

Today's News - Thursday, August 10, 2017

From: Todays News (OPO) <todays.news@ontario.ca>
To: Todays News (OPO) <todays.news@ontario.ca>
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Ontario has launched a new online tool to help people find wait times information for surgeries and procedures at hospitals across the province, and is providing more digital tools to help improve the patient experience. Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and Hillary Hartley, Chief Digital Officer, were at OneEleven innovation hub in Toronto to announce a number of new digital tools for patients, including:

- Enhanced wait times information: developed in collaboration with Health Quality Ontario (HQO), the new, easy-to-use wait times tool now includes the length of time between a referral received from a family physician or nurse practitioner and the patient's first appointment with a specialist or surgeon, in addition to the time between the decision on a procedure and the date the procedure is performed. Data is available down to the hospital-level, and will allow patients to make more informed choices about their health care needs.
- Ontario.ca/health: a user-focused, mobile-friendly and trusted source for information about a variety of health services in Ontario, including how to renew health cards, find health services in your community and get dental care for children.
- Expansion of the online eReferral system to seven more LHINs. eReferral helps reduce wait times by connecting patients and primary care providers to specialists and other health care services in their community faster.

Ontario is increasing access to care, reducing wait times and improving the patient experience through its [Patients First Action Plan for Health Care](#) and [OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare](#) – protecting health care today and into the future.

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Also today:

- Ontario is helping workers thrive in the low-carbon economy with new support for building sector professionals to develop green building skills. This initiative is part of Ontario's Climate Change Action Plan and is funded by proceeds from the province's carbon market. Deb Matthews, Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development, was at the LiUNA Local 1059 Regional Training Centre in London today to make the announcement. Ontario is helping unions, colleges and universities acquire new equipment and increase their capacity to train current and future workers in low carbon building skills. Ensuring that Ontario's skilled workers are prepared for the low-carbon economy is part of our plan to create jobs, grow our economy and help people in their everyday lives.

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- Ontario is widening 1.6 kilometers of Highway 26 from Sixth Line to Pretty River Parkway to reduce congestion and improve road safety in Collingwood. This section of highway will be widened to five lanes including a median shared left turning lane. Upgrading Highway 26 will improve traffic flow and improve road safety for drivers and pedestrians. Investing in better highways to keep people moving is 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** who has OHIP coverage through the OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare Program, **providing free average tuition** to over 210,000 students starting fall 2017 and on-the-job learning opportunities to help land a great job, helping 100,000 more kids aged 0–4 access quality, licensed child care, **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.