

June 2, 2006

FAMILY HEALTH TEAMS

The McGuinty government is bringing better health care to 2.5 million Ontarians by creating 150 Family Health Teams.

What are Family Health Teams?

Family Health Teams include doctors who work with other health care providers such as nurse practitioners, nurses, pharmacists, dietitians, physician specialists, social workers, health educators, mental health workers and others, depending on the needs of the community they serve.

These interdisciplinary teams work together to provide better access to comprehensive care. After hours, patients can call a registered nurse through the Telephone Health Advisory Service for advice. If needed, the nurse can also contact an on-call doctor to discuss the patient's case.

What Do Family Health Teams Do?

- Stress education and disease prevention, and encourage people to take an active role in their own health care
- Provide a comprehensive range of health care services to meet local health care needs
- Expand access to health care by providing services during extended hours and on weekends
- Provide health information so that patients can make informed decisions about their health
- Help manage chronic diseases like diabetes and asthma
- Improve health care coordination by better linking patients to other parts of the health care system, such as hospitals, long-term care homes, public health, mental health, and community programs and services
- Enable health care providers to share and access test results and other important patient information

What Does This Mean for Patients?

Patients in a Family Health Team will continue to see their family doctor when needed. Patients will also be able to see other health care professionals within the team, such as nurse practitioners, nurses, dietitians and pharmacists. Patients will also have access to their doctor or another doctor in the Family Health Team during extended hours. After hours and on weekends, patients may also call the Telephone Health Advisory Service to speak to a registered nurse.

In all of these cases, a patient's own doctor will receive information on these visits or calls so that the doctor will always be up-to-date on the patient's medical condition.

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