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REPORT TITLE: Overview of the Health System Integration Committee and Terms of Reference Update

FROM: Nancy Polsinelli, Commissioner of Health Services

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## **RECOMMENDATION**

**That the Health System Integration Committee Terms of Reference attached as Appendix I to the report of the Commissioner of Health Services, listed on the December 8, 2022 Regional Council agenda titled “Overview of the Health System Integration Committee and Terms of Reference Update”, be approved.**

## **REPORT HIGHLIGHTS**

- The Health System Integration Committee (HSIC) was established during the 2014-18 term of council to provide advice and direction for the Region of Peel to achieve greater integration with the rest of the health system.
- In the 2018-22 Term of Council, HSIC continued to cover a breadth of different topics and facilitated important discussions and dialogue about health system policy issues relevant to the Region’s health programs and priorities.
- The proposed HSIC Terms of Reference is included as Appendix I. Advisory membership in the Terms of Reference will be confirmed to reflect ongoing local health system transformation and include partners from Ontario Health Central Region and the three Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) serving Peel.
- In the 2022-26 Term of Council, HSIC will be able to build on the new relationships the Region of Peel has developed with local OHTs, Ontario Health Central Region and other collaborative health system partnerships nurtured as part of the Region’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic to advance health system collaboration and integration, influence system transformation and partner on coordinated advocacy opportunities.

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## **DISCUSSION**

### **1. Background**

The Health System Integration Committee (HSIC) was established by Regional Council on April 9, 2015, under Resolution 2015-221. While HSIC (also referred to in this report as the Committee) evolved out of discussions related to the future of the former Emergency and Protective Services Committee (EPSC), Council recognized the need for broader discussions about health system integration in Peel.

Through a council-endorsed mandate in the 2014-18 term of council, HSIC was established to provide advice and direction around how the Region could further integrate and coordinate with the rest of the health system. Since then, HSIC has served as an important forum for

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health system partners across Peel and various levels of government to come together to discuss and explore the capacity and system issues facing the health system in Peel.

As HSIC continued into the 2018-22 Term of Council, it advanced important discussions and dialogue about health system policy issues relevant to Regional health programs and priorities. In response to health system transformation under the current provincial government and emerging issues of importance for the Region, the advisory membership on HSIC during the 2018-22 Term of Council has evolved to include executive leadership from Ontario Health Central Region (which serves Peel) and the local area hospital partners. These partners have played an important role in providing advice and direction around how the Region can integrate and coordinate health service delivery with the rest of the system, including collaborative response during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Over the course of the 2018-22 Committee term, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial impact on Peel's health system, including pressures placed on the Region's own health services as well as the Committee's advisory membership. During the 2018-22 term, HSIC addressed several policy issues including provincial health system transformation, public health and emergency health services modernization, development of local Ontario Health Teams, advocacy for Peel's Adult Day Services programs and other supports for seniors, as well as mental health and addictions system funding. A report titled "Health System Integration Committee Term of Council Summary Report" was presented to the May 5, 2022 Committee meeting and provides a detailed overview of committee meetings during the Term of Council including key topics of discussion and outcomes achieved.

### **2. Opportunities for HSIC in the Next Term of Council**

In 2019, the government of Ontario initiated a transformation of the provincial health system with the aim of creating a more integrated system that would organize and deliver health care in a new way. The focus of these system changes has been to increase access for clients/patients, help them to navigate the system more easily, and increase accountability. Among the changes was the dissolution of the 14 LHINs (including Central West and Mississauga Halton, serving Peel) and several other agencies, to create a centralized oversight agency called Ontario Health. Ontario Health has established five regions to cover the provincial geography and Peel sits within the Ontario Health Central Region which is responsible for working with health service providers in Peel to facilitate primary care planning, lead regional health system planning, address issues that impact health equity and set a strategy for health human resources within the catchment area. Additionally, 51 Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) were established to integrate care teams and improve access to health services across the continuum of care. Three of these OHTs are located in Peel, including the Central West, Mississauga Health and Hills of Headwaters Collaborative OHTs.

During 2018-2022, the Region co-led the development of the CW OHT and has built strong relationships with member organizations and staff, and continues to advance its participation in the other two OHTs serving Peel (Mississauga Health and Hills of Headwaters Collaborative OHTs). Ontario Health Central and Peel's three OHTs have provided advice around integration and coordination of health service delivery with the rest of the system and were key partners during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ensuring ongoing engagement of these partners and gaining the benefit of direct input and advice from these system leaders is a priority for planning and integration of Regional services. Going forward, HSIC can provide important feedback on regional involvement in health system priorities, such as supporting

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vulnerable populations including seniors, those with mental health and addictions challenges and other emerging issues including, for example:

- COVID-19 pandemic response and system recovery
- Improving system access and patient/client flow
- Strategies for stabilizing health human resources
- Eliminating health inequities through coordinated response for underserved and priority populations

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has also accelerated the pace at which the Region is building and strengthening partnerships with other local health system partners, through the Community Response Table (CRT), Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) Action Tables and other system tables. It is anticipated that these tables will continue to evolve and influence future system collaboration and integration, particularly as it relates to vulnerable populations, including seniors.

While local health system transformation was paused as a result of the pandemic, it is anticipated that these efforts will restart and accelerate early in the term of the provincial government, and policy discussions with our advisory membership and other system partners may become increasingly important. Some examples of system-wide policy issues likely to re-emerge for discussion include:

- Emergency Health Services and Public Health modernization
- Restructuring of the health system including continued modernization of home and community care services
- Additional responsibilities and transfer of funding oversight to OHTs
- Integration of care for vulnerable populations, including seniors
- Advocacy for equitable funding allocations for local health services

### **3. Updating the Terms of Reference and Advisory Membership for the New Term of Council**

Committee membership for the 2018-2022 term was established at the December 13, 2018 Regional Council meeting and includes the Regional Chair (ex-officio) and six Regional Councillors as provided by the Terms of Reference. Advisory Members provide input regarding collaboration and integration opportunities and inform system level discussion around issues of integration and shared challenges around capacity. Advisory Membership was not updated during the 2018-22 Term of Council to reflect the evolving nature of health system transformation and advisory membership does not currently reflect the central roles of Ontario Health and Ontario Health Teams. Advisory members do not hold voting rights and do not count toward quorum.

The updated Terms of Reference, included as Appendix I, has been adapted to align with local health system transformation and includes representation from Ontario Health Central Region and the three OHTs. Also, given that hospitals are represented as members within Ontario Health Teams, hospital related integration opportunities will be identified and represented through the OHT advisory members. As the Committee prepares for a new Term of Council, advisory membership will be amended to reflect and align with the local health system transformation and is proposed to include:

- Chief Regional Officer, Ontario Health Central Region

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- One Co-Chair representative, Central West Ontario Health Team Collaboration Council
- One Co-Chair representative, Mississauga Ontario Health Team Collaboration Council
- One Co-Chair, Hills of Headwaters Collaborative Ontario Health Team

Additional opportunities to engage other health system partners in an advisory capacity to delegate on issues on an ad hoc basis (e.g., representation from the community mental health and addictions sector should this be a focus of a future meeting) will be considered by staff for HSIC meetings.

## **CONCLUSION**

HSIC continues to be an important touch point in advancing health system collaboration and integration for the Region of Peel, identifying windows of opportunity to influence system transformation and partnering on coordinated advocacy opportunities. As the 2018-22 Term of council has concluded, changes to the Committee's Terms of Reference to include Ontario Health Central Region and local OHTs will position the Committee to play an important role in advancing Regional health system priorities and addressing ongoing health system challenges that face Peel residents in the next Term of Council.

## **APPENDICES**

Appendix I - Health System Integration Committee Proposed Terms of Reference

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Nancy Polsinelli, Commissioner of Health Services

*Authored By:* Marlon Rhoden, Research and Policy Analyst