

Local Ontario Health Team welcomes funding for more interprofessional care

Healthcare can't work in silos and the Northern York South Simcoe Ontario Health Team, which covers both areas and its hospitals, including Newmarket's Southlake Regional Health Centre and Alliston's Stevenson Memorial Hospital, has welcomed new funding to make it happen.

On February 1, the Province of Ontario announced funding of \$110 million to connect everyone in Ontario to primary care, resulting in a new Interprofessional Primary Care Team for the community.

Our government is making record investments to ensure that everyone that wants to have a primary care provider can connect to one, said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, in a statement. While there is more work to do, giving hundreds of thousands of more Ontarians the opportunity to connect to primary care brings us that much closer to this goal.

90 per cent of Ontarians, said the Province, are connected to a regular healthcare provider and this new funding will help close the gap for 1.3 million people who do not.

The funding, they say, will result in adding more than 400 new primary care providers among 78 expanded interprofessional primary care teams.

Interprofessional primary care teams connect people to a range of health professionals that work together under one roof, including doctors, nurse practitioners, registered and practical nurses, physiotherapists, social workers and dietitians, among others, said the Province. Timely access to primary care helps people stay healthier for longer with faster diagnosis and treatment, as well as more consistent support managing their day-to-day health while relieving pressures on emergency departments and walk-in clinics.

An additional \$20 million will provide a boost to all existing interprofessional primary care teams to help them meet increased operational costs for their facilities and supplies so that they continue to provide high-quality care to the people they provide care to.

The funding, and the potential creation of the Interprofessional Primary Care Team, was warmly greeted by Southlake's new President and CEO Dr. Paul Woods.

Today's announcement is a game-changer for primary care in our communities and I strongly support the Northern York South Simcoe Ontario Health Team pursuit to establish an Interprofessional Primary Care team to improve care in our catchment area.

The communities we serve are among the fastest growing and aging in Ontario, helping to make Southlake one of the most overcrowded hospitals in the province with more than 115,000 visits annually to Southlake's Emergency Department. It's critical that we strengthen the relationship among physicians, primary and social care providers in the community with hospitals to better serve patients in the most appropriate care setting to meet their needs.

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