

ONTARIO IMPROVES ACCESS TO BARIATRIC SURGERY*McGuinty Government Moving Forward on Diabetes Strategy***NEWS**February 23, 2009
2009/nr-006

As part of Ontario's diabetes strategy, the province is increasing bariatric surgery capacity by 500% over the next three years.

Ontario is investing \$75 million to increase bariatric surgery capacity, also known as gastric bypass surgery, from 244 to 1,470 a year at four centres of excellence by 2011/2012. Today's announcement will help:

- St. Joseph's HealthCare Hamilton provide 450 surgeries a year
- Humber River Regional Hospital provide 330 surgeries a year
- Guelph General Hospital provide 240 surgeries a year, and
- The Ottawa Hospital provide 450 surgeries a year.

St. Joseph's Healthcare Hamilton and Hamilton Health Sciences will form the hub of the centres of excellence.

This initiative is part of the province's comprehensive [diabetes strategy](#) that will invest \$741 million over four years to prevent, manage and treat diabetes. It will also decrease pressure on Ontario's Out of Country Program, saving approximately \$10,000 for every bariatric case done here and not sent to the United States.

QUOTES

"High levels of obesity are leading to dramatic rises in serious chronic illnesses like diabetes, heart disease, hypertension and some cancers," said David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. "Bariatric surgery will help offset the costs of treating these obesity-related conditions, while reducing ER visits and hospitalizations."

"We're delighted by the government's investment that will make us a part of the centre of excellence for bariatric surgery in Hamilton," said Dr. Kevin P. D. Smith, President and CEO of St. Joseph's HealthCare Hamilton. "We look forward to having our outstanding bariatric program help more Ontarians receive this highly specialized surgery closer to home."

QUICK FACTS

- High levels of obesity are leading to a dramatic rise in illnesses such as diabetes, heart disease, stroke, hypertension and some cancers;
- In 2008/09 Ontario will fund 1660 patients for out-of-country bariatric services;
- A total of 244 bariatric procedures were performed in Ontario hospitals in 2007/08.

LEARN MORE

Find out more about the latest development on obesity research at the [Canadian Obesity Network](#).

For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOLine at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

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