

Ontario Reintroduces Legislation to Further Improve Patient Access and Experience

Proposed Patients First Act Would Deliver on Action Plan for Health Care

NEWS

October 6, 2016

Today, Ontario reintroduced the Patients First Act, 2016 that would, if passed, improve access to health care for patients and their families.

The proposed legislation would increase access to care with better coordination and continuity, and bring a greater focus on culturally and linguistically appropriate services. This includes:

- Giving Ontario's 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) an expanded role in improving and integrating planning and delivery of front-line health care services, directing more funding to patient care within the existing system.
- Improving access to primary care for patients, such as a single number to call when they need health information or advice on where to find a new family doctor or nurse practitioner close to home.
- Improving local connections and communication between family doctors, nurse practitioners, inter-professional health care teams, hospitals, and home and community care to ensure 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.
- Providing better 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.
- Strengthening health planning and accountability by monitoring performance and outcomes.
- Establishing a formal relationship between LHINs and local boards of health, to ensure local communities have a stronger voice in health planning.

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 process 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 reintroduction of the Patients First Act is part of Ontario's commitment to reintroduce all government bills that were before the legislature in spring 2016, so that debate on important issues may continue.

Over the past several months, the government has consulted with stakeholders from across the sector, including doctors and hospitals. This legislation includes proposed amendments based on the feedback that the government has received.

Improving access to health care is part of the government's plan to build a better Ontario through its [Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care](#), which is providing patients with faster access to the right care, better home and community care, the information they need to live 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 that 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 a broad understanding of health, health equity and the 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

“On behalf of the Ontario Hospital Association and its members, I would like to thank Minister Hoskins and the government for listening, and for making changes to this legislation to better recognize the roles and responsibilities of hospital boards. As the province moves to implement its legislation, hospitals are well positioned to play an important role in supporting new models of care to meet the needs of patients and clients, working in close partnership with their provider partners.”

— Anthony Dale, President and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association

QUICK FACTS

- 94 per cent of Ontarians now have a primary health care provider. Through the 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.
- 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 amend the Local Health System Integration Act and the Home Care and Community Services Act, among other statutes.

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](#)

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

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