

## **West Haldimand General Hospital**

### **Patient & Family Advisory Council Handbook**

Welcome and thank you for joining West Haldimand General Hospital's Patient and Family Advisory Council.

We value your commitment and appreciate your willingness to volunteer as an advisor partner who will help us transform local health care.

By collaborating with patients and families, we continuously learn from patients' experiences of care, what we've done well and where we can improve.

Through this engagement, it is anticipated that it will help improve the understanding of the patient experience and improve upon it'.

On behalf of the staff, physicians, and volunteers at West Haldimand General Hospital, thank you for choosing to be a WHGH Patient Family Advisor - we look forward to working with you!

## About West Haldimand General Hospital

### Vision

To be the best rural hospital, through partnerships and integration.

### Mission

To ensure access to quality healthcare for everyone who enters our doors.

### Values

I ~ *Innovation*

We will always be creative and supportive of new ideas that lead to positive change

C ~ *Compassion*

Sensitive to the needs and suffering of others

A ~ *Accountability*

We will always be personally and professionally accountable for our words and actions

R ~ *Respected*

We will always honour and show consideration of others

E ~ *Excellence*

We will always achieve excellence through work ethics, skills and abilities. We will cultivate a positive attitude regarding how we think and behave

## Patient and Family-Centred Care

### What is patient and family-centred care and why is it important?

- Patient and family-centred care is an approach to the planning, delivery, and evaluation of health care that is grounded in mutually beneficial partnerships among health care providers, patient and families
- Patient and family-centred practitioners recognize the vital role that families play in ensuring the health and well-being of patients and family members
- Patient and family-centered care is an approach to health care that shapes policies, programs, facility design, and staff day-to-day interactions. It leads to better health outcomes and wiser allocation of resources, and greater patient and family satisfaction

### Core Concepts of Patient and Family-Centred Care

#### Dignity and Respect

Patient and family perspectives and choices are heard and honoured. Patient and family knowledge, values, beliefs and cultural backgrounds are incorporated into care planning and decision-making.

#### Communication and Information Sharing

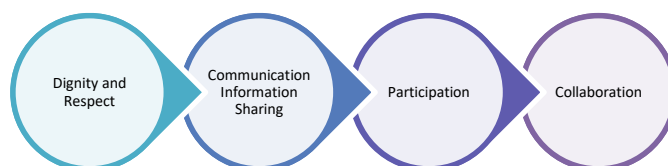
Health care providers share complete and unbiased information with patients and families in a way that is clear, complete, timely, accurate and useful in helping patients and families effectively participate in care and decision-making. Patients and families also share all necessary and relevant information with members of their care team.

#### Participation

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#### Collaboration

Patients, families and health care providers collaborate in policy and program development, in professional education, in research and evaluation, and in the delivery of care.



## **Patient and Family Advisory Councils Defined**

Patient and Family Advisory Councils are known to play a role in helping hospitals to become more patient and family-centered. Councils serve as a regular meeting forum for patients and families to partner with hospital staff members and leaders to shape decisions and influence change. Patient and Family Advisors share their unique experiences, tell their stories and use their informed perspectives to advise on issues and decisions. This ultimately impacts the delivery of health care and the quality of the experience of the next patient or family member.

## **The Role of a Patient and Family Advisor**

Patient and Family advisors are individuals who have received care (ideally within the past year) at West Haldimand General Hospital or are the family members or loved ones (immediate family, extended family, and close friends) of the person who received the care. They are part of a formal council, committee or working group that shares these experiences and insights in order to ensure the voice of the patient and family is brought into the decision making process.

**The goal is to improve care and service delivery and ultimately the patient experience at West Haldimand General Hospital**

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

The key roles and responsibilities of Patient and Family advisors are to:

- Contribute ideas and suggestions that will enhance patient and public involvement in health service planning and decision-making so that the patient community has a voice in the delivery of health care services
- Participate as a regular and active member of the committee and/or working group to which they have been invited
- Tell their story and share their point of view, be able to objectively listen to and appreciate the views of others
- Provide input into patient care and organizational processes, and advocate for patient and family needs from a broad perspective
- Show commitment to improving care for all patients and family members at West Haldimand General Hospital by ensuring that the patient is the focal point of all discussions
- Promote improved collaboration and relationships between patients, families and staff
- Review recommendations referred to the council
- Participate in the development of new programs, services and facilities

## **Expectations in the Role of Patient and Family Advisor:**

### **The Patient and Family Advisors can expect to:**

- Attend monthly meetings and ad-hoc meetings as required (estimated time commitment of 3-4 hours per month)
- Read meeting materials in advance of the meeting and come to the meeting prepared to contribute and discuss agenda items
- Have internal processes and terminology explained to them as needed for clarification and understanding
- Be listened to and respected for their insight and suggestions
- Be assigned a staff coordinator to address any question or concerns related to the involvement on the Patient and Family Advisory Council
- Attend an orientation session with Volunteer Resources in conjunction with an orientation to their role as advisor

### **The West Haldimand General Hospital expects Patient and Family Advisors to:**

- Respect the collaborative process and understand that the final decision-making related to care delivery and process improvements is the responsibility of the administration of West Haldimand General Hospital
- Maintain confidentiality of patient and organizational sensitive material
- Be positive and supportive of the West Haldimand General Hospital's mission which is, *Providing quality healthcare and promoting good health to our diverse population in collaboration with our community partners*

### **Your Role as a WHGH Volunteer**

As a member of the Patient and Family Advisory Council you will be recognized as a WHGH volunteer. As part of this role, you will be required to attend a Volunteer Orientation session that will be scheduled in conjunction with your PFAC orientation. You will also be required to log all of your hours with volunteer services.

As a benefit of your volunteer status you will:

- Be compensated for parking for all of your volunteer activities
- Be recognized for your volunteer efforts and be invited to attend all WHGH volunteer events

We could not realize our vision without the dedication and commitment of our volunteers who provide an essential role in assisting our patients, families, friends and visitors.

## Characteristics of a Successful Advisor:

- Respectful of others and their perspectives
- Comfortable speaking in a group and interacting with others
- Good listener
- Ability to use their personal experience constructively
- Ability to see beyond their own experience
- Ability to see the big picture
- Demonstrates a non-judgemental and positive attitude
- Ability to work collaboratively with other families and healthcare providers
- Desire to expand their knowledge and skills
- Desire to participate in bringing about meaningful change
- Ability to maintain confidentiality of patient and organizational information

## Preparing for Meetings

Meetings will take place on a regular basis (usually monthly) and will be co-chaired by the Chief Executive Officer and an appointed patient or family advisor. Terms of reference for the meeting will outline the council's membership, voting criteria, frequency etc. Prior to each meeting, you will receive a number of documents including a meeting agenda, minutes from the previous meeting and any briefing notes that will outline any initiatives coming to council that require advisor feedback. These elements to the meeting are described below. It is expected that patient and family advisors will review these materials in advance of the meeting and come prepared to discuss and contribute in a meaningful way.

### Elements to the meeting:

<b>Agenda ~</b>	an agenda will be prepared and circulated in advance of the meeting (typically one week). This document states the meeting details such as where and when the meeting will take place. It also outlines the topics that will be discussed during the meeting. Council members have the opportunity to add discussion items to the agenda as they see fit.
<b>Minutes ~</b>	are notes that summarize the discussion that took place during the meeting. Council members will review the minutes prior to the next meeting and will be accepted to approve the minutes to ensure that they accurately reflect the discussion. A note taker will make any revisions to the final document as required.
<b>Briefing Notes ~</b>	is a tool that is used by staff members throughout the hospital to bring items and ideas forward to the advisory council. This document will summarize any relevant background information, the issue at hand and also specify how they would like to engage with the council (i.e. endorsement, consultation, feedback, input, other).

## Preparing for the Initial Meeting – Telling your Story

At the first council meeting, patient and family advisors are often asked to share their stories. These personal stories serve as powerful tools for bringing about constructive change in the health care system. Sharing stories is an important way for them to tell others a little bit more about themselves and provide the opportunity to learn from their experiences. Each advisor has a story to tell that is uniquely based on their personal experiences throughout their health care journey. Listening carefully to these stories allows us to gather insights about each other and better understand where we have come from and where we would like to go. These stories can have lasting and powerful effect that will shape the future of health care at West Haldimand General Hospital.

Consider the following questions prior to agreeing to share your story and participating on council:

- Am I willing to share? The entire story? Or aspects?
- What do I feel is too private to share?
- What will my story teach those who are listening? What is the intended impact?
- Have I had negative experiences that are still bothering me and will be difficult to share in a constructive manner?

Remember to:

- Think carefully about the message you want your audience to remember. Speak from your heart – be authentic, respectful, and constructive
- Balance positive experiences with improvement opportunities
- Use your own style and be honest
- Expect questions from the audience – anticipate the topics and prepare for them
- Remember that your experiences can be turned into constructive learning opportunities
- Expect that some people who hear your story may be deeply moved. Also remember that you may feel emotional when you tell your story

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your experiences  
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## Preparing for Subsequent Meetings

**To be an active and effective member of a meeting, you can:**

- Be well prepared – go through the agenda in advance and review items
- For each agenda item, ask yourself: “How can I contribute to the discussion? What could be some possible concerns?” “What is relevant to bring to this discussion?”
- Be involved
- Be a good listener
- Support your fellow patient and family advisors

## Debate versus Dialogue<sup>1</sup>

Many think dialogue is just talking back and forth but it's more than that. Dialogue is the art of a good conversation. Not to be confused with debate, dialogue is the peaceful way of working out a problem. Debate means stating your point of view without taking time to consider other options, or getting your point across while trying to make others back down.

Dialogue is the process of putting two or more different opinions together to create a unified idea.

Debate	Dialogue
Assumes that there is a right Answer and someone has it	<b>Assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together they can craft a solution</b>
Defending assumptions as truth	<b>Revealing assumptions for re-evaluation</b>
Combative: participants attempt To prove the other side wrong	<b>Collaborative, participants work together toward common understanding</b>
Defending one's own views against those of others	<b>Reflecting on and re-evaluating one's own views</b>
Listens to find flaws and makes <b>agreement</b> counterarguments	<b>Listens to understanding, find meaning and</b>
Searches for problems and weaknesses	<b>Searches for strengths and value in others' ideas</b>
Countering of the other position without consideration of feelings or relationships – often belittles or depreciates the other person	<b>Genuine concern for the other person and seeks to not alienate or offend</b>
About winning	<b>About discovering new options</b>

## Application Process

Upon reading this handbook, if this opportunity sounds like the right fit for you, please contact Quality / Patient Experience for further information:

West Haldimand General Hospital  
Quality / Patient Experience  
75 Parkview Road  
Hagersville ON N0A 1H0  
905-768-3311 ext 1212  
[patientfeedback@whgh.ca](mailto:patientfeedback@whgh.ca)

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<sup>1</sup> Content adapted from <http://www.publicconversations.org/docs/resources/DebateDialogue.pdf>



Prospective patient and family advisors will be contacted and a formal interview will be scheduled. Please note – West Haldimand General Hospital does not guarantee that ALL applicants will be contacted for an interview however; applications will be held in a resource pool for future consultation.

## References

1. Change Foundation <http://www.changefoundation.ca/library/patientfamily-advisory-councils-ontario-hospitals-work-play/>
2. Institute for Patient and Family Centred Care [www.ipfcc.org](http://www.ipfcc.org)
3. <http://www.publicconversations.org/docs/resources/DebateDialogue.pdf>
4. Sault Area Hospital: Patient and Family Advisory Council Handbook