
News Release/ Communiqué

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ONTARIO HEALTH QUALITY COUNCIL RELEASES FIRST REPORT *E-Health Key to Health System Improvements*

Toronto – The Ontario Health Quality Council’s first report identifies electronic health records for all patients, health information management systems and telehealth, together known as e-health, as the key enablers for health care system improvements.

The report is based on the attributes of a high performing health system – Ontarians want their health system to be safe, effective, patient-centred, accessible, efficient, equitable, integrated, appropriately resourced and focused on population health - and indicators by which these attributes could be measured.

“Ontario’s health system is performing well in a number of areas,” said Ray Hession, Council Chair. Survival rates for patients with cancer or heart attack are steadily increasing, surveys show a large majority of Ontarians believe our health system provides good or excellent care, and Ontario hospitals have shorter acute-care stays, use more day surgery and have lower costs per case than hospitals in most other provinces. There are promising initiatives underway in a number of areas; however, it is too early to evaluate them.

Hession continued, “But in some respects, the system needs more work. We have found that inadequate information is limiting our ability to continuously improve quality, monitor performance and report on it.” He noted the Council believes investing in e-health — using information technology to manage health, arrange, deliver and account for care, and manage the health-care system — will do the most to improve each of the attributes of a high-performing health system.

“We concluded that the key enabler for health system improvements is e-health,” stated Hession. “The implementation of e-health in Ontario requires a clear plan, appropriate governance and requisite funding.”

“I want to thank the Ontario Health Quality Council for this thoughtful and extremely useful first report,” said Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman. “In order for Ontarians to be able to take part in a conversation about their health care, they need to know what’s going on in health care. By

pointing out those areas in which the system is performing well, and also those areas in which more work is required, the OHQC is letting Ontarians in on the conversation."

The Ontario Health Quality Council is an independent agency funded by the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. The Council reports directly to Ontarians on access to publicly funded health services, health human resources in publicly funded health services, consumer and population health status, and health system outcomes.

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The report is available at www.ohqc.ca

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