

Improving Access To Health Care

McGuinty Government Helps Recruit More Doctors

NEWS

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Ontario is improving access to health care with two new programs that will help communities that have traditionally had the hardest time recruiting doctors.

The province is introducing:

- The Northern and Rural Recruitment and Retention Initiative, which will provide grants to doctors and new doctor graduates who agree to practise in a northern or highly rural community
- The Postgraduate Return of Service Program, in which international medical graduates agree to practise for five years in any Ontario community, except the Toronto area and Ottawa, in exchange for postgraduate training opportunities. Previously, these doctors were restricted to practising in rural and northern communities for five years, following graduation.

These two programs are designed to help northern and rural communities with their unique challenges in recruiting and retaining doctors, while increasing access to doctors throughout the province.

Ontario is also increasing access to family health care for all by adding 50 Family Health Teams and 25 Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics across the province by 2011.

QUOTES

"Our government continues to look for ways for more Ontarians to receive health care closer to home. These initiatives provide immediate benefits to northern and rural communities, as well as to other areas of the province where there are also doctor shortages."

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

"A lack of health human resources is a key challenge for rural and northern communities. These new initiatives will help rural and northern communities recruit and retain doctors, improve access to health care and complement the work of the Rural and Northern Panel."

- Hal Fjeldsted, Chair of Ontario's Rural and Northern Health Care Panel

QUICK FACTS

- It is expected that 175 new international medical graduates will begin practising each year through return-of-service programs this year and in 2011 and 2012. After that 185 will start practising annually
- Since 2003, the number of doctors in Ontario has increased by close to 2,300 (10.7 per cent).

LEARN MORE

Find out more about the [Underserviced Area Program](#).

Learn more about the government's move to create more [Family Health Teams](#).

Learn more about the government's move to create more [Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics](#).

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