

INNOVATING DIGITAL HEALTH SOLUTIONS - HOW IT WORKS

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A. Program Overview

The **Innovating Digital Health Solutions Program (IDHS)** supports the implementation of Ontario-based digital and virtual care health technologies by accelerating evaluation, adoption, implementation, and procurement in the Ontario health system. IDHS is a program of the Government of Ontario, developed by the Ministry of Health (MOH), and administered by the Ontario Centre of Innovation.

IDHS is designed to encourage and foster partnerships between successful recipients, and Ontario-based Technology Vendors to evaluate, adopt, and implement market-ready innovative digital health and/or virtual care solutions that address Ontario's health system priorities.

B. How the Program Works

The IDHS is designed to encourage applications from Ontario Health Teams (OHTs) inclusive of Indigenous Health Care Organizations and other eligible Health Service Providers [HSPs] who are partnering with Ontario-based Technology Vendors to evaluate, adopt, and implement market-ready innovative digital health and/or virtual care solutions that address Ontario's health system priorities, and to drive collaboration that improves patient outcomes, optimizes the impact of investment in health innovation and identifies scalable health innovation.

Collaborative Project Teams are made up of:

Applicant: One or more Ontario Health Teams (OHTs), inclusive of Indigenous Health Care Organizations, such as those serving First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous persons. OHTs are groups of Health Service Providers (HSPs) and organizations that at maturity will be clinically and fiscally accountable for delivering a full and coordinated continuum of care to a defined geographic population in Ontario.

The Applicant will select a challenge theme and define the specific challenge statement they will solve within their respective healthcare setting. The applicant will commit to providing the health care setting in which the innovative technology will be evaluated, including patient engagement, clinical and operational support, and procurement expertise.

- **Technology partner** is an Ontario-based for-profit digital health technology business providing an innovative solution to the challenge statement. The for-profit businesses may be of any size (start-up, small- to medium-sized enterprise, and multinational enterprise) with a research and development, and/or manufacturing presence in Ontario and must have commercial capacity to deliver the project.

Other partners: Other partners such as community-based organizations and implementation teams are strongly encouraged to engage one or more OHTs/HSPs, who can provide sector expertise to ensure project implementation meets sector and local needs.

Projects: must align with one of the following challenge statements:

1. Deliver patient centred care to patients and families by:

- Enabling them to manage their health in the home or community by improving equitable access to innovative digital solutions.
- Enhancing chronic disease care through advanced digital health solutions.

2. Achieve efficient and coordinated services by:

- Increasing adoption, scale, and consistently spread digital solutions that streamline the process, improve workflow.
- Establishing innovative change management supports for implementing digital solutions (e.g., ensuring the fit of the digital solution to current clinical pathways and developing a plan to utilize and manage patient-generated data).

Note: The technologies must have obtained the required regulatory approvals, received initial user feedback, supporting institutional use case data, including clinical and economic evidence of value.

Projects will involve the successful recipient collaborating with an Ontario-based Technology Vendor to:

- implement a validated technology in a health care setting,
- understand the conditions necessary for successful implementation,
- develop evidence to support broader uptake of the technology (adoption plan), support validated market-ready technologies that have been successfully implemented in one or more health care settings,
- demonstrate how additional implementation of the technology advances integrated care across multiple health system partners to generate further evidence to support potential spread and scale.

Activities: may include identifying changes required to clinical care models and/or workflows to successfully integrate the technology, generating evidence to support adoption and implementation of the solution. (e.g., across multiple OHTs), developing further clinical and/or economic evidence that the technology is providing impact (e.g. reducing wait times, economically more viable, achieving better patient outcomes, etc.).

Exclusions: Activities not supported include clinical trials to assess the safety or efficacy of the technology, and all activities outside of the province of Ontario. Projects should not duplicate provincial efforts, programs, or services and/or should not rely on integrations with provincial assets or services, this also includes projects that have received funding from other Ontario Health funded programs. (Examples include, but not limited to the following: Data Repositories, Health Information Exchanges, Patient Portals, Shared Care Records, Population Health Management and eServices (eReferral/eConsult etc)).

Outputs: Upon completion of a project, recipients should have defined clinical care models and/or workflow changes, and other changes needed to effectively integrate the technology into the health care setting, generated evidence that supports further adoption (e.g., an economic analysis that examines the cost effectiveness of the technology and potential value to the health system), and a plan to support wider adoption and wider-scale of the technology in Ontario.

C. Challenge Statement

Through this funding round, the Digital First for Health (DFfH) Strategy Challenge Statement Workshops have identified the following digital health priorities to focus innovation on one or both of the following:

1. Deliver patient centred care to patients and families by:

- Enabling them to manage their health in the home or community by improving equitable access to innovative digital solutions.
- Enhancing chronic disease care through advanced digital health solutions.

2. Achieve efficient and coordinated services by:

- Increasing adoption, scale, and consistently spread digital solutions that streamline the process, improve workflow.
- Establishing innovative change management supports for implementing digital solutions (e.g., ensuring the fit of the digital solution to current clinical pathways and developing a plan to utilize and manage patient-generated data).

D. How Funding Works

Challenge Statement projects will support up to 50 per cent of the eligible project cash costs up to a maximum amount of \$500,000 . Projects must be completed by March 31st, 2024.

- Project teams (OHTs/HSPs/ Indigenous Health Care Organizations/Technology Vendors) must contribute the remaining 50 per cent of eligible project cash costs as a minimum requirement. Matching contributions can come from any or all organizations involved in the project and may include but not limited to allocation of staff time and change management resources that are required to effectively support the implementation.
- Flow of Funds: Funding for the project will be released to the Applicant Organization that will be responsible for reimbursing their project partner(s). Upon project activation, 50 per cent of funding will be released. Further payments will be reimbursed upon receipt and approval of expenditure and project reporting.

Note: the percentage of reimbursement is based on the percentage of the IDHS contributions in relation to the total project value.

E. Eligibility Criteria

I. Ontario Health Teams (OHTs), Health Service Providers (HSPs) and/or Indigenous Health Care Organizations

- All proposals must be submitted by **Ontario Health Teams (OHTs)** or other eligible **Health Service Provider(s)[HSPs]**, including **Indigenous Health Care Organizations**, such as those serving First Nations, Inuit, Métis and Urban Indigenous persons.
- OHTs, HSPs and/or Indigenous Health Care Organizations will be designated as the lead applicant and commit to providing the clinical setting in which the innovative technology

will be evaluated, including clinical and operational support, project management support, procurement specialists, and patients.

- Applicants and their partner(s) must be in good financial and reporting standing with OCI where applicable and will agree to provide project metrics and progress reports to OCI on a regular basis.

II. Project Eligibility and Activities:

Alignment with the Challenge Statements: The Challenge Statements support the Provincial Digital Health Priorities, strengthens the MOHs commitment to transform the health care system so that it is integrated, sustainable, and patient centered.

IDHS Projects must include a “Challenge Statement” identified by the OHTs through the Challenge Statement Workshops and must align with the provincial digital health strategy.

NOTE: All projects must address the potential patient benefits, economic and commercialization to the technology company resulting from an IDHS project and should be realized in Ontario (e.g., job creation, incremental revenue, follow-on financing, efficiencies created process improvement).

III. Eligible Use of Funds:

Refer to the [Eligible Expenses](#) document for full details.

F. Project Reporting Requirements

(1) Progress and Financial Claim Report(s):

- Progress report(s), including project progress, proof of expenditures, and a financial attestation, will be required. A progress report will be required at the halfway mark of the project and a final report (which will include reporting for the remainder of the project) will be due by March 31, 2024. The applicant organization will receive a notification from OCI’s AccessOCI system to submit the reports. The report must be received and approved by OCI prior to release of funds for eligible financial claims and release of the holdbacks. Regular communication with the Program Manager regarding project status and updates will occur monthly.

Note: Applicants MUST retain all proof of purchases, receipts, and other relevant documentation relating to eligible expenses. This documentation may be requested by OCI in review of the claims and to ensure all claims are auditable.

(2) Final Results and Financial Claim Report:

- A final report, including progress, proof of expenditures, and a financial attestation, will be required at the end of the project. Forty-five days prior to the scheduled completion date, the Project Team will receive an email notification of the project end date from the AccessOCI system,

with a link to the Final Progress and Financial Claim Report should the Project Team wish to begin entering data.

- On the scheduled project completion date, the Project Team will receive another notification to complete the Final Project Progress and Financial Claim Report from OCI's AccessOCI system.
- All required final reports by all Project Teams must be submitted within 30 days of project completion to be reimbursed for eligible expenses and maintain good financial standing with OCI.
- If early reporting is required, the Applicant may request it by emailing the Program Manager

(3) Metrics Survey:

- The Project Team for each project will be required to complete an annual metrics survey each April for the next three years following completion of the project. This annual report is mandatory for OCI to fulfil its contract with the Government of Ontario. Required metrics reports from all partners must be submitted to maintain good financial standing with OCI.

G. How to Apply

To begin the application process, reach out to the Program Manager (PM) who will connect you with an OCI Business Development Manager (BD) to discuss the opportunity and assist with initiating and the development of the application. In addition, should you require OH support to complete the submission, the PM will make introductions accordingly. The BD/PM will maintain oversight responsibility for the OCI components of any approved project.

Once an application is initiated, applicants MUST complete all requisite information requested in the online application module and upload a completed Application Template to the module. Applications initiated less than two weeks in advance of the submission deadline may not have sufficient time for a BD/PM to support the application.

Successful Project Teams **MUST** execute OCI's standard **Funding Agreement** within 30 days of notification of award. A copy of the Funding Agreement can be downloaded for your reference. Please do not fill out this form; a copy of the agreement will be generated through our online management system and sent to you upon approval of your project.

H. Evaluation and Assessment

IDHS is a competitive program with limited funding. All eligible applications are assessed against program objectives and assessment criteria.

Application Phase

Applications are internally reviewed for completeness, eligibility, and financial compliance (appropriate use of funds) prior to evaluation by an External Review Panel (ERP) and will include Members from the Ministry of Health, Ontario Health as well as Subject Matter Experts. Applications will be reviewed by an ERP of domain experts against program objectives and assessment criteria. Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs) will be completed by the ERP members prior to receipt and review of the Full Applications and other supporting documentation. Applications selected will be invited to present their projects to the ERP and participate in a Q&A session. The presentation can be provided in-person and/or virtually.

Funding Decisions

The ERP provides funding recommendations to the OCI Internal Review Panel (IRP). The IRP is comprised of OCI senior leadership and are responsible for reviewing the funding recommendations by the ERP and makes the final funding decision.

I. Downloads/ Additional Information

- **Eligible Expenditures** Guidelines (Expenditures are only reimbursed for approved project budgets starting from the award notification date. OCI does not cover costs associated with the proposal development phase)
- OCI **Funding Agreement** Template
- Challenge Statement Overview:
 - 1. Deliver patient centred care to patients and families by:**
 - Enabling them to manage their health in the home or community by improving equitable access to innovative digital solutions.
 - Enhancing chronic disease care through advanced digital health solutions.
 - 2. Achieve efficient and coordinated services by:**
 - Increasing adoption, scale, and consistently spread digital solutions that streamline the process, improve workflow.
 - Establishing innovative change management supports for implementing digital solutions (e.g., ensuring the fit of the digital solution to current clinical pathways and developing a plan to utilize and manage patient-generated data).

J. Resources

The following hyperlinked information may provide insight in relation to the key priority areas of the province of Ontario as identified by government stakeholders.

- [Ontario Health Teams](#)
- [Ontario Health Teams The Path Forward](#)
- [Digital Health Playbook](#)
- [Digital Standards in Health Care](#)
- [Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](#)