

LOCAL HEALTH INTEGRATION NETWORKS

The McGuinty government is creating a health care system that keeps people healthy, cares for them when they are sick and will be there for their children and grandchildren. The plan for making that vision a reality has three priorities: Healthier Ontarians, reduced wait times, and better access to doctors and nurses.

These priorities will be supported by initiatives to improve the planning, management and coordination of services throughout the health care system. One of these initiatives is the creation of 14 Local Health Integration Networks (LHINS)

What are LHINs?

LHINs are 14 local entities designed to plan, integrate and fund local health services, including hospitals, community care access centres, home care, long-term care and mental health within a specific geographic area.

They reflect the reality that a community's health needs and priorities are best understood by people familiar with the needs of that community and the people who live there, not from offices hundreds of miles away.

What will LHINs do?

LHINs will determine the health care priorities and services required in their local communities.

They will improve planning and integration at the local level in order to improve health results for patients in every part of the province.

Their roles will be phased in over time. Subject to the approval of any necessary legislative changes by the Legislative Assembly, they would begin by engaging local community and health care providers in setting priorities and planning health services in their area. LHINs would then move to integrating local systems and co-ordinating services, and eventually, to providing funding and allocating resources.

By 2007-2008:

- LHINs will have developed and implemented accountability and performance management agreements with local providers
- They will have developed and will be carrying out strategies to respond to community concerns and requirements, and will be working with local providers to specifically address local health needs
- They will be responsible for evaluating and reporting on their local health system's performance
- They will be providing funds to local health providers, as well as advice to the Ministry about local capital needs

Benefits

LHINs will result in a number of benefits. Specifically, LHINs will:

- enhance integrated health care delivery so that patients can more easily navigate across the continuum of health care
- reach accountability agreements with providers that will ensure that resources intended for patients are used for patients
- provide more community-based input into health care decision-making

Boundaries

There are 14 LHINs whose geographic boundaries are based on existing patient referral patterns. These boundaries will in no way prevent people from seeking health care services outside their own LHIN area. In that sense they are considered permeable in terms of patient care. People will continue to be able to choose their health care provider as they do today.

Governance

LHINs are operating as not-for-profit organizations governed by boards of directors who were appointed by the province through Order-in-Council, after a rigorous skill and merit-based selection process. The government has appointed one chair and two founding board members for each LHIN. The government proposes that each LHIN would have a full complement of nine board members by the end of the year.

The board of directors will be responsible for the management and control of the affairs of the LHIN and will be the key point of interaction with the ministry.

CEO's were selected after an extensive search and selection process, and with input and final approval from the founding board chairs. They will report directly to the LHIN boards.

Relationship with Ministry

The ministry will continue to set priorities for improving the health care of all Ontarians, such as keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times, and improving access to doctors and nurses. Better management of the system through LHINs will help in achieving these priorities.

The ministry will outline the principles, goals and requirements for all LHINs to ensure that all Ontarians have access to a consistent set of health care services. At the same time, LHINs will have the flexibility to address unique local health needs and priorities.

The relationship between the government and each LHIN (including operational, financial, auditing and reporting) will be outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding and an annual performance agreement between each LHIN and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.