

Paramedics to Offer More Community Care*Ontario Supporting 30 Innovative Programs for Patients with Chronic Conditions***NEWS**

October 14, 2014

Ontario is applying the training and skills of paramedics to improve access to care in the community for patients with chronic conditions, especially seniors.

The province is investing \$6 million in the expansion and development of 30 community paramedicine programs. These initiatives will support participating paramedics in working with [Health Links](#) and other teams of health professionals to provide more care to patients in the community, including:

- Providing home visits to seniors and high-needs patients, to help them with a range of services such as ensuring they are taking medication as prescribed.
- Increasing assessment and referrals to local services in the community like Community Care Access Centres (CCACs) for follow-up care.
- Educating patients on managing their chronic diseases.

Community paramedicine programs will help seniors and other patients live independently longer, and reduce emergency room visits and hospital admissions.

Ensuring seniors and other high needs patients can access the right care, at the right time, in the right place, supports [Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care](#). It is also part of the Ontario government's four part economic plan to build Ontario up by investing in people's talent and skills, building new public infrastructure like roads and transit, creating a dynamic, supportive environment where business thrives, and building a secure savings plan so everyone can afford to retire.

QUOTES

"Community paramedicine programs will help improve access to quality care for those who need it most. This initiative is about ensuring that those with higher needs are able to receive care in the home and in the community by a team of highly skilled health professionals, lightening the load on emergency rooms."

— Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

"I am pleased that our government is supporting Superior North EMS with this funding for the development of a new Community Paramedicine Program in Thunder Bay. This local project involves the integration of community paramedics trained in chronic disease management to conduct home visits as part of the Family Health Team role. This program allows paramedics to apply their training and skills beyond the traditional role of providing emergency response."

— Bill Mauro, MPP Thunder Bay - Atikokan

“There is no question that the provision of community paramedicine services is a significant addition to patient care, particularly in the more remote communities served by Superior North EMS. The program will reduce unnecessary emergency room visits and hospital admissions, and will enable paramedics to do an even better job for the people they already serve so well. When we meet the goal of providing the right care, at the right time, in the right place, we are improving the delivery of health care, and I am delighted that community paramedicine will now be included in the services provided in our region.”

— Michael Gravelle, MPP Thunder Bay - Superior North

“We know there are gaps in care provided to the elderly, chronically ill, and those economically and socially marginalized, and these people need more help. Superior North EMS' community paramedics are part of the solution to the challenges faced in our City and District. The innovation and collaboration by Superior North EMS will make the services provided by the City of Thunder Bay more efficient while providing better care to people in need. We are grateful for the Province's support of this program.”

— Keith Hobbs, Mayor of Thunder Bay

“The paramedics in Thunder Bay and the rest of Ontario are excited to be taking a more active role in the health of Ontarians. Through community paramedicine initiatives, we are able to improve health care services for our patients, their families and the community by leveraging paramedic training, and our connections in the community.”

— Norm Gale, President of the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs and Chief of the Superior North Emergency Medical Service

QUICK FACTS

- The 30 new community paramedicine programs across the province will be shaped by local needs.
- In January 2014, Ontario invested \$90,000 in one-time funding to help create a toolkit that paramedics can use to help seniors and patients connect to additional home care and community services. This will be available to paramedics in the coming month.
- Community paramedicine refers to a broad and developing field of practice for paramedics. It allows paramedics to apply their training and skills beyond emergency response and transportation to an emergency department.

LEARN MORE

- [Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care](#)
- [Health Links](#)

For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

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