

ONTARIO'S EMERGENCY ROOM WAIT TIME STRATEGY

May 22, 2009

As part of its Emergency Room Wait Time Strategy, the Ontario government is investing more than \$82 million in 2009/10 to reduce the amount of time people spend in hospital emergency rooms (ERs). This is the second year that the government is investing in this comprehensive strategy. The strategy helps hospitals improve emergency room (ER) performance in a number of ways:

INVESTING IN HOSPITALS TO IMPROVE ER PERFORMANCE

In 2009/2010, 46 hospitals facing significant ER challenges will receive \$55 million to help them improve ER access and reduce wait times.

The program, known as Pay for Results, rewards hospitals for meeting specific ER wait time reduction targets. It also provides them with opportunities and funding to meet these targets. Hospitals can use the money in a variety of ways — for example, they could expand staffing as part of emergency department teams, reorganize how these teams interact to encourage more collaboration, or renovate an emergency room to improve patient flow.

Last year, Ontario invested close to \$30 million in Pay for Results funding to 23 hospitals facing ER performance challenges.

This year, the program is expanding to include investments in 46 hospitals in all 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), including:

Local Health Integration Network	2009/10
ERIE ST. CLAIR LHIN	\$1,679,600
SOUTH WEST LHIN	\$904,100
WATERLOO WELLINGTON LHIN	\$2,390,300
HAMILTON NIAGARA HALDIMAND BRANT LHIN	\$5,571,500
CENTRAL WEST LHIN	\$3,910,000
MISSISSAUGA HALTON LHIN	\$5,993,000
TORONTO CENTRAL LHIN	\$7,902,200
CENTRAL LHIN	\$7,850,800
CENTRAL EAST LHIN	\$7,095,200
SOUTH EAST LHIN	\$942,000
CHAMPLAIN LHIN	\$4,355,300
NORTH SIMCOE MUSKOKA LHIN	\$2,082,500
NORTH EAST LHIN	\$1,434,800
NORTH WEST LHIN	\$2,830,000
TOTAL	\$54,941,300

CREATING PROGRAMS TO HELP HOSPITALS IMPROVE PATIENT ACCESS

Ontario is investing \$7.5 million in process improvement programs help hospitals better manage patient access in ERs. The programs provide hospitals with things like specialized coaching teams and toolkits to help them quickly identify ways they can improve the operation of their ERs.

Through this initiative, hospitals focus on:

- shortening the amount of time patients spend waiting in ERs
- finding ways to admit patients to a hospital bed more quickly, and
- reducing ambulance offload delays.

Process improvement programs are currently operating as pilot projects at hospitals located in the [Waterloo Wellington LHIN](#). Later this year, process improvement programs will be expanded to more hospitals in other areas of the province.

NURSES DEDICATED TO NON-EMERGENCY AMBULANCE PATIENTS

The government will continue to support a program that ensures more ambulances are available for dispatch in Ontario communities.

Emergency medical service providers in 14 municipalities will receive nearly \$5 million to provide nurses dedicated to helping patients who arrive to ERs by ambulance. By taking care of patients when they arrive, the ambulance offload nurses free up paramedics to respond to other calls.

The chosen municipalities enter into agreements with specific hospitals to purchase the services of nurses dedicated to receiving ambulance patients. The nurses are employed by the hospital.

Ambulance patients with life-threatening conditions will continue to be given priority by hospital staff. Other ambulance patients, who do not require resuscitation or immediate care, will receive timely care from a dedicated nurse.

Ontario's investment for dedicated nurses includes:

Municipality	2009/10 Funding
Durham	\$138,889
Middlesex	\$277,778
Peel	\$416,667
Toronto	\$1,805,556
Greater Sudbury	\$69,443
Essex	\$277,778
Peterborough	\$138,000
York	\$416,667
Halton	\$138,889
Ottawa	\$537,768
Niagara	\$137,714
Hamilton	\$416,667
Frontenac	\$69,443
Waterloo	\$138,889
Total Funding	\$4,980,148

INTRODUCING PHYSICIAN ASSISTANTS TO HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOMS

The government is investing \$4.1 million to place 27 physician assistants into 26 hospital emergency rooms around the province.

Physician assistants support physicians in a range of health care settings. Physician assistants might:

- Conduct patient interviews and take medical histories
- Perform physical examinations
- Perform certain controlled acts delegated by a physician
- Provide counselling on preventive health care

Having highly-trained physician assistants on-hand to perform some of these duties frees up emergency room doctors, allowing them to see more patients.

Ontario's investment in physician assistants include:

Local Health Integration Network (LHIN)	Existing or New Physician Assistants (PA)
<i>Erie St Clair LHIN</i>	2 New
<i>South West LHIN</i>	3 New
<i>Waterloo Wellington LHIN</i>	1 Existing 1 New
<i>Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN</i>	2 New
<i>Mississauga Halton LHIN</i>	2 New
<i>Toronto Central LHIN</i>	3 New
<i>Central LHIN</i>	1 Existing 3 New
<i>Central East LHIN</i>	1 New
<i>South East LHIN</i>	2 Existing 1 New
<i>Champlain LHIN</i>	1 Existing
<i>North Simcoe Muskoka LHIN</i>	1 New
<i>North East LHIN</i>	2 Existing 1 New
TOTAL Physician Assistants	27

COMMUNITY PROJECTS TO IMPROVE ER PERFORMANCE

Ontario is investing \$6.5 million to community projects that will help patients with chronic or palliative conditions receive care in the community and avoid frequent ER visits.

This initiative will begin as a number of pilot projects in a few Local Health Integration Networks. It will focus on cancer patients in palliative stages, patients with chronic conditions like asthma, and cardiac patients.

COMMUNICATIONS ON HEALTH CARE OPTIONS

The Government is investing \$4 million to continue helping Ontarians identify the health care options in their communities that are appropriate alternatives to ERs. This investment will support the public and stakeholder education campaign to continue promoting www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions.

The site, which was launched in February 2009, is Ontario's new one-stop source of information on health care services, with a focus on alternatives to ER care. Using this site, people can find the nearest walk-in and after-hours clinics, urgent care centres, family health teams, family health care providers and emergency rooms. As well, the site provides information on how to register in Health Care Connect, Ontario's new program designed to help Ontarians without a family health care provider find one.

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