the client . The client is contacted and support is provided by reviewing the following with client

- Review and understand the information provided to them by OPH, in their language of choice
- Identify and review OPH guidelines for isolation
- Access additional supports needed to isolate safely (e.g., food, medications, masks, cleaning supplies, baby supplies)
- Provide referrals and connections to other social services (e.g., Counselling Connect https://www.counsellingconnect.org/ or City of Ottawa Community and Social Services for financial aid)
- Arrange for the delivery of wrap around support for the isolation period

Clients facing barriers to access testing, and require additional supports to mitigate impact of COVID-19

Referral from OPH

Referral from Neighbourhood Engagement

Language Assessment

Location Assessment

Consent

SEO CHC recieves referrals

COVID+ and in need of supports

OPH-identified high-risk contact in need of testing and supports

Neighbourhood Team referral for testing

OHT-ESO Frontline Team

Sandy Hill CHC/SEO CHC for triage and/or assessment by RN

SEO CHC Mobile Team RN for triage and/or assessment

COVID Wise Screen and Script

Caredove

Support to book at Assessment Centres

Sandy Hill CHC

Somerset West CHC

South-East Ottawa CHC

Mobile Testing Team

On-site testing at CHCs

Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy

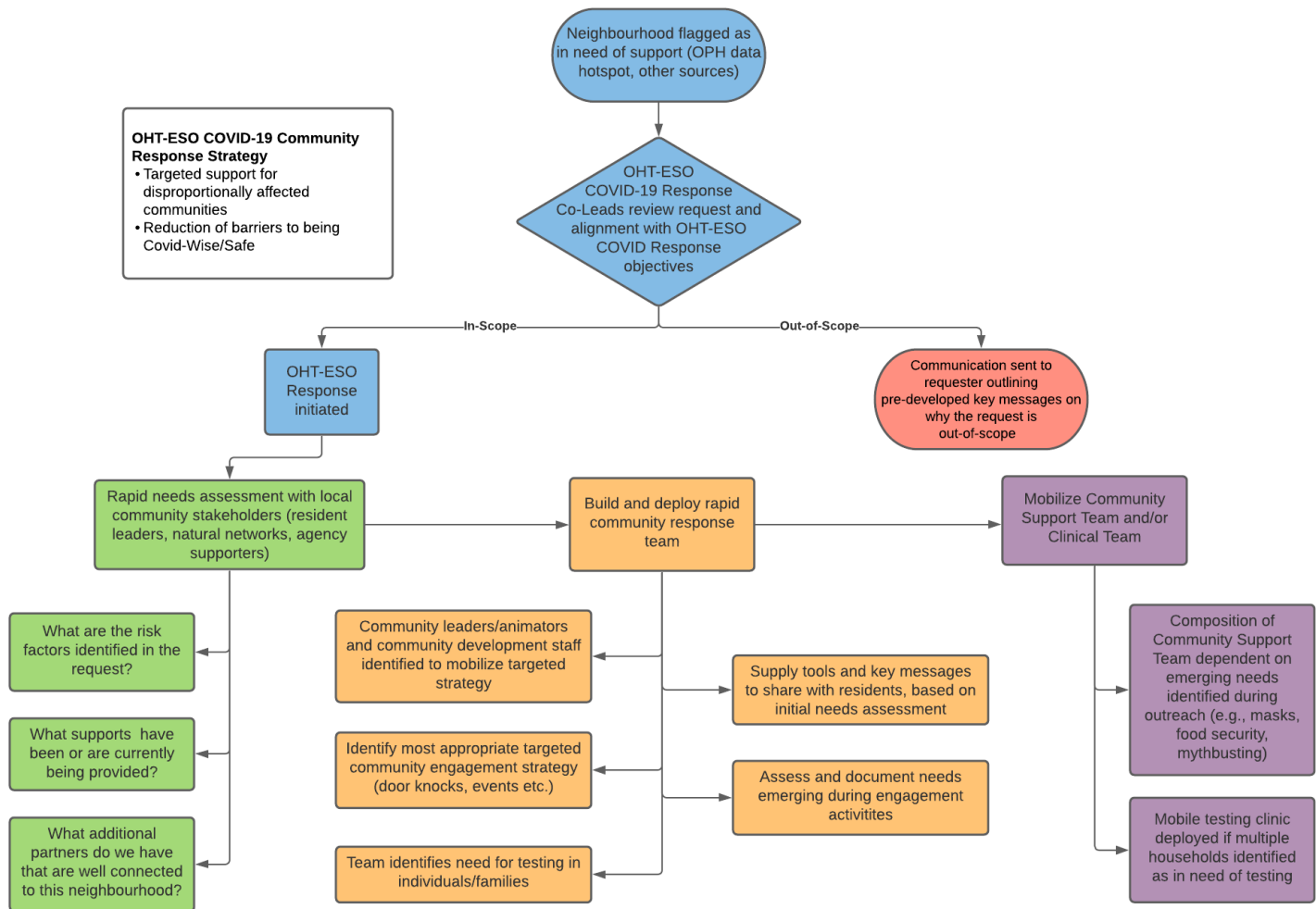The goals of the Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy are:

- To protect communities most affected by COVID-19 and respond to related needs
- To build capacity for community-based planning through improved understanding of challenges and strengthened community connections
- To provide information regarding Covid, testing, isolation, vaccines, etc.

We use epidemiological data from OPH to identify disproportionally affected communities and neighbourhood clusters showing high rates of COVID-19 transmission and design a customized response plan in consultation with local community leaders. This customized plan facilitates the mobilizing of allied supports and services to these communities that are aligned with their specific needs.

Neighbourhood engagement also centres on finding innovative methods of communication to reach all members of our community and identifying individuals and/or families that would have challenges in following public health guidelines for isolating due to lack of resources and social supports. Strategies such as neighbourhood door knocks, business and leader outreach, virtual sessions and groups, population/network based outreach (i.e. Somali, Arabic, ACB French).

Neighbourhood flagged as in need of support (OPH data hotspot, other sources)

OHT-ESO COVID-19 Community Response Strategy
- Targeted support for disproportionally affected communities
- Reduction of barriers to being Covid-Wise/Safe

OHT-ESO COVID-19 Response Co-Leads review request and alignment with OHT-ESO COVID Response objectives

In-Scope | Out-of-Scope

OHT-ESO Response initiated

Communication sent to requester outlining pre-developed key messages on why the request is out-of-scope

Rapid needs assessment with local community stakeholders (resident leaders, natural networks, agency supporters)

Build and deploy rapid community response team

Mobilize Community Support Team and/or Clinical Team

What are the risk factors identified in the request?

What supports have been or are currently being provided?

What additional partners do we have that are well connected to this neighbourhood?

Community leaders/animators and community development staff identified to mobilize targeted strategy

Identify most appropriate targeted community engagement strategy (door knocks, events etc.)

Team identifies need for testing in individuals/families

Supply tools and key messages to share with residents, based on initial needs assessment

Assess and document needs emerging during engagement activitites

Composition of Community Support Team dependent on emerging needs identified during outreach (e.g., masks, food security, mythbusting)

Mobile testing clinic deployed if multiple households identified as in need of testing

Mobilizing partners within the Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy

Identify community partners and put out a Call to Action

Ask community partners (in Ottawa, this call was to the Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres http://www.coalitionottawa.ca/) to identify a lead staff in their agency to work with the OHT-ESO operational team to implement the Neighbourhood Engagement Strategy. See Appendix B for partner expectations regarding the provision of wraparound supports.

Key messages to partners:

- We are one team working across our City
- You know your community best – what do we need to do to make a difference?
- We want you to tap into your community leaders, resident networks, agency partners and networks to build the community response teams – boots on the ground.

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Use Ottawa Public Health (OPH) data to identify the areas that need the most attention.

Ottawa Public Health produces Neighbourhood Cluster reports that identify a higher-than-expected number of people who have tested positive for COVID-19 in a specific geographical area made up of dissemination areas within a specific period. This data is shared with community partners in those areas to help strategically mobilize the resources to outreach to the community.   Additionally, the OHT-ESO team uses this data and overlays community demographic data as well as maps access to testing to help determine the best way to support the neighbourhood strategy (I.e. language needs, cultural representation, environment (high-rise/townhouse), distance to testing, etc.).

Support the neighbourhood teams with a 'mobilization toolkit'

The mobilization toolkit is meant to give agencies a launching point for designing the most appropriate strategy for their neighbourhood cluster.

- Community Engagement Pathway (overview of how to mobilize)
- Principles of Engagement (reason and approach to mobilization)
- Sample partners invitation letter (to help build the response team)
- COVID-19 training presentation (for front line staff and volunteers)
- Sample Community Engagement script (for front line staff and volunteers)
- Resources for Wrap Around Supports (quick reference to supports)
- Testing Locations and/or options in Ottawa (quick reference on where and how to access a test)
- Partner Feedback (opportunity to report back on what occurred)

Establish Partner Leads' Community of Practice

The weekly meeting of Partner Leads is an opportunity to share best practices and challenges, request additional resources and support, and report back on changes and/or impact.

City-wide engagement opportunities

While the neighbourhood teams are mobilizing, additional engagement strategies can be mobilized for communities without geographic boundaries (e.g., faith communities, ethnocultural communities)

- Work with faith and cultural leaders
- Hire community leaders to lead (for the community, by the community)
- Utilize existing resident and neighbourhood networks and communication channels to share information and seek input to evolve strategy

Targeted COVID-19 Testing

The OHT-ESO testing strategy is focused on health promotion and easier access to testing, with the goal of connecting individuals and families to accessible COVID-19 testing that meets their needs, when required. It is centred around the principle that community members not only need to understand the public health guidelines and reasons for getting tested, but that they understand the kinds of supports available to them if they receive a positive COVID-19 test result or need to isolate.

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Identify communities that need enhanced COVID-19 testing

It is a collaborative approach to determining where to provide service, guided by three questions:

- **Where is the standard testing approach not working?**
    - Areas with high rates of COVID-19 positive results
    - Areas with low testing rates
- **Who needs an enhanced testing approach to be served?**
    - Areas that face existing health inequities or barriers to care (e.g., cultural, linguistic, material deprivation)
- **Where are there trusted, engaged partners and communities?**
    - Communities have identified the need for more testing
    - Service providers already in the community
    - Service providers able to provide additional supports (e.g., social services, emergency food, income replacement, counselling)

Prepare for testing

- Engage and secure key community contacts and leads in the planning
- Identify community spaces for testing that are culturally safe and accessible
- Organize translation supports and/or multilingual staff and resources
- Co-design a communication plan specifically for the targeted community (leverage existing communication channels, in appropriate languages, etc.)
- Develop a plan to support the community's members that need to self-isolate. Depending on the community engaged, this may include:
    - providing a safe space for isolation
    - emergency food supplies
    - income replacement
    - counselling supports and ongoing communication
    - childcare and education support
- Compiling a list of resources specific to each community that could address the basic needs for those in self-isolation. If possible, designate lead staff to oversee the emergency response.
- Secure clinical supports to conduct testing, in partnership with local Assessment Centres, community paramedics, hospitals, etc.
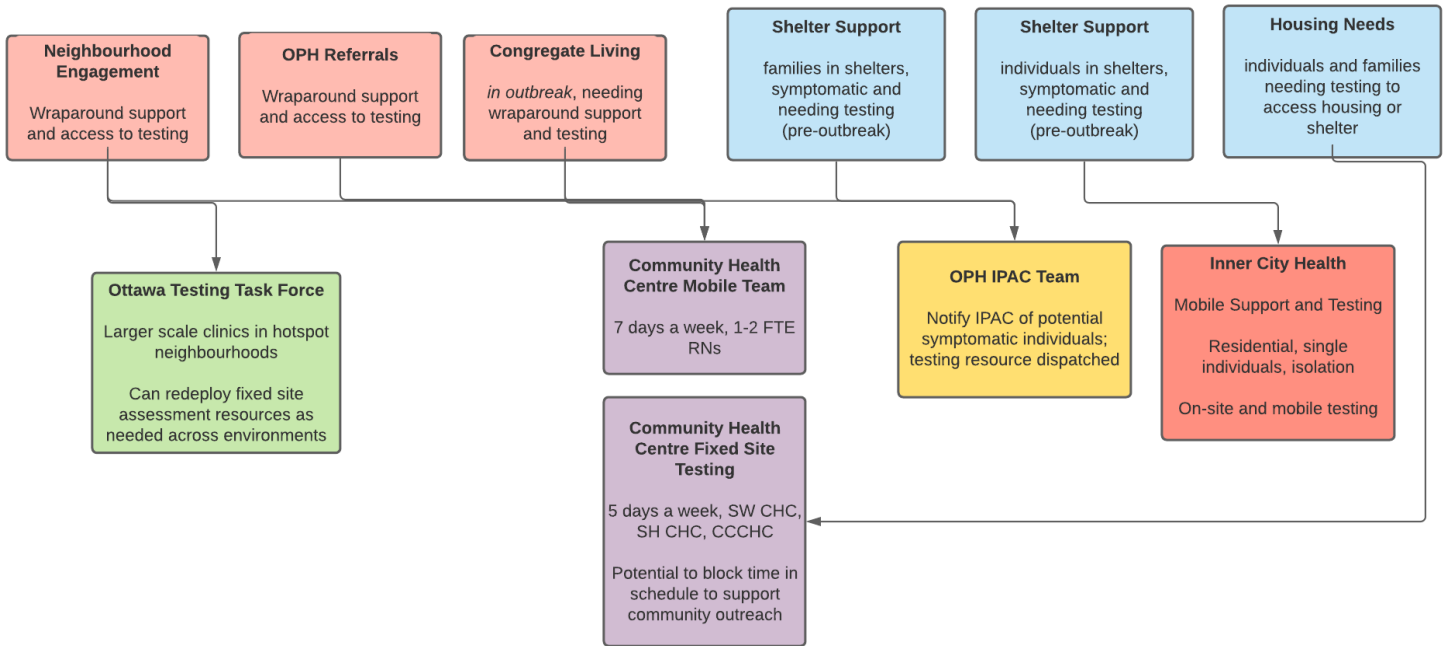
Post-testing supports

- Provide multilingual communication back to the community about the testing day and overall results
- Survey to community providers for insights and improvements
- Mobilize isolation supports for those who require it
- Debrief and review the process - Identify promising practices, lessons learned, and areas for improvements

In addition to providing easily accessible testing at the community level, the OHT-ESO partners are also providing critical mobile testing in congregate living environments such as shelters and overflow motels. The OHT-ESO has multiple partners working in multiple ways across the City to ensure a population approach to testing but that also recognizes that some communities require different points of access.

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Neighbourhood Engagement

Wraparound support and access to testing

OPH Referrals

Wraparound support and access to testing

Congregate Living

in outbreak, needing wraparound support and testing

Shelter Support

families in shelters, symptomatic and needing testing (pre-outbreak)

Shelter Support

individuals in shelters, symptomatic and needing testing (pre-outbreak)

Housing Needs

individuals and families needing testing to access housing or shelter

Ottawa Testing Task Force

Larger scale clinics in hotspot neighbourhoods

Can redeploy fixed site assessment resources as needed across environments

Community Health Centre Mobile Team

7 days a week, 1-2 FTE RNs

OPH IPAC Team

Notify IPAC of potential symptomatic individuals; testing resource dispatched

Inner City Health

Mobile Support and Testing

Residential, single individuals, isolation

On-site and mobile testing

Community Health Centre Fixed Site Testing

5 days a week, SW CHC, SH CHC, CCCHC

Potential to block time in schedule to support community outreach

APPENDIX A: MEMORADUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU")

Between:

Ottawa Public Health ("OPH")

AND

[Named Community Health Centre] ("the CHC")

WHEREAS the City of Ottawa is experiencing a second wave in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic;

AND WHEREAS OPH is mandated to prevent the transmission of disease and protect and promote the health of persons in the City of Ottawa, and is primarily responsible for providing testing, contact tracing, and self-isolation information and resources to persons who have tested positive for COVID-19, and persons in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, in the City of Ottawa;

AND WHEREAS both OPH and the CHC provide health care as defined in the *Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004,* S.O. 2004, c. 3, Sched. A ("PHIPA");

AND WHEREAS both OPH and the CHC are health information custodians as defined in PHIPA, both are members of the Ottawa Health Team, and both wish to leverage their connection to provide for an efficient and effective use of health care resources in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic;

THE PARTIES THEREFORE AGREE AS FOLLOWS:

1. OPH will disclose the name, phone number, preferred language and type of follow up required ("the information") of individuals to South East Ottawa Community Health Centre (CHC), and from there will be triaged for follow up care and support by the most appropriate CHC partner. The individuals will be people in the City of Ottawa who have been identified as receiving a positive COVID-19 result or have been identified as a close contact of a person who has received a positive COVID-19 test result.

2. OPH will make best efforts to obtain express consent from individuals whose information is being disclosed to the South East Ottawa CHC and other CHC partners ("CHC partners") prior to the disclosure of the information. However, given the resources required to case manage the current volume of individuals diagnosed with COVID-19 and to identify and contact the close contacts of those individuals, and given the expediency that is required to prevent further community spread of COVID-19, OPH may not be able to obtain expressed consent from all individuals. OPH considers CHC partners to be in the circle of care for the identified individuals in their catchment area and considers the disclosure of the information to CHC partners to be for the purposes of providing health care.

3. The CHC partners will contact all individuals that have been referred by OPH to offer health care services, including all resources available to assist with self-isolation.

4. The CHC partners will destroy the information of individuals who decline or refuse support or care at any point in the follow up process.

5. The CHC partners will use, maintain and protect the information disclosed to them by OPH in accordance with the requirements of PHIPA, including the following:

   a. The CHC partners will store the information securely, ensuring that is it protected against theft, loss and unauthorized use or disclosure.
   b. The information will only be used for the purpose it was disclosed, and for no other purpose.
   c. The CHC partners will limit the access of all employees, volunteers, contractors or other agents of the CHC to those with a need to know the disclosed information.
   d. The CHC partners will ensure that all employees, volunteers, contractors or other agents acting on their behalf are aware of their obligation to maintain the confidentiality of the personal health information.
   e. Should any of the CHC partners become aware the information disclosed by OPH has been used or disclosed in breach of the terms of this MOU, or in breach of the requirements of PHIPA generally, the CHC will immediately notify OPH and take all steps necessary to contain and remedy the breach.

6. Any notice or communication required to be given to either party may be delivered by email to the contact person below:

   Ottawa Public Health

   [Insert contact info]

   ___ Community Health Centre

   [Insert contact info]

7. This MOU will be in force from the date signed by the representative of the CHC partners until [specific date or event]. The MOU may be extended for a further period with the mutual consent of both parties indicated in writing.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____

Date: _____   Date: _____

[Name]   [Name]

[Position]   [Position]

Ottawa Public Health   Community Health Centre

APPENDIX B: Wraparound Supports for clients who tested positive for COVID-19 and their Close Contacts in Need of Isolation Supports

What do we mean by wraparound support?

The OHT-ESO partners have committed to supporting a COVID-19 Community Response to help stop the transmission and mitigate the impact on those disproportionally affected by COVID-19. We want to provide *as much support as possible* for people to safely isolate at home and reduce the risk of community transmission. This requires an exceptional response to an exceptional situation.

To date, we have been able to provide easy access to COVID-19 testing (e.g., fixed testing sites, 'pop-up' testing sites and/or the OHT-ESO mobile team) as well as assist clients with all their basic needs. In most cases, we have done so in their preferred language. Our goal is to ensure that people can safely isolate at home and refrain from leaving the home until they are cleared by public health to do so. While many supports can be arranged remotely or virtually via existing programs and systems, at times it does require "exceptional supports" and deployment of staff and/or volunteers to deliver items to the home.

Who is the client to be engaged for wraparound supports?

Individuals who face barriers to following public health guidelines because of the impact in doing so would have dire consequences (e.g., unable to access food, unable to access medications, potential risk of eviction for failure to provide rent, risk of job loss, etc.). We trust that agency staff will do a basic assessment of need but prioritize the following clients:

- Individuals who have received a positive COVID-19 test result
- Individuals who have been advised by Ottawa Public Health that they are a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 and must isolate
- Individuals isolating while waiting for a test result

What are some examples of the supports we have provided?

- #1 request is for *food support*. It must be delivered as these individuals should not be leaving their home for any reason.
- #2 request is for *financial support*. Often people are concerned about paying their rent and bills. We want to connect them to financial and employment services and/or direct them to programs to mitigate their expenses (e.g., LEAP).
- We recognize that this is an incredibly stressful time for individuals and families and we want to support them to stay in isolation. To do this, they sometimes require items that are not typically a part of our services. To date we have received *other requests for* and have been able to supply and deliver:
  - Masks, sanitizers, and sanitizer wipes
  - Diapers and wipes
  - Laundry detergent, dish soap and hand soap
  - Cell phone charger
  - Thermometer
  - Early years activity kits for children
- We have also planned to pick up prescriptions and/or pay for pharmacy delivery.

What is out of scope?

- We are not able to provide clinical care for people who have tested positive for COVID-19 or with symptoms caused by COVID-19 and we are not able to provide temporary or ongoing primary care support.
- We are not able to provide ongoing supports beyond the isolation period (i.e., once someone has been cleared by OPH, we would not continue with food deliveries. They would be expected to access the food bank and programs themselves).
- We are not able to provide financial aid or monetary supports

What if you cannot provide these kinds of support?

Our hope is that our OHT-ESO partners will do what they can to meet the needs of clients in their community. We want to ensure an equitable approach to requests across the region and hope that agencies can utilize their own staff, volunteers and/or existing services in the community to meet the home delivery needs of clients who are isolating. To date we have been able to support the client requests and/or provide them resources and community connections for additional inquiries. If you are not able to support the client with required items, please send a client referral via the Caredove platform and SEOCHC will triage the referral and request to other OHT-ESO partners to support.