

NEWS

LANDMARK PROVINCIAL AGING AT HOME STRATEGY LAUNCHES IN HAMILTON NIAGARA HALDIMAND BRANT LHIN

McGuinty Government Improves Access to Community-Based Health Care Services

June 19, 2008

NEWS

Standing in front of new Dodge Caravans that will provide area seniors with rides to appointments, George Smitherman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, today announced a series of local Aging at Home initiatives which are receiving more than \$6.7 million this year.

More than 250 new programs – funded with \$76 million this year – and a total of 100 vans providing 135,000 rides to appointments across Ontario are part of the province's landmark Aging at Home Strategy. The Strategy is a \$1.1 billion initiative to help seniors live healthy, independent lives in the comfort and dignity of their own homes. Minister Smitherman traveled to the Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant Local Health Integration Network (HNHB LHIN) today to highlight these local initiatives.

Aging at Home is part of the Ontario government's broader strategy to reduce wait times in emergency rooms. Offering better community supports to our seniors allows them to stay in their homes longer and reduces the pressures on Ontario's Emergency Departments.

The HNHB LHIN will be implementing more than 30 programs this year with more than \$6.7 million in provincial funding – initiatives ranging from a transitional care team for frail seniors leaving hospital to expanded homemaking services – designed to provide senior-centered accessible care in the community. Some offer culturally appropriate initiatives to meet the needs of diverse clientele. These initiatives emphasize a mix of community-based services in the following areas:

- Caregiver support and education
- Supportive housing
- Transportation and meals
- Physical activity
- Wellness and preventive care
- Reducing isolation

For example, the Wellington Outreach Program will be undertaking an innovative initiative in the HNHB LHIN which links young people and seniors, both with mental health challenges, with young persons providing assistance with activities of daily living to seniors. Partners in this project include the Wellington Psychiatric Outreach Program, Canadian Mental Health Association (Hamilton Branch), Hamilton Program for Schizophrenia, Community Mental Health Promotion Program, Community Programs Branch, and the City of Hamilton's Public Health & Community Services Department.

QUOTES

"We have worked diligently with our community partners to develop innovative health care and support services for seniors," said Juanita Gledhill, HNHB LHIN Chair "Transportation challenges have been identified by many caregivers, seniors' organizations and providers in our communities. The new van fleet will be an important building block to creating reliable and vital transportation for Ontario seniors and will allow our residents to receive the care they need where and when they want it."

"By making it easier for seniors to access vital health and wellness services in our community, we are helping to ease pressures on our hospitals, particularly emergency rooms," said Sophia Aggelonitis, MPP Hamilton Mountain. "I am delighted that these new vans will help seniors in our community age at home with the dignity and independence they so deserve."

"We are shifting the way we're delivering health to seniors by bringing care to their communities so people can stay at home longer, surrounded by loved ones and where they are most comfortable," said George Smitherman, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. "Providing rides to appointments and the innovative programs announced today, as well as increased home care and other supports, provides greater access to care for tens of thousands of seniors and at the same time builds stronger communities throughout Ontario."

QUICK FACTS

- The Hamilton Niagara Haldimand Brant LHIN is one of 14 local health integration networks and is responsible for planning, coordinating and funding the local health system in this region which spans from Burlington to Fort Erie and from Burford to Cayuga and includes more than 1.3 million residents.
- The HNHB LHIN represents local decision-making; decisions about the organization, coordination and funding of health services will be made closer to home by people who live and work in the LHIN.
- The new van fleet will provide 135,000 rides for seniors across Ontario to and from medical appointments this year.
- Ontario's Aging at Home Strategy is a four-year \$1.1 billion initiative launched in 2007.

LEARN MORE

Read more about [Ontario's Aging at Home Strategy](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/program/ltc/34_strategy_qa.html)
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