

## ONTARIO TARGETS SHORTER ER TIMES

*McGuinty Government Launches Public Reporting Of Time Spent in the ER.*

NEWS

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In a one-of-a-kind North American initiative, Ontario is setting clear targets for reducing the total amount of time patients spend in emergency rooms - and is publicly posting data about local ERs online.

The province is setting two targets:

- For patients with minor or uncomplicated conditions, which require less time for diagnosis, treatment and observation: the latest data from October shows that 90 per cent of patients spent a maximum of 4.6 hours in the ER; the target is 4 hours.
- For patients with complex conditions, which require more time for diagnosis, treatment or hospital bed admission: the latest data from October shows that 90 per cent of patients spent a maximum of 13.5 hours in the ER; the target is 8 hours.

Total time spent in the ER begins when a patient registers at the ER and continues as the patient receives treatment. It ends when the patient is discharged home or admitted to a hospital bed.

Ontario has a three-pronged strategy for reaching these targets:

- **Providing Ontarians with appropriate alternatives to ER care:** providing more options where people can seek care such as local family health teams and nurse practitioner clinics and making it easier for people to access information about walk-in clinics, after-hours clinics, and urgent care centres through the new web site [www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions](http://www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions)
- **Increasing capacity and improving processes within the ER:** programs such as the Hospital Performance Fund give hospitals with high emergency room volumes financial incentives to lower their times
- **Speeding the flow of patients from the ER:** ensuring that acute care beds are available for those who need them – this requires faster discharge of patients occupying hospital beds that are better suited to alternative levels of care such as long-term care or home care.

Ontarians can visit [www.ontariowaittimes.com](http://www.ontariowaittimes.com) to access information about their local ER – data is current as of October 2008.

### QUOTES

“Our government is creating an unprecedented level of transparency and accountability in hospital emergency care with the public reporting of time spent in the ER,” said Health and Long-Term Care Minister David Caplan. “We are committed to lowering ER times by providing alternate options for patients, improving ER performance and ensuring more hospital beds are available in a more timely fashion.”

“The collecting and reporting of this information will help us monitor our progress in improving emergency room performance,” said Dr. Alan Hudson, Provincial Executive Lead, Access to

Services and Wait Times. “Hospitals can now see how their ER is performing and use this information to improve their emergency services.”

### **QUICK FACTS**

- The time spent in ER data is being collected through the Emergency Department Reporting System which gathers information from 128 hospital ERs.
- The majority of people who go to hospital ERs – up to 90 per cent – are not admitted to a hospital bed.

### **LEARN MORE**

Find out more about the [reporting of time spent in the ER](#) data by hospital.

Read about the government’s [\\$109-million investment to reduce ER wait times](#).

Search for [alternatives to ER care](#) in your area.

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