

Today's News - Wednesday, January 24, 2018

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Premier Kathleen Wynne is inviting people from the Thunder Bay area to have their voices heard on the issues that matter most to them, their communities and to everyone across Northwestern Ontario. On Wednesday, January 31, the Premier will host the fourth in a series of provincewide town hall meetings. Hundreds of people have attended the town halls to date, taking advantage of the chance to speak directly with the Premier about the challenges and opportunities of a changing economy. From the rising minimum wage to legalized cannabis to education and health care, no issue has been off the table at earlier discussions in Toronto, Peel Region and Ottawa. The Premier's latest Town Hall will take place at the [Italian Cultural Centre](#) at 132 Algoma Street South in Thunder Bay, and will be moderated by Patricia Lang, former President of Confederation College. Admission is free to the event and open to anyone who wants to share their thoughts about Ontario's plan to create more fairness and opportunity in this period of rapid economic change. General admission seating will be available on a first-come, first-served basis at the Italian Cultural Centre. Doors will open at 5:00 p.m., and the Premier's Town Hall will start at 6:00 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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Also Today:

- Ontario is making it easier for youth aged 24 years and under to quit smoking by providing them with free counselling from a pharmacist and medication through OHIP+, part of the biggest expansion to medicare in a generation. More and more people are quitting smoking but studies show youth who smoke become regular smokers by 18 years old. Services and medications covered through OHIP+ to help youth quit include:
 - o Support services and counselling by a pharmacist for up to one-year.
 - o Prescription medication such as Champix and Zyban for youth ages 18-24 if they are participating in smoking-cessation counseling

Despite significant progress in reducing the use of tobacco products, 13,000 people in Ontario still die each year as a result of smoking. By quitting smoking early, people are less likely to develop smoking-related illnesses such as cancer and heart disease.

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- Ontario is supporting three organizations to create public awareness campaigns that promote and reflect the strengths of Ontario's Black children, youth and families and build community resiliency to help them rise above racial prejudices. Michael Coteau, Minister of Children and Youth Services and Minister Responsible for Anti-Racism, was at Twitter Canada in Toronto today to make the announcement. The campaigns will be delivered by three organizations and will promote strong Black cultural identities and anti-violence messaging through community outreach, online videos, live local events, traditional media and social media. Urban Rez Solutions and Innovate Inclusion, in partnership with La Passerelle-I.D.É., will lead campaigns in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, Windsor and Ottawa, and Empowerment Squared will

create a Hamilton-focused campaign. The initiative is part of the [Ontario Black Youth Action Plan](#), a four-year, \$47-million commitment to help reduce disparities for more than 10,000 Black children, youth and families in communities across the province.

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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.