



Ontario Connecting More People to Primary Care Teams in Thunder Bay *Closing the gap for people not connected to primary care in the community.*

NEWS

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Thunder Bay— The Ontario government is investing **\$1,851,605** to connect more people to primary care teams in Thunder Bay through **the Lakehead Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic, NorWest Community Health Centre, Lakehead NPLC, and Greenstone FHT**. This is part of Ontario’s **\$110 million** investment to connect up to **328,000 people** to primary care teams, bringing the province one step closer to connecting everyone in Ontario to primary care.

Ontario currently leads the country with 90 per cent of people connected to a regular health care provider. As a next step to close the gap for people not connected to primary care in the community, the province is supporting the expansion of interprofessional primary care teams in Thunder Bay - Atikokan.

Interprofessional primary care teams connect people to a range of health professionals that work together under one roof, including doctors, nurse practitioners, registered and practical nurses, physiotherapists, social workers and dietitians, among others. Timely access to primary care helps people stay healthier for longer with faster diagnosis and treatment, as well as more consistent support managing their day-to-day health while relieving pressures on emergency departments and walk-in clinics.

“Our government is making record investments to ensure that everyone that wants to have a primary care provider can connect to one,” **said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health**. “While there is more work to do, giving hundreds of thousands of more Ontarians the opportunity to connect to primary care brings us that much closer to this goal.”

“By working with and listening to the health care providers in our region, our government is making targeted investments to ensure that every citizen has access to a Primary Care Provider, and today’s significant investment brings us closer to achieving that goal.” **said Kevin Holland, MPP Thunder Bay – Atikokan**. “I look forward to further collaboration with our health care providers in the Region and I am excited to see what will be achieved by the recipients of today’s funding.”

In addition to other historic investments to expand medical school spots and efforts to break down barriers so highly-skilled internationally-trained doctors can care for people in Ontario, Ministry of Health modelling shows that these initiatives will help connect up to 98 per cent of people in Ontario to primary care in the next several years.

Since the launch of [Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](#) one year ago, the government has been making steady progress to ensure the health care system has become better

equipped to respond to the needs of patients and provide them with the right care in the right place, faster access to services and access to an expanded health care workforce.

Quick Facts:

- As a next step to close the gap for the 1.3 million people not connected to primary care in the province, the government is making a record investment of **\$90 million** to add over 400 new primary care providers as part of 78 new and expanded interprofessional primary care teams. The new and expanded teams will include Family Health Teams, Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics, Community Health Centres and Indigenous Primary Health Care Organizations.
- Ontario's investment of **\$90 million dollars** triples the original **\$30 million dollars** earmarked to expand interprofessional primary care teams and will deliver over four times as many initiatives as outlined in our Your Health Plan almost a year ago.
- The new and expanded teams are the result of a province-wide call for proposals that took place in 2023. All proposals were thoroughly reviewed by Ontario Health based on criteria prioritising areas of greatest need, to connect a greater number of people currently without a regular primary care provider with these services closer to home.
- Ontario is the first province to have a publicly funded Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic program. This is in addition to the new Practice Ready Ontario Program that will add **50 new physicians** this year.
- Ontario leads the country in how many people benefit from a long-term, stable relationship with a family doctor or primary care provider. Since 2018 the province has added over **80,000 new nurses** and **10,300 new physicians** to the health care system.
- Ontario invests over **\$1 billion** in interprofessional primary care teams annually.

Quotes:

"On behalf of our partners at Harbourview Family Health Team and Superior North EMS, we are pleased to accept this funding. This is a great example of different models of care coming together to try and best meet the needs of our community. Our goal will be to help increase access to interdisciplinary care across our city and region. We are all very committed to ensuring equal access to quality team based care for unattached or marginalized community members".

- Pam Delgaty, Executive Director at Lakehead Nurse Practitioner Clinic

"The Greenstone Family Health Team is very excited to be receiving this funding. It is critical in enabling us to provide high quality care while reducing operational pressures, which our rural northern primary care teams navigate daily. We know that strong primary care systems offer people the best health outcomes. This commitment will help us to improve coordinated and connected care as well as access to interdisciplinary team-based care in our community, ensuring more patients receive the right care from the right provider.

We are grateful to our provincial government for their investment in expanding primary care and we look forward to building a more robust health care system together. This will bring us one step closer to positioning primary care as the foundation of our health care system."

- Shannon Kristjanson, Executive Director at Greenstone FHT.

“We are excited about the recent funding announcement connecting 300,000 people to primary care teams in Ontario. This aligns with NorWest CHC’s strategic priorities, focusing on improving health access and outcomes for vulnerable populations through evidence-informed decision making. The emphasis on interprofessional care teams complements our commitment to equity-driven programming and partnerships. Through collaboration and advocacy, we’re set to maximize health resources, making a lasting impact on our community’s well-being with a strong emphasis on interprofessional care.

- **Juanita Lawson, CEO of NorWest Community Health Centres (NorWest CHC)**

Additional Resources:

- [Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](#)
- [Ontario Connecting Over 300,000 People to Primary Care Teams](#)
- [Your Health, Your Results](#)

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