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## **Ontario Making Treatment Faster for Hip, Knee and Lower Back Pain** *Province Expanding Program to Assess and Treat Muscle and Bone Disorders*

### **NEWS**

January 18, 2018

Ontario is expanding Rapid Access Clinics across the province to help people with hip, knee and lower back pain access the right treatment faster, following a successful pilot program.

Sophie Kiwala, MPP for Kingston and the Island, was at Kingston Health Sciences Centre (KHSC) today to make the announcement.

The new clinics will help people with pain in their muscles or bones get the treatment and specialized care they need by reducing unnecessary medical procedures, including imaging and surgery. The clinics will also improve wait times through a coordinated intake and triage process, with patients better able to access the right education and treatment options faster, which could include referrals to proven alternatives to surgery and pain medication like physiotherapy or chiropractic treatment.

Patients will be referred by family physicians to Rapid Access Clinics, where they will be seen within four weeks and given an assessment. Clinical experts agree that innovations like this lead to a more sustainable health care system, and are just one way that Ontario is leading as a champion of publicly-funded health care in Canada.

Ontario's plan to create fairness and opportunity 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 through the biggest expansion of medicare in a generation.

### **QUOTES**

“Musculoskeletal pain can be debilitating and interfere with a person’s quality of life. That’s why Ontario is investing in a central intake system to ensure those who suffer from pain in their hips, knees and lower back can access assessments and treatment options faster and closer to home.”

— Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

“Ensuring patients with muscle or bone pain get faster access to the help they need, and then treatment, is dramatically changing the experience for patients in our region for the better. This innovative approach to helping and treating our patients is a great step forward for health care in our community. ”

— Sophie Kiwala, MPP, Kingston and the Islands

““Reducing wait times and increasing access to the right care will help ensure patients receive the most appropriate treatment when they need it. This funding will help facilitate implementation of rapid assessment programs for patient referrals as it relates to hip, knee and back surgeries, and also further support the work of the Centralized Intake and Assessment Centre in our region.”

— Paul Huras, Chief Executive Officer, South East LHIN

“This new Rapid Access Clinic and the central intake process for our region is excellent news for both patients and referring physicians. Through this clinic, we are able to provide a simplified, streamlined referral process to ensure patients suffering from hip and/or knee arthritis are receiving the appropriate services in the timeliest fashion possible.”

— Dr. David Pichora, President and CEO, Kingston Health Sciences Centre

## QUICK FACTS

- Ontario is investing more than \$37 million over the next three years, including \$17 million in 2017-18, to expand Rapid Access Clinics so patients with musculoskeletal conditions can access the right care faster.
- This investment is part of a larger commitment of \$245 million over three years in the 2017 Budget to reduce wait times and improve the referral process for treatment of back pain and other conditions.
- Rapid Access Clinics build on existing models, like the lower back pain pilot program, [Interprofessional Spine Assessment and Education Clinics \(ISAEC\)](#), launched in November 2012. This program has helped over 6,500 people and maintains satisfaction rates of 99 per cent among patients, and 97 per cent for primary care providers.
- One in three adults are affected by musculoskeletal disorders, which impact the bones, muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints and connective tissues, and make it difficult to perform daily activities.
- Family physicians can refer patients to a Rapid Access Clinic to receive an assessment, education and treatment recommendations within four weeks by a physiotherapist or chiropractor.

## LEARN MORE

- [Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care](#)
- [Information about government-funded physiotherapy services](#)

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

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