

Better Care for Epilepsy Patients

Ontario Adds More Hospital Beds for Epilepsy Monitoring and Testing

NEWS

March 28, 2014

Ontario is more than doubling the number of hospital beds for epilepsy patients in order to enhance their care and reduce wait times for diagnostic testing.

The province is adding 21 new epilepsy monitoring unit beds at seven hospitals across Ontario, including three new beds at London Health Sciences Centre.

These new beds will help 750 more epilepsy patients get tested and diagnosed faster for drug-resistant epilepsy. This type of epilepsy cannot be treated with anti-seizure medication and may require surgery to control seizures.

Other important steps the government has recently taken to improve epilepsy care include:

- Improving diagnoses by funding a non-surgical method (magnetoencephalography) to measure brain activity at the Hospital for Sick Children and Toronto Western Hospital.
- Enhancing referral services and reducing wait times for patients by improving information and resource sharing between epilepsy centres.
- Ensuring all epilepsy patients have a comprehensive care plan that addresses both lifestyle and medical issues.

Providing better care for people suffering from seizures is part of [Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care](#) to provide the right care, at the right time and in the right place. It is also part of the government's economic plan that is creating jobs for today and tomorrow by focusing on Ontario's greatest strengths — its people and strategic partnerships.

QUOTES

“These additional 21 new epilepsy monitoring beds will make a real difference to Ontarians living with this disruptive and complex disease. By closely monitoring epilepsy patients, doctors will be able to more quickly determine if medication or surgery is the best treatment. This will improve care for epilepsy patients and reduce wait times for diagnostic testing.”

— Deb Matthews, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

“London Health Sciences Centre is proud of our leadership in epilepsy care in Ontario and we welcome the Minister’s announcement regarding new epilepsy monitoring beds, allowing us to help even more patients to treat their epilepsy.”

— Murray Glendining, Acting President and CEO, London Health Sciences Centre

“We applaud the province for acting on the recommendations put forward by Health Quality Ontario and for taking the first step in creating a larger provincial epilepsy care strategy to help epilepsy patients across Ontario receive access to the treatment they need.”

— Dr. Joshua Tepper, President and CEO, Health Quality Ontario

QUICK FACTS

- There are an estimated 70,000 Ontarians living with epilepsy. About 30 per cent of them have drug-resistant epilepsy.
- Ontario is providing \$8.67 million to open and operate 21 new epilepsy monitoring beds at seven hospitals and support magnetoencephalography at two hospitals. Once all the beds are open, there will be a total of 38 epilepsy monitoring beds across Ontario.
- This funding is the first phase of the government's approach to enhance epilepsy care, following the recommendation of Health Quality Ontario and the Ontario Health Technology Advisory Committee to develop a provincial approach to improve access to diagnostic testing for drug-resistant epilepsy.
- March is Epilepsy Awareness Month as designated by Epilepsy Canada.

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[Ontario's Action Plan for Health Care](#)

[Expert Panel on a Provincial Strategy for Epilepsy Care](#)

For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOline at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

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