

The Royal 2025: Co-Creating Access, Hope, and New Possibilities

Our Context

As part of a transforming health system in Ontario, the Royal Ottawa Health Care Group (The Royal) has been working for years to create consistent, equitable, meaningful care and services for people with mental health and addictions needs. Working with partners across the sector, The Royal has helped shape many initiatives to improve access, revolutionize treatment, fill gaps in care, and enhance quality and outcomes as a “Hospital without Walls.” In the past six months, the COVID-19 pandemic has underscored how critical this work is, emphasizing the urgent need for increased access to mental health and addictions services, both in-person and virtual.

As the first several months of the pandemic unfolded, The Royal recognized an urgent need both to respond with agility to provide immediate services and to continue its longer-term strategic planning. The Royal embarked on a high-engagement planning process in early 2020, with several key themes as guiding context:

- Care and services for people with mental health and addictions needs – and their families – are an integral aspect of overall health, and in uncertain and anxious times, timely support is even more critical
- Digital health and virtual care are not “future” needs but absolute requirements for today
- While there are many excellent service providers in the Ottawa region, and much work is already underway to integrate care and services, there are still many gaps, clients and families do not experience integrated or accessible care, and it is hard for anyone to have a clear view of the system or understand how to navigate it
- The Royal has many roles to play as a regional academic health science centre, and there is desire in the system to better define its role in relationship to other providers in order to ensure all system resources are best used and connected
- The Royal is a global leader in research and teaching, but has many opportunities to better integrate its academic mandate with client/family expertise and clinical practice
- People with mental health and addictions issues experience stigma and marginalization as a direct result of these conditions; many clients and families are further marginalized by poverty, race, immigration status, homelessness, gender and sexual orientation and other systemic inequities.
- The Royal has begun integrating clients and families into planning and decision-making, and there is a desire to amplify this role
- The Royal’s immediate response to COVID-19, both as a provider of direct services and as a system partner and leader, demonstrated agility and innovation that it will sustain and deepen
- The immediate future is highly unpredictable, especially around resource availability, and the strategy needs to be designed as a framework with priorities that will be significant for several years, while the specific activities within each will be adaptable based on the environment as it changes



Overall, the context indicated that the work already underway toward “Hospital without Walls” is the right work at this moment in time, and needs to be enhanced and expanded.

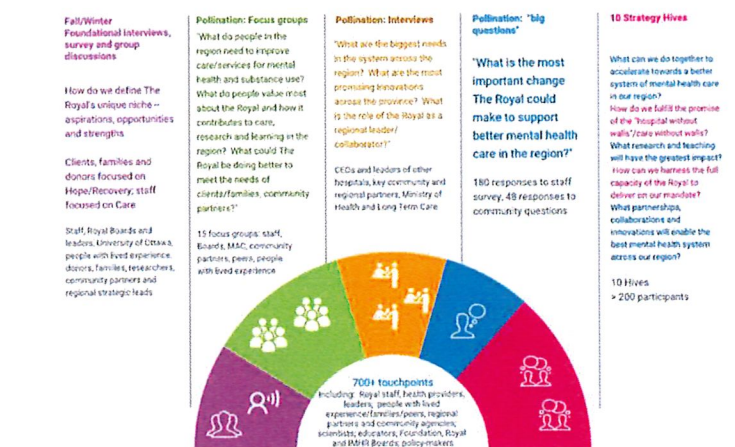
The Royal began strategic planning in early 2020, and when the March lockdown occurred, the senior leadership recognized the urgency to continue planning. Quickly, The Royal pivoted its high engagement planning process from planned in-person collaboration to a completely virtual process. Over five months – while expanding services to accommodate emerging clinical needs and integrating new research questions – The Royal conducted a virtual engagement of clients, families, team members, board members and system partners, with more than 750 touchpoints. Collectively, this group explored the overarching questions: What is the ideal system in the Ottawa region care, services, research and teaching for mental health and addictions services? What are The Royal’s specific and unique roles in that system? And what does The Royal need to do to affirm its leadership, reliability and collaboration within those roles?

Within these conversations, all of the work underway already across the system was considered, along with the key principles of the new provincial Roadmap to Wellness, especially the Core Services Framework. The groups recognized this framework as a useful organizing principle to distinguish where The Royal should be inventing and delivering care and services, and where it might play a less direct role in the system.

The process had four phases: scoping and defining; “pollination,” which included surveys, focus groups and interviews; five “Strategy Hives” (each offered twice) on key strategic questions; and a refining and iterative phase to finalize, shape and operationalize the emerging framework.

Co-creating the strategy

Engagement process



Context: Systemic vision

Throughout the process, the participants in the planning process expressed a shared vision for the system The Royal is part of. This vision needs to be co-created by everyone who guides and provides mental health and addictions care and services in any way in the region, including the nascent Ontario Health Teams and all of the individual providers. The Royal’s strategy is embedded in these aspirations, that can be summarized as “connected, expert care that reflects the full spectrum of human needs.” Some of the specifics are:

- **Clients, family members and peers fully engaged** in meaningful ways



- ***A system that is simple to understand and access, with no gaps, care when/where the client needs it***
- ***All system players are mutually respectful partners***, working in continual collaboration
- ***A “safe” system, meaning*** culturally aware and trauma-informed, anti-oppression, supportive
- ***Integrating all aspects of health and well-being, meaning that*** social determinants of health and full life needs are fully embedded into shared care
- ***Client-relevant outcomes and evidence-informed care***: underpinned by continual learning, evaluation and continual improvement.
- ***Centrally coordinated, with simple intake and referrals***, connected to primary care, hospital partners, and community agencies
- ***Continual, multi-faceted support from first point of contact***: no “inactive” waiting; peer support, self-help and education interventions integrated into all treatment and care
- ***Innovative technology***: to address inequities, improve access, improve capacity in multiple points across the system for shared care, connection between community/primary/specialists

The Royal is clear that working toward this system is a shared responsibility of the province, all regional hospitals, community providers and advocacy groups – it is not the sole work of The Royal. But The Royal’s plan needs to have this system as its backdrop, and clarify where it leads, influences, participates and learns from this overall regional system.

Key elements of the strategy

With this strategy, The Royal is positioning the organization as a *fully integrated academic health science centre*. This includes a significant regional role as a direct care provider, especially in specialized core services (zones 4 and 5 in the provincial framework), as a system leader in innovative virtual care, as an equitable collaborator with other providers in system design, new initiatives and connectivity, as a regional resource for coordination and integration, as a globally relevant incubator for research and innovation, and a significant education site. The strategy also fully incorporates The Royal’s role as an advocate, partner and leader in addressing systemic inequities.



Within these roles, The Royal is committing to strengthening and creating a “shoulder to shoulder” culture, creating deep collaborations with clients and families and system partners.

This culture will take shape through a commitment to the deep work of addressing structural inequities, expanded and reshaped team models, more integrated programming, full engagement of clients and families, and transparent collaboration with other system providers



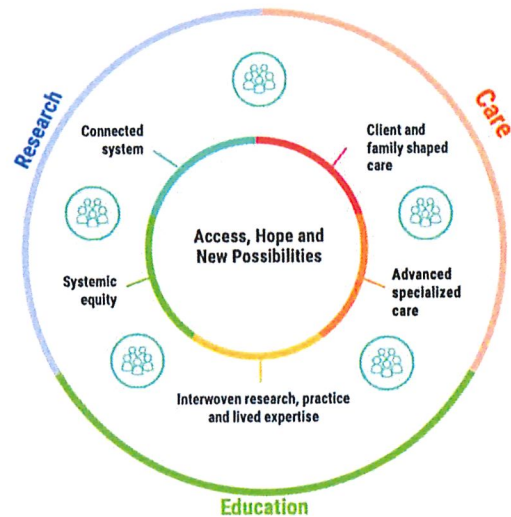
The Royal 2025: Co-Creating Access, Hope and New Possibilities

Our Purpose: *Expand access, hope, and new possibilities for people with mental health and addictions needs through the convergence of client and family-oriented care, science, education and lived expertise.*

As an academic health science centre, all of our work is shaped by **integrated research, care and education**.

There are five **strategic priorities**, high level domains that will focus and frame the work of the organization in the next five years:

1. Innovate and shape care to client and family needs
2. Advance specialized care
3. Connect care and services for a more accessible system
4. Integrate research, education, practice, and lived expertise to improve client and family-oriented outcomes and experiences
5. Advocate and partner for systemic equity



Across all of our work, we will **evolve our culture** inside and outside our Hospital without Walls to:

- **Be a trusted, responsive partner and provider, learning and working “shoulder to shoulder” – as equals – with people across our system**
- **Partner with clients and families** in meaningful ways to infuse their expertise and needs across all of our work.
- Become an **adaptable learning organization** across everything we do, enabling everyone to contribute to their fullest capacity and experience joy and meaning in their work.
- **Challenge organizational, system, disciplinary and diagnostic boundaries in research, education and care**, creating excellence through integrated, diverse and cross-disciplinary perspectives.
- Continually strengthen our commitment to **equity, diversity and inclusion** with clients and families, in our research and with all individuals across the organization.
- **Mobilize academic leadership, knowledge and innovative technology** across all of our work for technology to drive highest quality care, advance our field, and improve outcomes.
- **Develop, support and empower** our people as change leaders, collaborators, advocates and strong teams.



What the Strategy will look and feel like

Fundamentally, this strategy is building on the work that The Royal is already doing, stretching and advancing the commitments, relationships and expertise already underway. Each priority will have detailed actions, outcomes and impact. But there is also an overall story of how the progress to the desired future will look and feel, with some of the following themes:

From Today	To Ultimate Transformation
Client and family members have an advisory role across many Royal programs	→ The Royal is a global leader in deep engagement, partnership and co-design with clients and families in shaping care, research, and evaluation using client/family-oriented outcomes
Regional lead for tertiary care	→ Known regional leader and global innovator in complex/specialized care (zones 4/5 of the province's core services framework)
High clinical expertise and research impact in discrete areas	→ Fully integrated care, science and education, where every clinician and client can contribute to research and every researcher can connect to care, and care and services are quickly infused with new discoveries and innovation
Individual and programmatic relationships and service metrics	→ Organization-wide Royal Service Promise
Strong programs with great care when clients can access them	→ Regional coordinated access and system connections in place to improve access, connect people from program to program
Diagnostically designed programs and structures	→ Programs, services, and system connections designed to enable full bio-psycho-social-spiritual care and services
Regional translator of provincial initiatives	→ Collaborator and influencer of provincial policy and practice creating a shared regional system with clear, transparent roles
Long-standing commitment to health equity and supporting marginalized clients	→ Organization-wide commitment to ongoing learning and public advocacy in equity, diversity, inclusion and systemic equity
Working to reduce wait times	→ Waiting replaced with phased care with meaningful support from the first point of contact
Exploring ways to ensure team members are working to full scope	→ Maximizing our capacity with organizational structures that support and empower everyone to create a thriving environment, work at their best and bring their full complement of knowledge and strengths
Exploring digital health and virtual care	→ Regional and sector leadership in developing, innovating, developing evidence for and providing digital health solutions



Detailed Strategic Priorities

1. Innovate and shape care to client and family needs



Goal: *Clients and families will experience services that are easy to navigate, hopeful, shaped and evaluated around their needs and goals. Our Royal Service Promise will ensure that from the first point of contact, clients and families receive innovative, culturally competent quality care that meets them where they are, by highly knowledgeable, compassionate, interdisciplinary teams and peers at The Royal and by other providers in the system.*

Objectives:

1. Redesign, transform and evaluate programs and services to meet the diverse needs of clients and families as they evolve
 - create integrated pathways (inside and with partners)
 - address full bio-psycho-social-spiritual-needs of clients and families through integration and collaboration
 - evolve the organizational structure, design and supports at The Royal, in partnership with people with lived expertise and our teams, to enable more integrated, interdisciplinary, team-based care that meets clients' needs and fully draws on diverse expertise.
 - create evaluation and improvement models for all programs driven by client-oriented outcomes
 - work with existing funding models to develop creative approaches to interdisciplinary and novel care.
2. Develop and empower our people as change leaders, collaborators, advocates and strong teams within a mutually supportive, respectful environment

Where we will be in five years:

- *Everyone at The Royal will have experiences that reflect our Royal Service Promise*
- *We will be developing, delivering and evaluating innovative, evidence-informed care that improves client-oriented outcomes*
- *The Royal will achieve top quartile performance in accreditation results and meet or exceed quality targets*

Where we will start: Organization-wide initiatives to be launched in 2020/21:

1. Create and implement a Royal Service Promise developed in collaboration with clients and families that will inform quality standards and expectations across all programs and services
2. Undertake an organizational redesign of structures and care models across The Royal to integrate whole person needs, lived expertise, research opportunities and interdisciplinary, team-based care



2. Advance specialized care

Goal: *Grow our regional leadership in specialized care, including integrating client and family expertise, research, education and system partnerships to continually improve care.*

Objectives:

1. Invent, test, evolve, deliver and evaluate improved treatments and outcomes and that support recovery, safety and quality of life, through partnerships among scientists, clinicians, people with lived experience, families and other providers
2. Accelerate knowledge mobilization, transfer and uptake within The Royal and across the system

Where we will be in 5 years:

- *Knowledge developed at The Royal will influence care and treatment for people with specialized and complex needs in our region, across the country and around the world.*
- *Clients with specialized and complex needs in the region will have access to the most leading edge care and treatment, from our providers and through our capacity and knowledge mobilization across the region*

Where we will start: Organization-wide initiatives to be launched in 2020/21:

1. Develop interdisciplinary client and family-oriented research streams that encompass scientific exploration, innovative care models and client-oriented outcome.
2. Build interprofessional clinical research capacity, and create knowledge mobilization processes and structures to grow the transfer and uptake of new knowledge and build capacity at The Royal and beyond



3. Connect care for a more accessible system

Goal: Co-create an accessible and fully integrated system of care, working shoulder to shoulder with clients, families and system partners. Catalyze system change by advancing our leadership as a “hospital without walls” and leader in digital health innovation.

Objectives:

1. Develop and implement regional coordinated access for seamless connection across the system, working toward a fluid digital platform that:
 - matches clients to care
 - supports clinical decisions
 - draws together all of the regional providers, enabling integrated operations and information sharing between providers and programs
 - meets client-oriented outcomes
2. Revolutionize how, when and where care is delivered (virtually and in-person), and clarify our roles across the full spectrum of care
3. Evolve a system of phased treatment so clients have access to some form of accountable, meaningful care from the first point of contact, eliminating static wait times
4. Expand support/service to underserved populations, evolving community-specific approaches in partnership with each community

Where we will be in 5 years:

- *Coordinated access will be successfully implemented, with clients connected to the right care and all providers working in tandem for a seamless, client-oriented system*
- *Every client will have a tangible, supported experience from the first point of contact, including available education and self-management tools throughout their phased treatment*
- *Evolve the concept of wait times so that all clients have access to some coordinated, phased care from first point of contact*

Where we will start: Organization-wide initiatives to be launched in 2020/21:

1. Initiate regional coordinated access process across the system
2. In partnership with clients and family advocates, initiate the next generation of client-oriented resources, peer supports and research
3. Develop and implement cutting-edge digital health solutions



4. Integrate research, education, practice, and lived expertise to improve client and family-oriented outcomes and experiences

Goal: As an innovative academic health science centre, foster a dynamic culture where research and care are connected in all aspects of our work. We will bring together research and practice and forge new possibilities for research that transform client care and outcomes in the areas that matter most to clients and families. We will educate and recruit top talent from around the world to generate a convergence of diverse and cross-disciplinary expertise.

Objectives:

1. Create an integrated education strategy that strengthens education and training across disciplines and professions, attracting learners and trainees as a key part of our workforce and advancing integrated approaches to mental health and addiction.
2. Strengthen our environment to enable academic leaders across disciplines and at all career stages to thrive and further contribute to our shared vision.
3. Build interdisciplinary teams that include clients, families, clinicians, researchers and program leaders to explore questions on the full continuum of research and care, from discovery to evaluation.
4. Build our capacity as an incubator of ideas, and catalyze ideas into actions – for the community, the region, and the world.

Where we will be in five years:

- *Everyone at The Royal will have the potential to be part of and benefit from world leading scientific exploration*
- *The Royal will be a global leader in mental health and addictions (MHA) in integrated client/family oriented research, outcomes, care design, evaluation and adaptation*

Where we will start: Organization-wide initiatives to be launched in 2020/21:

1. Initial work toward fully-integrated MHA client/family oriented research, outcomes, care design, evaluation and adaptation
2. Actively build a learning organization across The Royal that puts people first and prioritizes quality and academic excellence



5. Advocate and partner for systemic equity

Goal: *Build understanding that people living with mental health conditions and addictions inherently experience systemic inequities, discrimination, and that many of our clients experience factors that further marginalize them. We will elevate the voices of individuals and groups who experience systemic inequities to push a progressive agenda around mental health/addiction services and systemic inequities, continually evolving our own capacity for equity, diversity and inclusion, and using science to challenge oppressive structures and foster policy change.*

Objectives:

1. Develop capacity within The Royal and with system partners and other stakeholders to amplify the voices of people with lived expertise and to identify and influence the big topics that could be shifted through evidence, science and sharing experiences.
2. Develop a clear, shared commitment to creating systemic equity for people with mental health conditions and addictions and for all marginalized, racialized and other vulnerable, diverse individuals.
3. Build capacity for “advocacy through science”, through education, outreach and taking public stances on systemic issues related to mental health, in collaboration with system partners and people with lived expertise
4. Build cultural competence and humility at The Royal to ensure our programs, services and spaces are welcoming to all, and appropriately address needs

Where we will be in five years:

- *Indigenous people with mental health and addictions needs receive meaningful, high quality, culturally competent care in the setting that works best for them*
- *The Royal will play a key role in making policy and social change related to systemic equity through evidence, science and sharing experiences*

Where we will start: Organization-wide initiatives to be launched in 2020/21:

1. Deepen our commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion, ensuring our programs, services and spaces are welcoming to all, mutually respectful and meet the specific needs of culturally and gender diverse communities.
2. Work closely with indigenous communities and partners to ensure indigenous people with mental health and addictions needs receive meaningful, high quality, culturally competent and compassionate care.



Summary of five year organization-wide outcomes

Over the next quarter, specific measures will be developed through operational planning.

Inclusive, Equitable and Supportive Experience and Culture

- Everyone at The Royal will have experiences that reflect our Royal Service Promise
- Every client will have a tangible, supported experience from the first point of contact, including available education and self-management tools throughout their phased treatment
- The Royal will play a key role in making policy and social change related to systemic equity through evidence, science and sharing experiences
- Indigenous people with mental health and addictions needs receive meaningful, high quality, culturally competent care in the setting that works best for them

Fully integrated and high impact academic health science centre

- We will be developing, delivering and evaluating innovative, evidence-informed care that improves client-oriented outcomes
- Everyone at The Royal will have the potential to be part of and benefit from world leading scientific exploration
- The Royal will achieve top quartile performance in accreditation results and meet or exceed quality targets
- Knowledge developed at The Royal will influence care and treatment for people with specialized and complex needs in our region, across the country and around the world.
- Clients with specialized and complex needs in the region will have access to the most leading edge care and treatment, from our providers and through our capacity and knowledge mobilization across the region

World-leading client-oriented outcomes and connection

- Coordinated access will be successfully implemented, with clients connected to the right care and all providers working in tandem for a seamless, client-oriented system
- Evolve the concept of wait times so that all clients have access to some coordinated, phased care from first point of contact
- The Royal will be a global leader in MHA in integrated client/family oriented research, outcomes, care design, evaluation and adaptation