

# Connecting More People to Primary Care in Pickering

PICKERING — The Ontario government is taking the next steps to deliver its Primary Care Action Plan, which is on track to connect everyone in the province to a family doctor or primary care provider by 2029.

As part of this plan to connect everyone in Ontario to a publicly funded family doctor or primary care team, the Ontario government is investing \$3,799,000 this year to connect up to 9,936 people to primary care in Pickering.

"An investment of \$3,799,000 is strengthening primary care capacity and delivering stable, reliable health care closer to home for families in Pickering," said Peter Bethlenfalvy, Member of Provincial Parliament for Pickering-Uxbridge. "This funding will help connect up to 9,936 patients to a primary care provider, providing greater certainty, continuity of care and access close to home."

The Durham West Network Family Health Team was

funded through the latest call for proposals under the Primary Care Action Plan, with all 124 teams receiving funding expected to connect another 500,000 patients to primary care across Ontario. Each team has established a plan to attach a high proportion of unattached people in their community, including those on the Health Care Connect waitlist.

The Durham West Network Family Health Team is an innovative partnership with four Family Health Organization (FHO) clinics: Central Pickering FHO, Priority Health FHO, Baywest FHO, and Ajax Harwood FHO. Funding will not only attach thousands of Durham Residents to a primary care provider, but the Family Health Team noted it will also strive to provide comprehensive team-based care for each patient.

"On behalf of our physician collaborative in Durham West, I am thrilled, proud and humbled to receive approval for the establishment of our new Family Health Team: Durham West Network Family Health

Team," said Dr. Lubna Tirmizi, Durham West Network Family Health Team. "We are grateful to both the provincial government and specifically the Primary Care Action Team for giving frontline family physicians the opportunity to have a voice in building out the future of primary care in Ontario. Thank you to the Durham Ontario Health Team and all our community partners for your tremendous support!"

Allied team members like nurses, social workers, Nurse practitioners, community paramedics and others will help the Family Health Team deliver quality primary care at every stage of life close to home.

The province has also exceeded its 2025-2026 attachment goal under the Primary Care Action Plan, which was to connect 300,000 patients to a primary care provider by March 31, 2026. As of January 1, 2026, the province has already attached 330,000 people to care in 2025-2026, surpassing its goal by more than

30,000 with three months still to go.

Through the 2026 Budget, the province is also increasing overall funding for the plan to a total of \$3.4 billion between 2025 and 2029.

"Through our Primary Care Action Plan, we are connecting more people to care and have already exceeded our 2025-26 attachment target," said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "By connecting more families to care in Pickering, our government is taking the next step toward connecting everyone in the province to primary care by 2029."

Through Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care, the Ontario government continues to take bold and decisive action to grow the province's highly skilled

health-care workforce and ensure people and their families have access to high-quality care, closer to home, for generations to come.

Ontario's Primary Care Action Team is drawing on best-in-class models of care to implement its action plan, supported by the government's investment of more than \$3.4 billion to connect approximately two million more people to primary care by 2029, which will achieve the government's goal of connecting everyone in the province to primary care.

The government is making significant progress on its goal of clearing the Health Care Connect waitlist as of January 1, 2025. That waitlist has been reduced by more than 87 per cent as the plan continues to hit its targets and deliver faster

access to high-quality care.

Ontarians looking to find a family doctor or nurse practitioner can register with Health Care Connect or call 811.

Interprofessional primary care teams connect people to a range of health professionals that work together under one roof, including family physicians, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, registered practical nurses, physician assistants, physiotherapists, social workers, dieticians and pharmacists, helping patients to receive more connected and convenient care.

Since 2018, Ontario has added nearly 20,000 additional physicians to its health-care workforce, including an over 14 per cent increase in family doctors.

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