

**NEW AGREEMENT WITH DOCTORS IMPROVES ACCESS TO CARE**

*McGuinty Government And Doctors Will Work To Get A Family Doctor For 500,000 Ontarians*

NEWS

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The McGuinty government has reached a new agreement with the Ontario Medical Association that includes a shared commitment to help 500,000 Ontarians without a family physician find one.

The commitment is the driving force behind a new program called Health Care Connect that will connect patients with family health care providers who are taking on new patients. Health care professionals in each of the 14 Local Health Integration Networks will connect people with appropriate health care providers in their community. The program will be launched in February, 2009.

Other key components of the agreement ratified by Ontario Medical Association members on October 18 include:

- Reducing congestion in hospital emergency rooms
- Providing funding for 500 nurses to join group practices
- Helping patients who have chronic diseases – such as diabetes – better manage their condition and reduce their need for emergency health services
- Ensuring Ontario remains the jurisdiction of choice for future physicians with a new program that will defer interest on medical resident debt
- Improving access to community mental health services provided by physicians

**QUOTES**

“This new agreement reflects the common vision shared by our government and the province’s doctors on how to improve health care for all Ontarians,” said Health and Long-Term Care Minister David Caplan. “We expect significant progress to be made in the next few years in family health care becoming available to more Ontarians and hospital emergency departments becoming less crowded.”

**QUICK FACTS**

- The agreement with the OMA will cover the period April 1, 2008 to March 31, 2012

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Read about [Family Health Teams](#) in the province.

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