

For Immediate Release

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Providing Relief in Dealing with Arthritis: Musculoskeletal Rapid Access Clinic for Hips and Knees

When Gianna's hip pain became unbearable last year, she was referred to Halton Healthcare's Musculoskeletal Rapid Access Clinic (RAC). She was very impressed with how the clinic was able to help her access the surgery she needed so quickly. Today, now totally pain free, Gianna says that the RAC is the hospital's best kept secret.

The RAC has been successfully providing some much needed pain relief for patients living with moderate to severe arthritic hip and knee pain since it was established in 2018. With its coordinated intake process, the clinic offers patients timely access to assessment, education, appropriate treatment options, an individualized treatment plan and if deemed appropriate, helps fast-track them for surgery.

Patients are referred to the Rapid Access Clinic by their family physician and are seen by an Advanced Practice Clinician within four weeks of the referral.

"Patient experience is our priority," explains Justine Wong, Advanced Practice Clinician, Halton Healthcare RAC. "Like Gianna, many patients come to us with significant pain and uncertainty about next steps. We provide them ways to manage their pain, educate them on non-surgical and surgical treatment options, and help them navigate the healthcare system so they can easily access the care and resources they need."

An Advanced Practice Clinician is a Regulated Healthcare Professional such as a Physiotherapist, Registered Nurse, Nurse Practitioner or Chiropractor with additional training in orthopaedic assessment and care. They conduct a very comprehensive standardized assessment. Patients who do not require a surgical consult are given recommendations including, but not limited to, exercise programs, physiotherapy, assistive devices and links to community resources such as the Arthritis Society.

If the assessment indicates that the patient is appropriate for surgical consult, they are referred to an orthopaedic surgeon and given the option of choosing their appointment based on preferred hospital, preferred surgeon and/or the next available appointment. Depending on the current wait times, most patients are seen by an orthopaedic surgeon within four to six (4-6 weeks).

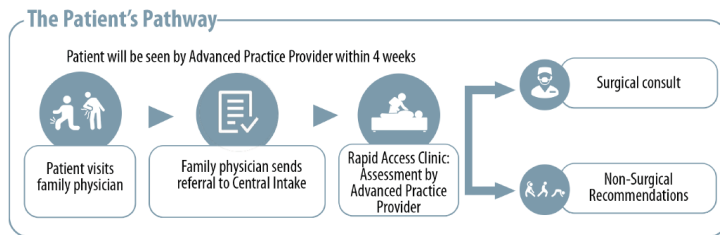
"I was pleasantly surprised at how quick I got in to the RAC for an assessment. Justine was extremely thorough and very helpful. She really took her time with me," explains Gianna. "We discussed my condition, she explained my options and she addressed all my questions and concerns."

"The Rapid Assessment Clinic does an excellent job of assessing patients before we see them on the surgical side. The Advanced Practice Clinicians, usually physiotherapists, have excellent knowledge of osteoarthritis of the hip and knee," explains Dr Thomas Zochowski, Orthopaedic Surgeon, Halton Healthcare. "Their coordination of the whole process is invaluable - it speeds things up and streamlines the process so patients can get the care they need, when they need it."

"I saw Justine in the RAC at the end of September, had my surgical consult with Dr. Zochowski a couple of weeks later, and was booked for surgery on October 23rd. I guess that's why they call it the Rapid Access Clinic," notes Gianna. "My care through my entire journey - from assessment to surgery and through my rehabilitation - was absolutely phenomenal thanks to all the wonderful caregivers at Halton Healthcare. I think the RAC is one of the hospital's best kept secrets. What a wonderful program! It is reassuring to know that we have this clinic available in our community at OTMH."

The RAC Program was developed through a partnership with the Mississauga Halton Local Health Integration Network (LHIN), Halton Healthcare and Trillium Health Partners to ensure that patients experiencing moderate to severe osteoarthritis in their hips and knees have access to a high quality continuum of care. To date, the clinic has helped more than 2000 patients. Based on the success of the RAC, the Program has been expanded to include shoulder assessment.

Patients must be referred to the Hip and Knee Rapid Access Clinic through the Mississauga Halton Central Intake Program by their family physician or specialist. Go to <https://mhcentralintake.com/services/musculoskeletal-care-hip-knee/> to print off a referral form.



Link to Video: [Click here to watch Gianna's story](#)

About Halton Healthcare

Halton Healthcare is a healthcare organization comprised of three community hospitals - Georgetown Hospital, Milton District Hospital and Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, along with several community programs and services. Together we provide healthcare services to nearly 400,000 residents in the communities of Halton Hills, Milton and Oakville. Halton Healthcare has been recognized for its best practices in a number of patient safety and patient care initiatives. For more information, visit www.haltonhealthcare.com. Follow us on Twitter @HaltonHlthcare, Facebook and Instagram.

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