

Today's News - Wednesday, May 3, 2017

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Today, Premier Kathleen Wynne, Kathryn McGarry, MPP for Cambridge and Daiene Vernile, MPP for Kitchener Centre met with students at the University of Waterloo to discuss how Ontario's new OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare Program will benefit them and their families. Last week, Ontario announced that as part of the 2017 Budget, it is moving to make prescription medications free for all children and youth 24 years of age and younger, regardless of family income. Coverage will be automatic, with no upfront costs. Beginning January 1, 2018, the proposed program will improve access to prescription medications for more than four million children and young people, including students and young professionals who may not have access to comprehensive drug benefit plans as they pursue postsecondary education or begin their careers. Beyond the most common prescriptions, OHIP+ will give young people access to more than 4,400 drugs reimbursed under the [Ontario Drug Benefit Program](#), including medications funded through the Exceptional Access Program, at no cost. Medications that will be covered include asthma inhalers, drugs to treat depression, anxiety and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, antibiotics and oral contraceptives. Ontario's drug funding program is already one of the country's most generous, helping to pay for needed prescription medications for seniors, people with high drug costs, and other vulnerable populations. Ontario is investing \$465 million to expand coverage through OHIP+. Making prescription medications more affordable for young people and families is part of our plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives.

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Also today:

- As part of the 2017 Budget, Ontario is boosting funding for mental health services and supports for people across the province. Deb Matthews, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development, and Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, were at the University of Toronto today to highlight \$6 million in additional funding for three years to support mental health services and supports at Ontario's colleges and universities. This is part of a broader investment in mental health services across the province announced in the 2017 budget, which also includes:
 - * Expanding access to existing psychotherapy services while developing a new provincewide publicly funded psychotherapy program to help people living with conditions such as anxiety and depression
 - * Supporting up to nine integrated youth service hubs to provide young people with walk-in, one-stop access to mental health and addictions services, as well as other health, social and employment supports under one roof
 - * Providing free prescription medications for youth 24 years of age and younger through

OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare – the first universal drug program of its kind in Canada.

Investing in mental health services and supports is part of Ontario's plan to increase access to care, reduce wait times and improve the patient experience through its Patients First Action Plan for Health Care and OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare Program – protecting health care today and into the future.

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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, **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.