

BACKGROUND

Ontario Cancer Plan: 2008 - 2011

What is the 2008-2011 Ontario Cancer Plan (OCP)?

The 2008-2011 Ontario Cancer Plan is a three-year roadmap for the province's cancer system. It sets out the actions that need to be taken to reduce the number of people diagnosed with cancer and improve the quality of patient care. It spans every phase of cancer.

What is the focus of the OCP?

The 2008-2011 Ontario Cancer Plan has six goals:

1. Reduce the number of people diagnosed with cancer
2. Reduce the impact of cancer through effective screening and early detection
3. Ensure timely access to effective diagnosis and high quality cancer care
4. Improve the patient experience at every step of the cancer journey
5. Improve the performance of Ontario's cancer system
6. Strengthen Ontario's ability to translate cancer research into improvements in cancer control and cancer services

Out of these goals, there are four key initiatives that will have the greatest impact on cancer control and care.

The four key initiatives are:

1. Transform cancer screening programs to boost early detection rates
2. Speed up and streamline cancer diagnosis
3. Raise the quality of regional cancer services through the development of Regional Cancer Programs and by making sure the people and infrastructure are in place to improve quality, safety and wait times for cancer services
4. Prepare Ontario response to and make best use of emerging advances in molecular oncology – tests that can predict people's response to treatment and cancer risks, and enable individualized diagnosis and treatment of cancer

Why the Ontario Cancer Plan is important?

Over the next 10 years Ontario will see an unprecedented rise in the number of people with cancer largely because we have an aging and growing population.

- Close to half of all people will develop cancer in their lifetime: 44% of men and 39% of women.
- In the next 10 years, Ontario will see a 40% increase in the number of people living with cancer.
- In 2007, 172 people in Ontario were diagnosed with cancer each day. By 2017, that number of newly diagnosed cases is expected to jump to 228 per day, unless there are significant changes to cancer prevention.
- Cancer drug spending is rising dramatically – because of demand (patients taking multiple therapies, more treated for 2nd and 3rd cancers) and because the cost of individual drugs has skyrocketed. In 2007 the province spent \$176 million on 27,000 intravenous chemotherapy treatments. In 2011-2012, it is projected that Ontario will spend about \$446 million on 49,000 chemotherapy treatments. That's nearly double the number of treatments and over double the spending in 3 years.

Cancer is a disease we can do something about. We can prevent some cancers and detect a number of them early. By planning ahead and taking action, we can make care safer and better for patients.

Over the last few years we've taken a number of actions that have produced real improvements, particularly in cancer treatment. But, we have just begun. We have put a strong foundation in place.

Ontario continues to have significant challenges. The process for diagnosing cancer is difficult and confusing for patients and we do not have a way of knowing how long people are waiting for diagnostic tests. Ontario's screening rates are too low. Funding and access to cancer drugs will continue to be a challenge.

What progress has been made since the first Ontario Cancer Plan was released in 2004?

Ontario has made substantial advances in cancer control since the first Ontario Cancer Plan in 2004.

Over the last three years we've put a strong foundation in place by introducing new prevention and screening programs, by expanding regional cancer services, by improving treatment wait times and by getting health professionals and organizations to work together to continually improve the quality of cancer services. Key successes include:

- Breakthroughs in cancer prevention and screening
 - Smoke-Free Ontario: ColonCancerCheck, Ontario's colorectal cancer screening program; and the HPV vaccination program
- Improving access to and quality of cancer services
 - Radiation wait times down 31 % in three years (2003-2006)
 - More cancer centres have been built, expanded and committed to in the last three years than ever before in Ontario
- Improving system performance
 - Launch of the Cancer System Quality Index, the first online report card of its kind in Canada that reports yearly on how the system is performing
 - Ontario is a leader in using information technology to improve patient safety and quality of care, and the overall performance of cancer services.
 - Computerized Physician Order Entry – an online cancer drug ordering system that reduces drug errors caused by misinterpretation of handwritten prescriptions and dosage calculations. 60% of all drug orders made using CPOE.
 - The Wait Times Information System – Ontario's single information system to collect accurate and timely wait time data. Patients and their primary health care providers can also access the information to make informed choices together about where to be referred for quicker service.
 - Interactive Symptom Assessment and Collection, a tool that allows palliative patients to track and report symptoms on-line to their health care team is being used by every regional cancer centre and Community Care Access Centre.

What specific actions are being proposed in the 2008-2011 Ontario Cancer Plan?

Goal 1: Reduce the incidence of cancer

Up to 50% of cancers could be prevented. The best way to gain an upper hand is to prevent it and detect it early.

We will continue to tackle tobacco and inactivity, poor nutrition and obesity - the biggest known cancer risk factors – through contributing to the Smoke-Free Ontario strategy and spearheading cancer-specific strategies to reduce cancer risks.

- We will develop effective healthy living strategies for reducing cancer risks.
- We will work with the Ontario government and other partners to better understand the role of occupational and environmental carcinogens so that we can develop more effective strategies to reduce harmful exposures. Cancer Care Ontario will focus on surveillance and research to understand at what levels of exposure different carcinogens pose a risk.

Goal 2: Reduce the impact of cancer through effective screening and early detection

We can make some of the most significant gains in cancer by detecting it early.

Last January, the province launched ColonCancerCheck, a province-wide, population-based colorectal screening program, the first of its kind in Canada. It provides:

- Wider access to people 50 and over to an easy-to-use test called the Fecal Occult Blood Test through primary care physicians and, for people without a primary care provider, through pharmacies and Telehealth. It also provides more colonoscopies for people at increased risk because of a history of colorectal cancer in their immediate family.
- Primary care practitioners with the supports they need to screen patients including education and improvements to the patient referral and follow-up processes.
- A large scale public education campaign
- Information technology to support self-care and improve clinical management, including invitations to participate, reminders and recalls for individuals 50 and over to get screened and prompts for their primary care practitioners.

Screening for breast and cervical cancers is saving lives in Ontario. But screening rates have stalled in recent years.

- Building on ColonCancerCheck, Cancer Care Ontario intends to work with the government and other partners to create an integrated and organized program for all cancer screening aimed at boosting screening rates. This program will be more efficient, convenient for health care providers and for individuals and will target hard-to-reach populations including new Canadians, low income earners, people without a family physician and Aboriginals.

We expect to see the following outcomes by 2010:

- Mammography screening of 70% of Ontarian women aged 50 to 69 years old – up from today’s participation rate of 60%
- Cervical screening of 85% of eligible Ontarians, representing 15% increase in three years
- Colorectal screening of 40% of eligible Ontarians, representing a 23% increase in three years

Goal 3: Ensure timely access to effective diagnosis and high quality care

Cancer Care Ontario will focus on improving access to diagnostic services by beginning to measure and tackle the wait time between when a patient is referred from a family physician to when they see a specialist for tests.

- We will begin by setting targets and measuring waits for diagnostic assessment of colorectal cancer.
- Our aim to have at least one diagnostic assessment program in every Local Health Integration Network.

Wait times for chemotherapy are not improving and the demand for cancer drugs is outpacing our human and physical resources. We need to change the way we deliver chemotherapy by providing more chemotherapy in community hospitals, closer to home and ensuring chemotherapy services are of consistently high quality and safe in every setting.

CCO is leading an initiative to improve access and safety of chemotherapy in every area of the province. Through this initiative more routine chemotherapies can be delivered in community hospitals, closer to home, while more complex treatments will be delivered in larger cancer centres that meet quality standards.

Cancer Care Ontario will help prepare for the safe and quality introduction and use of molecular oncology tests that predict people’s response to treatment and cancer risks and enable us to better target therapies to individual patients. Cancer Care Ontario is bringing leaders from different oncology disciplines and laboratory medicine to form a task force with the goals of ensuring consistent quality standards and assurance for these new tests and equitable access to services including genetic testing across the province.

Goal 4: Improve the patient experience across the continuum of care

We need to continually look at the entire cancer experience from the patient’s perspective to ensure that they are informed, supported and involved in their care.

- Cancer Care Ontario will develop a strategy to better understand, measure and improve the experience of the patient at every phase of cancer.
- Cancer Care Ontario has launched a Provincial Psychosocial Oncology program aimed at improving the quality and availability of services to meet the psychological and emotional needs of cancer patients.
- By expanding the use of ISAAC, a tool that allows palliative patients to track and communicate their symptoms to their care team remotely through kiosks and their home computer, will continue to improve the quality of palliative care.

Goal 5: Improve the performance of Ontario’s cancer system

CCO is committed to making sure that the cancer system is continually improving and accountable.

Ontario has nationally and internationally recognized expertise in creating information systems that support health professionals, improve the safety and experience of cancer patients and overall system performance.

Over the next three years we will:

- Harness information technology to support patients and primary care practitioners to participate in screening.
- Target 90% of chemotherapy ordered online instead of error-prone paper prescriptions.
- Providing more accessible web-based information to patients about wait times and other aspects of cancer services so they can better manage their own care.

Goal 6: Strengthen Ontario's ability to translate cancer research into improvements in cancer control

Cancer Care Ontario will continue to focus on ensuring that new research findings and discoveries are rapidly applied to improve cancer prevention and clinical practice.

- Cancer Care Ontario and the Ontario Institute for Cancer Research are poised to launch the Ontario Cancer Cohort, a province-wide study of over 100,000 Ontarians to better understand the causes and risks of cancer and other major diseases such as heart disease.

The Ontario Cancer Plan: 2008-2011 is available on Cancer Care Ontario's website at www.cancercare.on.ca

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