

Province Announces Ontario Health Team in Western York Region

Ontario Health Teams Better Connect Care and Support Ontario's COVID-19 Response

NEWS

July 23, 2020

[Vaughan-Woodbridge, ON] — In support of the ongoing fight against COVID-19 and as part of the province's plan to end hallway health care, the Ontario government is announcing a new Ontario Health Team serving Vaughan, King, Thornhill, Richmond Hill and surrounding communities and is providing additional funding to better connect care.

"Over the past several months, Ontario Health Teams have demonstrated remarkable responsiveness to the COVID-19 outbreak by simplifying the purchase of personal protective equipment, supporting the staffing of long-term care homes and assessment centers and expanding virtual care options," said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "They've done so by breaking down long-standing barriers to better connect care, both in support of patients and our brave frontline heroes. Today's announcement of a new Ontario Health Team in western York Region will build on this success as we continue to implement our plan to defeat COVID-19."

The Western York Region Ontario Health Team is one of five new Ontario Health Teams being established across the province at this time. Ontario Health Teams bring together health care providers to work as one team to improve patient outcomes. Through an Ontario Health Team, patients will experience easier transitions from one provider to another, including, for example, between hospitals and home care providers, with one patient story, one patient record and one care plan. Patient and families will also have access to 24/7 navigation and care coordination services.

The Western York Region Ontario Health Team will focus on caring for medically and socially complex older adults with cognitive, physical and functional limitations in its first phase.

"Today, we are proud to announce that our government has reached another major milestone in the development of Ontario Health Teams," said **Michael Tibollo, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and MPP for Vaughan-Woodbridge**. "The new Western York Region Ontario Health Team will bring a new model of care that better connects patients and health care providers in their communities. I want to extend my heartfelt congratulations and gratitude to the Western York Region Ontario Health Team for their hard work, and their commitment to providing high-quality integrated patient-centered care."

The province is also investing up to \$25.25 million to directly support the 29 approved Ontario Health Teams. Of this funding, \$9.5 million will be dedicated to virtual care, which will provide more support for vulnerable populations and individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. With the remaining \$15.75 million, each Ontario Health Team will receive up to \$375,000, to be used for:

- Expanding digital care, including training, education and purchasing new tools and technology for virtual visits, booking online appointments and patient portals;
- Dedicated human resources to help develop and implement this new model of care, including more collaborative responses to COVID-19; and
- Purchasing business information tools to measure the performance and outcomes of the Ontario Health Team model.

“Building a stronger health care system for the people of western York Region starts with a better connected system that is tailored to meet the needs of our local community,” said **Altaf Stationwala, President and CEO of Mackenzie Health**. “Today’s announcement is a major step forward in bringing together local health care and social service providers as one co-ordinated team so that patients can move between different services and get the care they need when they need it, close to home.”

“The announcement and endorsements today of the Western York Region Ontario Health Team represent a promise to the residents in western York Region to deliver an integrated approach to wellness and health,” said **Bryan Keshen, Co-Chair of the Western York Region Ontario Health Team and President and CEO of Reena**. “It is a promise to enhance wellness through a collaborative support model. The challenges and experiences resulting from this pandemic highlight the integrative nature of community health. Today, the founding collaborative members look forward to not only continuing to work together but to work with other providers in health, social services and other sectors to enhance the health and wellbeing of our community.”

Last year, the Ontario government began implementing its plan to build a new, integrated health care system for patients by announcing the first 24 Ontario Health Teams and Ontario Health, a single agency to oversee quality health care delivery, and improve clinical guidance and support for providers. The strong partnerships and integrated care established by Ontario Health Teams and Ontario Health has helped better position the province to respond quickly and effectively to COVID-19. As Ontario Health Teams continue to expand across the province, these partnerships and the lessons learned will also help better prepare the province for a potential second wave of COVID-19 and flu season.

“Families in our community have called for better-integrated care for patients,” said **Stephen Lecce, Minister of Education and MPP for King-Vaughan**. “We are taking action to improve local healthcare for families in King Township and Vaughan, in addition to the completion of the long-awaited Cortellucci Vaughan Hospital that will serve our growing community. Our focus is on building a healthcare system that is centred on patients, families, and caregivers.”

"As a former optometrist in York Region, I've witnessed patients struggle to navigate our complex medical system. The new Ontario Health Team model will help medical professionals work together to improve patient outcomes," said **Gila Martow, MPP for Thornhill**.

“This announcement highlights our government’s continuous commitment to fulfilling the promise to end hallway health care and deliver the best possible medical care to all Ontarians,” said **Michael Parsa, MPP for Aurora-Oak Ridges-Richmond Hill**.

"Effective and efficient healthcare service is eagerly needed by residents in Richmond Hill. The Western York Region Ontario Health Team will definitely fit the needs in my riding at the right time!" said **Daisy Wai, MPP for Richmond Hill**.

QUICK FACTS

- An Ontario Health Team is responsible for delivering care for their patients, understanding their health care history, easing their transition from one provider to another, directly connecting them to the different types of care they need and providing 24/7 help in navigating the health care system.

- Under an Ontario Health Team, Ontarians can be confident that they can continue to contact their health care providers as they always have, to access the health care they need. The Ontario government will continue working with its health care partners until Ontario Health Teams are fully established across the province and everyone is supported by a team.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Visit Ontario's [website](#) to learn more about how the province continues to protect Ontarians from COVID-19.
- Learn more about [Ontario Health Teams](#).
- Learn more about [Ontario Health](#).

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