

About the PATH Model of Care

The PATH model is designed for people with serious health conditions, who, along with their families, may face daunting decisions as they plan for the road ahead. They may have questions about the big picture of health and what to expect in the future.

The role of PATH is to bring more clarity to this time of life and to ensure that everyone involved (including health-care providers and patients/family) is on the same page about the nature of existing health conditions and what lies ahead. We'll show you how to make medical decisions that reflect individual values; help manage symptoms; and help you cope with changing health over time.

A word about frailty

Frailty is a stage of life that begins when the effects of a lifetime of health issues start to impact the ability to manage day-to-day activities (things like shopping, cooking, managing medications, or dressing). Most commonly, these difficulties are driven by changes in physical ability, memory, or a combination of the two. Frailty is not the same as age. Although frailty is more common in older adults, people may experience health issues and/or stressors earlier in their life and therefore become frail at a younger age.

Our expertise is complexity

There are times when it is appropriate to take all possible therapeutic measures to cure or delay illness progression. There are other times, however, when this approach causes more harm than good. The goal of the PATH clinic is to help patients and families choose a blend of therapeutic and palliative measures that will best preserve the individual's experience in their remaining time. The doctors, nurses and other health professionals at the PATH clinic have specialized training and many years of experience working with frail older adults and their families. We are here to help guide patients and families through the process of making health-care decisions. This approach has garnered multiple national awards and accolades, and has been expanded to other health-care programs across the country.

What to expect on the PATH

We believe that having a thorough understanding of present and future health can be transformative and empowering. As a participant in the PATH program, you and your family can expect a thorough evaluation of your current health status, a truthful discussion about your medical conditions, how these conditions will progress, and how any proposed treatments will impact these factors. For many people, this is the first time they receive a "big picture" description of health. While the discussion is grounded in compassion and honesty, it can be upsetting to hear information about health and prognosis for the first time. You can expect the staff at the PATH clinic to listen to you, answer your questions, and help you navigate which decisions should be made in advance and which decisions should not be. Appointments are generally 2 hours in length, but may be longer or separated into

several shorter visits, depending on the complexity of the situation and the decisions required. Depending on your needs, you may be seen by the PATH team again, as health changes, to help you and your family with decision making and addressing symptoms.

Getting on the PATH

People can be referred to the PATH clinic by their family physicians or specialist. The Halifax clinic is located in the Veterans' Memorial Building at the QEII Health Sciences Centre in Halifax, Nova Scotia. To learn more about the PATH Clinic, contact us by telephone at 902-473-3888, by email at info@pathclinic.ca or visit our website at www.pathclinic.ca.

We look forward to working with you!

