

Memorandum

PHD-C 8-2026

Subject: Health System Planning Report

Date: April 14, 2026

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Amanda Kirkwood, Manager, Public Health Analytics and Informatics

This memo provides an update on a recently released report by the Niagara Ontario Health Team - Équipe Santé Ontario Niagara (NOHT-ÉSON) called [Planning for the Future: A Data-Informed Health System in Niagara](https://noht-eson.ca/planning-for-the-future-a-data-informed-health-system-in-niagara/) (<https://noht-eson.ca/planning-for-the-future-a-data-informed-health-system-in-niagara/>). The report provides a comprehensive assessment of Niagara's health system capacity to inform coordinated, evidence-based planning led by the NOHT-ÉSON. It establishes a baseline understanding of Niagara's population health, service utilization, and available resources to guide collective planning and investment over the next five to 10 years.

This report is a culmination of a Niagara-wide collaborative effort amongst regional partners, including Brock University, Niagara College, Niagara Health, Niagara Health Knowledge Institute, and Niagara Region Public Health. Niagara Region Public Health led the quantitative analyses and data synthesis using existing data sources, while other partners contributed data and expert knowledge. Niagara Health Knowledge Institute led a rapid review of national and international literature on health system capacity.

The report is descriptive in nature and synthesizes readily available data to identify patterns, pressures, and gaps relevant to system planning using the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) framework, Stuff, Space, Staff, and Systems to describe the material, physical, human, and organizational components required to meet the health needs of Niagara's population.

The assessment identifies nine themes that persist in the local health system that impact access, equity, and overall population health outcomes. They are as follows:

- Increasing chronic disease burden
- Improving primary care access
- Understanding mental health and substance use

- Communicable disease and outbreak preparedness
- Addressing health equity and access to care
- EMS pressures
- Hospital system pressures
- Increasing demand for long-term and hospice care
- Understanding homelessness and supportive housing

The report also provides 48 short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations across these nine health system capacity gaps. Addressing the identified gaps will require collaboration among hospitals, primary care, public health, community organizations, social services, municipalities, and Indigenous partners with a continued focus on equity, access, and sustainability.

Finally, this report is intended to support ongoing system-level assessment and priority setting, recognizing that health system capacity must continue to be monitored and adapted over time as population needs, service demands, and system pressures evolve.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Amanda Kirkwood
Manager, Public Health Analytics and Informatics

Appendices

Appendix 1 [Planning for the Future: A Data-Informed Health System in Niagara](https://noht-eson.ca/planning-for-the-future-a-data-informed-health-system-in-niagara/)
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