

WHAT WE HEARD REPORT – WOODSTOCK HOSPITAL

January 2020



Introduction

To inform the development of the Woodstock Hospital 2020-25 Strategic Plan and define a vision for the future of the hospital, we wanted to put in significant effort to listen to the needs, perspectives and ideas of everyone impacted by the hospital. This included the people we provide care to – patients, families, and caregivers, and the people who provide the care – the staff, in all their unique roles from front-line staff to support staff and administration.

Importantly, we also wanted to understand the community we serve – those who live and work in the Oxford County area, as well as our community partners who provide care or other community services. For that reason, we created a dedicated campaign period to listen and learn, calling it “Your Voice, Your Vision: Creating Great Care Together” to inspire people to share with us what they care about and their expectations for care in this community.

From November 2019 to January 2020 we designed a variety of opportunities for people to share their input, including in-person meetings, surveys, feedback cards, chart paper, community sessions, open houses, phone calls, and emails. Through these various formats, we had a tremendous response of 950 individuals across our community, including over 125 patients, families, and caregivers, 230 community members, 45 community partner leaders, 25 volunteers and 525 staff and management.

This document intends to reflect back the range of feedback that we heard, including what matters to people about their health and health care, current experiences, and how they hope to see care delivered in the future. We structured our inquiry across three broad areas for input: “CARE, CULTURE, COMMUNITY”. From these areas, we heard many novel ideas, as well overlapping themes that are described in the sections below. For ease of reading, we have broken the feedback we heard into each audience we engaged with. These themes have been used to inform the development of our new 2020 to 2025 Strategic Plan for the hospital.

It should be noted that in their feedback, people were not limited in their reflections, often speaking much more broadly about their hopes for health and wellness in this community. Comments were not limited to people’s experiences with hospital care or aspirations for the hospital. While not all of this input is squarely for the hospital to act upon due to legislative mandates and funding, there are things that can be done to shift our approach and prepare us to work more collaboratively for the health of our community.

Executive Summary

Patient, Family, Caregiver Perspective	Community Perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value when care is personalized, empathetic, and free of stigma • Value knowing what is happening and why so that any worries they have can be put at ease. • Want to be active in their care and play a greater role in their health. • Upon discharge, struggle to navigate care across the community and feel impact of shortage of providers, specialties, and hours they can access care. • Social determinants of health matter to how they access and navigate care, as well as how they self-manage care and recover. • Seeking greater connectivity between hospital services and other providers involved in their care. • Pleased with the performance but sense workload/volume pressures. • Seeking expanded services (food), hours (pharmacy), parking, range of specialists at the hospital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feel fortunate to have Woodstock Hospital as part of their community with appreciation for it being a new, efficient, friendly, professional facility. • View the hospital as a leader in the community with expertise to be shared. • View health as more than just health care. See social determinants as needing to be addressed. Have an interest in looking at health care issues at a broader level than acute care, including lack of primary care, lack of PSWs, and shortage of LTC beds. • Want to see community partners work together to improve patient care and solve complex problems rather than parts of problems in silos. • Lack of transportation options for going out of the community for care. • Desire to have more specialties and specialists in the area, including psychiatry, cardiology, oncology (radiation), paediatrics, pain, burn unit • Concern over waitlist for procedures and a fragmented mental health system. • Interest in wellness & preventative care, encourage us to view health issues more holistically to include social determinants of health.
Staff Perspective	Community Partner Perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proud to provide care to the community and take great effort to be as warm, welcoming, and personalized. Motivated to help patients at their most vulnerable periods to ensure they have a quality care experience. • Proud to have handled the increased volume since old hospital (2011) but concerned on impact of workload on quality of care. • See a need to address communication amongst a care team within a unit and between units. • Feel that respect and feeling valued, regardless of role, is essential to have strong workplace culture and morale. Seek to be recognized for their work. • Want to become informed of priorities, initiatives, and changes. • Want to be encouraged to report incidents and learn what comes of them. • Appreciate when they are being engaged and involved in initiatives. • value informal and formal educational, training, and teambuilding activities. • Have an interest in improving discharge planning that could further involve community partners. • Increased use of technology could help automate tasks in order to invest time in other tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • View Woodstock Hospital as a professional and collaborative partner, willing to enhance points of intersection between services (eg. ER). • Share concern about the health status of the community and would like to see a community approach towards addressing social determinants of health. • Describe seeing more patients with complex health needs. • Share concern over the shortages in primary care providers, PSWs, and LTC beds. They too see hospital as impacted by the strains on other parts of the local health system. • See opportunity to work with the hospital to improve patient care experiences through better supporting patients as they transition from hospital to home. • Keen to work together to improve patient care through local Ontario Health Teams (OHT). • See value in fostering a culture of community amongst providers through interprofessional networking days and sharing knowledge through community workshops to improve patient self-care and understanding of health system.

Patient, Family, Caregiver Perspective

Patients, families, and caregivers (patients) told us they value when care is personalized and when they are greeted warmly. This helps them to feel comfortable and respected, and able to ask questions about their care. Many people describe getting this care at Woodstock Hospital, which they feel they don't always get in larger centres.

Overall, patients are seeking to be treated with empathy, patience, and free of stigma. This helps them feel safe and valued. Patients also value knowing what is happening and why so that any worries they have can be put at ease. They seek dialogue that is open and inclusive that promotes them being active participants in their care.

With respect to the physical structure of the hospital building itself, because patients, families and caregivers are entering a facility is busier than it has ever been before, they described challenges finding parking, as well as services that could better serve them with extended hours such as the pharmacy and lab. Patients, families, and caregivers also seek longer hours and more food options for evenings and weekends.

Patients, families and caregivers described sensing hospital volume pressures due to communication that may be constrained due to workload. Patients described feeling fortunate they aren't experiencing the same hallway health care pressures described across the province, but expressed some communication challenges if bed changes are required to ensure patient flow in the hospital. They sense that staff are under increased workloads, affecting their ability to spend time with patients.

In terms of patients health needs, many described how the social determinants of health matter to how they access and navigate care, as well as to self-manage care and recover. Even simply getting to appointments can be impacted by lack of housing, transportation or education may hamper their ability to get good care or participate in it.

Patients, families, and caregivers are seeking greater connectivity between hospital services and other providers involved in their care including primary care, home care, long-term care, and community support services. They are seeking greater support through the anxious period of being discharged from the hospital of knowing what to do for after care, who to follow-up with, and who to call if something is wrong. Upon discharge, patients, caregivers, and families struggle to navigate care across the community, which can be compounded if they don't have a primary care provider to follow-up with.

Patients described a desire to seek an expanded range of services and specialties in the area, rather than travelling farther afield or waiting in long waitlists for services like psychiatry, pediatrics.

In terms of their hopes for the hospital in the community, patients would like to see the hospital further build relationships with community partners to help ensure that patients experience smoother transitions between care settings.

Patients, families, and caregivers appreciate the opportunity to engage with the hospital to share ideas and feedback on their personal care and how care is designed and delivered throughout the hospital.

Staff Perspective

Staff are proud to provide care to the community and take great effort to be as warm, welcoming, and personalized as possible. They describe wanting to create a safe and welcoming environment for patients and families, both to settle anxieties, as well as help patients and their families feel free to ask questions and be involved in their care. Regardless of their role, all staff are motivated to help patients at their most vulnerable periods to ensure they have a quality care experience.

Over the 8 years since moving from the old hospital location to the current one, staff have been impressed to see the hospital deliver an ever-increasing range and volume of services. While most have seen this increase as a positive, as care has grown into more specialties, there is some sense of loss of the family feeling from the old hospital. As care has become more refined and the hospital size has grown, staff report feeling a bit removed from each other.

All staff describe feeling that in recent years care has taken on much more of a team-based approach, which they feel is positive and to the ultimate betterment of patient care. Still, many see a need to address communication amongst a care team within a unit and between units. Many describe a desire to get to know each other better and explain the work of their units to each other so there greater understanding and appreciation of each other's role. This extends from front line staff to support staff to administration staff who all play different but critical roles to making the hospital work. All feel that respect and feeling valued is essential to have strong workplace culture and morale.

From an organizational perspective, all staff, regardless of role, want to become informed of priorities, initiatives, and changes within the hospital while also taking time to understand their roles and issues they face. Workplace culture means an inclusive environment where staff feel empowered and supported by colleagues and management. Staff want to be encouraged to report incidents and learn what comes of them, both on an individual and collective level. They also appreciate when they are being engaged, have a voice in change initiatives, and have a sense of how their input is being used.

In terms of workload, all staff report seeking greater work-life balance so they can re-energize and avoid compassion fatigue. Flexibility in staffing, sick time, shift work to balance busy personal life were all said to be important. Staff described an interest in different incentives and rewards to be motivated, although expressed a need to tailor towards generational differences in staff.

Staff value informal and formal educational, training, and teambuilding activities. While they appreciate the existing efforts to support these initiatives, there is broad interest in there being more opportunities that are both offered and supported.

In terms of patient care, staff have an interest in improving discharge planning that could further involve community partners. They feel like they can help their patients further by educate them and their families to help them know what services exist in their community and who to call after discharge. Proactive follow-up was also said to be an area of potential improvement. Helping them with self-care and management of conditions was said to also help prevent patients from avoidable readmissions, negatively impacting patients, their families and the resources of the hospital.

Administrative staff described an interest in the increased use of technology to help automate tasks and use our time efficiently so staff have more time to invest in other tasks. While these tools are also of interest to staff on the front lines, they only want to use technology to simplify their workload and ensure that it doesn't take away from their time providing in person patient care.

Finally, all staff appreciate when they are recognized for their work.

Community Perspective

The community appreciated what they described as an unprecedented opportunity to provide feedback to the hospital on strategic issues, including having an opportunity to describe the evolving health needs and priorities of the community.

Overall, the community describes feeling fortunate to have Woodstock Hospital as part of their community. They are pleased with the hospital being such a new and current facility with new technology, that we make strides to be energy efficient, and manage high patient volumes. They appreciate how we have done all this but maintain a strong sense of community and that we provide care in a personalized and friendly way. They are impressed how we have grown across every major area since the hospital moved from the old site to the new site in 2011.

They have an interest in looking at health issues at a broader level than the hospital, with concerns in the community as to the lack of primary care, lack of personal support workers, and shortage of long-term care beds, appreciating that the hospital is impacted by the strains on other parts of the local health system. They want to see community partners work together to improve patient care and solve complex problems rather than address parts of problems in silos. They are encouraged to hear the community is working towards integrating care through developing a local Ontario Health Team.

While the community is appreciative that we are not in a regional hub, they described the challenges of going out of the community to receive care in larger centres with lack of transportation options. Residents feel the effect when communication lacks when they come back for follow-up in the community. Residents spoke of a desire to have more psychiatrists, cardiac care, cancer care (radiation, specifically), paediatric care, a pain clinic, and a burn unit in the area. They also spoke of concern over waitlist for procedures and a fragmented mental health system.

Like the patient, family, and caregiver community, residents also spoke about social determinants of health as impacting how they access or navigate care. Many of them struggle with day to day issues and are focused on getting by, with lives that are busier than ever with commuting, long hours, manual labour and rising costs of living and housing.

Many individuals also spoke about their interest in staying healthy and being able to avoid care if possible. Because they respect the expertise of the hospital, they would like to see staff out more in the community sharing their knowledge. They have an interest in wellness and seeing health issues more holistically.

Community Partner Perspective

Both community health partners and community partners (police, fire, county) described Woodstock Hospital as a professional and collaborative partner who is willing to sit down and find ways to work towards solutions.

Community partners share concern about the health status of the community. They describe many patients as having more complex health needs than in the past. Like members of the community, they share concern over the shortages in the community in primary care providers, lack of personal support workers, and shortage of long-term care beds. They too see hospital as impacted by the strains on other parts of the local health system. Like patients and the community, community partners believe that many health issues are rooted in the social determinants of health, to which they feel we all play a role as a community. Many would like to see a broader and shared approach towards addressing these deep foundational challenges faced by the community.

In this past year, community partners have been keen to work together to improve patient care and solve complex problems through developing a local Ontario Health Team. They are encouraged by the level of enthusiasm and opportunity to work across sectors towards the same goals, in particular about organizing care around people with chronic conditions. Every organization has heard the complaints of those they serve that our services, while individually impressive, are uncoordinated and extremely frustrating to navigate.

Community partners see opportunity to work with the hospital to improve patient care experiences through better supporting patients as they transition from hospital to home. Many believe that they can add value by being involved in discharge planning earlier during a patient's stay.

Many community partners feel we as a community could do a better job fostering a culture of community amongst providers in this region. Simply getting to know each other and the roles we play for our patients could improve our ability to work together. Greater understanding of the needs of the community could also result by greater sharing of the expertise and data brought by each organization. To help with this, community partners sought opportunities to include events like interprofessional networking days and community workshops to explain our roles to the community. While they don't feel this should solely fall on the hospital to fulfill, they see this as an opportunity for the hospital to play a leadership role due to its position of respect within the community.

Some articulated the opportunity that is presented when patients are hospitalized to introduce measures to help advance self-management and preventative measures patients can take to stay healthy. Exploring options for greater information sharing and notifications when patients are hospitalized were described as in the interest of all health care organizations, which patients will benefit as a result.