



City of Port Colborne
PORT COLBORNE Healthcare Advisory Committee Addendum

Date: February 9, 2026
Time: 6:00 pm
Location: Council Chambers, 3rd Floor, City Hall
66 Charlotte Street, Port Colborne

Pages

***5. Presentations**

***5.1 KPMG - Validation Session**

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Healthcare Analysis Report

Healthcare Advisory Committee

Validation Session

February 9, 2026



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Today's Agenda and Objectives

The following outlines our agenda and objectives for today's validation session.

Agenda Item	Time
 Welcome and Introduction	5 min
 Current State Assessment Summary	20 min
 Group Discussion: Current State Findings	30 min
 Models of Care Considerations	10 min
 Group Discussion: A Brighter Future for Healthcare in Port Colborne	20 min
 Wrap Up	5 min

- 1** **Review current state findings** including data analysis and Interest Holder engagement themes
- 2** **Identify key opportunities** for enhancing health and wellness services in Port Colborne
- 3** **Validate findings and discuss implications** for future considerations

Healthcare Analysis Report Objectives

The following outlines the key objectives of City of Port Colborne's Healthcare Analysis Report:



Understand Port Colborne's current and future healthcare needs through assessment of service access, utilization, and the impacts of system changes.



Benchmark health access and outcomes against Ontario comparators to identify gaps, risks, and opportunities for improvement.



Provide an evidence-based foundation for planning by delivering clear insights and considerations to inform the City's future Health & Wellness Strategy.

Current State Findings



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Healthcare Analysis Approach

Building upon the community engagement conducted by the City of Port Colborne in 2025, the following activities were undertaken to inform this healthcare analysis report. A summary of the results and analysis for each activity is outlined in the following slides.

Healthcare Needs and Access

- Analyzed census data to assess current population characteristics and projected growth trends
- Assessed healthcare needs and access using utilization data, access indicators, and population health measures
- Identified current and emerging access pressures specific to Port Colborne

Peer Benchmarking

- Health service needs and access risks were assessed for Port Colborne and 9 peer communities
- Peer group comprises of communities with similar populations and geographic characteristics

Survey

- Conducted a current state survey with select committees of Council, healthcare providers, and community agency representatives to understand their experiences and perspectives related to local health and wellness services

Interest Holder Consultation

- Conducted interviews and focus groups with interest holders including healthcare providers, municipal leadership, and community organization representatives to assess current state strengths, challenges and opportunities related to health and wellness services in Port Colborne

Current State: Summary of Key Takeaways

Residents of Port Colborne are at higher risk and have elevated healthcare needs; however, the current services and supports could be enhanced to better meet those needs.



High Risk Population

- **Aging population, with those aged 75+ being the fastest growing cohort**
- **High proportion of residents at elevated SDH risk** (increased risk for social determinants of health correlates with increased ED/UCC use)



Urgent Care Centre Fills Access Gap

- **Population relies heavily on ED/UCC services to meet their care needs** (Port Colborne residents account for 45% of total NHS Port Colborne UCC visits and 14% of complex care bed days)
- **High ED/UCC utilization for primary care sensitive conditions** (Port Colborne residents are 95% more likely to use ED/UCC services for acute PCSC compared to the provincial average)

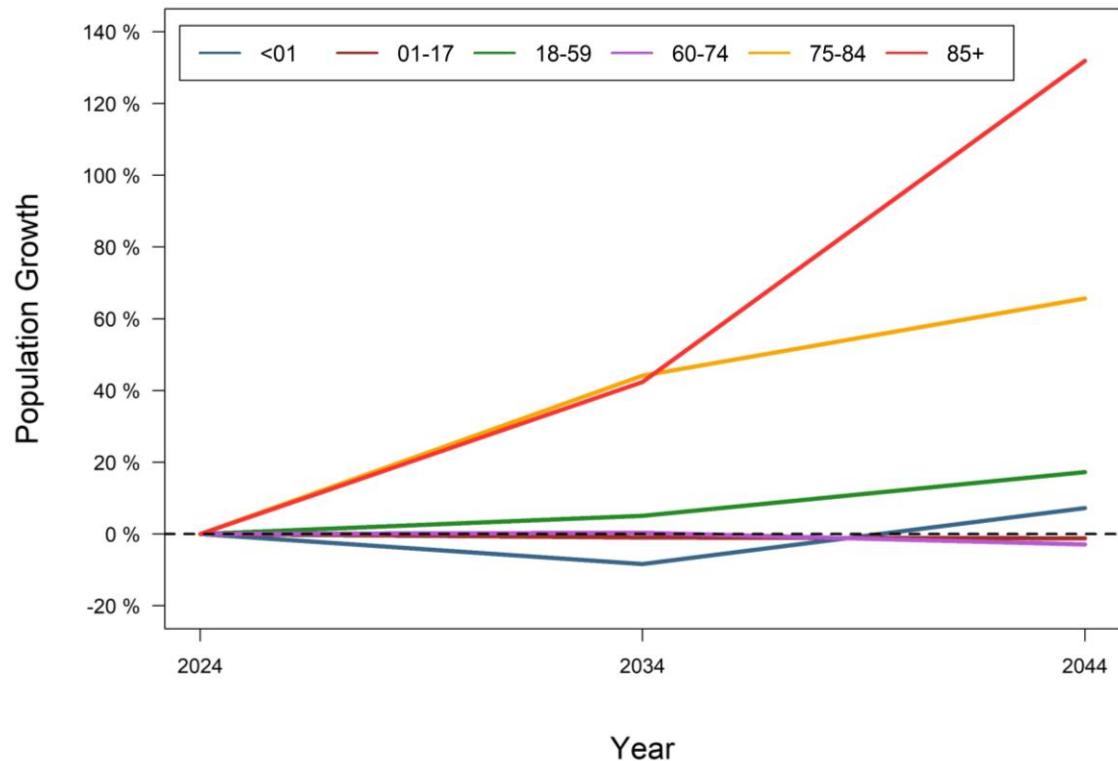


Transportation Is A Barrier To Accessing Care

- **Transportation cited as a key challenges for accessing care locally and within the region**

Population Demographics and Growth

Port Colborne's population is projected to grow 18% by 2044.



Seniors defined as ages 75+



- Use of most health services increases with age.
- Seniors 75+ are the fastest growing population, projected to grow 86% over the next twenty years.
- Without changes in care models, all resources for seniors, including primary care, community support services, social services, and inpatient services will need to nearly double to keep pace with needs.

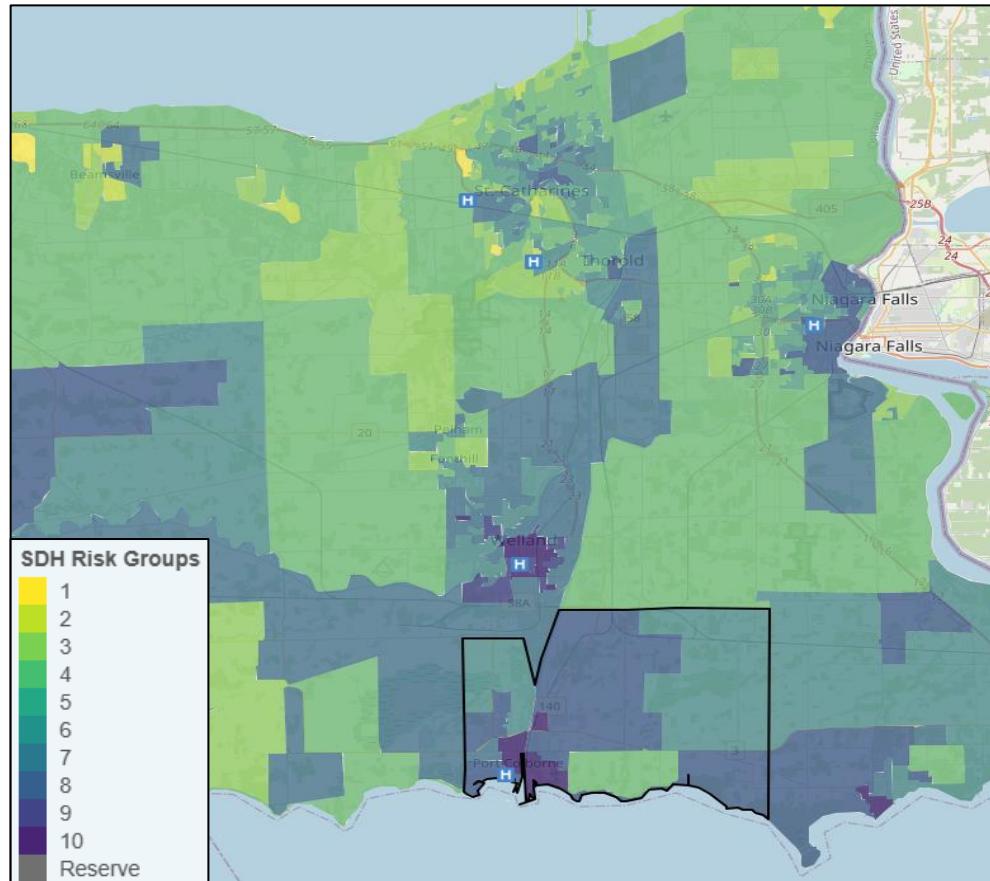
Port Colborne Population Projections

Age Group	2024	2034	2044	2051	20-yr % Growth
<1	188	172	202	219	7%
1-17	3,322	3,289	3,282	3,569	-1%
18-59	10,819	11,372	12,690	13,518	17%
60-74	4,806	4,823	4,666	5,249	-3%
75-84	1,847	2,663	3,060	2,955	66%
85+	848	1,207	1,966	2,491	132%
Total	21,830	23,526	25,866	28,000	18%

Source: Watson and Associates Growth Forecast (2024) and Dillon Consulting
Growth Analysis Review (2023); PSG Calculations
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The Social Determinants of Health

Port Colborne's population is at higher risk from the social determinants of health than the provincial average.



This map colours Dissemination Areas (DAs) based on their PSG Social Determinants of Health (SDH) Risk Group

PSG assigns DAs to SDH risk levels based on a variety of factors, including:

- Income and wealth
- Seniors 65+ living alone
- Recent immigrants
- Education
- Region type

2024 Population by Social Determinants of Health

SDH Group	Port Colborne	Ontario
Low: Groups 1-4	6%	65%
Moderate: Groups 5-7	10%	19%
High: Group 8	56%	6%
Highest: Groups 9-10	28%	9%
Reserve		0.5%
Total	22,000	16,124,000

The Social Determinants of Health

These tables summarize key SDH risk factors for Port Colborne and Niagara populations and compare to the provincial averages.

Region	2024 Population	Median Household Income	Median Household Value	No Certificate, Diploma or Degree	Aged 75 Plus and Unmarried	Immigrated in the Past 10 Years	Indigenous Population
Port Colborne	21,800	\$70,000	\$448,000	19%	53%	0.4%	2.1%
Low SDH Risk	700	\$100,000	\$600,000	10%	33%	0.0%	2.2%
Moderate SDH Risk	2,800	\$72,644	\$536,101	18%	50%	0.4%	1.7%
High SDH Risk	12,100	\$82,661	\$482,478	17%	52%	0.4%	1.0%
Highest SDH Risk	6,200	\$53,253	\$386,462	24%	64%	0.3%	2.7%
Niagara Census Division	539,200	\$79,000	\$600,000	15%	47%	3.2%	1.7%
Ontario	16,124,100	\$91,000	\$700,000	15%	48%	7.5%	1.8%

Region	Relative to Provincial Average						Indigenous Population
	Median Household Income	Median Household Value	No Certificate, Diploma or Degree	Aged 75 Plus and Unmarried	Immigrated in the Past 10 Years		
Port Colborne	23% lower	36% lower	24% higher	12% higher	90% lower	20% higher	
Low SDH Risk	10% higher	14% lower	35% lower	30% lower	100% lower	22% higher	
Moderate SDH Risk	20% lower	23% lower	16% higher	4% higher	94% lower	6% lower	
High SDH Risk	9% lower	31% lower	12% higher	8% higher	95% lower	45% lower	
Highest SDH Risk	41% lower	45% lower	57% higher	34% higher	95% lower	54% higher	
Niagara Census Division	13% lower	14% lower	1% higher	1% lower	57% lower	7% lower	

Source: Statistics Canada Census 2021 Profile, PSG Population Projections Summer 2025 Release

SDH Impact on Hospital Service Use

Within Port Colborne, hospital service use is correlated with social determinants of health risk.

SDH Risk Group	<i>Actual / Expected ED and UCC Visits</i>	
	Port Colborne	Ontario
Low Risk	1.23	0.80
Moderate Risk	1.32	1.16
High Risk	1.24	1.33
Highest Risk	1.67	1.83
Total	1.37	1.00

Key Takeaways:

- **High SDH risk groups use more ED/UCC services:** Residents of the highest risk neighbourhoods in Port Colborne are 36% more likely (1.67/1.23) to visit an ED or UCC than residents of low-risk neighbourhoods, demonstrating a clear correlation between social determinants of health and ED/UCC visits.
- **Elevated utilization is observed across all SDH risk groups:** Port Colborne population had 37% more ED/UCC visits than expected at the provincial average rate, implying that the population relies heavily on ED/UCC services to meet their care needs.

UCC Visits by Acuity Level

The Port Colborne UCC serves patients with a range healthcare needs and acuity levels across the Canadian Triage and Acuity Scale* (CTAS), with a mix of both urgent and lower acuity concerns.

CTAS Group	NHS Port Colborne UCC Visit Trends						
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	% Change
CTAS 1 & 2	3,567	1,809	2,442	3,177	2,939	3,060	-14%
CTAS 3	10,481	5,913	8,105	9,233	8,836	8,576	-18%
CTAS 4 & 5	7,515	5,032	5,957	6,439	6,171	5,736	-24%
Total	21,563	12,754	16,504	18,849	17,946	17,434	-19%

Key Takeaways:

- UCC closures impact visit trends:** The UCC reduced its hours of operation in 2023 which contributes to the observed decline in year-over-year number of visits.
- UCC visits span a wide range of acuity:** In 2024/25, 33% of UCC visits were lower acuity (CTAS 4 and 5), 49% were urgent (CTAS 3), and 18% were high-acuity visits (CTAS 1 and 2). This distribution indicates that the UCC serves a broad spectrum of clinical needs, ranging from non-urgent to emergency needs.
- UCC serves as a central access point for care:** The observed range of high and low acuity visits suggests that the Port Colborne UCC serves as a central access point for the population.

UCC Use As Substitute for Primary Care

Observed ED and UCC utilization is particularly high for primary care sensitive conditions* (PCSC). These conditions can typically be managed through effective and timely primary care and outpatient clinics.

2024/25 Actual and Expected ED and UCC Visits

Condition Type	Actual	Age and Sex Adjusted		
		Expected	Actual - Expected	Actual / Expected
PCSC* Acute	2,877	1,477	1,400	1.95
PCSC* Chronic	791	521	270	1.52
PCSC* Vaccine	138	92	46	1.50
Preference Sensitive	630	609	21	1.03
Process Sensitive	174	120	54	1.45
All Other Conditions	10,120	7,969	2,151	1.27
Total	14,730	10,788	3,942	1.37

Key Takeaway:

- ED and UCC use is high for primary care sensitive conditions:** Port Colborne residents are 95% more likely to use ED or UCC services for acute primary care sensitive conditions than the Ontario average. High rates of ED/UCC for primary care sensitive conditions are correlated with lack of adequate access to primary care and outpatient clinics.

*Primary Care Sensitive Conditions are conditions, like heart failure, diabetes, COPD, asthma, for which access to effective ambulatory services can avoid need for ED and inpatient care.

Port Colborne UCC Catchment Population

Observed utilization patterns indicate that the Port Colborne UCC serves both local residents and a broader regional group.

Measure	NHS Port Colborne Catchment by Patient Residence											Total
	Port Colborne	Welland	Wainfleet	Niagara Falls	St. Catharines	Fort Erie	Thorold	Pelham	West Lincoln	All Other Regions		
Complex Care Days	14%	16%	1%	12%	38%	6%	4%	3%	2%	4%		15,771
UCC Visits	CTAS 1 & 2	46%	27%	5%	3%	3%	2%	3%	3%	1%	7%	3,060
	CTAS 3	45%	27%	5%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	1%	7%	8,576
	CTAS 4 & 5	43%	27%	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%	4%	2%	8%	5,736
	Total	45%	27%	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%	2%	7%		17,434

Key Takeaways:

- Port Colborne residents are the highest users of ED/UCC services:** 45% of all UCC visits are from patients residing in Port Colborne and 55% of UCC visits are from patients that reside outside of Port Colborne.
- Complex Care Beds at NHS Port Colborne is primarily used by residents of neighbouring communities:** 86% of complex care days are from patients residing outside Port Colborne. In specific, 38% of total complex care days are from patients residing in St. Catharines. In contrast, Port Colborne residents account for 14% of complex care days, indicating that the site supports a broader regional population in its complex care facility.

Benchmarking: Peer Comparators

Health service needs and access risks were assessed for Port Colborne and 9 comparators with similar populations and geographic characteristics.

Characteristic	Port Colborne	Port Colborne Peer Comparators								
		Collingwood	Essex	Fort Erie	Greater Napanee	Niagara-on-the-Lake	Orillia	Port Hope	Port Elgin / Saugeen Shores	Wasaga Beach
Population Size	21,030	27,900	23,700	38,900	17,700	20,300	36,600	18,700	17,800	28,100
Hospital-based Laboratory Services	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Community-based Lab Services	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
X-ray	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
Ultrasound	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✓	✓
CT Scan	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
MRI	✗	✓	✗	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗	✗	✗
ED or Urgent Care Services	✓	✓	✗	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗	✓	✗
Closest Emergency Department	Welland	Collingwood	Windsor	Welland	Lennox & Addington	St. Catharines	Orillia	Coburg	Saugeen Shores	Collingwood
Closest Emergency Department (kms)	~15km	--	~24km	~35km	--	~25km	--	~9km	--	~20km



- In Port Colborne, the UCC currently plays an essential role in access to **laboratory, diagnostic services** (i.e., x-ray, ultrasound) and **urgent care**.

Legend: ✓ Local access ✓ Local UCC access ✗ No local access

Sources:

- StatCan Census, MOF Population Projections Summer 2025 Release
- Desktop research including [Niagara Health | Santé Niagara](#), [Georgian Radiology Consultants](#), [Town of Essex](#), [Bluewater Imaging](#)

Benchmarking: Health Service Risks

Health Service Needs and access risks were assessed using five measures. Detailed interpretations of these measures can be found in the appendix.

Health Service Needs and Access Risks: Port Colborne and Peer Regions

Measure	Port Colborne	Collingwood	Essex	Fort Erie	Greater Napanee	Niagara-on-the-Lake	Orillia	Port Hope	Port Elgin / Saugeen Shores	Wasaga Beach	Group Average
1. Population at High Risk from the Social Health Determinants	84%	44%	74%	71%	77%	0%	56%	41%	93%	61%	60%
2. ED/UCC Visit Rate for Primary Care Sensitive Conditions	122%	23%	-41%	66%	92%	-48%	84%	36%	141%	19%	49%
3. Admission Rate for Primary Care Sensitive Conditions	15%	7%	1%	4%	21%	-37%	53%	24%	-15%	5%	8%
4. ALC Use of Acute Resources	0.32	0.21	0.1	0.34	0.65	0.15	0.75	0.57	0.39	0.15	0.36
5. Projected Growth in ED/UCC Demand	22%	38%	23%	22%	24%	51%	24%	30%	38%	47%	30%
Composite Risk Score (Group Rank)	66 (4)	54 (8)	46 (9)	60 (6)	75 (3)	36 (10)	77 (1)	63 (5)	77 (1)	59 (7)	

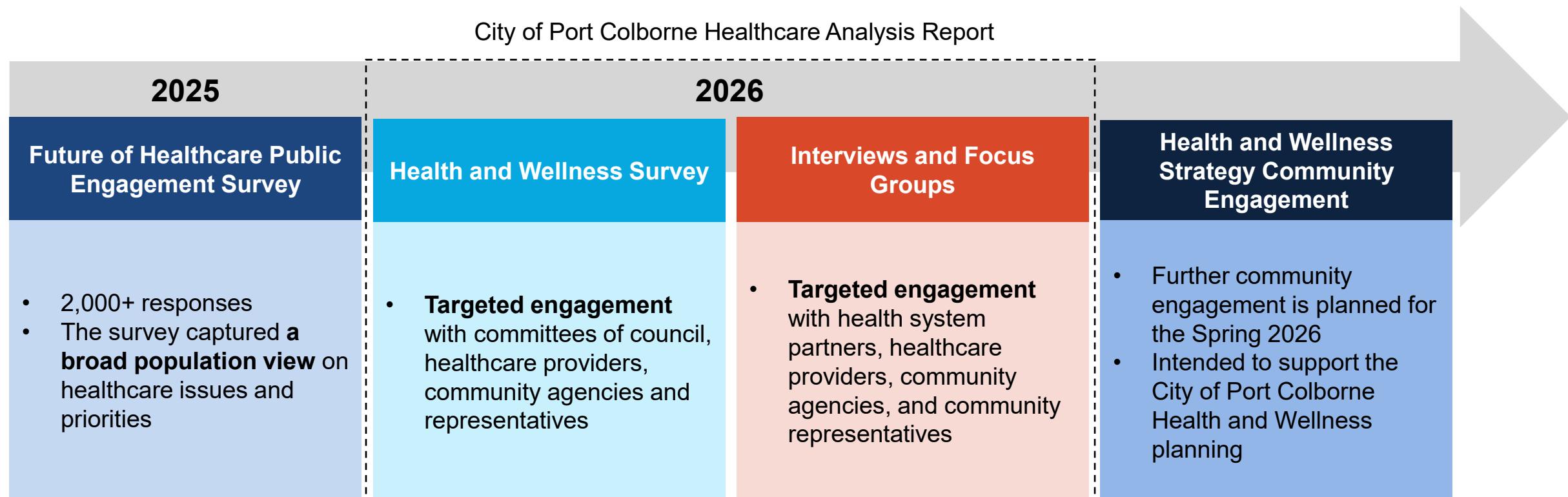
 **84%** of residents at **high risk from SDH**

 **122%** higher **ED/UCC visits for PCSC** compared to provincial average

 **Healthcare access risks are likely to be exacerbated with the closure of the UCC**, given **population demographics** and **limited access to transportation** among residents

Interest Holder Engagement Context

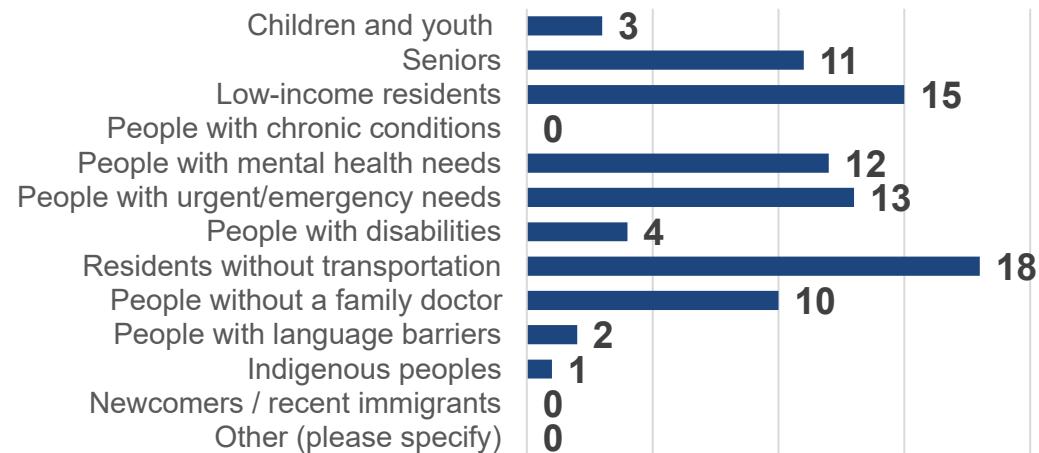
Building upon the Community Engagement campaign conducted by the City of Port Colborne in 2025, survey and interviews were undertaken in January 2026 to gain a deeper understanding of the current state strengths, challenges and opportunities to enhance health and wellness services in Port Colborne.



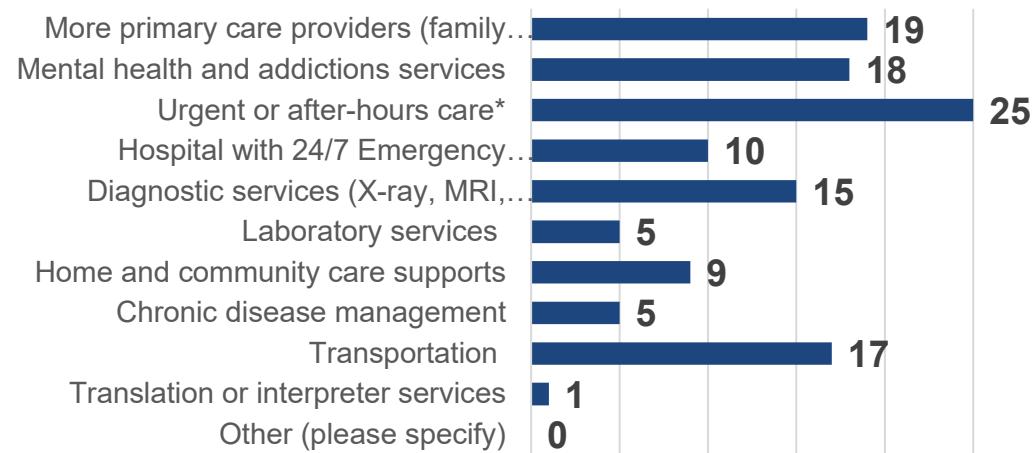
Survey Results: Key Takeaways

Select results are highlighted below. Detailed survey results are available in the appendix.

Groups Facing Significant Barriers to Healthcare in Port Colborne



Healthcare Services Most Urgently Needed in Port Colborne



Key Takeaway:

People Without Transportation was identified as the **#1** most impacted group

Key Takeaway:

Urgent Care or After-Hours Care was identified as the **#1** service needed by survey respondents

*Some respondents noted that urgent care and after-hours care represent distinct service needs

Survey Results: Key Themes

The following provides themes and input from the survey related to current state challenges and concerns.

CONCERN ABOUT TRANSPORTATION

"I believe the biggest challenge is transportation. How can you get help if you can't get there?"

"The need to travel to other sites/cities for specialist care, diagnostics and after-hours care is particularly challenging for those without access to transportation."

"More city transportation (i.e. bussing or Niagara taxi services) [is needed] to support travel to any health care facility."

CONCERN FOR LOSS OF URGENT CARE

"More access to urgent care and after hours. Wait times are too large to go to Niagara Falls, Welland, or St. Catherines. It is also too far and in accessible. Waking up in the middle of the night with a screaming child for an ear ache and having to wait until the morning is not an option."

"I think that having a 24-hour open emergency department would improve Port Colborne a lot. Since the other hospitals are for some people over 20 minutes"



ACCESS TO PRIMARY CARE

"I believe that investing in more family physicians would benefit the community greatly, as it is very difficult to acquire an appointment with a doctor."

"For today - a huge challenge currently existing is being able to access your primary care provider when you need them. Hours of service are not sufficient; therefore people go to the UCC and/or ED for issues better dealt with in the community."

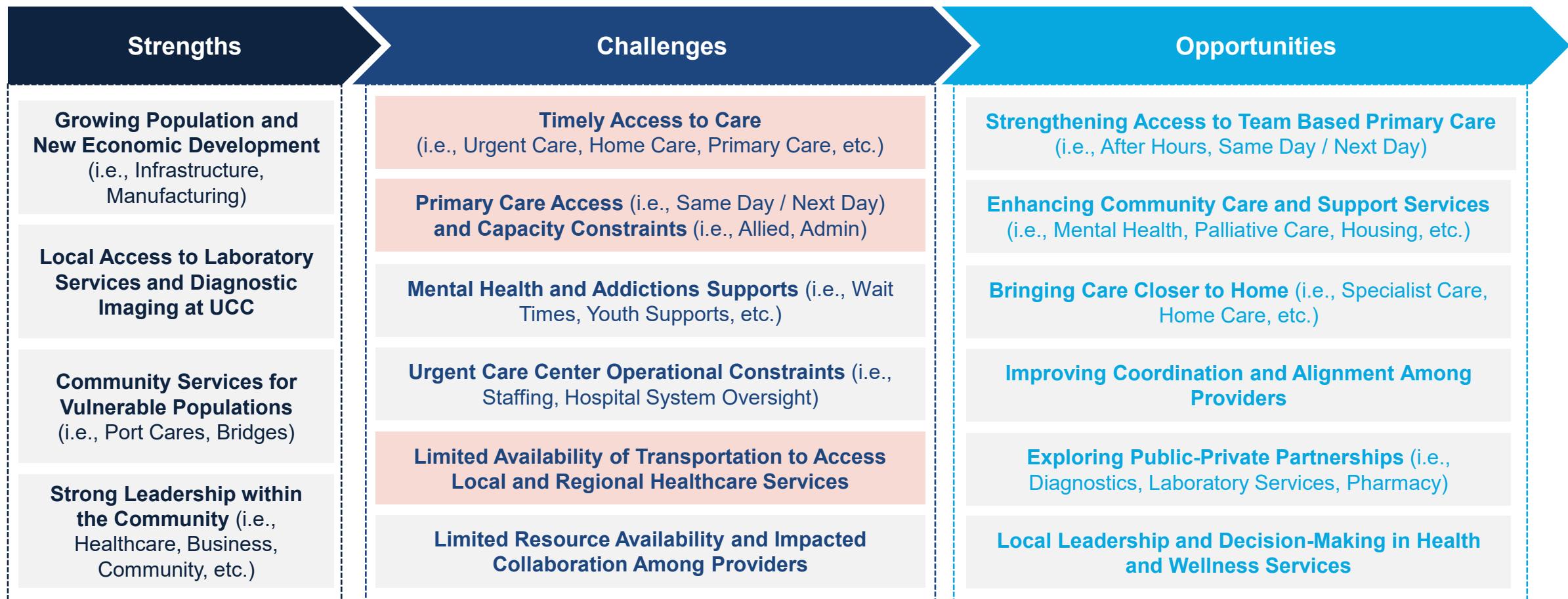
OPPORTUNITY FOR AN INTEGRATED HEALTH AND WELLNESS HUB

"A new centrally located building with after hours urgent care with imaging, lab and some wrap around services like mental health and addictions care."

"Access to allied health/interprofessional teams for all patients who have a family doctor in Port Colborne with particular emphasis on rehabilitation (physio/OT), mental health services and specialist (referral) care."

Interest Holder Consultation Summary

As part of the Current State Assessment, interview and focus group sessions were conducted with interest holders representing health system partners, healthcare providers and community representatives. A summary of the key themes from the sessions is provided below.



Group Discussion



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Discussion Questions



1. Do you have any **questions or comments** about the data presented?
2. What are your **reflections from the Current State findings**? Anything missing or unexpected?
3. Do the themes around **current state strengths, challenges and opportunities** resonate with you? Anything to add or clarify?

Models of Care Considerations

Models of Care Considerations

The following table provides an overview of different care settings, their health system role and other key characteristics.

	Emergency Department	Urgent Care Centre	Walk In Clinic	Pharmacy	Team Based Primary Care	Community Health Centre
Care Intent	Primary Purpose	Life-saving emergency care	Same-day urgent care	Rapid access for minor issues	Medication management	Comprehensive, continuous care
	Typical Conditions Treated	Trauma, stroke, cardiac events	Injuries, infections, fractures	Minor illness, prescriptions	Prescriptions, vaccines, minor ailments	Chronic, preventive, some urgent
	Population Focus	All, including critical cases	General population	General population	General population	Attached population
Care Delivery	Care Type	Episodic, high acuity	Episodic	Episodic	Episodic	Longitudinal, coordinated
	Patient Attachment	No	No	No	No	Yes (registered panels)
	Continuity of Care	Very Low	Low	Low	Low	High
Resources	System Role	Tertiary & emergency care	Reduce ED pressure	Improve access convenience	Support access and redirect minor care	Foundation of care system
	Relative Cost per Visit	Very High	Moderate-High	Low	Low	Low-Moderate

Where To Get Care

Legend:  = commonly managed
 = limited / mild cases
 = not appropriate / out of scope

The following table provides a summary of the typical conditions presenting at the NSH Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre as well as other healthcare and wellness settings by types of conditions or health concerns treated.

	NHS Port Colborne Urgent Care Centre	Emergency Department	Urgent Care Centre	Walk In Clinic	Pharmacy	Team Based Primary Care
Severe bleeding						
Difficulty breathing						
Chest pain or pressure						
Broken bones						
Trauma or injury to the head						
Deep cuts or wounds (i.e., stitches)						
Sprains, strains, or deep bruises						
Mild to moderate asthma attacks						
Ear infections						
Urinary tract infections						
Upper respiratory infections						
Sore throats, coughs & congestion						
Rashes						
Chronic disease management						



Sources: [Urgent Care Centre, King Campus - St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton](#)

- [Find a doctor or nurse practitioner](#)
- [Scope of Practice of Family Physicians in Canada](#)
- [Pharmacies | ontario.ca](#)

Group Discussion



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Discussion Questions



1. Where do you see the **greatest opportunity** for enhancing healthcare and wellness services in Port Colborne?
2. Which opportunities do you think should be **prioritized**? Why?
3. How can the City of Port Colborne and Partners **work together** to help achieve a brighter future for healthcare in Port Colborne?

Next Steps



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Next Steps

The following next steps outline how input from today's discussion will be incorporated into the Healthcare Analysis Report and inform future-facing considerations for Port Colborne.



Refine Inputs Using Feedback from the Validation Session

Feedback from the validation session will be used to refine the reports inputs, ensuring they accurately reflect local context, future potential, and Interest Holder perspectives.



Develop Key Considerations

Validated opportunities, along with identified enablers, constraints, and priority areas, will be synthesized into key considerations to inform future planning and decision-making.



Draft Healthcare Analysis Report

Insights from Interest Holder engagement and validation session will be integrated into the draft Healthcare Analysis Report to provide an evidence-based foundation for next phases of work.

Thank You!

Thank you for taking the time to share your experience and insights today. Your perspectives and input will inform future dialogue and planning.



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Appendix: Benchmarking



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Interpretation of Benchmarking Measures

The following provides detailed interpretations of the benchmarking results from the analysis between Port Colborne and 9 peer comparators.

- **Social Determinants of Health Risk:** Port Colborne (87%) ranks 2nd highest on SDH risk score, behind only Port Elgin / Saugeen Shores (93%). This indicates a high percentage of the population live in neighborhoods with social determinants of health risk factors (i.e., low income and wealth, seniors 65+ living alone, recent immigrants, low education status, etc.). Across Ontario, population health decreases as SDH risk increases.
- **ED/UCC Visits for Primary Care Sensitive Conditions:** Port Colborne (2.22) ranks 2nd highest on ED/UCC Visits for Primary Care Sensitive Conditions, behind only Port Elgin / Saugeen Shores (2.41). This Actual vs Expected Ratio indicates that residents of Port Colborne are 2.22x or 122% more likely to use ED/UCC for Primary Care Sensitive Conditions compared to other Ontarians after adjusting for age and sex.
- **Admission Rate for Primary Care Sensitive Conditions:** Port Colborne (1.15) ranks 4th highest on Admissions for Primary Care Sensitive Conditions, behind Orillia (1.53), Port Hope (1.24), and Greater Napanee (1.21). This Actual vs Expected Ratio indicates that residents of Port Colborne are 1.15x or 15% more likely to be admitted for PCSC compared to other Ontarians after adjusting for age and sex.
- **ALC Use of Acute Resource:** Port Colborne (0.32) ranks 5th highest on ALC Days among patients 65 years or older, behind Orillia (0.75), Port Hope (0.57), Port Elgin / Saugeen Shores (0.39), and Fort Erie (0.34).
- **Projected Growth in Demand for ED/UCC Visits:** Port Colborne (16%) ranks 10th (lowest) on project growth in demand for ED/UCC Visits among the ten comparator municipalities. The ED/UCC Visit Growth is driven by population growth forecasts, indicating that Port Colborne has lower projected population growth than its peer comparators.

Appendix: Survey Results

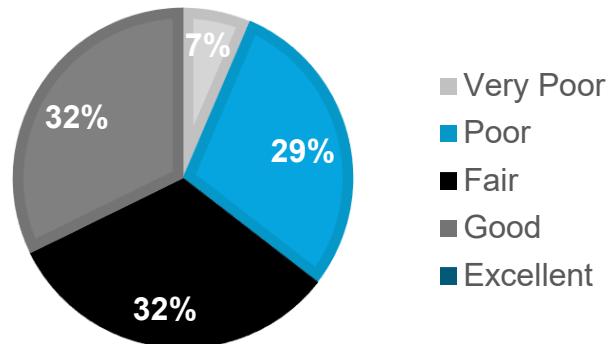


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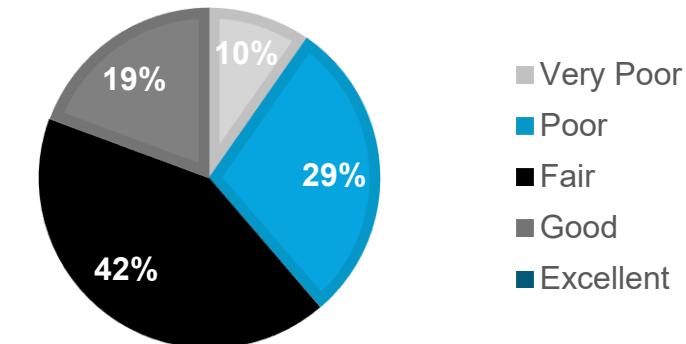
Perceptions of Healthcare Access and Equity

This slide outlines how respondents answered the following questions: *How would you rate the accessibility of healthcare services for residents of Port Colborne?*, and *How would you rate the equity of healthcare services for residents of Port Colborne compared to similar communities?*

Accessibility* of Healthcare Services in Port Colborne



Equity** of Healthcare Services in Port Colborne



* "Accessibility" refers to how easy it is to access healthcare when you need it, including factors such as travel distance, wait times, appointment availability, and hours of service.

** "Equity" refers to whether healthcare services are provided fairly and consistently across the community and region, and whether certain groups, such as seniors, low-income residents, newcomers, or people with disabilities face greater challenges accessing care than others.

Key Takeaway:

36% of respondents rated the **accessibility** of healthcare services as 'poor' or 'very poor'

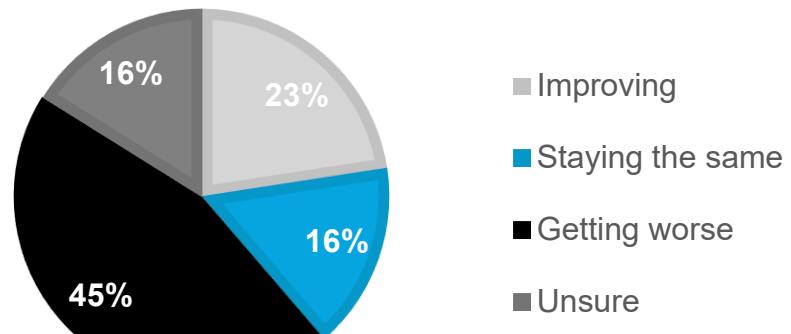
Key Takeaway:

39% of respondents rated the **equity** of healthcare services as 'poor' or 'very poor'

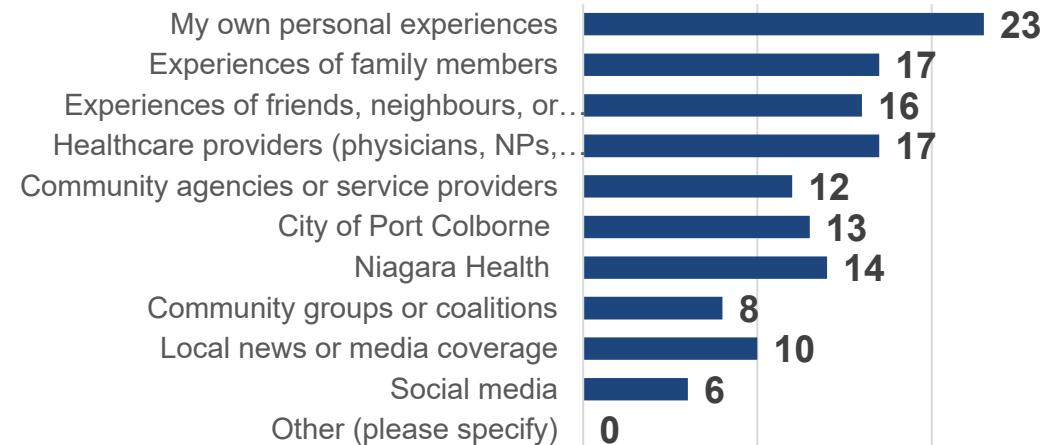
Future Outlook and Sources of Healthcare Information

This slide outlines how respondents answered the following questions: *Over the next 3-5 years, do you believe healthcare services in Port Colborne will be improving, staying the same, or getting worse?*, and *What has most informed your perception of healthcare in the City of Port Colborne?*

Future Outlook of Healthcare Services in Port Colborne in the Next 3-5 Years



Sources Informing Perceptions About Healthcare Services in Port Colborne



Key Takeaway:

Over **40%** of respondents believe that healthcare services in Port Colborne will be **getting worse** in the next 3-5 years

Key Takeaway:

Nearly all respondents indicate their personal, family and/or friends' experience informs their perception about healthcare

Identified Challenges in Healthcare Services

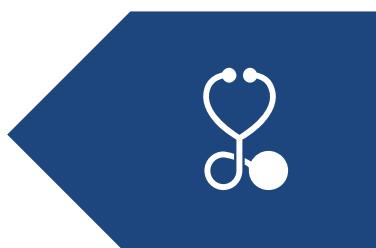
This slide summarizes how respondents answered the following question: *What do you see as the biggest challenge related to healthcare services (i.e., access, equity, etc.) for residents of Port Colborne today and/or in the future?* Answers can be synthesized into the following themes, highlighting key quotations:



Concern for the Loss of Local Access to Care

“Access to after-hours care and emergency care”

“I think the biggest challenge is the access”



Inconsistent Access to Primary Care

“Wait times to see family doctor [are] an urgent issue”

“It is very difficult to acquire an appointment with a doctor”



Increased Travel Burden

“The need to travel to other sites... is particularly challenging for those without access to transportation.”

“I believe the biggest challenge is transportation. How can you get help if you can't get there?”

Identified Opportunities in Healthcare Services

This slide summarizes how respondents answered the following question: *What strategies, investments, or changes do you believe would improve community and health services in Port Colborne?*. Answers can be synthesized into the following themes, highlighting key quotations:



Establish a Centralized, Integrated Health Hub

“Integrated health hub with multiple services under one roof.”

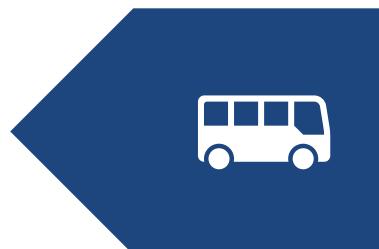
“One stop shop with almost everything at one location. X-Rays/MRI for sure.”



Strengthen Primary Care Services

“Increase access to team-based primary care”

“More primary care investment as well as diagnostics and evening/weekend services.”



Improve Local Transportation Options

“There is need for transportation supports for people to seek care out of town.”

“Direct transportation services to doctors, specialists, and hospitals”

Appendix: Consultation Summary



PORT COLBORNE

Interest Holder Consultation Summary

As part of the Current State Assessment, interview and focus group sessions were conducted with interest holders representing municipal leadership as well as health and community care services. A summary of the key strengths is provided below.

Strengths

Growing Population and New Economic Development: Population growth is driven in part by new manufacturing and infrastructure investment, including an estimated 350 new positions across two major developments. This anticipated growth in the local population is expected to increase demand for healthcare services locally. Several interest holders also identified proximity to healthcare services as a decision factor for manufacturing investment, raising concerns about future competitiveness following the anticipated UCC closure.

Local Access to Laboratory Services and Diagnostic Imaging at UCC: Interest holders identified local access to diagnostics and laboratory services as a key strength. On site X-ray, ultrasound, and point of care testing at the UCC, along with laboratory services at LifeLabs, were described as reducing the need for residents to travel. Interviewees emphasized the importance of preserving and/or expanding local access to diagnostics following the UCC closure.

Community Services for Vulnerable Populations: Interest Holders highlighted Port Colborne's strong network of community-based organizations such as Bridges Community Health Centre and Port Cares, which support seniors, low-income residents, and other vulnerable populations. Participants emphasized that these organizations play a critical role in health equity, often serving as trusted access points for residents.

Strong Leadership within the Community: Port Colborne was described as a highly engaged community with strong leadership. Interest holders highlighted strong leadership within municipal, community, healthcare and business sectors, with a shared goal of enhancing health and wellness services in Port Colborne.

Interest Holder Consultation Summary

As part of the Current State Assessment, interview and focus group sessions were conducted with interest holders representing municipal leadership as well as health and community care services. A summary of the key challenges is provided below.

Challenges

Timely Access to Care: Interest holders highlighted challenges around accessing timely care, such as limited after-hours access. The reduction in UCC hours of operations beginning in 2023 and intermittent closures have negatively impacted access to care. While some community organizations have attempted to mitigate these changes by extending service hours on a temporary basis, interest holders emphasized that the problem of timely care access remains.

Primary Care Access and Capacity Constraints: Primary care access emerged as a central theme across interviews. Interest holders described high patient volumes, increasing medical complexity, and limited access to allied health and administrative support as key constraints. It was noted that the absence of a Family Health Team in Port Colborne limits physicians' ability to expand capacity and contributes to challenges related to timely access, continuity of care, and longer-term sustainability. Physician burnout, driven in part by administrative burden, was cited as a key concern.

Mental Health and Addictions Supports: Interest holders identified access to mental health and addictions services as a challenge, describing long wait times for referral-based care and limited availability of locally delivered services. It was also noted that youth-focused mental health services are a gap within the community.

Interest Holder Consultation Summary

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Challenges

Urgent Care Center Operational Constraints: Operational constraints at the UCC were frequently raised as an issue. Rolling closures and reduced hours of the UCC were attributed to staffing challenges, compounded by broader workforce shortages across the province and region. Participants noted that the reliance on emergency-trained physicians has made Port Colborne's UCC vulnerable within the regional staffing environment.

Limited Availability of Transportation to Access Local and Regional Healthcare Services: Transportation was consistently identified as a significant barrier to access care locally and within the region. Residents must travel outside Port Colborne for services such as CT and MRI scans, fracture care, wound care, and various other specialist appointments (i.e., Regional Centres of Excellence). Interest holders emphasized that these challenges disproportionately affect residents without access to a vehicle, as well as seniors and other vulnerable communities.

Limited Resource Availability and Impacted Collaboration Among Providers: Limited resources and capacity constraints have negatively impacted the collaboration among providers in Port Colborne. The development of separate proposals for Ontario's Primary Care Action Plan by local groups was highlighted as an example of misalignment among providers and continues to impact the coordination and collaboration among local partners and providers.

Interest Holder Consultation Summary

As part of the Current State Assessment, interview and focus group sessions were conducted with interest holders representing municipal leadership as well as health and community care services. A summary of the key opportunities is provided below.

Opportunities

Strengthening Access to Team Based Primary Care: Interest holders consistently identified strengthening multi-disciplinary and team-based primary care models as a key opportunity. Allied health and administrative supports were seen as important enablers for these models and improving timely access to care. Strengthening existing primary healthcare through allied health and administrative supports were identified as potential strategies to reduce physician burnout and enhance timely access to care.

Enhancing Community Care and Support Services: Interest holders highlighted opportunities to build upon existing community-based care and support services (i.e., mental health and addictions, home care, housing supports, transportation, etc.) to help address current needs and reduce reliance on acute care. Interest Holders described community-based services as trusted access points that support system navigation, housing, mental health, and social needs, particularly for vulnerable populations.

Bringing Care Closer to Home: Participants expressed a strong interest in reducing the need for residents to travel for specialty services. Hoteling and itinerant physical models, where specialists (i.e., from Centres of Excellence) provide services in Port Colborne on a scheduled, part-time basis, were highlighted as opportunities for the community.

Interest Holder Consultation Summary

As part of the Current State Assessment, interview and focus group sessions were conducted with interest holders representing municipal leadership as well as health and community care services. A summary of the key opportunities is provided below.

Opportunities

Improving Coordination and Alignment Among Providers: Interest holders expressed opportunities to improve the coordination and collaboration of the City and partners around shared goals through role alignment and clear communication pathways. Enabling greater dialogue and alignment were seen as ways to reduce duplication, improve access and equity, and help advance shared goals. There is also an opportunity to align existing services with the needs of the community and help connect members of the community to the appropriate resources and services.

Exploring Public-Private Partnerships: Participants noted the potential for public-private partnerships to expand local access to health and wellness services (i.e., diagnostics, laboratory services, and pharmacy). Participants noted that these partnerships could help complement existing services, reduce the need for residents to travel outside the community, and increase flexibility and responsiveness in how services are delivered locally.

Local Leadership and Decision-Making in Health and Wellness Services: Interest holders emphasized building upon strong local leadership to better align health and wellness services with community needs. Participants expressed a desire for greater local input into planning and decision-making, particularly in the context of changing service models and service delivery in line with local needs.