



**COLLABORATING TO BUILD
A HEALTHY COMMUNITY**

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Acknowledgements

The Chatham-Kent Family Health Team (CKFHT) is grateful to all who contributed their time, expertise, and insights to the development of this new strategic plan. Many thanks to our physicians, staff, management, and Board of Directors for sharing your thoughtful feedback and ideas. To our community partners, we appreciate your collaboration and shared commitment to accessible, high quality primary health care. Lastly, we extend our gratitude to our patients – the heart of our work – for sharing their voices and experiences. Your insights have shaped our priorities and goals and ensure we remain a strong, collaborative, patient-centered organization.

CKFHT’s new strategic plan is a reflection of our shared vision for the future and our commitment to helping build healthier, stronger communities. We look forward to working together to bring this plan and this envisioned future to life.



Letter from the Board Chair

Dear Colleagues, Physicians, Partners, and Community Members,

Today marks a pivotal moment in our journey as we officially launch our new Strategic Plan. This isn't just a document; it's a roadmap, a shared vision, and a testament to our unwavering commitment to supporting the CKFHT mission of "Collaborating to build a healthy community." This Strategic Plan is built upon four key pillars, carefully chosen to address the most critical needs and opportunities in our community: Physician Recruitment and Retention, ensuring we have the skilled and dedicated professionals to care for our residents; Accessible Quality Primary Care, making sure everyone has access to the services they need, when they need them; Organizational Efficiency, allowing us to optimize our resources and deliver the best possible value; and finally, Community Partnerships, recognizing that we are stronger together and can achieve more by working hand-in-hand with our neighbours.

This plan is not the product of a vacuum. It's the culmination of countless hours of dedicated effort, thoughtful discussion, and invaluable insights from our staff, our physicians, community representatives, and our skilled and dedicated Board of Directors. Your contributions have shaped this plan, ensuring it is relevant, responsive, and reflective of the needs of our community. To each and every one of you, I extend my sincerest gratitude.

As we embark on this next chapter, I look forward to building on the existing strengths of our organization, leveraging our expertise, and embracing innovation to achieve our shared goals. This is a pivotal time for primary care in Ontario. We are navigating new provincial legislation and seeing significant funding commitments aimed at strengthening our healthcare system. This Strategic Plan provides us with a clear framework to capitalize on these opportunities, to advocate for our community, and to ensure we are well-positioned to deliver exceptional primary care services for years to come.

Let us embrace this plan with enthusiasm, dedication, and a shared commitment to building a healthier future for all.

Respectfully,

Joan Hackett

Board Chair, Chatham-Kent Family Health Team



Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Colleagues, Physicians, Partners, and Community Members,

It is with gratitude and optimism that I share the Chatham-Kent Family Health Team's Strategic Plan for 2025-2030. This plan reflects collaboration, consultation, and shared purpose—and reinforces our commitment to building a healthier community, together.

At the CKFHT, our mission—Collaborating to build a healthy community—guides everything we do. We envision a future where a strong, integrated team ensures timely access to care for all, working in partnership to enhance healthcare services across our region. This vision is achievable through the way we live our values: striving for excellence, embracing diversity, acting with integrity, showing compassion, and ensuring safety for every person we serve and every member of our team.

This strategy was created in partnership with patients, community organizations, health system leaders, staff, physicians, and our Board of Directors. I sincerely thank all who contributed. Your insight helped shape a plan that is inclusive and responsive to the community we serve.

We are proud to align this plan with Ontario's renewed investment in primary care, including the forthcoming Primary Care Act, 2025 and over \$1.8 billion in funding to expand access and attachment. The Act outlines a clear vision for a more equitable system—one that is accessible, coordinated, timely, inclusive, digitally connected, and responsive. These principles are deeply embedded in our strategy and reflect our commitment to person-centred, team-based care and our role in strengthening a sustainable, connected health system.

Our four strategic priorities—Patient Care, Physician Retention & Recruitment, Organizational Efficiency, and Community & Government Relationships—offer a practical roadmap to realize this vision locally. We are committed to delivering exceptional care, creating a sustainable and supported workforce, working efficiently and effectively, and fostering the partnerships that amplify our collective impact.

This strategy is rooted in service—listening to our community, supporting those who deliver care, and fostering conditions for people to thrive. It is not about recognition, but responsibility. It is built for meaningful, lasting impact—not just for today, but for the future we will create together. We look forward to walking this path with you—patients, partners, clinicians, and community members—as we move forward with purpose.

With appreciation and shared commitment,

Jason Bartell RN(EC), MN, B.ScN, NP-PHC
Executive Director, Chatham-Kent Family Health Team



Vision, Mission, and Values

Mission: Collaborating to build a healthy community

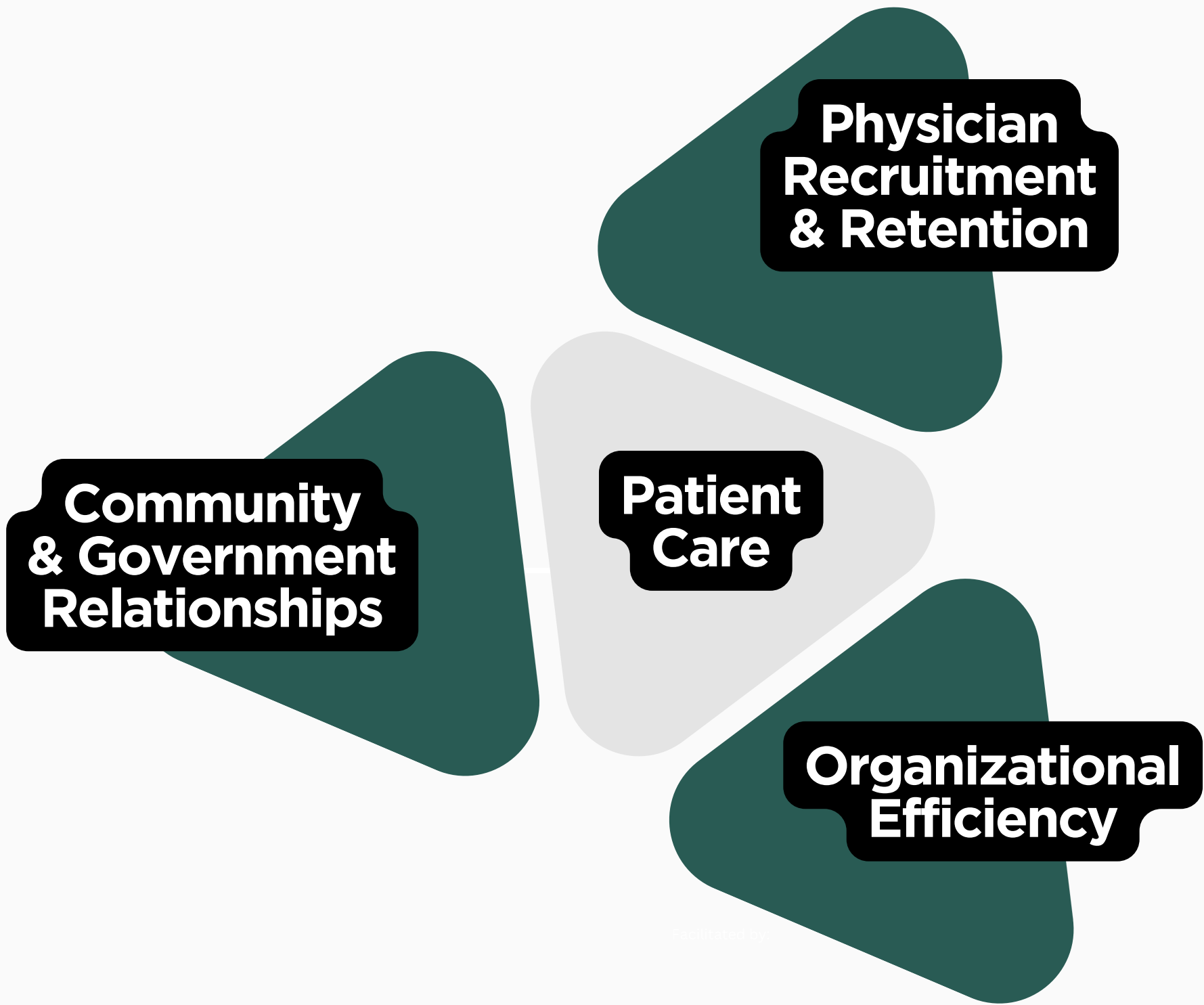
Vision: A robust team of professionals providing access to those in need, leveraging partnerships to enhance healthcare in our community

Values: CKFHT fosters a culture of patient-centered care, anchored by its values of:

- **Excellence:** Our team has a continuous thirst for excellence and best practices and is always seeking ways to improve the delivery of patient-centered care to those who count on us.
- **Diversity:** Our team respects, values, and embraces diversity in people, thought, experiences, and perspectives.
- **Integrity:** Our team has a shared commitment to do what is right and to collaborate to utilize our resources wisely and effectively.
- **Compassion:** Our team has a genuine concern for those in our community and treats them with dignity, respect, and empathy.
- **Safety:** Our team is dedicated to providing an environment that is safe for one another and for our patients.



2025-2030 Strategic Priorities



COLLABORATING TO BUILD A HEALTHY COMMUNITY



PRIORITY ONE

Patient Care

Goal: Deliver high-quality, accessible, responsive primary care

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Develop and implement clear, accessible communication channels with patients.
- Upgrade and integrate digital health tools to enhance the patient experience.
- Standardize access to programs to ensure consistent and equitable access.
- Embed culturally competent practices to advance inclusive care.

Patients are at the heart of everything we do, guiding our purpose and commitment to help individuals achieve their best health. By prioritizing effective communication, technological innovation, and high-quality service delivery, we foster a better care experience for patients, nurture trust and engagement, and ensure patients receive the right care at the right time. This improves patients' long-term health outcomes while optimizing the use of health system resources. In this way, our primary care team plays a vital role in building a more responsive, patient-centered local health care system.



Patient Care

Goal:

Deliver high-quality, accessible, responsive primary care

Objectives:

Develop and implement clear, accessible communication channels with patients.

Upgrade and integrate digital health tools to enhance the patient experience.

Standardize access to programs to ensure consistent and equitable access.

Embed culturally competent practices to advance inclusive care.



STRATEGIC PLAN 2025-2030

Mission

Collaborating to build a healthy community

Vision

A robust team of professionals providing
access to those in need,
leveraging partnerships to enhance
healthcare in our community

Physician Recruitment & Retention

Goal:

**Foster a work environment where physicians
want to come, stay, and thrive**

Objectives:

Expand training, mentorship, and clinical opportunities for medical learners

·Implement tailored resources to support physicians at all stages of the career lifecycle.

Continue to grow and sustain our comprehensive physician recruitment program.

CHATHAM-KENT FAMILY HEALTH TEAM

Organizational Efficiency

Goal:

**Continue to build a strong, lean, efficient,
and effective organization**

Objectives:

Foster a team culture of well-being, engagement, partnership, and accountability.
Optimize financial stewardship and resources to maximize fiscal efficiencies.
Leverage digital tools, technology, and innovation to streamline operations, improve service delivery, and increase overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Values

- **Excellence:** Our team has a continuous thirst for excellence and best practices and is always seeking ways to improve the delivery of patient-centered care to those who count on us.
- **Diversity:** Our team respects, values, and embraces diversity in people, thought, experiences, and perspectives.
- **Integrity:** Our team has a shared commitment to do what is right and to collaborate to utilize our resources wisely and effectively.
- **Compassion:** Our team has a genuine concern for those in our community and treats them with dignity, respect, and empathy.
- **Safety:** Our team is dedicated to providing an environment that is safe for one another and for our patients.

Community & Government Relationships

Goal:

**Cultivate mutually supportive relationships
to advance patient and organizational outcomes**

Objectives:

Integrate social determinants of health into patient care to improve health outcomes.
Advance advocacy and cultivate strategic partnerships that enhance our team-based care model.
Actively engage with community partners, policymakers, and health system leaders and networks to build trust and collaboration.

PRIORITY TWO

Physician Recruitment & Retention

Goal: Foster a work environment where physicians want to come, stay, and thrive

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Expand training, mentorship, and clinical opportunities for medical learners
- Implement tailored resources to support physicians at all stages of the career lifecycle.
- Continue to grow and sustain our comprehensive physician recruitment program.

We take great pride in all that Chatham-Kent has to offer, recognizing both the rewards and challenges that come with rural medicine - particularly in attracting and retaining physicians. By fostering an internal work environment that not only attracts but actively supports and retains physicians, we do more than build a stable workforce; we create the foundation for a thriving local health care system. A dedicated, long-tenured physician team that feels valued and supported strengthens physician well-being, enhances inter-professional collaboration, and fosters patient engagement. It drives innovation, smoother workflows, greater job satisfaction, and improves overall physician fulfillment.



PRIORITY THREE

Organizational Efficiency

Goal: Continue to build a strong, lean, efficient, and effective organization

To achieve this goal, we will:

- Foster a team culture of well-being, engagement, partnership, and accountability.
- Optimize financial stewardship and resources to maximize fiscal efficiencies.
- Leverage digital tools, technology, and innovation to streamline operations, improve service delivery, and increase overall efficiency and effectiveness.

Optimizing efficiency and effectiveness is key to building a stronger, more collaborative, high-performing organization. When team members feel valued, supported, and accountable, they co-create seamless partnerships within the team and with patients. Streamlining processes and maximizing resources enhance our ability to deliver exceptional care while efficient allocation of professional expertise ensures each team member's skills contribute meaningfully to patient outcomes, with specialized talents directed where they have the greatest impact. This commitment boosts organizational effectiveness and improves the patient experience.



PRIORITY FOUR

Community & Government Relationships

Goal: Cultivate mutually supportive relationships to advance patient and organizational outcomes

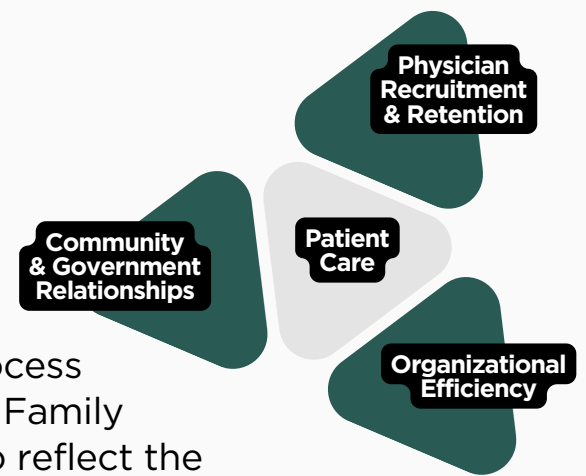
To achieve this goal, we will:

- Integrate social determinants of health into patient care to improve health outcomes.
- Advance advocacy and cultivate strategic partnerships that enhance our team-based care model.
- Actively engage with community partners, policymakers, and health system leaders and networks to build trust and collaboration.

We recognize that a patient's health outcomes are influenced by factors that extend beyond clinical care, such as employment, housing, food security, transportation, and social support systems. While these fall outside our direct mandate, understanding their impact on patient health and building strong relationships with community and sector partners is essential to advance overall health outcomes. Such relationship-building with community and government partners amplifies local health concerns, identifies opportunities for system improvements, reduces barriers to care, and positions family health teams as trusted voices in shaping health policy and effective primary care solutions.



How We Developed Our New Strategic Plan



Developing our new strategic plan was a thoughtful, inclusive process grounded in real experiences and aspirations. The Chatham-Kent Family Health Team knew that to be successful, our new direction had to reflect the voices of those who know us best - our patients, our people, and our partners.

Listening and gathering insight

We engaged more than 85 people from across our network - patients, physicians, staff, managers, community organizations, foundations, and members of our Board - who generously offered their ideas through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. These insights gave us a clear picture of CKFHT's strengths, challenges, and how the needs of patients, communities, and the health system are changing.

Defining priorities together

With this input, our Board of Directors, leadership team, and physicians came together to shape a meaningful and practical strategy for the years ahead. We used the feedback as a foundation for identifying where to focus: physician recruitment and retention, enhanced patient care, operational efficiency, and community and government relationships. These priorities reflect both our internal realities and the shifting landscape of primary care and help us continue to build a resilient organization ready to adapt to future challenges.

Turning vision into action

We've developed operational plans that define clear next steps, timelines, team leads, and performance metrics. Our commitment is not only to move the work forward, but to track our progress, share what we learn, and adapt as we go. This is more than a document—it's a shared commitment to building a stronger, more responsive family health team for the communities we serve.



Themes from the Environmental Scan

A strong strategic plan begins with a clear understanding of our operating environment. To guide our planning, we assessed local population health trends, Ministry of Health priorities, system changes, and community needs. This helped us identify key challenges and opportunities where the Chatham-Kent Family Health Team can make the greatest impact. Notable trends of the environmental scan and local data include:

Population changes

- Chatham-Kent's population is aging. This includes a higher-than-average senior population, many of whom are considered frail with some lacking access to a primary care provider.

Increasing rates of chronic disease

- Chatham-Kent continues to experience high rates of chronic diseases such as diabetes, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), and congestive heart failure, especially among seniors.

Health workforce shortages

- Ongoing difficulties in recruiting and retaining healthcare professionals, along with retirements and burnout, continue to strain service access.

Emergency department use, timely access to primary care, and unattached patients

- Many residents use the Emergency Department for non-urgent issues because they cannot secure timely primary care appointments (e.g., same-day, next-day) or lack a regular provider. The percentage of unattached patients in the region is growing.

Mental health and addictions pressures

- Emergency Department visits for mental health crises, substance use disorders, anxiety, and depression are rising. This reflects unmet needs for timely local supports such as community-based counselling and addictions treatment.

Equity, inclusivity, and social determinants of health

- Indigenous communities, newcomers, Black residents, and 2SLGBTQIA+ individuals face unique barriers. Transportation, cost, poverty, and discrimination limit health care access underscore the need for more culturally safe and equity-focused services.

Digital health tools and system navigation

- There is an increasing trend toward online appointment booking, virtual visits, eReferrals, and navigation initiatives to guide residents to the right care venue. Many residents remain unaware of local care options beyond the Emergency Department.

Team-based, integrated care

- There is a shift in the health system toward multi-disciplinary collaboration among doctors, nurse practitioners, social workers, dietitians, pharmacists, and other interprofessional healthcare providers.

Sector-wide challenges

- Organizations across the health sector face ongoing staffing shortages, funding constraints, barriers to access, system transformation, and growing patient complexity. At the same time, new technologies and models of care present opportunities for innovation and efficiency.



SWOT Analysis

We complemented the Environmental Scan with a SWOT analysis. This tool helped us look at our internal Strengths and Weaknesses (what we are good at and where we are challenged) and external Opportunities and Threats (external good things we can act upon and external issues that might arise). It gave us a clear picture of where we are now and what may affect us in the future, helping us make informed decisions. A summary of key findings from the SWOT analysis includes:

Strengths

CKFHT's accessible, team-based primary care that meets varied community needs was widely recognized as a core strength. Our innovative programs (such as Bridge Care), strong community relationships, and proactive approach to physician recruitment have helped build a trusted reputation and dedicated team. The organization's collaborative relationships with external partners, especially community Foundations and partners, have bolstered its reputation. Internally, CKFHT's dedicated staff, supportive management, and strong leadership ensure a patient-centered approach. While there are areas to improve, respondents agreed that CKFHT is delivering high-quality, responsive, and comprehensive care across Chatham-Kent.

Opportunities

CKFHT could harness external opportunities to enhance care delivery, better serve unattached patients, and position itself as a forward-thinking healthcare provider. Leveraging technology and data, exploring alternative staffing models, expanding partnerships with community Foundations and partners, and focusing on unique, patient-centered services—particularly in mental health and chronic disease—are common threads. Adapting to evolving provincial policies, utilizing vacant spaces, and ensuring staff are well-trained, supported, and engaged can help CKFHT become more agile, efficient, and responsive to community needs.

Weaknesses

CKFHT's internal challenges focus on improving accessibility, communication, staff compensation, and operational efficiency. Internally, there is a desire for CKFHT to continue to mature in its operations, efficiency, and accountability. Interest-holders also seek to better integrate with health system partners, and for increase staff morale and capacity.[JB1] External interest-holders suggest potential improvements in the patient experience (timely access, responsive communication, and expanded care options), developing deeper collaborations, and continued physician recruitment. Overall, addressing structural challenges, defining metrics, and investing in people, processes, and technologies can lead to organizational improvements.

Threats

CKFHT would do well to closely monitor evolving sector trends, including increased use of AI, virtual care platforms, and expanding scopes for non-physician providers. The aging population and growing social and economic pressures require flexible, integrated care models. Technological solutions offer efficiency gains but demand careful implementation and patient education. Funding uncertainties, wage gaps, and privatization risks underscore the importance of proactive awareness-raising of local and system needs, strategic fundraising, and building resilient community partnerships.





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