

Ontario Introduces Legislation to Further Improve Patient Access and Experience

Patients First Act Would Deliver on Action Plan for Health Care

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Ontario introduced new legislation today that would, if passed, improve access to health care services by giving patients and their families faster and better access to care and putting them at the centre of a truly integrated health system.

The Patients First Act would give Ontario's 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) an expanded role, including in primary care and home and community care. This would improve and integrate planning and delivery of front-line services and increase efficiency to direct more funding to patient care within the existing system.

The system-level changes would mean easier access to care, better coordination and continuity of care, and a greater focus on culturally and linguistically appropriate services. They would support the Action Plan by:

- Improving access to primary care for patients - such as a single number to call when they need to find a new family health care provider close to home.
- Improving local connections and communication between primary health care, hospitals, and home and community care to ensure more equitable access and a smoother patient experience.
- Ensuring that patients only have to tell their story once, by enabling health care providers to share and update their health care plans.
- Making it easier for doctors, nurses, and other primary care providers to connect their patients to the health care they need.
- Providing smoother patient transitions between acute, primary, home and community, mental health and addictions, and long-term care.
- Improving consistency of home and community care across the province so that people know what to expect, and receive good care regardless of where they live in the province.
- Strengthening health planning and accountability by monitoring performance.
- Ensuring public health has a voice in health system planning by establishing a formal relationship between LHINs and local boards of health.
- Facilitating local health care planning to ensure decisions are made by people who best understand the needs of their communities, and that LHIN boards reflect the communities they serve.

This new legislation would support the [Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care](#) - Ontario's blueprint for health care transformation, which includes expanding access to home and community care and ensuring that every Ontarian has access to a primary care provider.

Ontario will continue working with First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous partners and health providers to ensure their voices are heard, in particular with respect to equitable access to services that meet their unique needs.

Ontario will honour its commitment to meaningfully engage Indigenous partners through a parallel processes that will collaboratively identify the requirements necessary to achieve responsive and transformative change. Ontario is also committed to ensuring that any proposed changes will not negatively impact their current or future access to care.

The Patients First Act is the next step in the government's plan to build a better Ontario by providing patients with faster access to the right care, better home and community care, the information they need to stay healthy and a health care system that's sustainable for generations to come.

QUOTES

" Ontario is committed to a health care system that truly puts patients first. This means faster access to primary care for patients no matter where they live, and a system that will be there for generations to come. Thank you to the thousands of Ontarians who provided valuable input into creating this important legislation. Together we will continue to improve Ontario's health care system so it remains one of the best in the world."

- Dr. Eric Hoskins

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

" When we or one of our loved ones are ill, we want to be able to count on our health care providers to be able to access the appropriate level of care efficiently and seamlessly. As a practising family physician, I'm pleased to see that the Ontario government is introducing legislation which will help all of us in primary health care to work in a more integrated system that will benefit patients."

- Dr. David Price

Co-author of "Patient Care Groups: A new model of population based primary health care for Ontario"

" Ensuring health equity and the social determinants of health are mandated in the Patients First Act sets a strong legislative framework towards achieving transformative change that puts

people and communities first within Ontario's health care system."

- Adrianna Tetley

Chief Executive Officer, Association of Ontario Health Centres

QUICK FACTS

- Ontario is planning for a net increase of 700 more doctors each year.
- 94 per cent of Ontarians now have a primary health care provider. Through work of the Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care, Ontario is committed to connecting a family doctor or nurse practitioner to everyone who wants one.
- In 2015, there was a net gain of 205 Nurse Practitioners in Ontario.
- Investments in home and community care are up 90 per cent over the past decade.
- The ministry consulted and engaged extensively in English and French with more than 6,000 individuals and organizations across the province to help inform the proposed improvements to the health care system.
- LHINs plan, integrate and fund local health care, improving access and patient experience.
- If passed, the new legislation would replace the old Local Health System Integration Act, 2006 and the Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994, among other statutes.
- If passed, Ontario will initiate a review of The Patients First Act in three years.

LEARN MORE

- [Patients First: Reporting Back on the Proposal to Strengthen Patient-Centred Health Care in Ontario](#)
- [Patients First: A Proposal to Strengthen Patient-Centred Health Care in Ontario](#)
- [Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care -- Year One Results](#)
- [Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care](#)
- [Local Health Integration Networks](#)

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