Durham Community Health Centre

Strategic Plan | 2026 – 2031

DURHAM COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Our Health. Our Community. Our Durham.

Grounded in Compassion.
Guided by Trust.
Powered by Collaboration.

Indigenous Land Acknowledgement

We would like to acknowledge that the Durham Community Health Centre (DCHC) operates within the shared ancestral homelands of the Anishinaabeg, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat Peoples. This area is located within the Dish With One Spoon treaty lands, a living agreement between the Anishinabek and Haudenosaunee Peoples that bound them together to share and protect these lands, based on the values of harmony, respect, and reciprocity.

We also respectfully acknowledge that the work of DCHC takes place on the treaty lands of the Alderville First Nation, Beausoleil First Nation, Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, Curve Lake First Nation, Hiawatha First Nation, the Mississauga's of Scugog Island First Nation, and Rama First Nation, which are covered by the Williams Treaty of 1923. However, it wasn't until 2018 that inherent rights to hunt, fish, and harvest were recognized under the Williams Treaty, rights that had been wrongfully denied and had a direct impact on the health of the communities.

At Durham Community Health Centre, we recognize the profound impact of colonization, and we identify it is our responsibility to take the necessary steps to support healing, uphold Indigenous cultural values, and help create an equitable health system where Indigenous communities feel safe, valued, and cared for.

Durham Region continues to be home for many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples.
We are all Treaty people. Many of us have come here as settlers, immigrants, or newcomers in this generation and generations past.

We encourage you to reflect on your connection to this land, the privileges it offers, and your role in reconciliation, including the 94 Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

About Durham Community Health Centre

Durham Community Health Centre (DCHC) is a registered, charitable organization that provides integrated, accessible, and equitable community-based primary care, wellness services, and health education to Durham community members who face multiple barriers to their health and well-being.

DCHC also provides equity-based programs and services that focus on Indigenous Peoples and priority populations such as Black, the 2SLGBTQI Community, Newcomers to Canada, Seniors, and Unattached clients (i.e., those without a family doctor), to name a few. DCHC ensures Durham community members receive not only sick care but preventive care as well, enabling the community members to live longer at home.

At DCHC, we are a team-based interprofessional group of staff including physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, counselors, dietitians, outreach workers, medical secretaries, and other administrative staff. We always place every client at the center of our approach to care, based on their needs. We address these needs through integrated clinical and wellness care and health education.

Letter from the CEO and Board Chair

Dear Community Members, Partners, Staff, and Supporters,

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Durham Community Health Centre team, we are proud to share our 2026–2031 Strategic Plan.

Durham Community Health Centre was founded on a simple belief: health is built together. Every day, we work to ensure that individuals and families facing the greatest barriers can access care that is compassionate, culturally safe, and coordinated. Today, as communities across Durham Region face increasing health and social pressures, that mission has never been more vital.

This plan charts a clear path forward and reflects the voices of our community, staff, clients, partners, and our Board. Our three strategic pillars, strengthening our Culture and Talent; enhancing care for Clients and Communities; and advancing Intentional Partnerships and Sustainability will guide us in building a stronger, more resilient organization. Through these priorities, we will empower our team, deepen the impact of our care, and expand our reach through meaningful partnerships.

We are committed not only to navigating change but to shaping it. By integrating lived experience alongside evidence, strengthening governance and infrastructure, and ensuring financial sustainability, we position DCHC to lead with clarity, equity, and compassion.

We are deeply grateful to our staff, partners, and community members, whose dedication and trust make this work possible. Together, we embark on this next chapter, building a healthier, more inclusive Durham Region for all.

With gratitude,



Ivano Labricciosa
Board chair



Francis Garwe
Chief Executive Officer

About the Plan

The Durham Community Health Centre has undergone significant changes in recent years to ensure we continue responding to the evolving needs of our communities. We expanded our reach through new programs, three physical locations, a mobile clinic, and virtual care services. A key lesson from this period has been the importance of adaptability and preparedness as our health system faces ongoing pressures. Economic shifts directly affect community health and the ways people seek care and support, reinforcing the need for a flexible, responsive model of service delivery.

As we look ahead, this strategic plan reflects our intention to be both pragmatic and purposeful in how we codevelop programs, support our staff, serve clients, nurture partnerships, and fulfill our mandate. We remain committed to the vision, mission, and values outlined in our previous strategic plan. Our strategic pillars and objectives have been refined to reflect input from key interest-holders, our changing economic context, emerging sector trends, and provincial reforms.

To shape this direction, we engaged broadly across the organization and community through:

- Staff focus groups, interviews, and an all-day strategic planning session
- Client interviews across all three physical sites
- External partner interviews
- Board and leadership interviews and a visioning workshop

A major emphasis of this process was engaging staff, particularly frontline teams, whose deep commitment to community care is foundational to DCHC's impact.

As a Community Health Centre, we play a vital role in Ontario's primary care system at a time of significant transformation. With the province moving toward a connected, convenient, inclusive, and responsive primary care model, and with clear evidence of the harms experienced by people without a primary care provider, we welcome the direction set out through the Primary Care Act.

DCHC IN OUR COMMUNITY:
AN INTERCONNECTED ECOSYSTEM



DCHC's Programs and Services

Programs and Services

Clinical Care
Family medicine, pediatric care, geriatric assessment and intervention network, gender care

Chronic Disease Prevention and Management
Diabetes, Hepatitis C, Harm reduction

Mental Health
IPC Mental health team, Indigenous counseling and support, and walk-in clinic

Wellness Care
Nutrition, diet, and physical well-being

Physical Sites | Mobile Care | Virtual Care | HART Hub | Youth Hub



Health Education (Learning Hub)

Vision

Building
Healthier
Communities
Together

Values

IC-ACT:

Innovative
Collaborative
Actively Inclusive
Compassionate
Trustworthy

Mission

Partnering to provide integrated, accessible, and equitable care to enhance health and social well-being in our communities.

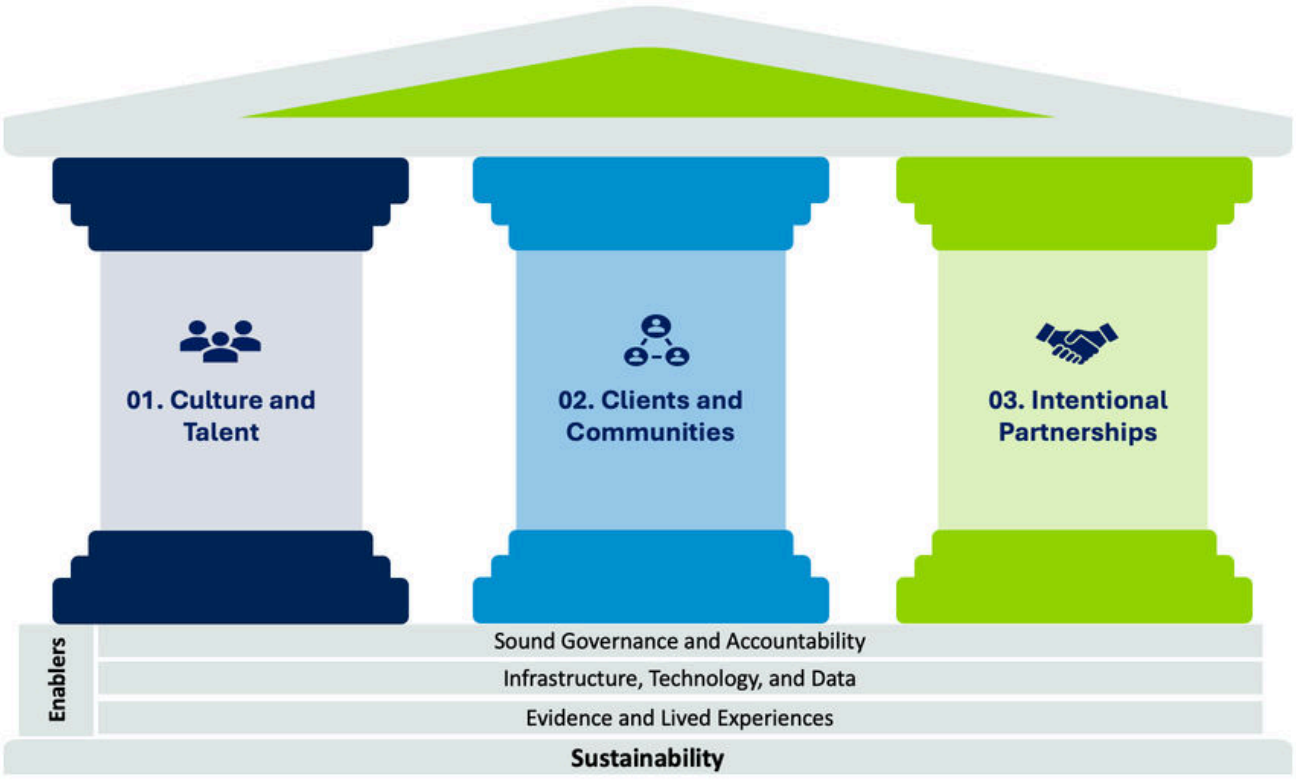






Three Pillars Enabled by Key Factors

As DCHC positions itself for the next five years, we are focusing on the areas that will most meaningfully shape our ability to deliver high-quality, equitable, and sustainable community health services. Our three strategic pillars reflect where we must direct our collective effort, strengthening our internal culture and talent to support a healthy and skilled workforce; deepening our commitment to clients and communities to ensure care is person-centred and responsive; and advancing intentional partnerships that allow us to address complex health and social needs through shared solutions. These priorities are supported by a set of organizational enablers that form the foundation for success: strong governance and accountability, modern and reliable infrastructure and technology, and the thoughtful use of evidence and lived experiences. Importantly, the three pillars and enablers would not be possible without sustainable funding from our funders. Together the pillars, enablers and sustainable funding, establish a cohesive framework that will guide our decisions, reinforce operational excellence, and ensure we remain adaptable to the evolving needs of the diverse communities we serve.



Pillar 1: Culture and Talent

Goal: Build a workplace that supports staff well-being, growth, and retention by investing in equitable staffing, clear pathways, effective communication, and reliable organizational systems.

Our ability to deliver high-quality care depends on a stable, supported, and engaged workforce. As the organization continues to evolve, we will continue to strengthen the culture, systems, and structures that enable staff to do their best work, collaborate across teams, and remain committed to our mission.

This pillar focuses on building strong teams and leaders, aligning workforce capacity with service demand, and creating a high-quality employee experience from onboarding through career growth and integrated work. It emphasizes staff wellness, psychological safety, and retention, recognizing that healthy teams are essential to healthy communities.

The objectives outlined in this section also advance equity, transparency, and shared decision-making, while modernizing HR infrastructure to support accountability, data-informed planning, and long-term sustainability. Together, they reflect a deliberate shift toward proactive workforce planning, clearer communication, and investment in the people and systems that underpin organizational performance.

Culture

Strategic Objectives:

- Strengthen shared beliefs of trust, respect, and continuous improvement.
- Build a shared accountability framework for outcome achievement.
- Implement support systems and develop standard operating procedures.
- Improve collaboration and coordination through internal referral pathways, communication, and shared decision-making.

What Success Looks Like

- Team members who report feeling satisfied with their work.
- Team members who report understanding how their role contributes to organizational outcomes.
- Core processes with documented, approved standard operating procedures (SOPs).
- Team members trained on SOPs relevant to their role.
- Team members engaged on decisions related to program and service delivery.

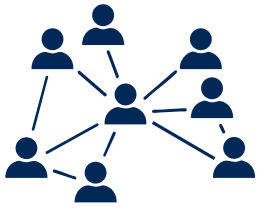
Talent

Strategic Objectives:

- Enhance employee wellness, psychological safety, and retention.
- Strengthen workforce planning and staffing models.

What Success Looks Like

- Employee engagement and psychological safety improvement scores.
- Staff retention.
- Mix and number of staff and ratio of staff to patients.



Pillar 2: Clients and Communities

Goal: Deliver seamless, culturally safe, person-centred care and programming that improves access, strengthens trust, and responds to the diverse needs of the communities we serve.

Achieving seamless, culturally safe, and person-centred care requires intentional design of how clients access services, navigate care, and experience support across programs and sites. This pillar focuses on improving timely access to integrated primary care and supports, strengthening coordination and continuity, and reducing barriers for communities facing the greatest inequities.

The objectives in this section consider provincial objectives for primary care, lived experiences of the community and clients we serve, and emerging demographic trends in the Durham region. With a fast-growing and diverse population, cultural safety, trauma-informed and equity-driven care will continue to be a cornerstone of our programs and services, including the ones delivered to our priority populations. In the coming years, a particular focus will be placed on seamless data gathering which will allow for continuous improvement of service and program delivery.

Access and Reach

Strategic Objectives:

- Improve access to care by increasing the number of attached clients in the catchment area.
- Expand timely access to primary care, mental health, and wraparound supports.
- Deepen community outreach, mobile care, and partnerships to reach underserved populations.

What Success Looks Like

- Increase same-day/next-day appointment availability.
- After-hours utilization of services.
- Wait times for mental health services.

Service Quality and Appropriateness

Strategic Objectives:

- Continue to provide culturally safe, equitable and trauma-informed care through our priority populations programs.
- Continue to ensure consistent, high-quality client experience across all sites and programs.
- Continue to integrate client voice and lived experience into program design and planning.
- Strengthen data collection and use to understand community needs and client outcomes.

What Success Looks Like

- Client satisfaction scores.
- Clients reporting they feel “seen, heard, and respected”.
- Team members completing cultural safety training annually.
- Service utilization and satisfaction by priority populations (2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, black, newcomer, children and youth, senior, and unsheltered).

Pillar 3: Intentional Partnerships

Goal: Build purposeful, transparent, and mutually beneficial partnerships that strengthen care coordination, expand community impact, and ensure integrated, wraparound supports for the people and communities DCHC serves.

We believe that impact happens when partners in communities are mobilized for a shared purpose and when funding models support long-term collaboration. We were able to implement various new initiatives with our partners. We want to build on existing momentum and continue to be intentional in the partnerships we develop and nurture. We believe this is important for clarity in shared roles and responsibilities in achieving measurable outcomes that impact common target clients and communities. DCHC will map and evaluate all current partnerships to assess their purpose, value, and any duplication, helping determine which relationships should be scaled or maintained. We will continue to prioritize equity by expanding partnerships with Black, Indigenous-led, newcomer-serving, and 2SLGBTQIA+ organizations, working together to design programming that addresses inequities and responds to community needs.

The organization will strengthen partnerships by formalizing structures through updated Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) that clearly define roles, responsibilities, operating procedures, and shared accountability with key partners. Shared data agreements will be developed using PHIPA compliant protocols, along with common performance indicators and aligned data systems that support coordinated, communitywide planning. Consistent cross-agency referral pathways will be created by standardizing workflows across mental health, housing, food security, harm reduction, and youth services, ensuring that all partners have visibility into available programs, eligibility requirements, and shared resource guides.

Partnerships

Strategic Objectives:

- Map and evaluate all partnerships to clarify their purpose and prioritize what delivers the greatest impact.
- Formalize partnership structures through MoUs, shared protocols, and clear roles and responsibilities.
- Expand investment in partnership development capacity.

What Success Looks Like

- Number of partnerships with a formal MoU.
- Partnerships with equity-deserving communities.
- Expand investment in partnership development capacity.

Collaboration and Coordination

Strategic Objectives:

- Expand consistent referral pathways with key health, social, and community partners.
- Enhance shared data sharing agreements, privacy frameworks, and performance indicators.
- Improve communication and transparency with partners through sound governance principles, regular meetings, joint workplans, and shared reporting.

What Success Looks Like

- Referral completion across partners.
- Number of shared data dashboards or joint reporting cycles completed.
- Clients with coordinated care plans for complex needs.
- Increased service reach among priority populations.



Our Key Enablers

To achieve our strategic objectives, we identified key enablers that will need to be developed or solidified.

Governance and shared accountability:

Staff and community engagement emphasized the need for clear processes and stronger communication pathways, particularly across teams that are rapidly growing or delivering care in new ways. DCHC's future requires strong governance characterized by coordinated structures that strengthen decision-making, improve transparency, and reinforce trust across the organization and with partners. Strengthening shared accountability will enable DCHC to work more seamlessly across programs, ensure alignment with health system funders, and support partnerships that enhance access to care across the Region of Durham.

Infrastructure, Technology, and Data

As Ontario invests significantly in expanding interprofessional primary care teams, DCHC must ensure its internal systems are equipped to manage growth, support interdisciplinary collaboration, and enhance client experience. Strengthening our digital and physical infrastructure, improving access to tools and training, and establishing consistent data practices will allow DCHC to plan effectively, evaluate impact, and support high-quality care across multiple locations as well as mobile and virtual services. Importantly, implementing systems that enable seamless data collection will support faster, data-informed decision-making.

Evidence and Lived Experiences

Grounded in our commitment to equity, DCHC will continue to pair evidence informed practices with the lived experiences of the communities we serve. DCHC's model is most effective when shaped by community voice. Engagement findings highlighted the importance of deeper community input, culturally grounded approaches, and qualitative insights that reflect real-world experiences. Strengthening our use of evidence and community generated knowledge will support more inclusive program design, help identify emerging needs - such as food insecurity, access to mental health supports, and housing instability - and reinforce our role in advancing health equity in Durham Region.

Our ability to deliver on this strategy strongly relies on sustainability, both financial and environmental.

To fulfill its mission over the long term, DCHC will strengthen its financial sustainability through disciplined stewardship, diversified funding, and evidence-informed resource allocation. At the same time, the Centre will explore opportunities to reduce its environmental footprint and align operations with emerging environmental sustainability guidelines in the health sector.

As a primary care provider in one of Ontario's fastest-growing regions, DCHC relies on the partnership and trust of its funders to deliver accessible, equitable, and community-responsive care. Key areas of focus include:

- Strengthening relationships with funders through transparency, accountability, and impact reporting.
- Pursuing stable and multi-year funding opportunities to support long-term planning.
- Enhancing partnerships that enable shared resources and collaborative impact.
- Strengthening internal financial planning, forecasting, and resource allocation practices.

In parallel, DCHC will advance environmental sustainability by identifying practical and achievable actions that align with sector guidance. Priority actions include:

- Promoting responsible resource use across programs and operations
- Advancing sustainable procurement practices
- Integrating environmentally conscious approaches into facilities and day-to-day operations

Ultimately, sustainability is not solely about cost management. It is about ensuring DCHC has the capacity, flexibility, and resilience to meet growing community needs, while remaining accountable stewards of public, partner, and environmental resources.

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Visit our website to learn more: www.durhamchc.ca

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Thank you

We extend our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the development of this strategic plan. Whether you shared your perspectives through engagement sessions, participated in interviews and consultations, or provided thoughtful feedback throughout the process, your insights have been invaluable. Your voices have shaped a plan that is grounded in lived experience, responsive to community needs, and positioned for meaningful impact.

We remain committed to continuing this collaboration with our interest holder community. Strengthening our health and social systems requires ongoing partnership, shared accountability, and a collective commitment to improvement. This plan reflects not only a path forward for Durham Community Health Centre, but a shared vision for a more accessible, equitable, and integrated system of care.

To our clients and communities: your well-being remains at the centre of everything we do. This strategic plan is designed with you in mind: to enhance your experience, improve access to care, and ensure services remain responsive to your evolving needs. We are committed to continuous improvement and to delivering high-quality, compassionate, and community-informed care.

Together, we will continue to build a stronger, more resilient system that supports the health and well-being of all those we serve.

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Your DCHC

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