



## Investment of nearly \$3.8M will connect up to 10,000 people to primary care

PICKERING — Today, the Durham West Network Family Health Team joined Peter Bethlenfalvy, Member of Provincial Parliament for Pickering-Uxbridge, to recognize the work currently underway as part of the recent announcement of nearly \$3.8M for the newly established Family Health Team. This funding will connect up to nearly 10,000 people to primary care in their community.

The newly established 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 Durham West Network Family Health Team will also strive to provide comprehensive team-based care for each patient.

"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 structure of this new Family Health Team will include allied team members like nurses, social workers, pharmacists, community paramedics, physiotherapists, and other medical professionals. The goal is to deliver quality primary care at every stage of life, close to home, for existing and new patients. Work is already underway to prepare the family health team for accepting new patients.

"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!"

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.

This is part of the government plan to connect everyone in the province to a family doctor or primary care provider by 2029. 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 the region, 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, dietitians 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.

"After more than thirty years caring for this community, I've learned that good primary care is not only about seeing more patients faster — it's about caring for people more fully. At Ajax Harwood Clinic we have long built our practice around patient education and group-based care, and the Durham West Network Family Health Team now lets us bring that approach, and the team around the physician — nursing, health promotion, and navigation — to hundreds more families across Durham West. Helping patients build their own capacity for health has always been at the heart of what we do. I thank the Minister and the Province for investing in primary care in Durham."

— Dr. Carlos Yu, FHO Lead, Ajax Harwood Clinic FHO

"As a Family Health Organization and urgent care clinic, our partnership with the Ministry of Health allows us to bridge critical gaps in patient care. Thanks to this provincial funding, we, members of Durham West Network Family Health Team are able to provide our community with direct, cost-free access to specialized mental health support, dedicated chronic disease management, home nursing, and vital heart and lung programs. This collaborative team model ensures our patients receive comprehensive, high-quality care much faster, ultimately empowering our patients and building a healthier community."

— Ehsan Samiee, MD CFPC, FHO Lead, Priority FHO

"The investment in the Durham West Network Family Health Team is a major step forward for healthcare in Ajax and Pickering. At BayWest Medical Centre, we see the growing need for accessible primary care, mental health supports, chronic disease management, and culturally responsive services every day."

"As a newer clinic serving the Ajax community over the past two years, this funding is critical to helping us grow, attach more patients in need of care, and expand access to comprehensive team-based healthcare close to home. It will allow us to bring in additional healthcare professionals, improve patient access, and help connect thousands of unattached residents with a family physician. "We are grateful to Ontario Health, the Ministry of Health, and Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy for supporting this important investment in the future of healthcare in our community."

— Dr. Rizwan Kazi, FHO Lead, BayWest FHO

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