

Patient and Family Advisory Committee (PFAC) as of January 2018

George Goto, Burlington

George is a retired, accomplished professional engineer with more than 30 patents to his credit. He is an active primary caregiver and advocate for his wife and son which has provided him with a variety of experiences navigating community support services and the broader health care system. George is interested in utilizing his unique perspectives to proactively highlight areas of opportunity, particularly in regards to the mental health sector.

Polliann Maher, Hamilton

Polliann joins the committee with more than 18 years' experience navigating the community mental health sector with her loved one, and understands the depths of mental health and its impact on the family unit. Her personal and professional experiences have allowed her to interact with different systems throughout Southwestern Ontario. In addition to her own experience, Polliann supports families as they too navigate various systems to access supports needed throughout their journey. She hopes her unique perspective advocating for those in the military and veteran communities will identify new opportunities to improve access to health care and service supports.

Jori Warren, St. Catharines

Jori is a devoted, proactive advocate and caregiver for several family members who require various levels of support. Recently, she was one of the Alzheimer Society of Niagara Region's "Champions" advocating for improved health system planning at the provincial level, having met with local MPP's to discuss issues faced by those living with dementia. Jori is interested in ensuring patients with dementia obtain early detection and screening, particularly those requiring additional supports, and that caregivers have increased access to respite services.

Janice Kucharew, Brantford

Janice has been an advocate and caregiver for several decades supporting family members throughout their journeys. She is currently an active member of a long-term care home's Family Council, and remains heavily involved within her community, recently as a member of the Brantford Choir Executive. Janice is honoured to share her experiences and perspectives to strengthen the patient, family and caregiver engagement necessary to improve our health systems in a positive and constructive way.

Josephine Quercia, Stoney Creek

Josephine brings a wealth of personal and professional experience to the committee. As an appointed member of the Citizens' Council for the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care coupled with her involvement with the Ontario Drug Policy Research Network's Citizens' Advisory Panel, Josephine furthers her caregiver role by calling on her experiences to improve supports. Josephine is passionate about utilizing her varied experiences to help shape and enhance the programs and services within the HNHB LHIN.

Olga McNeill, Grimsby

Olga has been active within the Grimsby community throughout her life, being involved in numerous community organizations, boards and political organizations, including the HNHB LHIN's Citizens' Reference Panel. She brings with her a wealth of knowledge, particularly regarding long-term care homes and home and community care services. Olga is interested in improving patient care transitions and emergency department access.

Shirley Verhage, Hamilton

Shirley has been a primary caregiver for more than 16 years and has been an advocate in both private and provincially-funded long term care homes. Her experience, particularly with persons with aphasia, prompted her involvement, and subsequent role, as Family Supervisor for a one-year research project regarding the care path of persons with dementia. Shirley is interested in improving supports for patients with dementia and their families.

Keith Dorman, Hamilton

Keith has more than a decade of personal experience within the health care system including physiological, mental health and developmental services, and has achieved success in revising patient-centred communications. He is a dedicated advocate working to end the stigma surrounding mental health by improving communication and ensuring access to necessary treatment is readily available. Keith is interested in utilizing his keen attention to detail and ability to identify opportunities to improve ease of navigation throughout the health care system, particularly as it pertains to the dignity of patients and families living with mental health challenges.

Anne Marie Cargnelli, Pelham

Anne Marie brings a wealth of professional strategic planning expertise. In her previous role as Chair of the Northland Pointe Family Advisory Council (a long-term care home in Port Colborne), she developed new engagement strategies to better engage and measure care, experience and access of services for patients and caregivers. As a caregiver and mother of three young children, she is interested in working together to improve health outcomes and experiences for patients and families across Ontario.

Michael Porto, Welland

Michael brings a unique perspective to the committee, having lived decades with rare, chronic health conditions as both a patient and primary caregiver. He is currently a member of the City of Welland's Accessibility Committee, and has consulted with the St. Catharines planning committee regarding accessibility for patients and community users. He has advised municipal building and planning departments as to how to meet the accessibility needs of the community in relation to new, existing and restored buildings. Michael is interested in removing barriers in order to ease health system navigation - from finding a family doctor to community support services integration.

Michelle Moore, St. Catharines

Michelle is a caregiver who has had on-going experience navigating the health system from initial interaction with first responders through hospitalization. In her current role, she is actively involved in revising and creating policies in order to develop a best practice health and safety program to meet the needs of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) responders working and living with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in the Niagara region. Michelle is interested in improving resources related to mental health emergencies and crisis, for both patients and family members.

Jodi Rock, Hamilton

Jodi brings more than two decades of both personal and professional experience navigating and interacting with a variety of health care systems across our LHIN. In addition to her personal experiences, Jodi has been an advocate supporting vulnerable populations through her previous role as Hamilton's first inaugural Aboriginal Patient Navigator. Jodi continues to serve on advisory committees to promote cultural sensitivity and inclusion and is excited to have the opportunity as a PFAC member, to utilize her experiences and provide a lens that respects both traditional and mainstream perspectives.