
Local Health Integration Networks: Building a True System

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Minister's Statement

Two years ago, we began charting the progress of Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) for health care providers and Ontario citizens. Within that time, in 31 of these bulletins, LHINs have evolved from a difficult-to-grasp concept to an easy-to-understand reality.

We have watched 14 LHINs grow from one or two person operations taking baby steps as they tried to figure out their role in the grand scheme of things, to full-blown, confident and strong Local Health Integration Networks, acknowledged and respected in health care circles and in the community.

We have watched as the LHINs consulted and engaged their communities, gathering the opinions and the knowledge they needed to put in place their first annual Integrated Health Service Plans.

We have watched as LHINs began to play a role within the health care system, acting as partners with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in helping hospitals develop new models of delivery in support of the Wait Times Strategy.

In the last few months we have seen the ministry and LHINs working closely together to bring about an extraordinary transfer of knowledge from one to the other. This has included untold of hours of commendable work by staff at the regional offices as they wind down, to ensure that LHINs are ready and able to assume their responsibilities.

And now we find ourselves at the dawn of a new era in health care in Ontario, with Local Health Integration Networks coming fully into their power, assuming

responsibility for prioritizing, planning, and funding health care in their respective parts of the province.

At the end of the day, it is Ontario patients who will benefit from this transition. They will experience shorter wait times and receive better care from a system that will be more efficient and sustainable. For those of us involved in the creation of LHINs, this must be a considerable source of pride. I know that it is for me.

I would like to thank each and every person who has been involved with the LHIN project. I'd like to thank providers for their patience, cooperation and enthusiasm throughout the process, and I'd like to thank the LHINs themselves for the great work they have done to date, and in advance for the great work I know they are going to do in the months and years ahead.

*The Honourable George Smitherman
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care*

The LHIN bulletin will continue throughout the early weeks of the transition, in order to address any questions and concerns that providers or members of the public may have. In addition, anyone is welcome to submit questions about LHINs and the ongoing health care transformation in email form to transforminghealth@moh.gov.on.ca. They will be answered directly in as timely a manner as possible.