

Today's News - Tuesday, May 2, 2017

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Date: Tue, 02 May 2017 10:55:33 -0400

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As part of the 2017 Budget, Ontario is improving access to high-quality health care services for people across the province by investing \$1.3 billion over three years to reduce wait times, with more than \$285 million of that for 2017-18. Premier Kathleen Wynne was joined by Minister of Health and Long-Term Care Dr. Eric Hoskins at Lakeridge Health in Oshawa today to highlight how this investment will allow patients to have tests done more quickly, see a specialist when needed or get surgery faster. This investment will:

- * Help more patients by improving access and shortening wait times for MRIs and hip/knee replacements, and increasing stroke and chemotherapy treatments
- * Increase capacity for new procedures such as cardiac services, complex spine surgeries, and organ/tissue donations and transplants
- * Expand the availability of digital solutions such as eReferral and eConsult, which give family physicians faster, online access to advice from specialists, decreasing the need for referrals and freeing up specialist wait lists.

Patients will also see improved local access to appropriate health care through the use of new inter-professional models of care, including new ways of assessing patients experiencing low back and hip/knee pain. These models ease wait times by making referrals more efficient and supporting self-management plans for patients who don't need to see a specialist. **Reducing patient wait times and improving access to health care services across Ontario are part of our plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives.**

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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 proposed Fair Hydro Plan, and taking action to make housing more affordable for homebuyers and renters through our Fair Housing Plan.