
MEMORANDUM

COM-C 1-2019

Subject: Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Announcement: 'New Plan for Health Care Reform'
Date: March 19, 2019
To: Public Health & Social Services Committee
From: Adrienne Jugley, Commissioner, Community Services

On February 26, 2019, the provincial government announced initial details regarding health care reform in Ontario, including the introduction of legislation (*The People's Health Care Act, 2019*) that would, if passed, integrate multiple existing provincial agencies into a single health agency – **Ontario Health**, and support the establishment of local **Ontario Health Teams** with the aim of connecting health care providers and services to patients and families. The following provides a brief outline of the proposed changes:

Ontario Health

Ontario Health would oversee health care delivery and is proposed to improve clinical guidance and offer support for providers to enable better quality of care for patients.

The creation of Ontario Health would dissolve and re-incorporate a number of existing bodies, including:

- Cancer Care Ontario
- Health Quality Ontario
- eHealth Ontario
- Trillium Gift of Life Network
- Health Shared Services Ontario
- HealthForce Ontario Marketing and Recruitment Agency
- Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs)

If the legislation is passed, it is proposed that the consolidation of agencies and provincial services into the Ontario Health agency would be implemented over a number of years.

Ontario Health Teams

Ontario Health Teams would be responsible for the delivery of all of the care for their patients, understanding their health care history and needs, and directly connecting them to services, including: primary care; hospitals; home and community care; palliative care; residential long-term care; and mental health and addictions services.

It is proposed that, as Ontario Health Teams are established, people will continue to be able to choose who provides their care and will also have more care choices available through technology. With safeguards in place to protect personal health information, it is proposed that patients would also have an option to securely access digital health services, such as having access to their electronic health records and virtual care options.

Within the legislation, care providers are viewed to also benefit from the expansion of digital tools, enabling them to more quickly and comprehensively access the information they need, such as specialist advice and clinical supports.

If the legislation is passed, Ontario Health Teams will be established in phases across the province. Ontario Health Teams will focus on existing local health care providers partnering or working together to provide coordinated care, or teams of providers serving a specialized patient population such as specialty pediatrics or patients with complex health needs.

It is expected that by maturity, 30-50 local Ontario Health Teams would be operational, each serving an approximate geography of 300,000 patients.

Impact to Community Services

- Niagara Region's Community Services Department operates eight long-term care homes and provides a range of seniors' community programs, largely funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and the HNHB LHIN respectively. It is anticipated that the changes envisioned through this new legislation will impact those services.
- At this time, the details related to "*The People's Health Care Act, 2019*" are still preliminary. It is anticipated that there will be opportunities to learn more about the specific implications for the long-term care sector and seniors community programs over the next several months, in addition to further understanding responses from local health stakeholders and provincial health care associations.

As the details of these changes are better understood, along with the implications for Niagara Region's services, we will share this information with Regional Council. Also, please find attached the Ontario Government's news release for your information.

Respectfully submitted and signed by

Adrienne Jugley, MSW, RSW, CHE
Commissioner, Community Services



NEWS

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ontario's Government for the People to Break Down Barriers to Better Patient Care

Renewed, connected and sustainable health care system will reduce hallway health care by focusing resources on patient needs

February 26, 2019 9:00 A.M.

TORONTO — Today, Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, delivered the Government of Ontario's long-term plan to fix and strengthen the public health care system by focusing directly on the needs of Ontario's patients and families.

"The people of Ontario deserve a connected health care system that puts their needs first," said Elliott. "At the same time the people of Ontario deserve peace of mind that this system is sustainable and accessible for all patients and their families, regardless of where you live, how much you make, or the kind of care you require."

Ontario's new plan would improve access to services and patient experience by:

- Organizing health care providers to work as one coordinated team, focused on patients and specific local needs. Patients would experience easy transitions from one health provider to another (for example, between hospitals and home care providers, with one patient story, one patient record and one care plan).
- Providing patients, families and caregivers help in navigating the public health care system, 24/7.
- Integrating multiple provincial agencies and specialized provincial programs into a single agency to provide a central point of accountability and oversight for the health care system. This would improve clinical guidance and support for providers and enable better quality care for patients.
- Improving access to secure digital tools, including online health records and virtual care options for patients - a 21st-century approach to health care.

"If we expect real improvements that patients will experience first-hand, we must better coordinate the public health care system, so it is organized around people's needs and outcomes. This will enable local teams of health care providers to know and understand each patient's needs and provide the appropriate, high-quality connected care Ontarians expect and deserve," said Elliott.

Ontario's renewed patient-centric approach is paired with historic investments in long-term care for seniors and improved mental health and addictions services for families. Ontario is investing \$3.8 billion over 10 years to establish a comprehensive and connected system for mental health and addictions treatment, and adding 15,000 new long-term care beds over five years and 30,000 beds over 10 years.

"Our government is taking a comprehensive, pragmatic approach to addressing the public health care system," said Elliott. "By relentlessly focusing on patient experience, and on better connected care, we will reduce wait times and end hallway health care. Ontarians can be confident that there will be a sustainable health care system for them when and where they need it."

QUICK FACTS

- The government intends to introduce legislation that would, if passed, support the establishment of local Ontario Health Teams that connect health care providers and services around patients and families, and integrate multiple existing provincial agencies into a single health agency – Ontario Health.
- The entire process will be seamlessly phased in to ensure that Ontarians can continue to contact their health care providers as usual throughout the transition process.
- The government has consulted with patients, families, nurses, doctors and others who provide direct patient care, including the Premier's Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine and its working groups, the Minister's Patient and Family Advisory Council, and health system and academic experts.
- Ontario currently has a large network of provincial and regional agencies, clinical oversight bodies and 1,800 health service provider organizations. This creates confusion for both patients and providers trying to navigate the health care system.

LEARN MORE

- Read the Premier's Council report: [Hallway Health Care: A System Under Strain](#)
- Ontario's plan to build a connected public health care system. [Learn more.](#)

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