

ONTARIO'S PLAN FOR HEALTH CARE

The McGuinty Government's Plan for Health Care has three components: Healthier Ontarians, improving patients' access to doctors and nurses, and shorter wait times.

Healthier Ontarians

Keeping Ontarians healthy is a major component of the government's Plan for Health Care. The following are some of the strides our government has made to ensure a healthier Ontario:

Keeping people healthier

- Publicly funding the vaccination of more than two million children against chicken pox, meningococcal meningitis and pneumococcal disease
- Initiating *Operation Health Protection - An Action Plan to Prevent Threats to our Health and to Promote a Healthy Ontario*, a three-year plan to revitalize the public health system following decades of neglect
- Launching *Smoke Free Ontario*, a comprehensive strategy to combat smoking including legislation that would prohibit smoking in all workplaces and enclosed public places, initiatives to prevent young people from starting to smoke and helping smokers quit

Improving community-based care

- Unprecedented investments in home care, long-term care, community support services and community mental health

Improving the determinants of health

- Cleaner sources of energy
- Drinking water protection
- Food safety

Improving patients' access to doctors and nurses

The government is committed to increasing the number of doctors and nurses and improving access to all health care professionals by:

- Establishing 150 Family Health Teams (FHTs) by 2007-2008, which will provide health care to some 2.5 million Ontarians, close to home
- Achieving a groundbreaking agreement with the Ontario Medical Association, which will bring more doctors to Ontario and improve health services for patients
- Creating 141 new permanent family medicine residency positions by 2006, resulting in 337 more family physicians ready to practice by 2008 providing care to 400,000 more Ontarians
- More than doubling the number of training positions for International Medical Graduates (IMGs) from 90 to 200
- Funding 3,052 more full-time nursing positions in our hospitals, long-term care homes, home care and community agencies

Shorter Wait Times

Reducing wait times for key services is one of the government's top priorities. To achieve this, the government has committed to providing timely access to key services, including cancer surgery, hip and knee replacements, cardiac surgery, cataract surgery, and MRI/CT scans.

For 2004/2005, the McGuinty government provided funding for:

- an extra 1700 cancer surgeries;
- an additional 1680 hip and knee joint replacements;
- 2,000 new cataract surgeries;
- 1,016 more diagnostic procedures to detect and prevent heart disease
- 37,581 more MRI exams, a nearly 20 per cent increase
- 81,268 more CT exams

Creating a Health Care System

The government will prioritize local needs and integrate care, eliminate barriers to access, and ensure appropriate quality care is delivered by:

- Transferring decision-making and planning power to the local level, through Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) that will put patients at the center of the health care system
- Utilizing government resources to oversee health care planning, and focusing on managing health care human resources and information
- Having the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care take on a strategic role: setting strategic direction and priorities, providing central oversight of the health care system, setting and maintaining standards, developing policy, legislation & regulations, and being responsible for overall monitoring and reporting to the public

Better use of information and information management:

- An new information management strategy will mean better data, better ability to measure performance and better decision-making

Providing Proof of Results

The government will ensure that there is independent and public reporting by:

- Creating the Ontario Health Quality Council, an arms-length independent body that will monitor the province's health care system
- Utilizing third-party verification of the results on improvements in the delivery of health care, for example the Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences (ICES) Wait Times report
- Establishing an accountability framework for the health care system supported by Bill 8, The Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act
- Making the Chief Medical Officer of Health more independent, with the ability to report directly to the legislature and to the public