



# A Strategy for the Decade Ahead

## 2025-2034



# Land Acknowledgement

Southlake Health and Southlake Foundation recognize and acknowledge the lands originally used and occupied by the First Peoples of the Williams Treaties First Nations and other Indigenous Peoples, and on behalf of Southlake, we would like to thank them for sharing this land. We would also like to acknowledge the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation as our closest First Nation community and recognize the unique relationship the Chippewas have with the lands and waters of this territory. They are the water protectors and environmental stewards of these lands and we join them in these responsibilities.

# A MESSAGE FROM THE Board Chair and President & CEO

For 100 years and counting, Southlake has built healthy communities through leading edge care, innovative partnerships, and amazing people.

While many things have changed over the years, our unwavering pride for people, place, and performance has stood the test of time. As we look toward the future, we are proud to unveil a new strategy that will chart the next 10 years of care in northern York Region and southern Simcoe County.

Ontario's healthcare system is struggling under the weight of an aging and growing population, limited resources and dated infrastructure. In fact, a recent study from the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto projects that approximately 3.1 million people are expected to be living with major illness in 2040 – up from 1.8 million in 2020. Multimorbidity is also rising as more Ontarians manage two or more chronic conditions, contributing to an increase in care needs in an already strained environment.

More must be done now to meet these needs. The municipalities we serve are among the fastest growing and aging in the province and without any material acute care expansion in over 20 years, Southlake has become an epicentre of hallway healthcare in Ontario. But we cannot wait for others to solve our problems for us. The urgency of our challenge must dictate our pace and we will not leave patients behind.

When faced with these challenges during strategy consultations, our communities spoke loud and clear - increase access to high-quality care, closer to home - so that's exactly what we are going to do.

Southlake's new strategy for the decade ahead will improve how care is delivered by leveraging 100 years of expertise as a leading community hospital and regional tertiary care provider to build what we are calling a Distributed Health Network. Anchored by our Davis Drive site and existing community-based locations, we will work with partners to establish additional footholds across the municipalities we serve so we can provide care closer to home and tackle hallway healthcare. Key to this will be the creation of a second hospital site and the redevelopment of our Davis Drive campus. We will also expand beyond our walls all together, with a focus on virtual care and by leveraging learnings from our successful Southlake@home program.

Transformative philanthropy will propel our strategy. Our generous donor community is committed to helping Southlake address the healthcare challenges in northern York Region and southern Simcoe County.

We have successfully provided services from both the hospital and various community-based locations across northern York Region and southern Simcoe County for some time. With our new strategy we are doubling down on this approach by embracing an exciting new vision for the future of healthcare with a new name as...



We invite you to learn more and join us on our journey that will chart care for the decades ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Harris', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Marilee Harris,  
Board Chair

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Woods', written over a light grey rectangular background.

Paul Woods, MD  
President & CEO



# Executive Summary

Ontario's healthcare system is at a crossroads facing unprecedented demand and a unique combination of challenges at magnitudes never seen before in Southlake's 100-year history. Challenges such as:

## ***Unprecedented Population Growth and Aging***

The communities served by Southlake are among the fastest growing and aging in Ontario. Southlake provides care to two of the province's four fastest growing municipalities - East Gwillimbury and Bradford West Gwillimbury. Our catchment area is growing at twice the rate of the province as a whole.

## ***Health System Integration***

Persistent siloes negatively impact how healthcare is organized and funded, putting stress on the delivery of services felt by patients, families, caregivers, and communities every day. While individual experiences of care are excellent, transitions between sectors of the system can be difficult and access to care remains stubbornly unequal across Southlake's catchment area. A proud member of the Northern York and South Simcoe Ontario Health Team (NYSS OHT), Southlake is inspired by new and expanded integrated care initiatives and excited to continue supporting the OHT's development.

## ***Limited Acute Capital Investment at Southlake***

Without any significant acute care capacity expansion in more than 20 years, Southlake is rapidly becoming one of the most overcrowded hospitals in the province.

## ***Health Workforce***

Stretched staff resources can erode the patient experience, notably during patient handoffs between providers and during discharge planning between parts of this system. This can lead to stress and burnout.

## ***Access to Care in the Community***

With limited capacity in the community, hospitals like Southlake struggle to transition patients to more appropriate care settings based on their needs, exacerbating hallway healthcare at the Davis Drive site.

## ***Keeping Pace with Technology Advances and Digital Integration***

In a resource-challenged healthcare system, staying up-to-date with new technologies, digital solutions, and equipment can be difficult. The importance of community investment cannot be overstated, with our partners at the Southlake Foundation spearheading ambitious campaigns that drive philanthropy to benefit the communities we serve.

## ■ The Quintuple Aim

To tackle these issues, healthcare organizations should focus on fulfilling the Quintuple Aim to simultaneously improve population health outcomes, experience of care, care team well-being, health equity and cost of care measures. Southlake Health views our most pressing challenges and exciting opportunities through the Quintuple Aim lens to deliver on our commitment to leading edge care, close to home.



## ■ Thinking differently – what is a hospital?

Historically, hospitals were thought of as places – buildings where patients need to go to receive care. For decades our healthcare system has been designed this way. The extensive issues the system now faces necessitates a different approach.

Patients, families, and caregivers are demanding change. They want healthcare to evolve like other industries to be more user-friendly and connected.

The historical role of hospitals as a catch-all for capacity gaps in other parts of the system is not sustainable. Community organizations play a critical role and need increased resources. With our partners, Southlake Health will provide care where patients want to receive it – closer to home or at home, when appropriate – to preserve precious acute care hospital capacity for those who need it most.

## ■ What could a hospital be?

Viewing hospitals merely as places is part of what has led to the challenges Ontario is facing. But if a hospital is not simply just a place, what is it?

Southlake Health believes a hospital is fundamentally a constellation of expertise. It is an assembly of people with specialized knowledge, skills, and experience that provide services to fulfill a need.

When we recast hospitals this way, where and how those services are provided becomes less relevant. Some people require care at a hospital with advanced technology and equipment, while others are better served in a community setting or at home. Others do not require in-person contact at all. Most people require a mix, both within a specific healthcare journey and over time. This shift in perspective is essential to address our challenges.

## ■ The only constant is change

Care that used to require admission to hospital is now provided on an outpatient basis. New diagnostic and surgical approaches are making care less invasive. Pharmaceutical advancement is enabling more services to be provided in the community or at home. The decentralizing effect of technology means patients can receive high-quality ongoing care through virtual methods and remote monitoring without needing to set foot in a hospital.

Expertise is no longer concentrated to a physical location, but spread across various nodes of care.

## ■ We must pick up the pace

For years everyone has “admired” the problems in our healthcare system, fascinated by their complexity. We no longer have the luxury of waiting for solutions. During the Apollo 13 crisis, the standard speed with which scientists and engineers solved problems did not matter. The urgency of the need dictated the pace. A similar mindset in our healthcare system is required now.

## ■ Southlake’s Distributed Health Network solution

Central to the challenges that Southlake and many other hospitals in Ontario face are two realities:

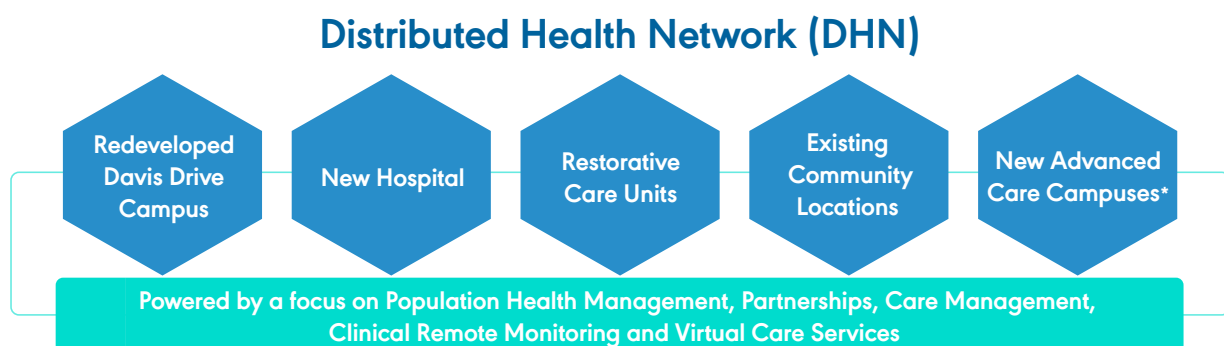
- 1) Geography - our core catchment area is nearly 1,200 square kilometres and our tertiary regional programs cover a much larger area.
- 2) Capacity - our buildings are too small and too old which prevents us from serving more patients.

However, Southlake Health believes we can use our first challenge - geography - to help solve our second - capacity - in order to increase access to care. By transforming our organization through key Population Health Management principles to foster Quintuple Aim improvements, we can provide the right care in the right location, reduce overcrowding, and ensure long-term sustainability by evolving into a Distributed Health Network (DHN).

A DHN is a new way to organize and deliver care across our broad geographic catchment area. Services will be spread throughout the municipalities we serve. Acute hospital-based care will be delivered at a redeveloped Davis Drive site, as well as at a new hospital currently in the early planning stages. Services that don’t need to be provided in a hospital will be delivered at Advanced Care Campuses, multifunctional spaces that will be developed to support high-quality care closer to home to help reduce hallway healthcare.

This distributed approach to care will be powered by a focus on care management and coordination, clinical remote monitoring, and virtual care services. We will also leverage our experience delivering care alongside our partners through integrated care initiatives, such as the successful Southlake@home program, which has spread across the province.

Southlake will continue to pursue new partnerships with other healthcare organizations and strengthen existing ones, confident in our belief that patients can benefit from increased access to community-based providers and their expertise.



\*Smaller multifunctional spaces that will be developed across our vast catchment area to support high-quality care closer to home to help reduce hallway healthcare.

## ■ Strategic Priorities and Enablers

Five Strategic Priorities have been identified as areas of focus to strengthen Southlake and set us up for success as we bring the DHN vision to life. Five key Enablers will serve as drivers to empower our progress on our strategic priorities.

These were developed based on deep internal and external engagement, and in response to the challenges we face and promising opportunities ahead:

### Priorities

- **Clinical Excellence** - Maintain a relentless focus on clinical excellence by consistently providing evidence-informed care that patients deserve and can trust.
- **Quality and Safety** - Consistently provide high-quality and safe care to everyone who relies on us, while building trust and accountability to inspire people to deliver their best.
- **Experience** - Enable a positive experience for everyone who comes through our doors and make Southlake the best place to work.
- **New Models of Care** - Distribute services closer to home to improve the Quintuple Aim.
- **Partnerships, Research and Academics** - Foster knowledge development and exchange for the benefit of patients and strengthen our partnerships.

### Enablers

- **People** - Our people are the most important part of Southlake.
- **Sustainability** - Ensuring we are good stewards of taxpayer dollars without losing focus on the environmental impact of what we do is of paramount importance.
- **Infrastructure** - We need to care for the buildings and spaces from which our people care for patients.
- **Data and Analytics** - After our people, data is the most important strategic asset we have.
- **Digital Health** - People expect healthcare to be convenient and connected, like how they live the rest of their lives.



## ■ Population Health Management and the Learning Health System

Population Health Management is a well-established evidence-based approach to drive improvements along each aspect of the Quintuple Aim. Population Health Management challenges us to think proactively about everyone who lives in our communities and work with our partners to design a system that meets their needs.

According to the World Health Organization, the key principles of Population Health Management are:

- Defining and identifying the population we serve
- Understanding their healthcare needs
- Proactive modeling and evidence-based care planning
- Delivering tailored services
- Focusing on continuous evaluation and improvement

By adopting Population Health Management as a core operating system, Southlake Health will learn from and partner with leading healthcare systems from around the world to ensure we can make the most significant impact for northern York Region and southern Simcoe County.

To do so, Southlake Health will deploy the Learning Health System approach to thoughtfully integrate insightful accelerants such as research and academics to refine our operations in a sustainable manner and drive improved population health management.

Refined at the Institute for Better Health at Trillium Health Partners, the Learning Health System Action Framework is designed to accelerate improvement through five “Learning Gears”:

- Advanced Analytics and Population Insights
- Evidence Syntheses and Curation
- Patient, Caregiver and Provider Co-Design
- Implementation and Reach
- Rapid Cycle Evaluation, Feedback and Adaption

Building on the successes in our first 100 years, this new strategy sets out an ambitious plan to grow and transform our organization and, along with our partners, address the significant healthcare challenges facing our part of the province.

## ■ Impact and Outcomes

We will measure the success of our strategy through the Quintuple Aim.

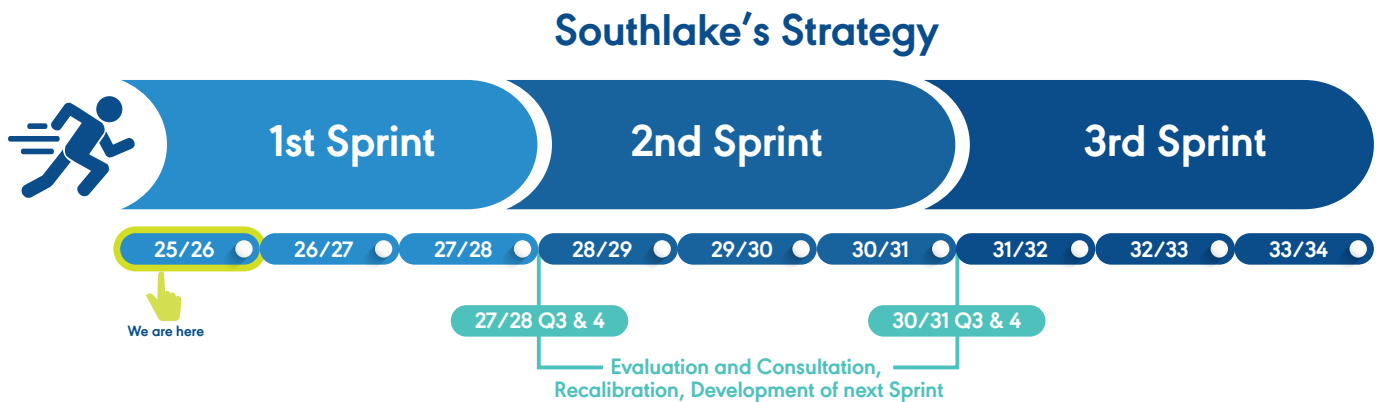
Objectives	Anticipated impact and outcomes
Improve patient outcomes and health of the population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High-quality care and the best possible clinical outcomes for the patients who rely on us for care.</li> <li>• A proactive focus on prevention and wellness, especially for those with chronic disease.</li> </ul>
Better patient, family and caregiver experiences of care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional integrated care pathways to coordinate services, with a special focus on transitions of care across sectors of the healthcare system.</li> <li>• Patient-centred care that follows people where they go and customizes services to their specific needs so the experience of care can be as positive as the quality of care itself.</li> </ul>
Enhanced team member satisfaction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced burnout by tackling long-standing barriers to collaboration across the healthcare system.</li> <li>• Improved team morale by enabling clinical teams to spend more time on patient care and less on reactive problem-solving.</li> </ul>
Improved health equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved access to care across our vast catchment area, responsive to the diverse needs of our growing communities.</li> <li>• Expanded reach by leveraging partnerships, community and home-based services and virtual options to help address historical equity challenges.</li> </ul>
Better value and financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maximized value for taxpayer dollars that are invested in us by providing care options in lower cost settings and preserving acute hospital capacity for those who need it most.</li> <li>• A successful example of the benefits of Population Health Management and integrated care at scale.</li> </ul>

## ■ Planning and Implementation Sprints

Our new strategy is a transformative ten-year plan that accounts for the rapidly changing healthcare landscape by dividing our planning and implementation phases into three-year sprints. This will allow us to focus on strategic project execution, building momentum for ongoing transformation while enacting meaningful change in the short-term.

There are many benefits to this approach:

- Flexibility and adaptability - Sprints allow us to adapt to evolving healthcare trends, technological advancements, and policy/regulatory changes.
- Evaluation and course correction - Sprints enable nimble implementation, ensuring that long-term goals can still be achieved without major setbacks.
- Internal and external engagement - Sprints create a sense of excitement and focus for everyone in the Southlake family and across the communities we serve, aligned with our short-, medium-, and long-term objectives.
- Risk management and resource allocation - Sprints provide frequent reassessment opportunities so we can mitigate issues and ensure our resources are allocated effectively and efficiency.



## ■ Conclusion

The modern hospital is much more than a building – it is a constellation of expertise that must adapt to patients' changing needs and the evolving healthcare landscape. By shifting away from traditional thinking that sees hospitals as simple bricks and mortar facilities, we can better appreciate their true value – harnessing the collective expertise, compassion, and experience of their people to deliver care in new and flexible ways.

Fueled by transformative philanthropy from our generous donors, in the decade ahead, Southlake Health will continue to focus on what we do best - providing leading edge care to the communities who rely on us. By evolving our organization into a Distributed Health Network, focusing on the principles of Population Health Management and strengthening partnerships, we will improve outcomes and experience for patients, families and caregivers, while also enhancing satisfaction for our teams, addressing health equity concerns and ensuring sustainability.

Join us.



596 Davis Drive  
Newmarket, Ontario  
L3Y 2P9

Tel: 905.895.4521  
TTY: 905.952.3062  
[southlake.ca](http://southlake.ca)