

YOUR HEALTH CARE OPTIONS

February 12, 2009

Ontario is introducing Your Health Care Options website (www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions) as a source of information that will enable Ontarians to make informed decisions about where to go for their front-line health care needs.

The website directs people to places they can go in their community for immediate care – such as Telehealth Ontario, family health care providers, Family Health Teams, walk-in and after-hours clinics, urgent care centres, and hospital emergency rooms. Listed below is a definition of these health services and what they provide.

Health Care Option	What it is...	How it can help...
Telehealth Ontario	Telehealth Ontario is a free, confidential telephone service people can call to get health advice or general health information from a Registered Nurse.	Provides round-the-clock access, to a qualified health professional – helping you decide whether to care for yourself, make an appointment with your doctor, go to a clinic, contact a community service or go to a hospital emergency room.
Family Health Care Providers	General practitioners, family physicians and nurse practitioners are your family health care providers. They focus on family medicine, diagnose and treat diseases, physical disorders and injuries of patients of all ages.	Provides immediate care for non-emergency situations.
Family Health Team	A Family Health Team brings together different health care providers to deliver the highest possible quality of care for the patient. Family Health Teams are designed to give physicians support from other health care professionals including nurses, nurse practitioners and other professionals who work together to provide you with a range of health care options.	Provides immediate care for non-emergency situations.
Community Health Centres	Community Health Centres are non-profit organizations that provide health and health promotion programs for individuals, families and communities. A health centre is established and governed by a community-elected board of directors.	Provide care for those who have difficulty accessing primary health care due to barriers such as language, culture, physical disabilities, homelessness, poverty or geographic isolation.

Walk-in or after-hours clinic	A walk-in clinic is a non-hospital based clinic where care is provided for patients with uncomplicated and non-emergency needs. Clinic hours usually extend into the evenings and weekends and often do not require an appointment.	Provides immediate care for non-emergency situations, with a range of services similar to those provided in your primary care physician's office.
Urgent Care Centre	Urgent Care Centres provide services to patients without an appointment seeking treatment for non-life threatening conditions during the day, in the evening and on weekends. Urgent Care Centres are equipped to provide all types of treatment, with the exception of surgery.	Provides immediate care for minor or uncomplicated conditions in less urgent situations such as eye injuries, sutures, casts, X-rays, and laboratory tests.
Emergency Room	The emergency room is the department of a hospital responsible for the provision of medical and surgical care to patients arriving at the hospital in need of immediate medical attention.	Provides immediate care for emergency situations – including serious or life-threatening illnesses or injuries.

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

Steve Erwin, Minister's Office, 416-326-3986
 Andrew Morrison, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care,
 416-314-6197

ontario.ca/health-news
Disponible en français