

## **Improving Care for High-Needs Patients in Southeastern Ontario**

*McGuinty Government Linking Health Providers, Offering Patients More Co-ordinated Care*

### **NEWS**

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Ontario is improving co-ordination of care for high-needs patients such as seniors and people with complex conditions through the creation of 3 Health Links in Southeastern Ontario.

Three of 19 across the province, these new Health Links will encourage greater collaboration and co-ordination between a patient's different health care providers as well as the development of personalized care plans. This will help improve patient transitions within the system and help ensure patients receive more responsive care that addresses their specific needs with the support of a tightly knit team of providers.

**The Rural Kingston Health Link** will include (but is not limited to) partners such as :

- Rural Kingston Family Health Organization
- Sharbot Lake Family Health Team
- Lakelands Family Health Team (Northbrook)
- Verona Medical Clinic
- Sydenham Medical Clinic
- Tamworth Medical Clinic
- Newburg Clinic
- Kingston General Hospital
- Hotel Dieu Hospital
- Lennox and Addington County General Hospital
- Community Support Services within geographic cluster
- South East Community Care Access Centre
- South East LHIN

**The Rural Hastings Health Link** will include (but is not limited to) partners such as :

- Gateway Community Health Centre (Tweed)
- Central Hastings Family Health Team (Madoc, Marmora)
- Bancroft Family Health Team
- North Hastings Family Health Team
- Quinte Healthcare Corporation
- Community Care Access Centre
- Moira Place Long Term Care Home
- Community Mental Health – Hastings Prince Edward
- Addictions Centre
- Community Support Services within geographic cluster
- Heart of Hastings Hospice
- South East LHIN

**The Quinte Health Link** will include (but is not limited to) partners such as:

- Belleville and Quinte West Community Health Centre
- Brighton and Quinte West Family Health Team
- Prince Edward Family Health Team
- Belleville Queen's Family Health Organization (Queen's FHT)
- Belleville Nurse Practitioner-led Clinic
- Belleville Physicians FHO
- South East Community Care Access Centre
- Quinte Healthcare Corporation
- Community Mental Health – Hastings Prince Edward
- Addictions Centre
- Community Support Services within this geographic cluster
- South East LHIN

Each Health Link will measure results and develop plans to improve access to family care, reduce avoidable ER visits and re-admission to hospitals, reduce referral time to a specialist, and improve the patient's overall experience through the health care system.

Health Links are part of the McGuinty government's Action Plan for Health Care, by delivering faster access and a stronger link to family health care, and providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place.

## **QUOTES**

"These new Health Links will make a big difference for patients – particularly seniors – in Kingston. I'm so pleased to see our dedicated local health care professionals coming together to make this kind of coordinated patient care possible, and to make our health care system even better."

- John Gerretsen, MPP, Kingston and The Islands

"As one of the first five primary care pilots back in 2000, the Rural Kingston FHO expressed its faith in the future of primary care reform in Ontario. Optimal access to resources for all patients has been our goal from the beginning. The transformative nature of the Health Link concept confirms that initial faith. We can realize the goal."

- Dr. Dempsey, Rural Kingston Family Health Organization

"Gateway CHC is very pleased and excited to be part of the newly-formed Health Links. We are especially pleased by the announcement today by the Minister of Health which recognizes the commitment, collaborative planning, and engagement by all of the partners over the last few months. We are ready to build on our existing partnerships to deliver better value for money, ensure high quality care, and continue our focus on improving health care to those in our communities."

- Lyn Linton, Executive Director, Gateway Community Health Centre

"We are so excited to be involved in this transformative initiative. At Belleville & Quinte West Community Health Centre we serve a population with complex medical and social needs. Working more collaboratively with our health care partners will improve their quality of care, keep people out of the emergency departments and provide access to more appropriate health care options."

- Marsha Stephen, Executive Director, Belleville & Quinte West CHC

“Health Links will break down barriers for Ontarians, making access to health care easier and less complicated. By encouraging local health providers to work together to co-ordinate care for individual patients, we’re ensuring our most vulnerable patients – seniors and those with complex conditions – get the care they need and don’t fall between the cracks.”

- Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

“The South East LHIN is excited to be one of the early adopters of Health Links with three teams in this region. Health Links is an idea whose time has come and we know full well that by bringing providers together in a truly coordinated fashion, patients across the South East will have better access to quality care.”

- Paul Huras, CEO, SE LHIN

"Health Links are a significant evolution in our health care system. Primary care groups and providers in communities will be working together, with partners such as the CCAC and hospitals, to improve the way they deliver care to patients, especially to the most vulnerable populations."

- Dr. Jonathan Kerr, Primary Care Lead, South East LHIN

#### **QUICK FACTS**

- 19 early-adopter communities have been chosen to launch the first Health Links and will submit plans to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term within the next 60 days. Over time, Health Links will be expanded across the province.
- A Health Link may include family doctors, specialists, hospitals, home care, long-term care and community support agencies. Each Health Link will have one of its providers play a co-ordinating role.
- Each Health Link will work with its LHIN to develop personalized care plans for seniors and other patients with complex conditions, and to increase the number of those patients with a primary care provider.
- Patients with complex conditions include seniors, those with multiple chronic diseases, and those with mental illness and addictions.
- A recent study found that 75 per cent of seniors with complex conditions who are discharged from hospital receive care from six or more physicians and 30 per cent get their drugs from three or more pharmacies.
- Complex patients represent up to five per cent of Ontario’s population, but use two-thirds of the health care budget.

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