Social Medicine Initiative

Memorandum of Understanding Between

University Health Network

And

City of Toronto

And

United Way of Greater Toronto

This Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) sets the terms and understanding between the University Health Network (UHN), the City of Toronto (COT) and the United Way (UWGT) to establish the Social Medicine Initiative ("the Initiative"), a collaborative systems integration initiative to improve health and social outcomes for Toronto residents.

Background

Social determinants of health models have long demonstrated that health and poverty are inextricably linked. Positive health outcomes are dependent on whether people are able to, for example, access affordable housing, participate in supportive community services like child care, and gain employment with adequate incomes. As levels of poverty deepen and intensify in communities across Ontario, this will have the effect of increasing demand and complexity experienced by health care institutions.

Evidence suggest that this is already occurring. Recent data from UHN shows that over 57% of high-needs patients with chronic disease are living in low-income neighbourhoods or currently without any stable housing. This data reflects the reality, identified by the City of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy, that poverty is experienced disproportionately by people from equity-seeking communities. Presently, patients often report finding it difficult to access social services due to lack of awareness, uncoordinated systems, and location and eligibility barriers.

The link between health and social outcomes demands that health care providers, such as UHN, and local governments, such as City of Toronto and its partners, such as the United Way, work closely together to improve the wellbeing of residents. Indeed, a large body of research consistently demonstrates that in order to provide high quality care for individuals with complex needs there needs to be strong collaboration, coordination and integration of health and social services. The City of Toronto has recognized this in its Poverty Reduction Strategy,

and in particular in Recommendation 14 which sets the objective of creating a seamless social support system in cooperation with health care and community service providers.

Through a partnership between UHN, the City of Toronto, and the United Way, there is great potential to create new and tighten existing community partnerships, embed the principles and practices of social medicine within institutions, and increase the integration of health and community services.

Purpose

The intent of the Social Medicine Initiative is to improve the wellbeing of residents by improving patient and caregiver access to the most appropriate community services by coordinating the delivery of health care and services through a health equity lens. The Initiative seeks to advance a proactive approach in reducing the development of new health issues before they arise by trying to addressing root social causes and needs.

By coordinating systems, it will become easier for patients to access the services they need that takes the specific needs of patients into consideration. Systems integration will reduce the number of patients who require an alternate level of care, and provide them with the supports they need, reducing the burden on the overall health and social services system.

Equity and inclusion will be embedded in the implementation of this partnership. Recognizing the needs of communities at greatest risk of poverty (e.g. women, newcomers, single parents, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, LGBTQ2S) will serve as starting point for how social medicine innovations will be designed.

Priority Areas for Action and Collaboration

The Initiative will take a systemic approach to improving the wellbeing of residents. This means that in addition to direct health care provision, the Initiative will also seek to the ways in which system integration can improve outcomes across the broad range of issues identified in the City of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy:

- Affordable and supportive housing
- Access to supportive services
- Social isolation and loneliness
- Transportation equity and mobility
- Food access and security
- Quality jobs and livable incomes
- Systemic change

Examples of solutions that may be co-designed, prototyped and evaluated include, but are not limited to:

- Improving patient and health care provider knowledge of supportive services through the development and rollout of a social needs screening and referral tool
- Leveraging anchor institution assets to create affordable and supportive housing
- Lowering barriers to access services through coordinated or integrated patient/client referral

Objectives

- Identify immediate areas for collaboration to achieve social medicine and poverty reduction outcomes
- Undertake an evidence-informed, co-design process to prototype solutions to advance a seamless health and social support system across jurisdictions
- Advance culture change within institutions to create an enabling environment for social medicine and poverty reduction innovations

Roles and Responsibilities

The City of Toronto, through the Poverty Reduction Office will:

- Convene and facilitate collaborations with internal divisions, agencies and corporations as well as external community-based and not-for-profit groups and organizations
- Provide information and data about the social and community based service sector to inform the design and prototyping of social medicine innovations
- Identify areas for policy and regulatory change to enable systemic change, including aligning innovations with other current health care/municipal partnerships
- Provide in-kind policy development support to empower the work of the partnership, including developing a mutually agreed upon terms of reference.
- Secure the participation of senior management of the Toronto Public Service, and involve Toronto City Council where appropriate.

The University Health Network will:

- Convene and facilitate collaborations with staff and units within UHN and its partner organizations
- Provide information and data about health care and patient outcomes to inform the design and prototyping of social medicine innovations
- Provide analytical and evaluation support through the involvement of the UHN Behavioural Science Policy Lab
- Ensure the participation of the UHN Board and Foundations to enable the participation and resourcing of this partnership.

The United Way will:

- Convene and facilitate collaborations with internal divisions, as well as community-based not-for-profit agencies and networks, local resident groups, corporate and labour partners
- Provide information and data about the social and community based service sector to inform the design and prototyping of social medicine innovations
- Identify areas for policy and regulatory change to enable systemic change, including aligning innovations with other current social service sector partnerships
- Provide in-kind support to empower the work of the partnership, including developing a mutually agreed upon terms of reference
- Secure the participation of senior social service sector leaders and partners where appropriate.

Duration

This MOU constitutes the basis of an ongoing relationship between the Partners, with the intent of a first phase of deliverables to be initiated within one year of signing. The MOU will be reviewed at the conclusion of the City of Toronto's 2019-2022 Poverty Reduction Strategy Action Plan, or as deemed necessary by the partners.

Signed,

UNIVERSITY HEALTH NETWORK

_____	Kevin Smith_____
Authorized Signing Officer	Print Name
President & CEO_____	August 16, 2019_____
Title	Date

CITY OF TORONTO
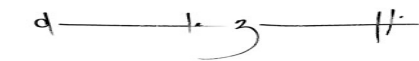
_____	Chris Murray_____
Authorized Signing Officer	Print Name
City Manager_____	August 19, 2019_____
Title	Date

UNITED WAY OF GREATER TORONTO

_____	Daniele Zanotti_____
Authorized Signing Officer	Print Name
President & CEO_____	August 19, 2019_____
Title	Date