

Today's News - Thursday, March 1, 2018

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Ontario is building on its commitment to create a province free from domestic and sexual violence by launching a new strategy that will help support survivors and end the cycle of violence. Harinder Malhi, Minister of the Status of Women, was joined by Michael Coteau, Minister of Community and Social Services, and Yasir Naqvi, Attorney General in Toronto today to launch It's Never Okay: Ontario's Gender-Based Violence Strategy. This comprehensive new strategy will help survivors and families get the support they need, when they need it, as well as help to prevent violence by intervening early. The strategy will focus on four key areas:

- Improving services and supports for survivors, families and communities. Support services like counselling will be expanded, as well as access to emergency shelters, transitional housing and Indigenous shelters and healing lodges.
- Intervening early and effectively to help youth who have seen or experienced violence by providing consistent and flexible supports for children who find themselves in shelters and greatly reducing the waitlist for the Child Witness program.
- Changing attitudes and norms through public education, along with training for service providers, communities and bystanders so they can recognize and respond to gender-based violence.
- Improving the justice system response by providing free legal advice to survivors of sexual assault. In addition, alternate justice options for survivors of gender-based violence that are trauma-informed and survivor-centered will be explored in partnership with the violence against women sector.

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Also Today:

- Premier Kathleen Wynne is inviting people to join her on the eve of International Women's Day to discuss how to create more fairness and opportunity for everyone in Ontario. The Premier will host a Town Hall on Wednesday, March 7 at the Design Exchange at the Toronto Dominion Centre at 234 Bay St. in Toronto. Admission to the event is free and open to anyone who wants to engage directly with the Premier about the issues that matter most to them, with a particular focus on gender equality. All questions are welcome. Over the past three months, more than 1,400 people from all over Ontario have had the opportunity to have their say about a range of issues, from health care and education, to free trade and minimum wage. General admission seating

will be available on a first-come, first-served basis at the Design Exchange. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m., and the Premier's Town Hall will start at 6:30 p.m. Those who wish to attend are encouraged to RSVP. Please note, an RSVP does not guarantee admission but helps ensure that adequate seating is available.

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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.