



Community and Health Services Department
Public Health Branch

Memorandum

TO: Members of Committee of the Whole
FROM: Dr. Karim Kurji, Medical Officer of Health
DATE: January 14, 2016
RE: **Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Discussion Paper**

Background

On December 17, 2015, the Minister of the Health and Long-Term Care released *Patients First: A Proposal to Strengthen Patient Centred Health Care in Ontario* (Patients First) outlining a proposed plan to transform Ontario's health care system. Patients First focuses on four main proposals related to: more effective integration of service and greater equity; timely access to primary care; consistent and accessible home and community care and stronger links between public health and other health services.

With the release of the discussion paper, the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Honorable Dr. Eric Hoskins, has launched a public consultation process which may result in a restructuring of primary care and public health service delivery and have potential impacts for public health.

Local and Provincial Public Health associations and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario will be participating in the consultation process to make recommendations on discussion questions posed in the paper.

Public Health Proposal: Integrate local population and public health planning with other health services. Formalize linkages between Local Health Integration Networks and public health units

Correspondence from the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care highlights proposed structural changes between the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) and Public Health (see Attachment 1).

To integrate population health and establish stronger links between public health and other health services, Patients First proposes LHINs and public health units build on

existing collaborations, work more closely together to align work and ensure population and public health priorities inform health planning, funding and delivery. Patients First outlines the following support for this new formal relationship:

- The Ministry would create a formal relationship between the Medical Officers of Health and each LHIN, empowering the Medical Officers of Health to work with LHIN leadership to plan population health services.
- The Ministry would transfer the dedicated provincial funding for public health units to the LHINs for allocation to public health units. The LHINs would ensure that all transferred funds would be used for public health purposes.
- The LHINs would assume responsibility for the accountability agreements with public health units.
- Local boards of health would continue to set budgets.
- The respective boards of health, as well as land ambulance services, would continue to be managed at the municipal level.

Patients First highlights a separate initiative to support more consistent public health services across the province. The Ministry is modernizing the Ontario Public Health Standards and Organizational Standards to identify gaps and duplication in service delivery; determine capacity and resource needs; and develop options for greater effectiveness.

In addition, Patients First states the Ministry would appoint an Expert Panel to advise on opportunities for partnership between LHINs and public health units, and how to further improve public health capacity and delivery.

Next Steps

York Region Public Health in consultation with provincial public health and regional municipal partners and colleagues will engage in a review of the public health proposal and discussion questions and report back to Council with recommendations.

Dr. Karim Kurji, Medical Officer of Health

kk/mw

Attachment (1)

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**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

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Dr. Karim Kurji
Medical Officer of Health
York Region, Public Health Branch, Community and Health Services Department
17250 Yonge Street
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Dear Dr. Kurji:

Over the past several years, Ontario's care providers and health system partners have worked hard to create meaningful change across the system. There has been significant progress in access to primary care, a greater focus on health promotion, and more supports at home and in the community.

Although there have been many meaningful accomplishments, the Ontario health care system remains characterized by excellent services that are separate in their delivery and funding. This affects access, quality, and consistency of care. We believe that our system needs structural change to improve delivery and sustainability of the services that Ontarians rely on.

The ministry has released *Patients First: A Proposal to Strengthen Patient-Centred Health Care in Ontario*, a discussion paper that outlines proposed changes for the health system. The proposed structural changes would see Local Health Integration Networks assume responsibility for home and community care and system integration, and have greater involvement with primary care, and improved linkages with population health planning. The discussion paper can be found here: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/news/bulletin/>.

The ministry looks forward to continuing the dialogue about this proposal in a variety of forums. We are committed to a meaningful engagement process that includes all health system partners, as well as patients. We hope this input will result in a plan that can successfully build a high-performing health system that is more responsive to local needs, is better connected and integrated, drives quality and performance, and enhances transparency for providers and patients, clients and their families.

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Dr. Karim Kurji

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Hoskins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister