

Dartmouth Community Conversations:

Expanding from East Dartmouth to all of Dartmouth



Dear Dartmouth Community,

It is hard to believe that the Dartmouth Community Health Team has been open for over a year now! We opened our doors in the East Dartmouth community in March 2010. The idea was to offer free health and wellness programs and services to help you with your wellness goals - close to where you live and work.

Before we got started over a year ago, we needed to know what you as a community wanted and needed. We learned about the health of the people in the area. Most importantly, we talked to you -- the community. We held conversations with approximately 300 people, including local family physicians, youth and community organizations from East Dartmouth to hear what was important to you regarding your health and wellness. We listened.

We heard the East Dartmouth community wanted free wellness programs on healthy eating, physical activity, emotional wellness, and parenting. You also told us you wanted support linking you to the other services that you needed. We heard you wanted us to focus on groups such as seniors, youth, parents of young families and people with complex health and social needs.

It was your voice that shaped the next steps of the Community Health Team. We chose space in the community, hired staff and developed wellness programs and services based on what the community told us. These programs and services are now being offered in different locations throughout East Dartmouth.

During this last year, we started to get to know and better understand this great community! We continued to meet with community groups and took part in local events. This gave us great chances to continue to ask you what you needed. We heard loud and clear that the programs and services offered by the Community Health Team were helpful but they needed to be available to all of Dartmouth and not just the East Dartmouth community. We agreed!

Before we could begin to offer programs and services to the rest of Dartmouth, we needed to hear what was important to people in these areas - just like we had in East Dartmouth. So we held more community conversations. The rest of this report will let you know what we heard and what we will be doing next.

We thank you for your warm welcome to Dartmouth. We love being here, getting to know you, and supporting your health through free wellness programs and services. And...we are still listening!

Your Community Health Team,
Lisa, Heather, Jacklynn, Caroline, Judy, Sarah, Monique, Jackie, & Shannon

Shaping the Dartmouth Community Health Team

In March 2011, the Dartmouth Community Health Team held conversations with about 125 community members and family doctors across Dartmouth to hear what health and wellness programs and services were important to them. In June, we heard from 80 youth through an electronic survey and had conversations with over 70 youth.

What the Dartmouth Community Said

The Dartmouth community let us know how much they cared about the health and wellness of their community. They shared their stories and talked about their needs. Community priorities for programs and services included:

- nutrition
- stress and anxiety management
- chronic illness
- mental health
- support to self manage health
- physical activity

The community also said they wanted support to help link people with the services and programs that they need. The Community Health Team calls this wellness navigation. Wellness navigation is helping people connect with the health, wellness and social programs and services that are needed.

People with low income, seniors and youth were said to be the groups that could most be helped by the Dartmouth Community Health Team.

Some people said that not knowing what programs and services are available and not having transportation or programs offered in their communities might make it hard for them to go to the Community Health Team. They said it would be best to have programs available in a number of different communities within Dartmouth – this would bring the team closer to more people.

Many people shared how tough it is to live on a fixed or low income. They talked about how it was hard to afford healthy food and safe housing. They wanted support to have low cost healthy food easier to get in their community. People shared that they did not always experience a sense of dignity and reported it often feels that different parts of the system (health and social sector) do not always understand their roadblocks to change. They also want support to help others better understand the challenges they live with.

We heard from family doctors that they think the programs and services of the Community Health Team are very helpful for the Dartmouth community, especially for those with chronic health conditions.

Thank you to all who shared their thoughts on how to support the health and wellness of Dartmouth. These thoughts will help shape the programs and directions of the Dartmouth Community Health Team.



What We Are Doing Now

We are working to bring the programs and services of the Community Health Team to the whole Dartmouth community. Some of the work we are doing now includes:

- Finding out what is already available in your community so we can let you know about it. We can also partner with community groups to help bring a variety of programs and services closer to you.
- Finding space in the community to offer Community Health Team or partner programs and services.
- Starting to offer Community Health Team programs and services in different areas of Dartmouth over time.
- Looking into ways to bring key people together to find ways to make a difference on larger system issues like food security. Food security is when all people have enough safe, nutritious food to maintain a healthy life at all times.
- Letting you and others know what we are doing.

How We Will Work

The Community Health Team will be guided by key principles that came about from the community conversations. The Community Health Team will:

- Listen to community members and be flexible in responding to their needs
- Avoid unnecessary duplication with existing programs and services
- Support peer learning through group programming so that people can help and support each other
- Support people in managing their own health
- Be mindful of the needs and issues of seniors, parents, and youth in its activities
- Respect that people best understand their own life experience and health
- Be aware that many things have an effect on the health of individuals and communities
- Support community connectedness
- Network, partner, and collaborate with others
- Connect with community members and stakeholders on an ongoing basis
- Be inclusive and make efforts to go to where people live and work to connect and offer programs and services
- It takes time for the community to know us and for us to know them

Programs and Services

What we heard in the conversations with the community will shape the programs and services that the Community Health Team will offer. To begin, the Community Health Team will focus on:

- nutrition
- stress and anxiety management
- wellness navigation
- physical activity
- support for self management

STAY TUNED — Programs and services will be phased in over time as they are available. Watch for the Community Health Team in a location near you.

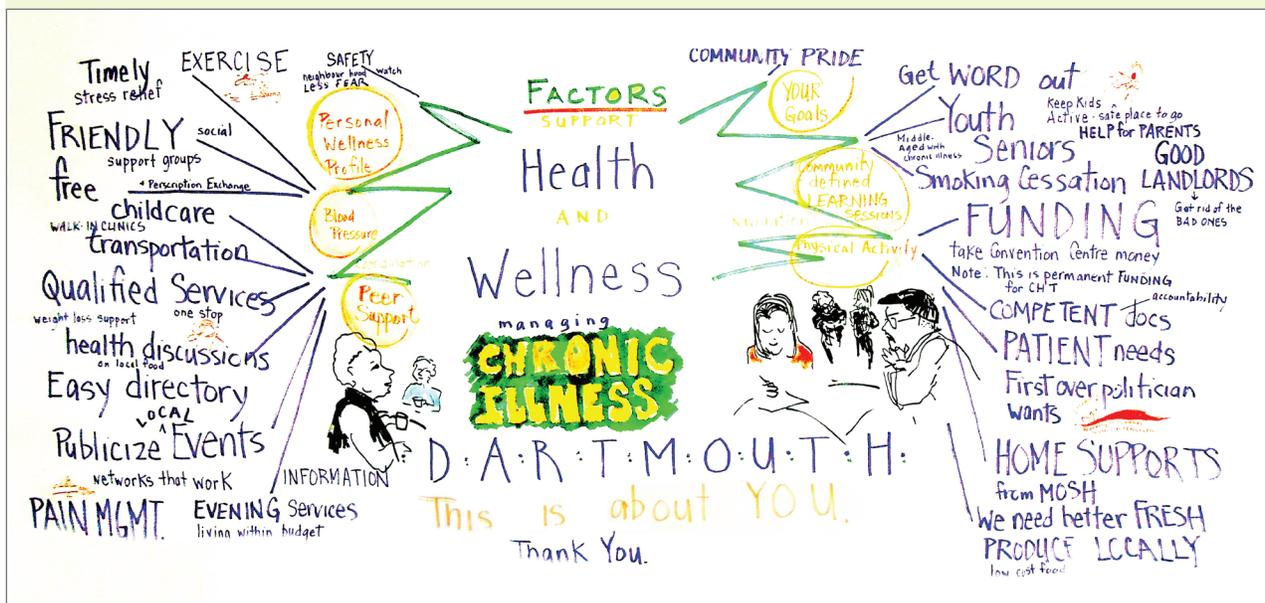
The Community Health Team will link, collaborate, and partner with different groups to deliver programs and services across Dartmouth. Capital Health will need the support of others to make the Dartmouth Community Health Team everything it can be.

What You Can Do

If you need help with your health goals or need support to connect with services in your community, touch base with the Community Health Team. We are always the right door! We will help you find what you need. Give us a call or drop by our Tacoma Drive space to find out more about our free services and programs.

Help spread the word! Let your friends and family who live, work or have a family doctor in Dartmouth know about the Community Health Team.

We thank the community and partners for your support. The Dartmouth Community Health Team looks forward to working together to improve the health and wellness of the Dartmouth community.



For more information

You can contact us a number of ways:

- Drop in at 58 Tacoma Drive (next to Sobeys)
- Call us at 460-4555
- Email us at cht@cdha.nshealth.ca
- Visit our website at www.CommunityHealthTeams.ca



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