

# BRIGHT LIGHTS AWARDS

2023

**HURON SHORES FAMILY HEALTH TEAM**  
**Award: Optimizing teams' capacity and creating efficiencies**  
**Achievement: Palliative Care Team**



Huron Shores FHT serves a population with a large proportion of elderly patients. In reviewing the team's hospital discharge program, they identified a gap in access to a family physician and noticed numerous referrals to a social worker for grief. As a result, their nurse practitioner, nurse, and social worker joined forces and created a palliative care program. In its first year, the program has provided palliative care to over 28 patients for a variety of diagnoses such as cancer, COPD, kidney failure, restricted lung disease and other life-limiting illnesses.

The program is available to rostered, non-rostered, and unattached patients and is receiving referrals from hospitals in more urban areas that don't have a palliative care program. The team tries to see patients the same day or the next as the referral. They provide advanced care planning that is individualized and fluid. Their approach fosters transitions, pathways, and accessibility, while also providing bereavement support to family and friends.

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The palliative care program improves equity in access to palliative care, allowing all patients in the community to receive care in the environment of their choice. It also aims to help people who experience social or economic inequities the same appropriate care in a timely and safe way without discrimination.

The popularity of the program led the team to expand its catchment area and it is more than doubling its staff by training two more nurses and two additional social workers. A physician supports the team, and another has expressed interest in assisting in some of the new communities being served. It began by serving a population of 6,000 and has expanded to serve more than 13,500.

The team regularly participated in professional development collaborates with the North Shore Health Network - Blind River Palliative Care Committee. Its success demonstrates that a variety of health-care professionals can provide palliative care services.

#### Key Facts:

- Services are provided by nurse-practitioner, nurses, and social workers.
- 28 people referred in first 12 months.
- Catchment area has expanded from serving 6,000 people to serving 13,500 people.
- The three-person team will soon be a seven-person team.
- Its services are available to rostered, non-rostered and unattached patients.