

Today's News - Monday, October 23, 2017

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Premier Kathleen Wynne was in Kitchener-Waterloo this afternoon to announce that Ontario is pushing forward with plans to bring high speed rail (HSR) to the Toronto-Windsor corridor by establishing an HSR Planning Advisory Board to provide strategic support on the landmark project. Canada's first high speed rail service will slash people's travel times, providing a faster, greener travel option that creates new opportunities for workers, businesses and anyone traveling in this part of the province. Premier Wynne announced this important step forward in a speech to the Greater Kitchener-Waterloo Chamber of Commerce. In addition to providing strategic advice on major business issues associated with the project, the HSR Planning Advisory Board will engage with the private sector, stakeholders and Indigenous communities. The team members will bring a breadth and depth of expertise to the project, including in the high tech and innovation sectors; engineering, environmental sciences and transportation planning; and the financing and delivery of infrastructure projects.

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Also Today:

- Ontario is making over 2,000 additional hospital beds and care spaces available this year to improve access to care for patients and families, and reduce wait times in hospitals, at home and in the community. Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, was at Sinai Health System this morning to announce the investment, which includes making more than 1,200 additional hospital beds available across Ontario. The province will also help patients continue to get the care they need as they transition from hospital to home by:
 - o Providing 207 affordable housing units for seniors who need additional community supports when they are discharged from hospital
 - o Creating 503 transitional care spaces outside of hospital for up to 1,700 patients who don't require care in a hospital
 - o Reopening 150 beds at Humber River Hospital's former Finch site and 75 beds at University Health Network's former Hillcrest site to provide care for those transitioning out of hospital.

With the flu season approaching, the province is also encouraging people in Ontario to get the free flu vaccine. The flu vaccine is the best way to help protect against the most common flu viruses expected this season. The vaccine is available starting this week at health care provider offices, local public health units or at participating pharmacies across the province.

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- Mitzie Hunter, Minister of Education, and Michael Coteau, Minister of Children and Youth Services, were in Hamilton this afternoon to announce that Ontario is boosting support for children and youth in care. The province will provide school boards with funding for transportation services for children and youth in care, which will offer more stability by allowing students to stay in their current school when they experience changes in their place of residence. Funding will also be provided to Ontario's children's aid societies, including Indigenous societies, to connect children and youth in care with an educational liaison. The liaisons will assist students in navigating the school system and developing educational plans and goals, and coordinate available supports within the school and the community to help students reach their full potential.

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Our government's plan to build a stronger, healthier Ontario includes **historic new investments in health care**, including free **medications for everyone 24 and under through OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare**, providing free **tuition to over 210,000 students** and on-the-job learning opportunities to help land a great job, helping 100,000 kids access quality, licensed child care and making it more affordable for families, making everyday life more affordable by **reducing electricity costs by 25 per cent** on average through our Fair Hydro Plan, and taking action to **make housing more affordable** for homebuyers and renters through our Fair Housing Plan.