



Almaguin Highlands Ontario Health Team

February 14, 2020

Working to improve health care & wellness in the Almaguin Highlands



WHO WE ARE

- ▶ The Almaguin Highlands Health Centre Committee (AHHCC) is the Ontario Health Team (OHT) applicant and sponsor; for the East Parry Sound District.
- ▶ AHHCC is a not-for-profit organization focused on returning and expanding quality healthcare services to the Almaguin Highlands region. This region spans up the Highway 11 corridor from just north of Huntsville to just south of North Bay, Ontario.
- ▶ The AHHCC was established in 2011 when Muskoka Algonquin Health Care announced the closure of the Burks Fall's Hospital, resulting in the Village taking ownership of the building, and establishing the Almaguin Highlands Health Centre.
- ▶ Fundamentally, the Committee was formed to help protect quality healthcare services across the Almaguin Highlands region following a period of steady cuts to services in our area.
- ▶ The AHHCC Committee is comprised of 10 surrounding municipal representatives, who also sit on various health care boards and committees throughout the Parry Sound District.

Almaguin Highlands Health Centre Committee municipal members;

- ▶ Chair Bruce Campbell
- ▶ Township of Strong member: Marianne Stickland
- ▶ Township of Armour member: Rod Ward
- ▶ Municipality of Magnetawan member: Brad Kneller
- ▶ Township of McMurrich/Monteith member: Dennis Banka
- ▶ Township Perry member: Norm Hofstetter
- ▶ Town of Kearney member: Carol Ballantyne
- ▶ Township of Ryerson member: Barb Marlow
- ▶ Township of Joly member: Tom Bryson
- ▶ Village of Burk's Falls member: Cathy Still
- ▶ Village of Sundridge member: Lyle Hall
- ▶ Administrator: Erica Kellogg
- ▶ Many of our members also work with other health organizations and committees to ensure the region remains covered and always consulted.

Areas of Focus for the AHHCC...

1. Communicating the specific needs for healthcare across the Almaguin Highlands region through an Ontario Health Team (OHT) application which supports all residents of the region.
2. Ensuring we are prepared for the future of healthcare delivery through provision of high-speed connectivity for every resident of the Almaguin Highlands.
3. Ensuring that we attract and retain the healthcare professionals we require to deliver excellent healthcare to the region.
4. Strategic health care planning, with a regional view, to restructure and build a responsive system that meets the needs of our residents, supports our care providers, and improves health outcomes.

Note: Post initial application, Powassan has opted to join the Nipissing OHT.



Recent AHHCC Successes

As we working towards OHT readiness ...

► Physician Recruitment

Attended NOSM Career Fair in Sept/19

Municipalities are providing onboarding/completion/retention incentives

Almaguin Community Economic Development is an active recruitment participant

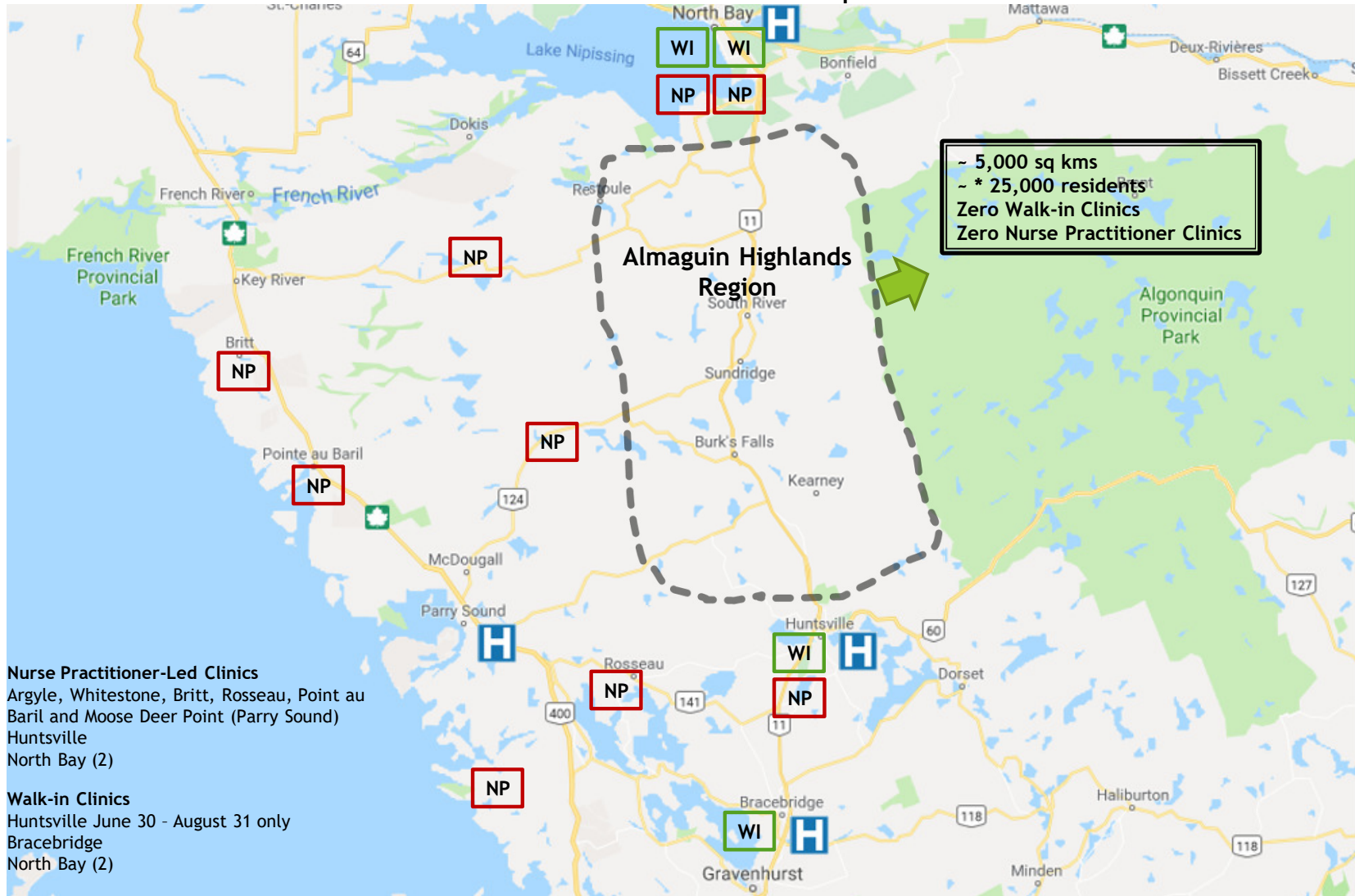
► Health Care Survey 2019-20

Approximately 1,000 residents' survey data has been collected

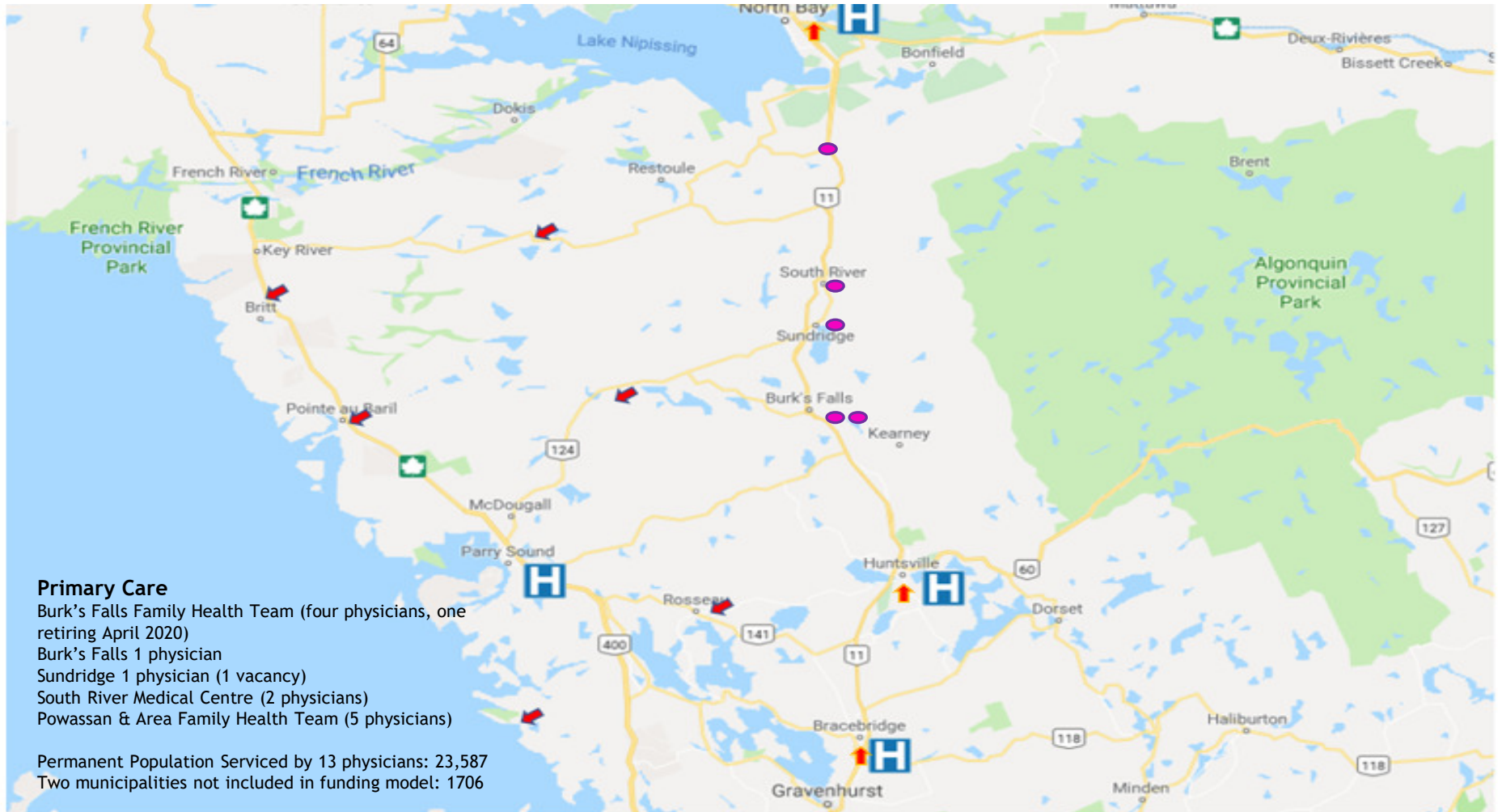
► High Speed Internet/Broadband Services

Contract tendered; with implementation to commence in 2021

Healthcare Service Map



Healthcare Service Map





Why AHHCC applied to be an OHT

- ▶ To protect our RNPGA's and Northern Residents' Travel Grants.
- ▶ We champion the Minister of Health's vision and OHT strategies.
- ▶ We have an opportunity to build an equitable primary health care continuum for our residents, that supports care-givers, service providers and physicians.
- ▶ We have a defined population, within a geographic area, that requires action now.
- ▶ We need to move our communities' primary health care services forward, for nimble responses to future needs.
- ▶ We accept responsibility and accountability for our residents' health care service provisions; decisions need to be made locally.
- ▶ Our residents deserve equitable access to health care, as all other Ontarians.
- ▶ We have a good attitude, work as a Team, and are willing to learn and grow. 😊



Almaguin Highlands Demographics

- ▶ Large geographic area with a sparse, rural and remote population, in Northern Ontario
- ▶ Population: 24,000 permanent residents; with limited local health care access
- ▶ Additionally, 20,000 seasonal residents & tourists; with no access to local health care, and serviced by hospital emergency departments
- ▶ Close to 30% of our area's population is over 65 years of age, with many over 75; living in their own homes (the fastest growing population in Northern Ontario)
- ▶ Socio-economic status of residents: many well below the provincial poverty level, and on fixed incomes
- ▶ Our residents have the lowest health care equity rate in the province of Ontario, resulting in an up to 2-year loss of life vs Southern Ontario



Local Health Care Services

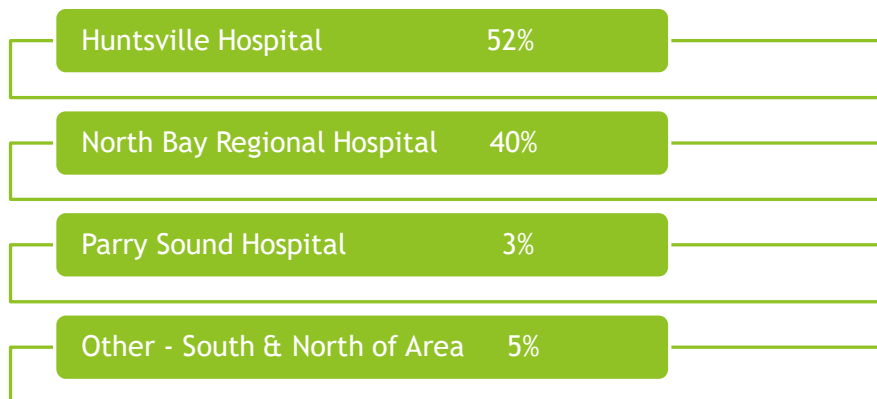
- ▶ 2 FHTs, 2 Group 1, 1 Group 2, RNPAGs (13/15 FTEs filled)
- ▶ Nurse Practitioners (w physicians)
- ▶ Mental Health & Addictions
- ▶ Health promotion, disease prevention (NBPSD Health Unit)
- ▶ Home Care & community supports
- ▶ LTC & residential care homes
- ▶ EMS
- ▶ Lab services, ECG & X-Ray
- ▶ Optometrists
- ▶ DSSAB, CAS, Hands
- ▶ Physiotherapy
- ▶ Mobile Foot Care
- ▶ Pharmacies
- ▶ Dentists & Hygienists
- ▶ Chiropractors
- ▶ RMTs
- ▶ Local seniors social groups
- ▶ Friends for Seniors
- ▶ OTN



Urgent Care Migration Patterns

There are no hospitals located in the Almaguin Highlands

- ▶ Patient choice will continue to be the driver of urgent care visits by residents.
- ▶ The hospitals' mandates will not change, with the implementation of OHTs.
- ▶ Residents' travel time to nearest hospital is approx. 1 hour; in ideal conditions.
- ▶ Complex and specialists' care will continue to be sought outside of the OHT.
- ▶ Where Almaguin Highlands' residents seek urgent care:





URGENT Needs

- ▶ One physician for the Sundridge Medical Centre
- ▶ One replacement for retiring physician at the Burk's Falls Family Health Team
- ▶ A Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic for non-rostered and non-urgent health care, to be located in the central to southern region of Almaguin Highlands
- ▶ Affordable, low-income seniors' housing
- ▶ Increased mental health and addiction service provisions

Note: These local investments and implementations will decrease urgent care visits/stays, and improve health outcomes for our residents.



Our Challenges

- ▶ Physician recruitment and retention
- ▶ No access to funding to support local health care decisions
- ▶ Removing the silos, for a broader vision, and planning for the future
- ▶ Chronic, historic underfunding of primary health care and support services; a lack of focused primary health care investments
- ▶ Fastest growing seniors' population in Ontario; with no plan forward
- ▶ Communication methods; limited, until high-speed internet and broadband arrives
- ▶ An influx of seasonal residents and tourists during the summer months, our areas' population doubles, on any given weekend
- ▶ There is no local public transit system; with many residents at or below the poverty level
- ▶ Risks of food and housing insecurity



Next Steps ...

- ▶ 1. Determine if our Almaguin Ontario Health Team application proceeds to 'in development' status 😊
- ▶ 2. Determine if a Parry Sound District Ontario Health Team is a viable option 😊
- ▶ 3. Determine if we must join or be divided among other adjoining Ontario Health Teams (Muskoka, West Parry Sound or Nipissing) 😞