



Pediatric Health Leaders Applaud Historic Expansion of Children's Health Care

July 19, 2023 (OTTAWA, Ontario) – Today, the Ontario Government Made Kids Count with a historic investment of \$330 million to expand children's health care across the province.

This investment will allow children's hospitals and community-based providers across the province to expand services and reduce wait times for essential children's health care services, including surgeries, procedures, diagnostic imaging, mental health treatment, and child development and rehabilitation. This will allow providers to run more operating rooms, open more beds, expand clinics, hire more staff, and, perhaps most importantly, deliver more innovative programs in partnership.

Every day matters in the life of a child, and children across Ontario are currently waiting longer than adults for critical health care services. In fact, close to two-thirds of patients at Ontario's children's hospitals have already passed the clinically recommended wait time for their surgery. In the community, 90,000 children and youth are waiting for community- and school-based child development and rehabilitation services, and over 28,000 children are waiting for mental health treatment across the province.

Today's announcement is a turning point for the hundreds of thousands of children across Ontario waiting for care. This expansion of children's health care is a critical step towards right-sizing the pediatric health system to meet the needs of Ontario's almost 3 million children and their families. Not only will this lead to better access to the right care at the right time and place, but it will also prevent further complications and challenges down the road, leading to better outcomes for an entire generation.

We thank the provincial government for hearing our rallying cry and responding with this system-wide investment to expand children's health care in communities across Ontario. As providers of children's health care, we are committed to maximizing these investments and ensuring the best outcomes for all of Ontario's children, youth, and families.

Quotes:

"Ontario's welcome investment is the first of its kind—a broad strategy and multi-pronged investment in children's hospitals and in community-based care. We're ready to do things differently—to look at the whole system of care, not just certain elements of it. Empowered Kids Ontario is a proud partner in this collaborative effort that is a game changer for kids and families." Jennifer Churchill, CEO, Empowered Kids Ontario

"We are grateful to the Ontario government for this vital investment to support SickKids and our Children's Health Coalition partners in taking important steps toward improving timely access to vitally important health services. Children, youth and their families in Ontario deserve a pediatric health system that will be at the ready when they need it. Today's announcement is pivotal in building capacity across the system to serve the growing number of Ontario children and youth who depend on the highly specialized care we provide." Dr. Ronald Cohn, President and CEO, The Hospital for Sick Children (SickKids)



“Today, the government has shown it is committed to improving children’s health. We look forward to continuing to work together to ensure that children and youth have access to the care they need, where and when they need it. This investment will have a tremendous impact on the physical, developmental and mental health on a generation of children and youth in Ontario.” Lauren Ettin, Executive Director, Kids Health Alliance

“Children and youth with disabilities and developmental differences, medical complexity and rehabilitation needs have faced an unprecedented crisis in terms of wait times and overall access to services. This investment will help families access the care and services they need, when they need them. We applaud this announcement and will continue to work together with government and pediatric health care partners in hospitals and community to drive change across the continuum of care, so that all children can maximize their ability to live meaningful lives and have healthy futures.” Julia Hanigsberg, president and CEO, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

“Today is a historic day for pediatric healthcare in Ontario – the single biggest expansion of our capacity. Ever. Ontario’s population of kids has grown considerably in the past 20 years and will continue to grow – yet the pediatric health system hadn’t,” says Alex Munter, President and CEO, CHEO. “Over the past two decades, we’ve also seen the emergence of new diseases, more kids with developmental needs and increased rates of many illnesses, ranging from childhood cancer to mental illness to diabetes. More kids with more needs: that’s why right-sizing the system to better meet those needs is so important. CHEO and our Kids Come First Health Team partners are getting right to work to turn these investments into new and expanded programs for kids and families.” Alex Munter, CEO, Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario

“As a full-service children’s care provider, our hospital takes a whole-child approach to specialized treatment and service delivery. We recognize and appreciate that these government investments span the spectrum of young people’s health and well-being, supporting acute, surgery, developmental, rehabilitation, and mental health. Our teams will now have access to expanded resources to enhance what they do best: provide expert care and help young people flourish.” Bruce Squires, President, McMaster Children’s Hospital

“We want nothing more for our kids than for them to be happy and healthy. This includes ensuring they receive the care they need when they need it. Today’s investment by the Government of Ontario will help alleviate surgical, ambulatory, and emergency department wait times so that children and their families can access high-quality care as soon as possible.” Nash Syed, President, Children’s Hospital at London Health Sciences Centre

“Too many kids and families end up in hospitals because they can’t get the mental health care they need in the community. Today’s investment will help us advance an innovative system of care for child and youth mental health, focusing first on those with the most complex and intensive needs. Not only will this provide timely access and clear pathways to high-quality care for kids and families, but it will also free up hospital capacity to address other urgent care needs and reduce health system costs overall.” Tatum Wilson, CEO, Children’s Mental Health Ontario



About the Children's Health Coalition

[The Children's Health Coalition](#) is a collective of eight leading Ontario children's health organizations: CHEO, Children's Hospital – London Health Sciences Centre, Children's Mental Health Ontario, Empowered Kids Ontario, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital, Kids Health Alliance, McMaster Children's Hospital and SickKids.

We represent expertise in pediatric health care and research; rehabilitation; mental health services like targeted prevention, early intervention, short and long-term counselling and therapy, addictions services, intensive services, and acute care; physical, cognitive, and communication disabilities; as well as emergency and complex care. We deliver every kind of care a child could need, and we see how the elements of care can work together to support their families no matter what challenges they are facing.