

2018 Budget Boosts Access to Health Care for Kingston Families*Ontario Investing in Redevelopment of the Kingston Health Sciences Centre***NEWS**

April 6, 2018

Ontario is ensuring people in Kingston can access the care they need closer to home with significant new investments in home and community care, mental health and addictions, and other programs to help people support their loved ones.

Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, was joined by Sophie Kiwala, MPP for Kingston and the Islands, at Kingston Health Sciences Centre today to talk about how the province is strengthening health care in the community.

The province is making a major investment in the redevelopment of the Kingston Health Sciences Centre to meet the growing health care needs of southeastern Ontario. This construction project includes upgrades to the emergency department, operating rooms, clinical labs, inpatient units, the neonatal intensive care unit and labour and delivery suites.

Ontario's 2018 Budget includes important health care investments for families in Kingston, such as:

- Providing Kingston Health Sciences Centre with more funding to deliver more cardiac care services, hip and knee replacement surgeries, cataract surgeries, MRI hours for high-risk patients, and support for the hospital's busy emergency department.
- Providing Providence Care Hospital with additional funding to invest in the care and supports that address the specific needs of their patients and community.
- Improving home and community care services in the region with an estimated 123,000 more hours of personal support, 12,000 more nursing visits and 2,000 more therapy visits.
- Making prescriptions free for people 65 and over through an expansion of OHIP+. Starting August 1, 2019, about 29,223 seniors in Kingston will no longer have to pay a deductible or co-payment for prescription medications. The province is already providing free prescriptions for everyone under 25, and with this expansion nearly one in two people in Ontario will have access to OHIP+.
- A new Ontario Drug and Dental program for individuals and their families who do not have coverage from an extended health plan will reimburse up to \$400 per single person, \$600 per couple and \$700 for a family of four with two children for eligible prescription drug and dental expenses, starting in the summer of 2019.

Ontario's plan to support care, create opportunity and make life more affordable during this period of rapid economic change includes a higher minimum wage and better working conditions, free tuition for hundreds of thousands of students, easier access to affordable child care, and free prescription drugs for everyone under 25, and 65 or over, through the biggest expansion of medicare in a generation.

QUOTES

"As the province grows and ages, it is more important than ever to invest in our health care system so that we can provide the care that all people in Ontario deserve. The 2018 Budget will allow us to expand and improve services to everyone across the province."

— Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

"Individuals and families in Kingston, the Islands and across the province should be able to access affordable health services when they need them. With the expansion of programs like OHIP+, and incoming supports through the Ontario Drug and Dental program, we are working to make life more affordable and access to care easier for individuals today and in the future."

— Sophie Kiwala, MPP, Kingston and the Islands

QUICK FACTS

- Ontario has invested \$2.5 million to support early planning for future potential capital investments at the Kingston Health Sciences Centre — Kingston General Hospital Site.
- Ontario is providing Kingston Health Sciences Centre with more than \$8.82 million in additional funding in 2018-19, representing a 2.5 per cent increase.
- Ontario is also providing Providence Care Hospital with more than \$1.04 million in additional funding in 2018-19, representing a 1.4 per cent increase for hospital services.
- Ontario's health care budget will total \$61.3 billion in 2018-19 — a five per cent increase from the previous year.
- The 2018 Budget includes proposed investments of \$575 million per year by 2020-21 to expand OHIP+ to seniors by eliminating the annual deductible and co-payment under the Ontario Drug Benefit program; an additional \$822 million in 2018-19 for hospital operating funding; and an additional \$650 million over the next three years to improve home and community care services.

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