

# Monica Bettazzoni

Chief Operating Officer and Program Director, Georgetown Hospital

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## Introducing Monica Bettazzoni, Chief Operating Officer and Program Director, Georgetown Hospital

Halton Healthcare is a leading healthcare organization serving people with compassionate, quality and integrated community hospital care. The organization is comprised of three community hospitals - Georgetown Hospital, Milton District Hospital and Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital, along with several community programs and services. As part of our commitment to supporting care in our communities, Halton Healthcare is proud to introduce **Monica Bettazzoni** as Chief Operating Officer of the Georgetown Hospital and Director for the Georgetown Hospital Family Practice Program, beginning June 13, 2022.



Monica holds a Bachelor of Medical Rehabilitation, Occupational Therapy from the University of Manitoba and a Master of Education and Doctor of Philosophy from the University of Toronto. She has been part of the Halton Healthcare team for over ten years in the role of Program Director, Mental Health, Central Intake and Self-Management Programs.

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## Q&A

### Q: What's your professional background?

A: I began my career as an Occupational Therapist. I chose the profession because I was pulled towards helping people, particularly with a focus on recovery. Working as part of a team and empowering patients to overcome physical and mental health challenges to achieve their goals has been very rewarding.

After earning a Master of Education in Applied Psychology and Doctor of Philosophy, I had the opportunity to grow as a leader through a variety of manager and director roles, leading teams in system-wide transformations across all levels of care, developing new programs and leading several redevelopment projects. In my time with the Mental Health Program at Halton Healthcare, for instance, I've had the opportunity to support its growth to provide a full continuum of care and expand across all three hospitals and through Halton Region, while also leading teams to transition into the new Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital.

The past couple of years much of our work has expanded to include the Connected Care Halton Ontario Health Team as well as COVID-19 response and recovery. While I didn't expect that I would be living and working through a pandemic in my lifetime, I can honestly say that I am honoured to have worked with such incredible teams as we have supported our patients and families and the system as a whole. As I took on leadership positions within the Halton Healthcare COVID-19 Emergency Operations Centre, there were so many quick lessons learned. Together our teams have risen to all challenges, supported and adapted – I'm taking all of that with me into this new role.

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## **Q: What are your priorities in your new role?**

A: My first priority as I join the team at Georgetown Hospital will be to learn as much as I can about the organization and its people, through meeting with staff, physicians and volunteers and doing a lot of listening. It has me reflecting on COVID-19 and how it's changed the landscape of healthcare. The impact of the pandemic on our health and human resources has proven that this is where a strong focus needs to be. We need to support and restore our staffing, and move back to a state of stability, which means resourcing staffing, strengthening our teams and putting the focus back on care.

## **Q: What do you see as your biggest challenges?**

A: This really goes back to what I've set as my early priorities – restoring and supporting our health and human resources. Throughout the pandemic healthcare workers faced many challenges such as heavy workloads, changing shifting policies, and the added stress associated with caring for COVID patients, not to mention the need to balance work and home life pressures. We know that these challenges lead to resignations, low morale and burn out.

I will be focused on retaining and recruiting staffing and restoring resiliency, capacity and staff well-being – for our teams and for our patients and families. I know this is going to be a challenge, but with steady focus on our goals, and giving people the tools to achieve them, we can get there together.

## **Q: As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up, and why?**

A: I grew up in Winnipeg, Manitoba and was a huge fan of medical television shows, like *Emergency!* This was before the time of reality television, so it was my glimpse of what teams did to save lives and I wanted to be a part of it. I was always intrigued by the back story of the patient - what led to the emergency situation, or how did things resolve for them. That's why I chose the initial path of becoming an Occupational Therapist (OT). OTs get to know all aspects of a patient's life and support them to achieve goals that are meaningful to them. As a leader, that also translates into getting to know staff and other leaders and helping them achieve their goals – personal, professional and organizational.

## **Q: What is the best piece of advice you've ever been given?**

A: I live by the advice I was given by a former supervisor, mentor and now friend. She told me that you can *never assume anything*. For me that always means checking in, being a good communicator and making sure that everyone is on the same page. It doesn't necessarily mean that we're all taking the same path, but as long as we're all going in the same direction, with the same end in sight, we'll get there.

## **Q: Any final thoughts?**

A: I am driven by being a helper and having an impact in what I do – even in the smallest ways. I love being able to look back and feel that I've made a difference because of my work and the work of the teams that I'm a part of. Whether it's as simple as helping a patient navigate the halls of the hospital to

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get to an appointment, or developing a plan and delivering on a new program for thousands of patients and their families, I get satisfaction from knowing that I've made a difference.

I am excited to be taking on this role and am honoured to join such a wonderful team in Georgetown. I want to thank everyone for welcoming me to the team and for diving right into the work with me. I also want to thank Cindy McDonell, who was in this role before me. Following in Cindy's footsteps will be a definite challenge, but I can't wait to see what we're all able to accomplish together, with the shared purpose: To Care.