PORT COLBORNE







# COMMUNITY
# HEALTH & WELLNESS
# ACTION PLAN

***CONNECTED CARE. CLOSE TO HOME.***
***FOR EVERY STAGE OF LIFE.***

www.portcolborne.ca

905-835-2900

# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

**Niagara Region is situated on treaty land.**

This land is steeped in the rich history of the First Nations such as the Hatiwendaronk, the Haudenosaunee, and the Anishinaabe, including the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

There are many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people from across Turtle Island that live and work in Niagara today.

The City of Port Colborne stands with all Indigenous people, past and present, in promoting the wise stewardship of the lands on which we live.

As part of implementing the Community Health & Wellness Action Plan, the City will work in partnership with Indigenous communities and advisors to review and strengthen this acknowledgment so it meaningfully reflects our commitment to Truth and Reconciliation.

The City recognizes that reconciliation is an ongoing journey and is committed to listening, learning, and building relationships founded on respect, trust, and collaboration.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE
# MAYOR AND CITY COUNCILLORS

Access to healthcare is one of the most important issues facing our community. Across Port Colborne, we have heard clearly from residents that timely, reliable, and local care matters – and that gaps in the system are having a real impact on people's lives.

This conversation is about more than the relocation of services. It is also about building the future of healthcare in our community. Residents deserve access to modern, accessible facilities, a strong range of services, and a skilled team of healthcare professionals who can deliver high-quality care close to home. As our community grows and evolves, so too must the healthcare system that supports it.

In early 2025, the City established a citizen-led Healthcare Advisory Committee to bring local insight and lived experience into this work. We extend our sincere thanks to Chair McDowell, Vice-Chair McGarry and all Committee members for their dedication and contributions to this Action Plan and our community.

With the Committee's guidance, the City has successfully completed four phases of community engagement over the past 18 months, where we heard directly from residents, healthcare providers, community organizations and priority populations. The survey confirmed strong support for the draft Action Plan, with 91 per cent overall approval and majority support for all eight Areas of Focus. This feedback strengthened the final Plan and will continue to guide its implementation.



Council also commissioned an independent healthcare analysis by KPMG to assess local needs, service gaps and future demand over the next 20 years. This research, supported by the City's GIS work with Esri Canada on a public-facing dashboard, has provided a clearer and more current picture of the challenges and opportunities facing Port Colborne. It will help ensure that future decisions and advocacy are grounded in evidence and responsive to the needs of our growing community.

We have committed $1 million over three years to support healthcare advocacy, planning and sustainable local solutions. The Province's recent investment of more than $4.75 million to expand team-based primary care in Port Colborne, Fort Erie and Wainfleet is also an important step forward. We are grateful for this investment and the continued collaboration of the Province and our regional healthcare partners.

This Action Plan moves us from vision to action. It brings together community voices, local experience and current data to guide practical steps today, while building the foundation for longer-term solutions, including the modern, accessible healthcare infrastructure Port Colborne needs and deserves.

To everyone who shared their experiences, ideas and time, thank you. Your contributions have been essential in shaping this Plan. We remain committed to listening, reporting on progress and working together toward a healthier Port Colborne, where care is connected, and close to home for every stage of life.

Thank you,
Mayor Steele & Port Colborne City Council



# CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS 2022-2026

**Mayor**
William Steele

**Ward 1**
Councillor Mark Bagu
Councillor Dave Elliott

**Ward 2**
Councillor Eric Beauregard
Councillor Tim Hoyle

**Ward 3**
Councillor Gary Bruno
Councillor Frank Danch

**Ward 4**
Councillor Monique Aquilina
Councillor Ron Bodner

MESSAGE FROM THE

# CHAIR AND VICE-CHAIR HEALTHCARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Healthcare Advisory Committee was created by City Council to help guide Port Colborne's response to one of the most important issues facing our community, access to healthcare close to home. As a citizen-led committee, our role has been to listen, to learn, and to help shape a path forward that reflects both the realities of the healthcare system and the lived experiences of our residents.

As healthcare professionals ourselves, we bring both personal and professional experience to this work. We have seen first hand how difficult it can be for residents and their families to navigate the system, especially when care is not available close to home.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to our colleagues on the Healthcare Advisory Committee for their dedication, and to the many individuals and organizations who contributed their time and insight to this draft Action Plan. In particular, we are very grateful to the Port Colborne Health Coalition for their ongoing participation, and to the Niagara Ontario Health Team – Équipe Santé, Bridges Community Health Centre, Welland McMaster Family Health Team, Niagara Practitioners' Alliance, Port Cares, and our local physician groups, who generously shared their expertise and continue to support this community every day. We also want to thank the 30 presenters who brought forward frontline perspectives. Your insights have grounded this work in real experience and helped ensure this Action Plan is practical, informed, and focused on what matters most to the people of Port Colborne.

Over the past 18 months, the Committee has heard from healthcare providers, community organizations, regional partners, and subject matter experts. These conversations have helped us better understand key challenges, our local system pressures and provincial healthcare trends.

Through surveys, conversations, and outreach, residents have clearly told us that healthcare access is becoming more difficult, it's about more than just the closure of our Urgent Care Centre, and that timely, local care matters deeply. Many shared personal stories about the challenges they face. Those voices have stayed with us and continue to guide this work.

It is important to recognize that municipalities do not deliver healthcare services. However, they do have a role to play in advocating for our residents, planning for the future, and bringing partners together. This Committee has worked to do exactly that, helping ensure Port Colborne's voice is heard in regional and provincial conversations, while identifying practical steps that can make a difference locally. We are grateful for the trust and support of City Council, including the critical resources provided to better understand our community's needs through data and external guidance from KPMG and Esri Canada.

This Community Health & Wellness Action Plan represents the next step in that work. It reflects what we have heard, what the data tells us, and what we believe is achievable through collaboration and sustained effort.

We are pleased to see such strong community support for the Action Plan. Thank you to everyone who completed the survey, attended an open house, or shared your experiences and ideas. Your feedback helped strengthen the final Plan and will continue to shape its implementation.

On behalf of the Healthcare Advisory Committee, thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we have built a strong foundation for the future, and we look forward to continuing our work with the community to improve healthcare access and well-being for everyone in Port Colborne.



**Sydney McDowell, NP (Chair)**



**Dr. Philip McGarry, MD (Vice Chair)**

# COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**Sydney McDowell, NP**
(Chair)

**Dr. Philip McGarry, MD**
(Vice Chair)

**Carmen Tamas**

**Matt Lallouet**

**Tina Triano**

**Councillor Monique Aquilina**
(Non-voting member)

**Councillor Ron Bodner**
(Non-voting member)

**Mayor William C. Steele**
(Ex-officio member)

# COMMUNITY PROFILE

**22,000**
Community Population*

**$70,000**
Median Household Income*
Provincial Average: $91,000

**54.2%**
Labour force participation*
Provincial Average: 67.9%

**54%**
High school diploma or less*
Provincial Average: 32%

**2.2**
Average household size*
Provincial average 2.6

Port Colborne is a close-knit, resilient community with a strong sense of identity, connection, and pride. Located along the shores of Lake Erie and the Welland Canal, the city offers a high quality of life, growing economic opportunities, and a supportive network of community organizations that work every day to help residents stay healthy and well. The community is experiencing steady growth and new investment, positioning Port Colborne as an increasingly attractive place to live, work, and raise a family. At the same time, residents value the small-town feel, where people know each other, support one another, and expect care to be close to home.

Like many communities across Ontario, Port Colborne is also facing real and growing pressures that affect health and access to care. The population is older than the provincial average, with a higher proportion of seniors, many of whom live alone and may face mobility and transportation challenges. Income and education levels are lower than average, which can make it harder for residents to get information, navigate the healthcare system, access support, and maintain overall health and well-being. Many residents are living with chronic conditions and require ongoing care and support.

Access to healthcare remains one of the most significant challenges. Approximately 2,700 residents do not have a family doctor, and local primary care and after-hours care options are limited. As a result, many people rely on urgent care or emergency services for needs that could be addressed earlier and closer to home. Transportation barriers resulting from limited public transit to hospitals, corresponding lengthy travel times, and specialists outside the community add to these challenges, particularly for seniors and those with limited mobility.

These strengths and pressures exist at the same time. Port Colborne is a community that cares deeply about its residents and is committed to building a healthier future. This Action Plan is grounded in that reality, recognizing both what is working well and where change is needed so that practical, community-driven solutions can be developed to improve access, support well-being, and ensure residents can get the care they need, close to home.

* From Statistics Canada.
** From Primary Care Data Reports for Ontario Health Teams from 2022. From Inspire-PHC.
*** From Port Colborne Healthcare Analysis Report by KPMG (Feb 2026).

# OUR VISION:

A healthy and vibrant community embracing growth for future generations.

# OUR MISSION:

To provide an exceptional small-town experience in a big way.

# OUR VALUES:

**Integrity** - We interact with others ethically and honourably.
**Respect** - We treat each other with empathy and understanding.
**Inclusion** - We welcome everyone.
**Responsibility** - We make tomorrow better.
**Collaboration** - We are better together.



**2,700**
Residents without a family doctor**



**33%**
Seniors in Port Colborne live alone*
**Niagara average: 29%**
**Provincial average: 27%**



**20%**
Households live below the poverty line*
**Niagara average: 16.7%**
**Provincial average: 14.5%**



**9.4%**
Population growth since last census*
**Provincial Average: 5.8%**



**27%**
Residents over the age of 65*
**Provincial average: 18%**



**102%**
Projected increase of residents age 75+ by 2050***
**Under moderate growth scenario**



# HEALTHCARE IN PORT COLBORNE

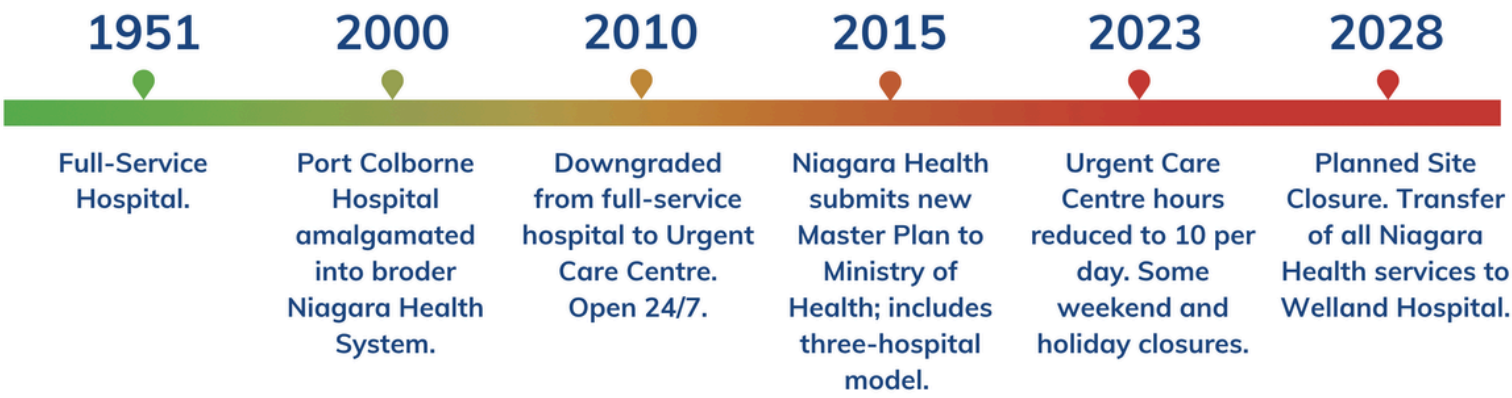
For generations, healthcare has been an important part of life in Port Colborne, shaped by community leadership, local pride, and a shared belief that care should be close to home. This Action Plan is rooted in that same belief. It is hopeful about the future and grounded in a simple idea, every resident should be able to get the care, support, and information they need in a way that is fair, respectful, and easy to access.

This Plan has been shaped by many people. It reflects the voices of residents, caregivers, healthcare workers, community organizations, local leaders, and system partners who shared their time, ideas, and lived experience. It also reflects the commitment of City Council, the Healthcare Advisory Committee, City staff, and many others who helped guide this work to build a stronger foundation for community health and wellness planning.

## HISTORY OF THE PORT COLBORNE HOSPITAL SITE

Healthcare in Port Colborne has changed greatly over time. When the local hospital first opened its doors in 1951, it was made possible through community fundraising and local support. For many years, it served as a full-service hospital and an important part of life in the city. Over time, healthcare services across Niagara, as well as Ontario, became more regionalized. Governance was centralized through the Niagara Health System amalgamation in the early 2000's, services were reorganized, and more care began to move to other communities. In Port Colborne, that meant a gradual reduction in local hospital services and a shift to an Urgent and Complex Care Centre (UCC) in 2010. Over time, primary care in the community did not develop at the same pace as in other municipalities, and residents came to rely heavily on the UCC for access to urgent and primary care.






## RECENT PROGRESS AND CHANGES

We reached another turning point in December 2024, when Niagara Health reaffirmed previously announced plans to close the Port Colborne UCC, as part of the regional model approved by the Province in 2017. This raised concerns in the community about access, travel, fairness, and the future of healthcare in Port Colborne. In response, City Council approved a broad community engagement process to hear directly from residents and better understand local needs and priorities. Thousands of people took part through surveys, public meetings, open houses, and other engagement opportunities. The message was consistent, local healthcare matters, and the community wants to be part of shaping its future.

Council also established the Healthcare Advisory Committee to help guide this work and keep local voices at the centre of planning. The committee began its work in June 2025 and has played an important role by bringing lived experience, community insight, and practical advice to the table. At the same time, Council committed funding in support of healthcare planning, advocacy, and long-term local solutions, recognizing that while the City traditionally does not have jurisdiction in healthcare service planning and delivery, it does have an important role in bringing people together, planning ahead, speaking up for the community to help support better health outcomes.

## MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

To build a strong evidence base for this Action Plan, an independent healthcare analysis was completed by KPMG to better understand local needs, service use, access barriers, as well as future pressures. Work with Esri Canada, the world leader in mapping, is also helping to support a more data-informed picture of the community, including visual tools that strengthen planning, advocacy, and long-term decision-making. Together, this work has helped to create a clearer understanding of both the risks facing Port Colborne and the opportunities to build a sustainable and healthier future.

This Action Plan is the result of that journey so far. It brings together community input, local knowledge, research, and a shared commitment to care close to home. It is built around eight areas of focus that reflect what matters most to residents and where action is needed most. The goal is not only to respond to change, but to work together toward something better, a future where healthcare in Port Colborne is more connected, more inclusive, and easier to access at every stage of life.

# THE CITY'S ROLE IN STRENGTHENING LOCAL HEALTHCARE

Improving healthcare requires shared responsibility. The City plays a different role than healthcare providers and the Province, but that role is still important. While the City does not deliver or fund healthcare services directly, it has a meaningful role in shaping the conditions that support health and well-being in the community. This includes listening to residents, identifying local needs and gaps, and working with partners across the healthcare system to help improve access and coordination. By bringing people together and keeping a strong focus on local priorities, the City can help ensure that decisions are informed by real experiences and reflect what matters most to residents.

This section outlines how the City can take action across four key areas: leading, supporting, influencing, and advocating. Each role reflects a different way the City can contribute to improving healthcare outcomes, from driving community engagement and supporting local initiatives to influencing broader planning decisions and advocating for needed investments. Together, these actions help create a more connected and responsive system, strengthen access to care close to home, and ensure that the needs of Port Colborne residents are clearly represented at every level.



## THE CITY WILL LEAD

- Community engagement and listening to residents.
- Bringing partners together to support local solutions.
- Sharing information and improving awareness of available services.
- Tracking progress and reporting back to the community.
- Investments that create real progress.

## THE CITY WILL SUPPORT

- Local physician and healthcare provider recruitment efforts.
- Community-based programs and partnerships that improve health and well-being.
- Coordination between organizations working in health, housing, and social services.

## THE CITY WILL INFLUENCE

- Regional healthcare planning through participation and collaboration with partners.
- How healthcare needs are considered in local planning decisions (e.g., growth, transit, accessibility).

## THE CITY WILL ADVOCATE FOR

- Increased provincial funding for primary, urgent, and emergency care, including critical diagnostic and lab services.
- Timely access to care close to home.
- Solutions that address transportation and access barriers.
- A healthcare system that reflects the growing needs of Port Colborne residents.

## COUNCIL ACTIONS TO DATE

- Committed a $1-million Council investment over three years to support healthcare advocacy, planning, and long-term solutions, helping advance local priorities and strengthen the community's voice in broader healthcare discussions.
- Conducted community-wide engagement throughout 2025 and into 2026 to better understand local needs, challenges, and priorities, ensuring the Action Plan is grounded in real experiences and reflects what matters most to residents.
- Established a citizen-led Healthcare Advisory Committee to provide local insight and lived experience, bringing community voices directly into the planning process and helping guide meaningful, practical solutions.
- Commissioned an independent health services analysis with KPMG to assess system planning and service delivery over the next 20 years, providing clear data and evidence to inform long-term decision-making.
- Developed an interactive health data dashboard with Esri Canada, to support physician recruitment, health neighbourhood planning, and the coordination of future community-based services.

# WHAT ARE SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH?

Social determinants of health are the everyday conditions that influence a person's ability to stay healthy, beyond just medical care. They include factors like income, housing, education, employment, social supports, and access to healthy food and safe environments. These conditions shape health outcomes over time, often having a greater impact than healthcare itself, by either creating opportunities for good health or contributing to barriers and inequities within a community.

## What makes Canadians sick?

**50% YOUR LIFE**

- Race
- Income
- Gender
- Disability
- Education
- Social Exclusion
- Social Safety Net
- Indigenous Status
- Community Belonging
- Housing/ Homelessness
- Safe and Nutritious Food
- Early Childhood Development
- Employment/ Working Conditions

**25% YOUR HEALTHCARE**

- Access to Healthcare
- Health Care System
- Wait Times

**15% YOUR BIOLOGY**

- Biology
- Genetics

**10% YOUR ENVIRONMENT**

- Air Quality
- Civic Infrastructure

## What does it mean for Port Colborne?



**84%**

Port Colborne residents live in neighbourhoods facing the **high or highest social determinants of health risks**

Provincial average: 15%



**52%**

Residents are 52% more likely to use ED/UCC services for chronic conditions

Compared to provincial average

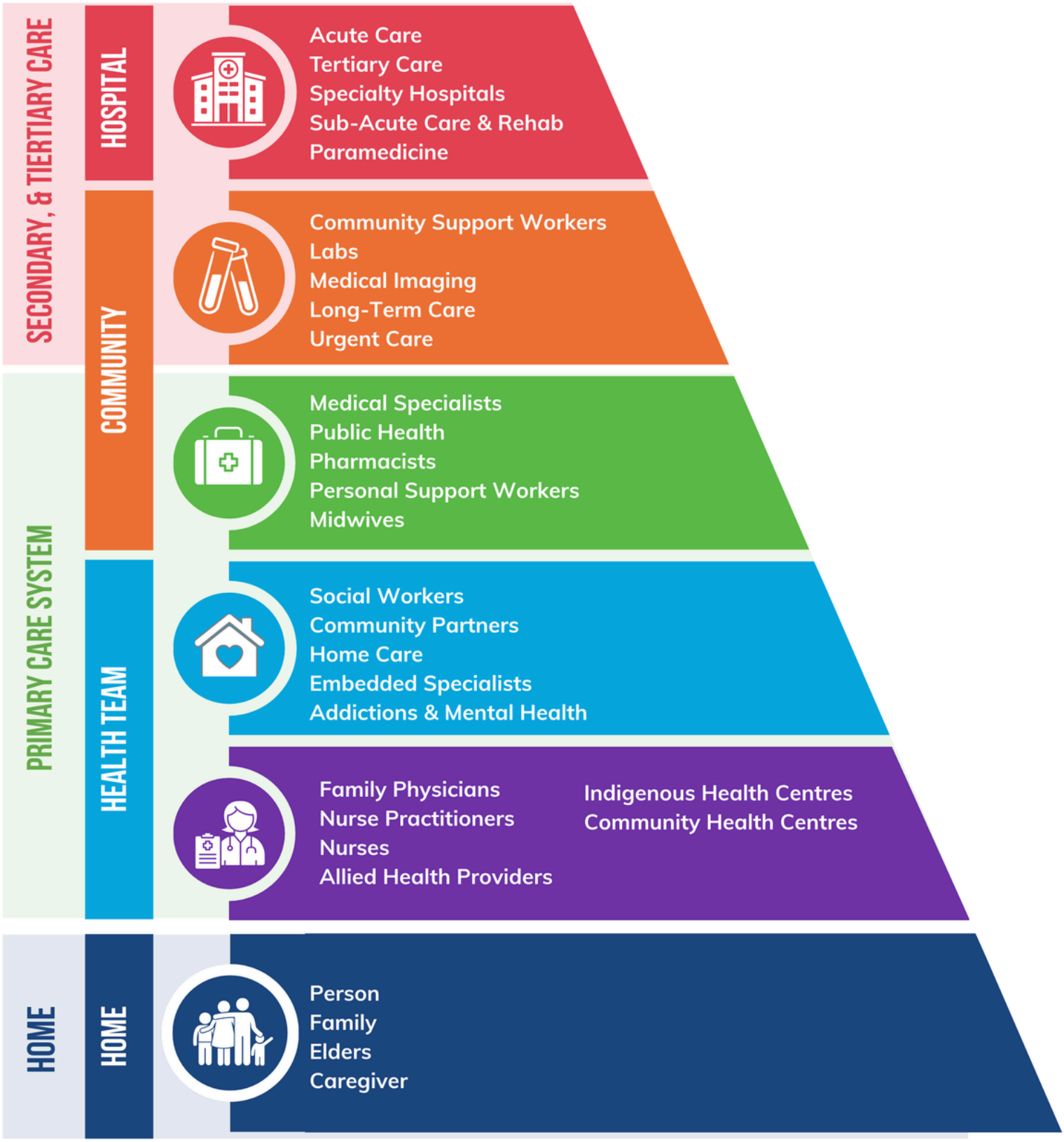


**95%**

Residents are 95% more likely to use ED/UCC services for acute conditions

Compared to provincial average

# HOW THE HEALTH SYSTEM WORKS



# COMMUNITY INSIGHTS & ENGAGEMENT

At the heart of this Action Plan are the voices of Port Colborne residents. Through a multi-phase engagement process, community members, partners, and healthcare experts shared their experiences, ideas, and priorities for the future of care. This work has been guided by a commitment to clear information, inclusive participation, and transparent decision-making.



## PHASE ONE: January to April 2025

The first phase of community engagement was approved by Council in late January 2025 and brought together more than 2,000 completed surveys and over 10,000 comments. Residents shared their input through open houses, town halls, virtual sessions, pop-ups, and conversations with working groups and Council committees. The message was clear. Access to healthcare is becoming more difficult, and residents want care that is closer to home, easier to navigate, and available when they need it.



## PHASE TWO: April 2025 - ongoing

What we heard in Phase One helped shape the work of the Healthcare Advisory Committee. The Committee meets bi-weekly to review research and data, and to bring together community members and healthcare professionals to share ideas and practical solutions. So far, the Committee has heard from 25+ presenters, including healthcare providers, community organizations, and regional partners. Members have also visited hospitals, urgent care centres, and other clinical settings. The goal is to better understand the challenges people are facing and the opportunities ahead.

**January 2025**

Council launches first phase of healthcare engagement.

**June 2025**

Port Colborne Healthcare Advisory Committee work begins.

**August 2025**

Public delegations invited to speak at the Healthcare Advisory Committee.

**November 2025**

Primary Care Funding Requested by Niagara Ontario Health Team.

**December 2025**

KPMG Commissioned to complete study on Port Colborne.

## PHASE THREE: December 2025 to February 2026

To support its work and ensure decisions are grounded in evidence and practical solutions, the Committee engaged KPMG to complete a healthcare analysis. KPMG worked closely with the Committee and local partners to better understand service gaps, barriers to access, and future needs. This work confirmed what residents shared in Phase One and added clear data to guide next steps. This draft Action Plan brings everything together and reflects community input, partner insights, and the data on current and future healthcare needs.

## PHASE FOUR: May to July 2026

From May 5 to July 2, 2026, the City completed the fourth phase of community engagement, focused on the draft Action Plan. The survey confirmed strong support, with 91 per cent overall approval and majority support for all eight Areas of Focus. Residents and partners shared feedback through online and paper surveys, in-person open houses, focus groups and discussions with priority populations. This feedback helped refine language and clarify actions included in the final Plan before it was approved by the Healthcare Advisory Committee in July, and City Council in August 2026.

## PHASE FIVE: July 2026 to 2030

Community input will continue to be an important part of how this plan proceeds and engagement with the healthcare system continues to grow. Ongoing engagement will take place through the work of the Healthcare Advisory Committee over its four-year term, as well as through touchpoints with Committees of Council, focus groups, surveys, and continued conversations with residents, partners, providers and organizations. This will help track progress, respond to change, and make sure the plan remains grounded in real community needs over time.

**January 2026**
Esri Canada healthcare dashboard project begins.

**April 2026**
Draft Community Health & Wellness Action Plan published.

**May 2026**
Community Engagement on draft Community Health & Wellness Action Plan begins.

**August 2026**
Final Community Health & Wellness Action Plan to be considered for approval by City Council.

**September 2026**
Business Case Development and Implementation begins.



# VISION FOR A HEALTHY PORT COLBORNE:

*Connected Care, Close to Home for Every Stage of Life.*

**PURPOSE:** To improve access to timely and barrier-free healthcare services for all residents of Port Colborne.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

**Quality Care We Can Trust:**
Everyone in Port Colborne deserves safe, reliable healthcare delivered by professionals who put patients first.

**Care When We Need It:**
Residents should be able to get help quickly and close to home, without long waits or travel.

**People at the Centre:**
Healthcare should reflect real lives, listen to residents, and respond to the needs of families and caregivers.

**Fair Access for All:**
Everyone should be able to get the care they need, regardless of income, where they live, their abilities, identity or the barriers they face.

**A System That Lasts:**
We need smart, local solutions that work today and support a healthy community for generations to come.

The Action Plan is organized into eight key areas of focus. For each area, we've brought together what the community shared through public engagement, what the data and research show about local needs, and a clear set of actions to guide our response. This approach ensures each priority is grounded in both lived experience and evidence, with practical steps to move forward.



AREA OF FOCUS

# BETTER ACCESS THROUGH ADVANCED PRIMARY CARE

Primary care is the front door to the healthcare system. It is where people go for check-ups, ongoing care, early diagnosis, and help navigating services. When access to primary care is strong, people stay healthier and fewer residents need to rely on hospitals or emergency care.

In Port Colborne, access to primary care is already limited. Many residents do not have a family doctor or cannot get timely appointments. These challenges are felt most by seniors, low-income residents, and those without reliable transportation. As a result, more people are turning to urgent care for needs that should be addressed earlier.

## THE COMMUNITY SAID

What we heard through surveys, open houses, and conversations with residents:



### Hard to find a family doctor or same-day care

Many Port Colborne residents do not have a family doctor or cannot access same-day care.



### Using urgent care for everyday health needs

The Port Colborne UCC is often used for care that should happen in a primary care setting.



### Wanting more local care options

Residents want more local options, including after-hours care, walk-in clinics, and team-based care.



### Worried about losing urgent and after-hours care

There is concern about losing access to urgent, after-hours care and related services when the Port Colborne UCC closes in 2028.



### Challenges getting care outside the city

Travelling outside the city for care creates barriers, especially for seniors and those without a vehicle.

# THE RESEARCH SHOWED

What the data tells us about access to care in our community:

- Limited access to primary care is driving higher use of urgent and emergency care (2,700 residents without a family doctor and a shortage of at least five physicians).
- Evidence across Ontario shows that strong primary care improves access and reduces pressure on hospitals.
- Demand for care will continue to grow as the population increases and ages. Port Colborne residents visit emergency departments more often than the provincial average.
- Gaps in primary care access disproportionately affect residents already facing the greatest barriers.

# STEPS IN OUR ACTION PLAN

What we're doing to address these needs and strengthen access to care in Port Colborne:



## Attract More Primary Care Providers

Advocate for more primary care providers by working with regional and provincial partners to bring stable, long-term funding and recruitment support to Port Colborne.




## Improve After-Hours Access

Advocate for improved after-hours access and explore pathways for 24/7 on-call coverage similar to models in other rural municipalities in Ontario.



## Urgent Care Coverage

Work with the province and local providers to secure sustainable funding to fill service gaps for urgent and time-sensitive injuries and illnesses (e.g. cuts, minor burns, eye injuries, sprains, fevers, and ENT issues).



## Expand Team-Based Care

Support team-based care models that include nurse practitioners, allied health professionals, paramedicine, and wrap-around services.



## Create Modern Spaces for Care

Support the development of modern spaces for care, including new or expanded clinic locations and leverage virtual care technology.



## Measure Progress and Impact

Track and report on progress, including attachment rates, service use, and community feedback, to support ongoing planning and advocacy.

AREA OF FOCUS

# MEDICAL IMAGING AND LAB SERVICES

Healthcare does not stop at a doctor's visit. People also need timely access to tests, medical imaging, lab work, and specialist care. These publicly funded services help diagnose issues early, guide treatment, and prevent serious health problems. That need is especially clear in Port Colborne, where many of these services are already limited or require travel outside the community.

Residents often leave the city for scans, fracture care, and specialist visits. For those with lower incomes, limited mobility, caregiving responsibilities, or no access to a vehicle, even routine care can become difficult to access. Strengthening local access to these services will make care faster, more equitable, and easier to navigate.

## THE COMMUNITY SAID

What we heard through surveys, open houses, and conversations with residents:



### Medical imaging and diagnostics are important

Residents want to keep the local X-ray, ultrasound, and lab services that are currently publicly funded and associated with the UCC.



### Worried about losing more services over time

There is concern about losing even more healthcare services over time due to centralization or privatization of hospital-based services.



### Travel for care is difficult and costly

Travelling for tests and appointments is stressful, costly, and time-consuming, and can be a concerning barrier to diagnosis and treatment.



### Support for MRI and specialized care closer to home

Strong support exists for a South Niagara MRI and more specialized care to better serve Port Colborne, Wainfleet and Fort Erie.



### Conveniently located care

Co-locating services is preferred and seen as more convenient. Healthcare services should be available on both sides of the Welland Canal.

# THE RESEARCH SHOWED

What the data tells us about access to care in our community:

- Local access to testing and same-day clinical services is essential to timely care.
- When residents must travel farther for basic services, delays increase and some people choose not to seek care.
- Limited access to medical imaging and diagnostics can lead to later diagnoses and increased pressure on urgent and emergency care.
- Maintaining local services is especially important for residents facing transportation, financial, or mobility barriers.

# STEPS IN OUR ACTION PLAN

What we're doing to address these needs and strengthen access to care in Port Colborne:



### Protect Local Medical Imaging and Diagnostic Services

Advocate to maintain local diagnostic services, including X-ray, ultrasound, and lab services, as essential components of care close to home.



### Expand Access to Medical Imaging and Diagnostics

Support opportunities to expand services in South Niagara, including access to MRI and other diagnostics, to reduce wait times and travel.



### Bring Specialists Closer to Home

Enable local access to visiting specialists and outpatient services by supporting clinic space and community partnerships, with healthcare services being available on both sides of the Welland Canal.



### Support One-Stop Care Models

Promote co-located care models that bring multiple services together to improve access and patient experience.



### Reduce the Need to Travel for Care

Work with partners to reduce unnecessary travel for routine and non-emergency care through better coordination and planning.

AREA OF FOCUS

# COMMUNITY-BASED CARE

Most healthcare should not happen in a hospital. Many residents need support closer to home, including home care, chronic disease management, rehabilitation, caregiver support, palliative care, and services that help people stay safe, healthy, and independent. This is especially important in Port Colborne, where the population is older than average and demand for care is growing.

At the same time, residents of all ages face barriers to accessing the support they need. Aging, chronic illness, disability, mobility challenges, mental health needs, and social isolation often overlap. Without the right supports in place, it becomes harder for people to stay well at home. Strengthening community-based care will help residents maintain independence, support families and caregivers, and reduce avoidable hospital visits.

## THE COMMUNITY SAID

What we heard through surveys, open houses, and conversations with residents:



### Need for More Local Support for Seniors and Families

Seniors, families and caregivers need more support close to home.



### Demand for Preventative Care and Reduced Hospital Visits

People want more services that help prevent illness and reduce hospital visits, and improved access and reduced wait times for women's health services such as preventative screening and reproductive health.



### Strong Support for Connected, Community-Based Care

There is strong support for more connected, local care and wellness services for all ages.



### Challenges Navigating a Fragmented Care System

Navigating between primary care, specialists, and hospital services is difficult and often fragmented.



### Long Wait Times for Community Services

Wait time for some community-based services, such as long term care beds, or physiotherapy can take months.

# THE RESEARCH SHOWED

What the data tells us about access to care in our community:

- There are gaps in care between home, primary care, and hospital services, especially during transitions.
- Supporting seniors, families, and caregivers is central to future health and wellness planning.
- Strong community-based care improves quality of life and reduces pressure on hospitals.
- Residents with complex needs, limited mobility, lower incomes, or limited social support are most affected by these gaps.

# STEPS IN OUR ACTION PLAN

What we're doing to address these needs and strengthen access to care in Port Colborne:



### Expand Local Home and Community Care Services

Work with healthcare and community partners to support the expansion of local home and community-based care services.



### Advocate for More Long-Term and Transitional Care Capacity

Advocate for increased capacity in long-term care, hospice, palliative and transitional care, recognizing growing demand in the community.



### Support Aging in Place for Residents

Support aging in place by advocating for services and programs that help residents remain safely at home.



### Strengthen Support for Caregivers and Families

Strengthen support for caregivers and families through partnerships, awareness, and local resources.



### Improve Care Coordination and Transitions

Promote better care coordination and transitions, including discharge, recovery, and follow-up supports.



### Plan for Future Community Care Needs

Align health planning and recruitment with future growth to anticipate care needs and ensure sustainable access to food, housing, social services, and community development.

AREA OF FOCUS

# MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Mental health is a key part of overall health. People need timely, compassionate support for mental health and substance use, just as they do for physical health. Early support can prevent crisis, reduce hospital use, and improve quality of life.

In Port Colborne, these needs are often linked to broader challenges such as housing instability, isolation, trauma, and barriers to care. Addressing mental health requires more than treatment alone. It requires better connections between services, stronger community supports, and easier pathways for people to get help early, before issues become more serious.

## THE COMMUNITY SAID

What we heard through surveys, open houses, and conversations with residents:



### Expand Local Mental Health and Addictions Support

Mental health and addictions support should continue to be available locally.



### Improve Connections Between Healthcare, Social, and Community Services

Residents want better connections between healthcare, social services, and community supports to improve health outcomes.



### Focus on Early Support to Prevent Crises

Residents want timely support to help prevent issues from escalating.



### Recognize Mental Health as a Growing Community Priority

Mental health has emerged as a clear and urgent priority for residents.

# THE RESEARCH SHOWED

What the data tells us about access to care in our community:

- Mental health and addictions support must be part of the core strategy, not an add-on.
- Earlier access and stronger local coordination can improve outcomes and reduce crisis-driven care.
- Well-being depends on connecting healthcare with social and community supports.
- People facing social and economic barriers may be at greater risk and need more flexible, local, and welcoming pathways to access support.

# STEPS IN OUR ACTION PLAN

What we're doing to address these needs and strengthen access to care in Port Colborne:



### Strengthen Coordination and Accountability Across Health, Community and Social Services.

Support stronger coordination between healthcare providers, community organizations, and social services, while tracking outcomes to measure impact.



### Advocate for Greater Access to Local Mental Health and Addictions Services

Advocate for increased access to local mental health and addictions services, including sustainable funding and programs for women and youth.



### Make Services Easier to Find Through Awareness and Navigation

Improve awareness and navigation of services so residents can easily find the help they need.



### Promote Prevention and Early Intervention

Promote prevention and early intervention through partnerships, education, and community-based initiatives.



### Integrate Mental Well-Being Into Community Planning

Embed mental well-being across all areas of planning, recognizing its connection to housing, social supports, and overall community health.

AREA OF FOCUS

# TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS TO CARE

Access to healthcare is not just about whether services exist. People also need to be able to reach them and understand how to use them when they need care. Long travel times, limited transit options, cost, and confusion about where to go can all delay care or prevent people from accessing it altogether.

These challenges are not experienced equally. They are often hardest on seniors, people with disabilities, low-income households, caregivers, and residents without access to a vehicle. As more healthcare services are delivered outside the community, transportation and system navigation must be treated as a core part of healthcare access.

## THE COMMUNITY SAID

What we heard through surveys, open houses, and conversations with residents:



### Transportation is a Major Barrier

Transportation challenges were consistently identified as the leading barrier to accessing care.



### Travel Challenges for Seniors and Those Without Vehicles

Travel outside Port Colborne to see specialists or to access after-hours emergency care is especially hard for seniors who live alone and people without a vehicle.



### Need for Clearer Information on Where to Access Care

Residents want clearer information about where to go for different types of care.



### Concerns About Growing Travel Barriers as Services Change

There is concern that travel challenges will increase as local services change, and residents want the City to advocate for adequate EMS and paramedic training and increased capacity.

# THE RESEARCH SHOWED

*What the data tells us about access to care in our community:*

- Transportation is a healthcare access issue, not just a transit issue.
- Travel time, cost, and system complexity create real barriers and inequities.
- Without proactive planning, access challenges will continue to grow over time.
- Clear information and practical supports are essential, especially for residents facing multiple barriers.

# STEPS IN OUR ACTION PLAN

What we're doing to address these needs and strengthen access to care in Port Colborne:



### Enhance Transportation Options for Medical Appointments

Work with partners to improve transportation options for medical appointments, including flexible and community-based solutions.



### Prioritize Support for Residents Facing the Greatest Barriers

Prioritize support for residents facing the greatest barriers, including seniors, people with disabilities, and low-income households.



### Improve Access to Information

Centralize and improve access to clear, simple information so residents know where to go and how to access care.



### Increase Awareness of Available Transportation Supports

Increase awareness of existing transportation supports, including medical travel and assistance programs.



### Integrate Healthcare Access into Transit and Mobility Planning

Integrate healthcare access into local transit and mobility planning to better reflect current and future needs.



### Bring Care Closer to Home Through Local Services

Support opportunities to bring services closer to home, such as mobile clinics and visiting specialists, to reduce the need for travel.

AREA OF FOCUS

# HEALTHY RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

Health is shaped by more than healthcare. It is also shaped by housing, food, recreation, social connection, safe streets, walkable neighbourhoods, and access to community spaces. These everyday conditions affect whether people can stay healthy and independent over time.

This broader view matters because some residents face barriers in their daily lives that impact their health long before they enter a clinic or hospital. Building a healthier community means reducing those barriers, supporting healthy aging, and making it easier for people to live well where they are.

## THE COMMUNITY SAID

What we heard through surveys, open houses, and conversations with residents:



### Desire for a Healthier Community Beyond Healthcare Services

Residents want a healthier community, not just more healthcare services.



### Value Placed on Recreation, Green Space, and Social Connection

Residents view access to natural areas, walkability, and community as key contributors to overall quality of life.



### Seniors Want to Stay Active, Included, and Independent

Health and well-being are shaped by opportunities to stay engaged, supported, and age safely at home.



### Recognition of Social Factors That Impact Health

Residents recognize that housing, food, transportation, and neighbourhood design affect health.



### Growing Concern Around Food Insecurity

Food insecurity is a growing concern, with more individuals and families relying on local supports.

# THE RESEARCH SHOWED

What the data tells us about access to care in our community:

- Health outcomes are shaped by both healthcare services and everyday living conditions.
- Prevention and wellness improve quality of life and reduce long-term pressure on the healthcare system.
- Municipal planning and programs play an important role in supporting the social determinants of health.
- A stronger focus on prevention must prioritize residents and neighbourhoods facing the greatest barriers.

# STEPS IN OUR ACTION PLAN

What we're doing to address these needs and strengthen access to care in Port Colborne:



### Embed Health in Municipal Planning and Decision-Making

Apply a health lens to municipal planning, policies, and major decisions, ensuring the City's role in leading, partnering, and advocating for healthier, more resilient communities is clearly defined and communicated.



### Prioritize Equity for Underserved Residents and Neighbourhoods

Focus on equity by prioritizing underserved residents and neighbourhoods facing the greatest barriers.



### Support Walkable, Age-Friendly, Complete Communities

Support the development of complete, walkable, and age-friendly communities through planning and policy.



### Align Health and Wellness Goals Across City Services

Promote collaboration across City departments to ensure municipal services, programs, and initiatives contribute to improved community health and well-being.



### Strengthen Community Food Security Initiatives

Work with community partners to support food security initiatives, such as community gardens and local nutrition programs.

AREA OF FOCUS

# EQUITY, ACCESSIBILITY AND CULTURALLY SAFE CARE

A strong health system should work for everyone. People should be able to get care and information in ways that are fair, respectful, understandable, and welcoming, regardless of age, income, language, ability, culture, identity, or background.

This includes making sure healthcare planning reflects the needs of residents who may face barriers or be underserved. It also means recognizing that trust matters. People are more likely to seek care, ask questions, and stay connected to services when they feel respected, understood, and included.

## THE COMMUNITY SAID

What we heard through surveys, open houses, and conversations with residents:

### Desire for Inclusive Healthcare Planning for All Residents

Healthcare planning should reflect the diverse needs and experiences of all residents, including underserved and marginalized communities.

### Respectful, Culturally Aware Care and Reconciliation

People support respectful, culturally aware care and want to see stronger commitments to Truth and Reconciliation and relationship-building with Indigenous communities.

### Need for Clearer, More Accessible Information

Residents want healthcare and City information to be easier to understand and accessible for people of all abilities.

### Importance of Access to French-Language Services

People emphasized the importance of accessible French-language healthcare and key City services in a designated French-language service area.

# THE RESEARCH SHOWED

What the data tells us about access to care in our community:

- Equity must be built into planning from the beginning.
- Language, culture, trust, and lived experience all shape access to care.
- Priority populations experience unique barriers that should be reflected in healthcare planning.
- Inclusive planning leads to stronger services and better outcomes.
- Equity should guide how all priorities are planned and delivered.
- Port Colborne's distinct Indigenous and Francophone communities highlight the need for culturally safe and linguistically appropriate care.

# STEPS IN OUR ACTION PLAN

What we're doing to address these needs and strengthen access to care in Port Colborne:



### Consider Health Equity in Municipal Planning and Decision-Making

Embed equity and inclusion across all planning, engagement, and communication.



### Ensure Diverse Voices Are Included in Decision-Making

Work with community partners such as Bridges Community Health Centre and Port Cares, to ensure diverse voices are included, especially Ontario priority populations and those facing barriers to care.



### Strengthen Relationships with Indigenous Communities

Advance the City's journey of Truth and Reconciliation while building trust and understanding to support culturally safe approaches to health and care.



### Build Capacity for Inclusion, Accessibility, and Cultural Safety

Build internal and external awareness and capacity around inclusion, accessibility, and cultural safety throughout city programs, policies and practices.



### Collaborate on Inclusive Healthcare Planning

Collaborate with regional partners, including the Niagara Ontario Health Team- Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara, to support inclusive healthcare planning and engagement.



### Enhance Access to Francophone Services and Bilingual Information

Services in French support equitable access and better health outcomes for Francophone residents.

AREA OF FOCUS

# COMMUNITY VOICE, ACCOUNTABILITY AND ADVOCACY

Healthcare planning is strongest when it is guided by local experience, good information, and clear follow-through. It is also important to understand how the system works (see page 36).

While the City does not deliver or fund healthcare, it plays an important role in listening to residents, bringing partners together, advocating for local needs, and tracking progress over time.

This role should be carried out in a way that is open, practical, and accountable. Residents need to see how their input has shaped the strategy, what actions are being taken, and how progress will be measured and shared. Ongoing involvement and clear communication will help build trust between the community and Council, and keep the Action Plan grounded in community needs.

## THE COMMUNITY SAID

What we heard through surveys, open houses, and conversations with residents:



### Desire for Council Advocacy on Local Healthcare Needs

Residents want City Council to keep speaking up for local access to healthcare services, specifically increased options for after-hours care, and 24/7 access to urgent and emergency care.



### Need for Clear Updates on Changes and Reasons

People want clear updates about what is changing and why.



### Value of Community Input in Planning

Community members value having a voice in healthcare planning.



### Importance of Evidence-Based, Locally Relevant Decisions

Residents want decisions based on evidence and real local realities.

# THE RESEARCH SHOWED

What the data tells us about access to care in our community:

- Progress must be tracked and reported in a clear and accessible way.
- Public trust grows when people see action and regular follow-up.
- Strong local coordination helps the community respond to change more effectively.
- Accountability includes understanding whether improvements are reaching residents facing the greatest barriers.

# STEPS IN OUR ACTION PLAN

What we're doing to address these needs and strengthen access to care in Port Colborne:



### Engage the Community Through Ongoing Advisory Groups

Keep community voices involved through ongoing engagement, meetings with committees of Council, and community advisory groups.



### Provide Regular Updates to Council and the Community

Report regularly to Council and the community on progress and outcomes.



### Use Clear Data and Indicators for Transparent Decision-Making

Share data openly and use clear, simple indicators to support transparent decision-making.



### Strengthen Partnerships Across Health and Community Organizations

Strengthen partnerships across healthcare, community organizations, and all levels of government.



### Maintain Consistent Advocacy on Local Healthcare Priorities

Maintain focused and consistent advocacy on Port Colborne's healthcare priorities.



### Coordinate Partners to Align Priorities and Monitor Progress

Bring partners together through a local coordination or steering group to align priorities and monitor progress.

# WHO DOES WHAT IN HEALTHCARE?

## MUNICIPALITIES (i.e. The City of Port Colborne)

In Ontario, municipalities do not provide healthcare services, but they still play an important role in supporting community health. Some municipalities, including the City of Port Colborne, advocate for local healthcare needs, bring partners together to support solutions, share information with residents, plan for current and future community health needs, make investments, and track progress over time. This means the City helps ensure residents' voices are heard and works to improve access to care locally, even though healthcare delivery itself is the responsibility of the Province and healthcare providers.

## PRIMARY CARE PROVIDERS (i.e. Doctors & Nurse Practitioners)

Primary care providers, including doctors and nurse practitioners, are your main point of contact for everyday healthcare. They provide regular check-ups, diagnose and treat common health issues, refer you to specialists or tests when needed, and help manage long-term health conditions. Their role is to support your overall health and help you stay well through ongoing, consistent care.

## COMMUNITY-BASED CARE PROVIDERS

### (i.e. Home Care, Community Health Centres, Support Services)

Community-based care providers, including home care, community health centres, and support services, deliver care outside of hospitals, often in your home or community. They provide nursing, rehabilitation, and personal support, while supporting seniors, caregivers, and people with ongoing health needs. These providers offer mental health, addiction, and social supports, help coordinate care after hospital stays, and help people recover, stay independent, and avoid unnecessary hospital visits.

## NIAGARA HEALTH, WEST LINCOLN, HALDIMAND WAR MEMORIAL, HOTEL DIEU SHAVER HOSPITALS

Hospitals and healthcare organizations across Niagara and surrounding regions provide emergency, urgent, inpatient, surgical, rehabilitation and diagnostic services. These facilities offer hospital-based and specialized care, including imaging and laboratory services.



## NIAGARA REGION PUBLIC HEALTH AND EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES (EMS)

Niagara Region Public Health promotes health and prevents illness through vaccinations, inspections, education, and monitoring community health risks. Niagara EMS provides 24/7 emergency assessment, treatment and transportation, along with community paramedicine programs. Together, these regional services help prevent illness, respond to emergencies, and support the health and well-being of residents.



## ONTARIO HEALTH TEAMS (OHTS)

Ontario Health Teams plan and coordinate care across the region by connecting hospitals, doctors, and community services. They work to improve access and reduce gaps in care, helping make the system more connected and easier to navigate.



## PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

The Province of Ontario funds healthcare services, sets policy and priorities, decides where services and funding are allocated, and approves major infrastructure projects such as new or redeveloped hospitals. The province makes the key decisions about how the healthcare system operates and where resources are invested.



## GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

The Government of Canada provides funding to provinces for healthcare, such as through the Canada Health Transfer, and sets national standards and legislation, including the Canada Health Act. It also supports public health, research, and data collection, and funds programs for Indigenous health and priority populations. The federal government helps fund healthcare and set national standards, while provinces decide how care is delivered.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who has contributed their time, ideas, questions, and lived experience to this Action Plan. The Healthcare Advisory Committee is especially grateful to residents, caregivers, healthcare workers, community organizations, and partner agencies who have come together to work toward practical solutions to improve healthcare access in Port Colborne. A special thank you to the Port Colborne Health Coalition for its ongoing participation, advocacy, research, and deep commitment to the community.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to key partners who have consistently helped inform this work, including the Niagara Ontario Health Team – Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara, Bridges Community Health Centre, Welland McMaster Family Health Team, Niagara Practitioners' Health Alliance, Port Cares, our local physician groups, allied health professionals, frontline experts, and many others across the health system. Their willingness to share knowledge, challenge assumptions, and work collaboratively has strengthened this process and helped shape a more informed path forward for our community.

Boggio's Family of Pharmacies
Brant Municipal Enterprises
Centre de santé communautaire Hamilton/Niagara
City of Orillia
Community Living Port Colborne-Wainfleet
County of Brant
County of Renfrew
Dr. David Salanki
Dr. Erica van Daalen
Dr. Jeff Remington
Dr. Norbert Geiger
Regional Councillor Vance Badawey
MPP Sam Oosterhoff
MP Fred Davies
EarlyON Child and Family Centre
Esri Canada
Friends of 55 Recreation Centre
Hope 4 Our Hospital
KPMG
Lockview Medical Group
Mapleview Medical Clinic
Niagara Economic Development– Physician Recruitment Program
Niagara Emergency Medical Services
Niagara College
Niagara Health
Niagara Region Public Health
Niagara South Medical Centre
Niagara Southcoast PROBUS Club
Ontario Health atHome
Ontario Long-Term Care Association
People Helping People Achieve
Port Colborne Legion Branch 56
Town of Wasaga Beach
YMCA Port Colborne

# CONNECTED CARE STARTS HERE

Port Colborne's approach to healthcare planning has always been grounded in community, and that continues with this Community Health & Wellness Action Plan.

The challenges facing residents are not new. For decades, local reports have identified the same core issues, difficulty accessing primary care, transportation barriers, an aging population and the need for stronger coordination across services. Planned system changes and growing demand have made coordinated and practical action more important than ever.

There have been some encouraging signs of progress. The Province's recent investment of more than $4.75 million to expand team-based primary care in Port Colborne, Fort Erie and Wainfleet is an important step toward connecting more South Niagara residents to care close to home. The City recognizes and appreciates this investment and the continued partnership of the Province and local healthcare providers.

**This Action Plan is not the end point — it is where we begin.**

Four phases of engagement helped shape and refine the Action Plan. The final survey confirmed strong community support, with 91 per cent approval for the Plan's overall direction and majority support for all eight Areas of Focus.

Ongoing two-way dialogue and transparent reporting will remain central throughout the Plan's implementation. This fall, the City will publicly launch its healthcare data dashboard, developed with Esri Canada, providing residents and partners with access to current local health, demographic and equity data. This evidence-based resource will strengthen accountability and support future planning and advocacy.

Strong healthcare systems are built over time through collaboration, trust and shared responsibility. Together, this work will strengthen Port Colborne's voice in the healthcare system and support a future where residents can access the care they need, close to home and with confidence.

# GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

This glossary is included to help make healthcare terms easier to understand. Our goal is to ensure that everyone in the community can follow the plan, take part in conversations, and feel confident navigating the healthcare system.

## ACCESS TO CARE

The ability for a person to get the healthcare services they need, when and where they need them, without barriers like long wait times, travel, or cost.

## AFTER-HOURS CARE

Healthcare services available outside of regular daytime hours, such as evenings, weekends, or holidays.

## ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Healthcare workers who are not doctors or nurses but provide important services, such as physiotherapists, social workers, dietitians, and pharmacists.

## ALTERNATE LEVEL OF CARE (ALC)

Patients who no longer need hospital care but are waiting to transition to another type of care, such as long-term care, rehab or home care.

## COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE (CHC)

A local clinic that provides team-based care, often including doctors, nurse practitioners, and social supports, especially for people facing barriers to care.

## CONTINUITY OF CARE

Receiving consistent care over time, often from the same provider or team, who understands your health history.

## DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH (SOCIAL DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH)

Factors that affect a person's health, such as income, housing, education, transportation, and social support.

## DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES

Tests used to find or confirm a health issue, such as X-rays, ultrasounds, bloodwork, or MRIs.

## EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT (ED)

A hospital unit that provides emergency care for serious or life-threatening conditions.

## FAMILY DOCTOR / PRIMARY CARE PROVIDER

A healthcare professional (doctor or nurse practitioner) who provides regular check-ups, manages ongoing health needs, and coordinates care.

## HEALTH EQUITY

The idea that everyone should have a fair opportunity to be as healthy as possible, regardless of income, age, location, or personal circumstances.

## HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE

Healthcare and support services provided outside of hospitals, such as home nursing, personal support, and rehabilitation services.

## INTERPROFESSIONAL TEAM (TEAM-BASED CARE)

A group of healthcare providers from different backgrounds working together to care for patients (e.g., doctors, nurses, social workers).

## MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS SERVICES

Support and treatment for mental health challenges and substance use, including counselling, crisis support, and recovery programs.

## NIAGARA HEALTH

An organization that operates hospitals in the Niagara region.

## NIAGARA ONTARIO HEALTH TEAM (OHT)

A group of healthcare providers and organizations working together to plan and deliver coordinated care in the region.

## PRIMARY CARE

The first point of contact in the healthcare system, such as family doctors or nurse practitioners, who provide general care and referrals.

## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The process of involving residents and community members in planning and decision-making by gathering their input and feedback.

## RURAL AND SMALL COMMUNITY HEALTHCARE

Healthcare delivered in smaller or more spread-out communities, where access may be affected by distance, transportation, and provider shortages.

## SYSTEM NAVIGATION

Helping people understand where to go for care and how to access the right services.

## URGENT CARE CENTRE (UCC)

A healthcare facility that treats non-life-threatening conditions that still require prompt attention.

## WAIT TIMES

The amount of time a person waits to receive care, whether for an appointment, test, or treatment.

# RESEARCH & SOURCES

The following sources reflect the data, research, and partnerships that have guided the development of the City of Port Colborne Community Health and Wellness Action Plan. All listed information can be found online or on the City of Port Colborne website at: www.portcolborne.ca/healthcare


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- Connected Care for Canadians Act — Government of Canada, (2024)
- Health Protection and Promotion Act — Government of Ontario, (1990)
- Excellent Care for All Act — Government of Ontario, (2010)
- French Language Services Act — Government of Ontario, (1986)
- Connecting Care Act — Government of Ontario, (2019)
- Bill 15: Connecting Care Amendment Act (Patient Bill of Rights) — Government of Ontario, (2021)
- Primary Care Action Plan — Government of Ontario, (2024)
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**City of Port Colborne Reports and Documentation**

- City of Port Colborne. (2026). Healthcare Analysis Report (Staff Report 2026-40)
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**Municipal Case Studies and Comparative Research**

- Case Studies – Municipal Healthcare and Community-Based Care Models:
- Town of Wasaga Beach
- City of Brantford
- Municipality of Chatham-Kent
- County of Brant (Paris)
- County of Renfrew
- City of Orillia
- Town of Collingwood
- Municipality of Central Elgin (Port Stanley/Cowanville context)
- Town of Essex
- Town of Greater Napanee
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COMMUNITY

# HEALTH & WELLNESS

ACTION PLAN

*CONNECTED CARE. CLOSE TO HOME. FOR EVERY STAGE OF LIFE.*



## GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

**Quality Care We Can Trust:**
Everyone in Port Colborne deserves safe, reliable healthcare delivered by professionals who put patients first.

**Care When We Need It:**
Residents should be able to get help quickly and close to home, without long waits or travel.

**People at the Centre:**
Healthcare should reflect real lives, listen to residents, and respond to the needs of families and caregivers.

**Fair Access for All:**
Everyone should be able to get the care they need, regardless of income, where they live, their abilities, identity or the barriers they face.

**A System That Lasts:**
We need smart, local solutions that work today and support a healthy community for generations to come.

## AREAS OF FOCUS:

- Better Access Through Advanced Primary Care
- Medical Imaging and Lab Services
- Community-Based Care
- Mental Health and Well-Being
- Transportation and Access to Care
- Healthy Resilient Communities
- Equity, Accessibility and Culturally Safe Care
- Community Voice, Accountability and Advocacy