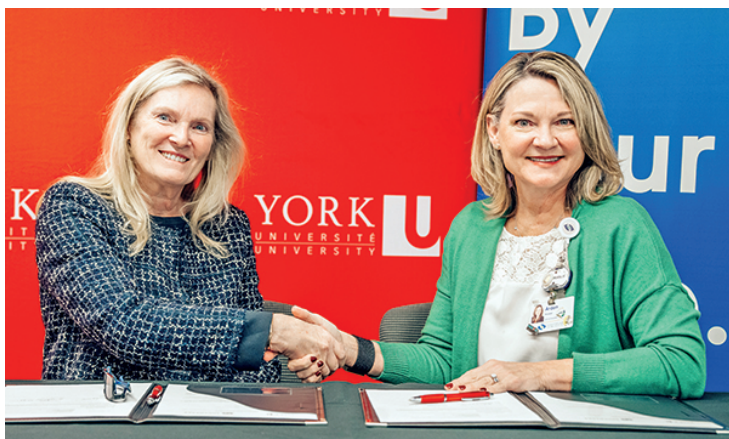


Southlake and York U ink deal to ?address pressing challenges? in community



It was a handshake to look at ?addressing pressing challenges? in the community, and in the New Year, Southlake Regional Health Centre and York University will use their respective strengths to do just that.

On December 11, Arden Krystal, Southlake's outgoing President & CEO, was joined by Rhonda Lenton, President and Vice Chancellor of York University, to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that will enable both parties to ?explore mutual areas of interest and goals, opening conversations and furthering health knowledge, practice and policy, and care.?

In a statement, Lenton said this kind of collaboration between healthcare groups and places of education are ?more critical than ever to feed the talent pipeline? and foster an environment for life-long learning, leading to ground-breaking research and innovation.?

?I am delighted to continue York University's partnership with Southlake,? said Lenton. ?This MOU signing will leverage York's long-standing reputation as a leader in healthcare education, while advancing our shared goals of increasing the quality and accessibility of care in York Region and Simcoe County. Together, I am confident we can make important advancements that improve the health outcomes, wellbeing and quality of life of Ontario's diverse and rapidly-growing communities.?

Added Krystal: ?Southlake is proud to foster an environment of innovation, growth and learning, while providing leading edge care to our communities. This partnership with York University will allow us to enrich care for the patients we serve, support professional development and enhance collaboration with the mutual goal of improving care delivery.?

As part of the agreement, York and Southlake will be able to partner on improving health informatics and analytics, as well as health technology to develop digital health solutions, machine learning, and diagnostic imaging collaborations.

Community development initiatives will also be explored through the MOU, which the parties say will result in ?positive change for both institutions, along with the students, staff, faculty and communities they serve.?

?This would include providing Southlake employees with learning opportunities at the University and jointly hosting community events to help raise awareness of local health concerns,? they said. ?This collaboration spans the full spectrum of care ? from infant, child and adolescent health to healthy aging and seniors' care. It will usher in better care for generations by leveraging expertise in cancer research, neuroscience, and disease modelling, including diabetes, addiction, cardiovascular disease and more.?

NEW HEALTH TEAM

It was a busy week for the local hospital as Southlake announced it was joining the South Simcoe Ontario Health Team to better

connect with the communities it serves.

While Southlake Regional Health Centre serves the communities of northern York Region with an increased presence in Newmarket and Aurora, its catchment area also covers portions of southern Simcoe County.

On Friday, Southlake detailed the creation of the Northern York South Simcoe Ontario Health Team, which is a merger between the two separate health teams serving both geographic areas.

"As the communities we serve grow and change, it is essential that we broaden our horizons to meet our patients' needs," said Gayle Seddon, Executive Director, Southlake Community OHT, in a statement. "In the spirit of collaboration and providing high-quality care, the Northern York South Simcoe OHT is forging a new path of excellence to elevate service offerings in our communities and transform the healthcare landscape."

Added Jody Levac, President and CEO of Alliston's Stevenson Memorial Hospital: "As we enter this new chapter, meeting the needs of our population and communities will remain as the driving force in the work we do. We are eager to enter this new era of unity, demonstrating our commitment to collaboration, community care, and quality partnerships."

The new Northern York South Simcoe OHT will provide collaborative healthcare in Aurora, Newmarket, New Tecumseth, East Gwillimbury, Bradford West Gwillimbury, Georgina, Cookstown, Essa Township, Base Borden, Adjala-Tosorontio and Mono.

"The Southlake Community OHT and the South Simcoe OHT both shared an overarching goal of bringing connected care to the communities they serve, ensuring that the unique needs of their populations are met," said the team in last week's announcement. "The Northern York South Simcoe OHT will prioritize improving access to healthcare and reducing gaps in the healthcare system for these communities."

By Brock WeirEditorLocal Journalism Initiative Reporter