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# Importance of Transit Access for Patients, Families and Staff

November 25, 2021





# Canada Health Act

- Accessibility is a core principle of the Canada Health Act.
- The ability to access healthcare services has long been considered a 'right' by Canadian citizens and is protected under the Canada Health Act.



# Top 5 Transportation Barriers to Healthcare Access

1. **Transportation Infrastructure:** Limited availability and routes
2. **Transportation Costs:** High cost of fares, and personal vehicle expenses (i.e. insurance, gas, maintenance)
3. **Vehicle Access:** Lack of personal vehicle, lack of access to a vehicle through friends or family
4. **Distance and Time Burden:** Long travel distances, lengthy wait times, and inconvenient or erroneous time schedules
5. **Policy:** Budget cuts resulting in bus and train shortages, routes removed and lack of adequate transit in underserved areas

## Impact on Healthcare

- Missed appointments, negatively impacting health and quality of life
- Limited pharmacy access and decreased prescriptions filled
- Economic burden for patients and health system

Source: <http://www.hpoe.org/Reports-HPOE/2017/sdoh-transportation-role-of-hospitals.pdf>

3



# Niagara's Population and Geography

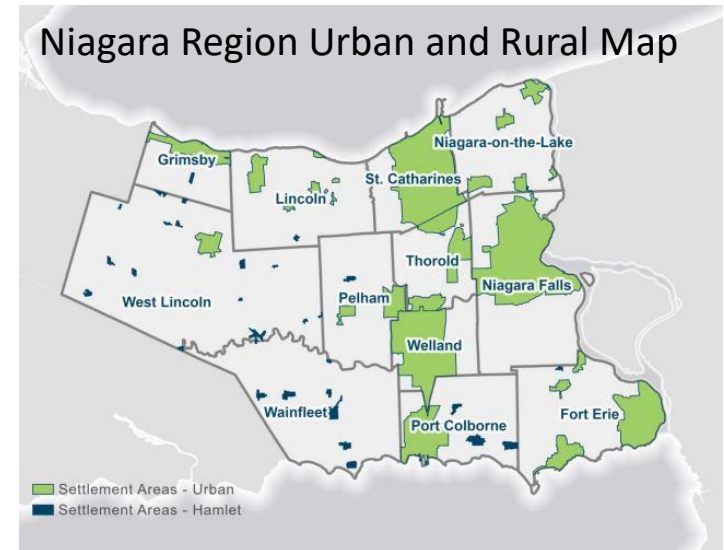
## Older Adult Population

- Niagara has an aging population with 21.4% age 65 and over compared to Ontario at 16.7% (2016 Census).
- As the Niagara population will grow and age over the next 20 years, seniors 75 and over projected to increase by 100% percent (2016 Census).

## Niagara's Geography

People who live in rural areas may have difficulties in accessing healthcare due to a lack of services, isolation or a lack of mobility (Niagara Region, 2021).

Living in rural areas may also limit walkability, access to community and social supports and access to healthy food (Niagara Region, 2021).



Source: <https://www.niagararegion.ca/health/equity/pdf/priority-profile-rural-urban.pdf>

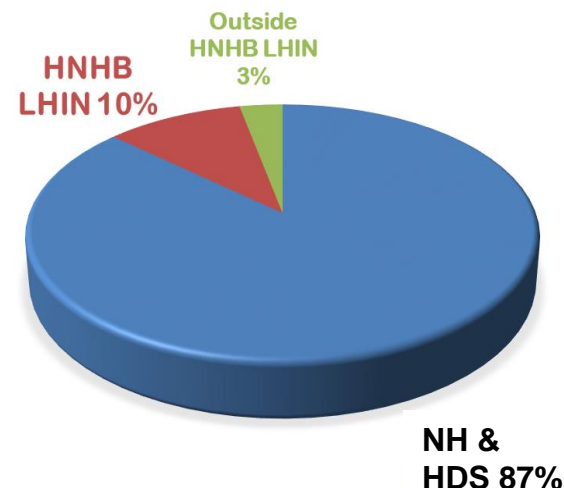
# Importance of Patient Access

**86.7% residents stay in Niagara for care**

**97% stay in Niagara for Complex Care**

- 66% at NH & 31% at Hotel Dieu Shaver (HDS)

- Patients travel across the region to access services at Niagara Health and Hotel Dieu Shaver.
- Niagara Health is expanding its regional model of service delivery, as the new South Niagara Site will assist to consolidate and expand acute care services for the region.
- Niagara Health sites will offer regional Centres of Excellence with high concentrations of expertise and resources.
- The transit hub included in the design of the South Niagara Site is a key component to a connected system.
- Hotel Dieu Shaver, located in St. Catharines, is Niagara's only rehabilitation hospital serving the entire Niagara region.





# Niagara Health: Patients Served by Place of Residence

**Inpatient Acute & Complex Care, ER, Day Surgery & Endoscopy Days+Visits+Cases** April 2019 – March 2020

RESIDENCE	Days + visits +cases					TOTAL
	ST. CATHARINES SITE	WELLAND SITE	NIAGARA FALLS SITE	FORT ERIE SITE	PORT COLBORNE SITE	Days + visits +cases
ST. CATHARINES	61,032	6,889	9,837	3,136	5,166	86,060
NIAGARA FALLS	9,540	5,880	37,907	1,743	1,325	56,395
WELLAND	6,447	22,994	5,019	7,508	6,891	48,859
FORT ERIE	2,924	3,590	5,216	13,931	569	26,230
PORT COLBORNE	1,901	5,638	13,279	1,541	11,983	34,342
THOROLD	6,546	1,816	2,140	461	3,978	14,941
NIAGARA-ON-THE-LAKE	3,950	574	3,385	481	217	8,607
PELHAM	2,597	3,225	1,919	113	1,243	9,097
LINCOLN	3,316	303	647	13	308	4,587
WAINFLEET	227	474	179	25	777	1,682
WEST LINCOLN	819	5,864	487	493	4,758	12,421
GRIMSBY	1,049	58	235	22	201	1,565
OTHER ONTARIO	3,665	1,102	3,337	435	600	9,139
WORLD OTHER	202	43	551	14	24	834
CANADA REMAINING	276	88	349	51	108	872
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>104,491</b>	<b>58,538</b>	<b>84,487</b>	<b>29,967</b>	<b>38,148</b>	<b>315,631</b>



## Hotel Dieu Shaver: Patients Served by Place of Residence

April 2019 – March 2020

City/Town	Number of Inpatient Admissions
St. Catharines	580
Niagara Falls	194
Welland	122
Thorold	68
Fort Erie	65
Niagara-On-The-Lake	44
Port Colborne	42
Pelham	39
Lincoln	37
Grimsby	12
West Lincoln	6
Wainfleet	3
Outside Of Niagara	26
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1,238</b>

City/Town	Number of Outpatient Visits
St. Catharines	11,958
Niagara Falls	5,268
Welland	3,973
Thorold	2,012
Niagara-On-The-Lake	1,543
Pelham	1,486
Fort Erie	1,327
Lincoln	967
Port Colborne	858
West Lincoln	510
Grimsby	500
Wainfleet	202
Outside Of Niagara	551
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>31,155</b>

\*Residence data not identified for additional 7,577 visits





## Hotel Dieu Shaver Employees

- HDS employs 492 people
- 95% of HDS team members live in Niagara

City/Town	Number of Employees
St. Catharines	183
Niagara Falls	82
Welland	45
Fort Erie	20
Thorold	52
Port Colborne	14
Pelham	30
Lincoln	14
Niagara-on-the-Lake	17
Grimsby	7
Wainfleet	1
West Lincoln	3
Outside of Niagara	24
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>492</b>

## Niagara Health Employees

- Niagara Health employs 5,893 people
- 85% of NH team members live in Niagara

City/Town	Number of Employees
St. Catharines	1,160
Niagara Falls	1,181
Welland	1,029
Fort Erie	342
Thorold	303
Port Colborne	301
Pelham	267
Lincoln	138
Niagara-on the-Lake	122
Grimsby	90
Wainfleet	56
West Lincoln	25
Outside of Niagara	879
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,893</b>





# Lessons Learned from COVID

- Transportation is an important determinant of healthcare access.
- People with elevated health risks are overburdened by transportation barriers.
- Patients need extra help with trips for care during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Expanded non-emergency transportation services may help promote health equity.
- Transportation-health partnerships are critical during the pandemic and beyond.

Source: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2590198221000452> 9