

Ontario Expanding Access to Diabetes Care in Durham Region

WHITBY — The Ontario government is renovating and expanding The Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre to connect more people in Whitby and across Durham Region, to high-quality diabetes care. Once complete, the expanded centre will nearly double its capacity from 2,000 patients annually to 3,800 patients annually. This project is part of the government's plan to protect Ontario's health-care system by investing nearly \$60 billion in more than 50 major hospital projects across the province over the next 10 years.

"Our government is making historic investments to protect Ontario's health-care system and build a connected, people-first health-care system," said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. "Through this investment, Ontarians in Durham Region will benefit from increased access to diabetes education and care, resulting in fewer related health complications for patients and reduced stress on the health-care system."

With the government's investment, The Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre will be able to serve more people and deliver enhanced care in a welcoming environment that has more clinical space, private counselling rooms and child-friendly areas.

As a next step, the Ministry of Health is working with The Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre to complete planning for this project, including determining programming, operational and space requirements. Once detailed planning is complete and the project is tendered and awarded, a construction schedule will be confirmed.

Through Your Health: A Plan For Connected and Convenient Care, Ontario is expanding and modernizing health facilities and community based services across the province, making it faster and easier for people of all ages to connect to the high-quality care they need, where and when they need it.

The Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre is Canada's only stand-alone centre and charitable organization specializing in type 1 diabetes. The centre delivers a wide range of programs and services via a multidisciplinary team to children, adolescents, adults and their families, offering expert counselling.

The centre serves approximately 2,000 patients annually from regions including Durham, Northumberland/Kawartha, Peel and York with a projection to grow to almost 3,800 patients.

Type 1 diabetes is a condition in which the pancreas does not produce any insulin. Insulin is an important hormone that helps your body to control the level of glucose (sugar) in your blood.

According to Diabetes Canada, diabetes contributes to 30 per cent of strokes, 40 per cent of heart attacks, 50 per cent of kidney failures requiring dialysis, 70 per cent of amputations annually and is the leading cause of vision loss.

Roughly 10 per cent of people living with diabetes have type 1, insulin-dependent diabetes. Type 1 diabetes generally develops in childhood or adolescence but can also develop in adulthood. People with type 1 need to inject insulin or use an insulin pump to ensure their bodies have the right amount of insulin.

Over the next 10 years, Ontario is investing nearly \$60 billion on major health infrastructure. This is part of the government's plan to get shovels in the ground on more than 50 major hospital projects across the province, which will deliver approximately 3,000 new hospital beds and build a connected, people-first health-care system.

The Ontario government is investing \$257 million in 2025-26 to support critical infrastructure upgrades and repairs at 126 hospitals and 66 community health-care facilities across the province, a 12.3 per cent increase from the previous year.

"Our government is continuing to make investments that strengthen the health-care services families rely on. This investment into the expansion of The Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre will ensure more people across Durham Region can access the high quality diabetes care they need closer to home, protecting Ontarians and creating a more resilient province."

- Peter Bethlenfalvy

Minister of Finance and MPP, Pickering—Uxbridge

"We are thankful to the Province of Ontario for recognizing the importance of specialized diabetes care and supporting our Building on The Best Capital Campaign. Their support will help us expand The Best Centre, ensuring all of our patients and families living with type 1 diabetes receive the care and support they need to thrive."

- Lorrie Hagen and Serge Babin

Executive Director and Chair, The Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre

"The Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre is at the forefront of meeting the needs of our local children, youth and adults living with type 1 diabetes. My thanks to Minister Jones and Minister Bethlenfalvy for their ongoing support of The Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre's innovative work which ensures Whitby residents living with type 1 diabetes and other parts of the Region of Durham have the lifelong care they need, when and where they need it."

- Lorne Coe

MPP, Whitby

"Our government is making the necessary investments toward a people-first healthcare system, which includes facility upgrades and an important expansion of programs for The Charles H. Best Diabetes Centre right here in Durham Region. With over 300,000 Canadians living with type 1 Diabetes and relying on daily insulin injections, our investments into resources, staff and facilities brings us closer to a possible cure and an improved quality of life for those affected."

- Todd J. McCarthy

MPP, Durham

Over \$2 Million to Improve Accessibility for Seniors and People with Disabilities

The Ontario government is investing over \$2 million through the new Enhancing Access to Spaces for Everyone (EASE) Grant to build more inclusive and accessible spaces across the province. As part of the government's plan to protect Ontario, the funding will help build stronger, more resilient communities by supporting over 40 projects that increase accessibility and create more opportunities for seniors and people with disabilities to participate in their community.

"We are creating communities where everyone can participate fully," said Raymond Cho, Minister for Seniors and Accessibility. "Through the EASE Grant, our government is supporting innovative and impactful projects that will help create a more inclusive province for people in every corner of our province."

Through the EASE Grant, municipalities, not-for-profit organizations and Indigenous governing bodies can receive up to \$60,000 for projects that focus on improving accessibility, including upgrading building entryways, adding ramps and elevators, leveling sidewalks and parking areas. Grant funding can also support adding accessible washrooms and signage, removing barriers and making community spaces more inclusive. Examples of this year's funded projects include:

Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation is receiving up to \$58,000 to remove physical barriers at Baxter Conservation Area, allowing seniors, people with disabilities, and families to enjoy nature safely and inclusively.

Thorold Community Activities Group is receiving up to \$29,000 to improve outdoor accessibility at Thorold's community centre by upgrading sidewalks, parking areas, and signage, making it safer and easier for seniors and people with disabilities to access recreation and food security programs. The Township of Champlain is receiving up to \$50,000 to add accessible, age-friendly features at L'Original Beach, including shaded seating, signage, and pathways, to support inclusive, barrier-free recreation. The Town of Deep River is receiving up to \$60,000 to install an elevator at the Deep River Arena, removing a physical barrier and improving access to the upper level for older adults, people with disabilities and those with mobility challenges, thereby supporting full participation in community programs and events.

In addition to the EASE Grant, the Ontario government is making historic investments in community programs and Seniors Active Living Centre (SALC) programs, which have now expanded to over 400 locations across the province with over \$128 million in funding since 2018. Thousands of additional seniors across the province can now access local programs that promote social connection and well-being. These changes are one more way the province is meeting the needs of Ontario's aging population and better supporting the people who care for seniors by improving and expanding supports for seniors no matter where they live.

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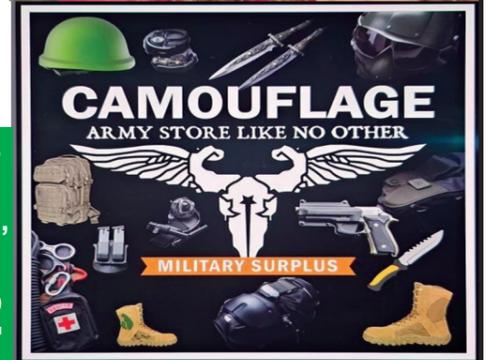
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