

News Release

Ontario Expanding Community Role for Paramedics Community Paramedicine Programs Improving Access to Care for Seniors

January 21, 2014 9:30 a.m.

Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Ontario is supporting the expansion of community paramedicine programs to improve access to home care and community support services for seniors and other patients with chronic conditions.

The province is investing \$6 million to support the expansion and development of community paramedicine initiatives across the province. These programs allow paramedics to apply their training and skills beyond the traditional role of emergency response, and can include:

Providing home visits to seniors known to call emergency services frequently, to provide a range of services such as ensuring they are taking their medications as prescribed.

Educating seniors in their homes about chronic disease management and helping to connect them to local supports, such as Diabetes Education Teams.

Helping refer patients to their local Community Care Access Centre (CCAC) so that they can be provided with appropriate home care services.

Community paramedicine programs will work with teams of health professionals, including Health Links, to co-ordinate care for individual patients with complex chronic conditions. These programs will help seniors and other patients to live independently, while helping to reduce unnecessary emergency room visits and hospital admissions.

Ensuring seniors and other high need patients can access the right care, at the right time, in the right place, supports Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care. This is part of the Ontario government's plan to invest in people, build modern infrastructure and support a dynamic and innovative business climate.

Quick Facts

More than half of Ontario residents currently have access to community paramedicine programs in their communities.

Approximately 13 community paramedicine programs are currently operating in Ontario.

In 2014, 10 additional municipalities and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers are planning to implement community paramedicine initiatives.

Expanding community paramedicine in Ontario was a key recommendation contained in Dr. Samir Sinha's report, *Living Longer, Living Well*.

Quotes

Community Paramedicine programs help patients get the care they need in their communities, while reducing unnecessary emergency room visits and hospital admissions. These new supports for community paramedicine will also help seniors and patients with chronic conditions manage their conditions better and stay healthy.

Deb Matthews

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

There is no question that by leveraging the health care training and skills of Ontario paramedics through community paramedicine programs, we are able to improve health care services for our patients, their families and the community. We look forward to working with all of our partners to expand the current programs, launch new programs and share best practices across the health care sector.

Norm Gale

President of the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs and Chief of the Superior North Emergency Medical Service

Toronto EMS views the practice of Community Paramedicine as a growing and necessary role for our profession. Toronto EMS' Community Paramedics treat and assess more than 700 patients a year and that does not even scratch the service of the medical need in the community. This new funding will allow us to increase our community outreach in this important and growing area of health care.

Paul Rafis

Toronto Emergency Medical Services Chief

Over the last few years, we have witnessed the ability of Community Paramedicine programs in Ontario and beyond to leverage the talent of skilled paramedics to deliver better patient and system outcomes. Today's landmark investment in Community Paramedicine will allow us to become a world leader in developing a variety of unique made-in-Ontario solutions that help us to further deliver the right care, in the right place, at the right time. This is a great day for older Ontarians and especially those wishing to age in place in our rural and northern communities.

Dr. Samir Sinha

Executive Lead, Ontario's Seniors Strategy and Director of Geriatrics, Mount Sinai and the University Health Network Hospitals