

---

**ONTARIO IMPROVING ACCESS TO PROSTATE CANCER TESTING***McGuinty Government To Cover Community Laboratory PSA Tests Under OHIP*

NEWS

December 16, 2008  
2008/nr-122

Ontario is improving access to care by making it easier for men to get tested for prostate cancer closer to home.

Starting in January, 2009, the cost of a Prostate-Specific Antigen test performed at a community laboratory will be covered under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan when it's ordered by a primary care provider for men who meet the test's clinical guidelines.

Making the PSA test available in community labs means many men will now benefit from improved access and monitoring within their own community. For those living in rural and northern communities this flexibility will provide greater convenience because less time will be required to travel to and from a testing facility.

Currently, publicly funded tests are only available in hospitals and are covered through a hospital's budget.

**QUOTES**

"Through more discussions with health care providers and increased access to the PSA test, Ontario's men will be better equipped to detect prostate cancer," said David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. "Our government pledged to increase access to the PSA test — I'm pleased to follow through on that commitment."

"Making the test more accessible through community labs removes a barrier for men at risk and for those with symptoms who should have a PSA test," said Terrance Sullivan, President and CEO of Cancer Care Ontario. "Men should talk to their primary care physician about whether the PSA test is right for them."

"I'm pleased the government is making it easier for all Ontarians — especially those in rural and northern areas of the province — to get the PSA test," said Thunder Bay-Atikokan MPP Bill Mauro, who introduced the issue in two Private Member's Bills.

**QUICK FACTS**

- In Ontario in 2007, about 8,900 men were diagnosed with prostate cancer and 1,650 died from the disease — the third leading cause of cancer death in men.
- The PSA test is a blood test that measures the amount of PSA in the blood. PSA is produced by the prostate and is normally in a man's blood in small amounts. An elevated PSA level may indicate that cancer is present.
- Elevated PSA levels don't necessarily mean a man has cancer. Other factors — infection of the prostate gland, for example — can also cause PSA levels to rise.

## LEARN MORE

For Frequently Asked Questions: [Frequently asked questions.](#)

For more information on the Clinical Guidelines: [Clinical Guidelines](#)

---

Steve Erwin, Minister's Office, 416-326-3986  
Andrew Morrison, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care,  
416-314-6197

**ontario.ca/health-news**  
*Disponible en français*