

## Connecting Children and Youth in Southwestern Ontario to Care Close to Home

*Over \$4.5 million boost in funding to expand pediatric services*

**NEWS**

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WINDSOR — The Ontario government is investing more than \$4.5 million to increase access to pediatric services for children and youth in Southwestern Ontario so they have the care they need, when they need it, right in their own community. This is part of the province's [investment of an additional \\$330 million](#) each year in pediatric health services at hospitals and community-based health care facilities across Ontario.

“Our government is making record investments in the health and well-being of our children,” said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “The pediatric funding provided to services in Windsor, Chatham, and Sarnia will have a tremendous impact on children and their families, ensuring they receive faster access to care when they need it.”

The over \$4.5 million in additional funding will support programs and services at Windsor Regional Hospital (\$2.6 million), John McGivney Children's Centre in Windsor (\$480,000), Connections Early Years Family Centre in Windsor (\$66,000), the Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent (\$519,000), and Pathways Health Centre for Children in Sarnia (\$964,000). The funding will be used to:

- Increase the number of people who can be seen, triaged and cared for on-site in the emergency department at Windsor Regional Hospital by expanding an after-hours pediatric emergency diversion clinic to seven days a week at its Metropolitan Campus that will expedite care by reducing the amount of time pediatric patients spend in the emergency department.
- Increase access to children's rehabilitation services, such as speech-language pathology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy at John McGivney Children's Centre and Connections Early Years Family Centre in Windsor, Children's Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent, and Pathways Health Centre for Children in Sarnia.

“Our government is ensuring children and youth in every corner of the province have quick and convenient access to high-quality and convenient care, closer to home,” said Robin Martin, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Health. “This investment in Southwestern Ontario will make it easier and faster for young people and their families in the region to connect to the care they need for years to come.”

This consistent and stable annual funding increase will ensure hospitals in Southwestern Ontario have the people, resources and technology to improve access to pediatric care and prevent backlogs. Over 100 high-priority initiatives are being quickly implemented across Ontario to ensure children and youth in every corner of the province can connect to emergency care, surgeries, ambulatory services, diagnostic imaging, and mental health services.

“Ontario is putting children and youth first by ensuring they receive the care they need when they need it,” said Michael Parsa, Minister of Children, Community and Social Services. “Our government's significant investment in pediatric care will reduce waitlists, improve access to clinical assessments, early intervention, and children's rehabilitation services, such as speech-language pathology, physiotherapy, and occupational therapy. This means less time waiting for services, quicker recovery, and better quality of life for children and their families in Southwestern Ontario and across the province.”

Through [Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](#), the Ontario government is providing significant financial support to hospitals and communities to improve how they deliver pediatric care – ensuring Ontarians of all ages can access care easier, faster, and closer to home in their communities.

### Quick Facts:

- Supporting the mental health and well-being of people in Ontario is a key priority for this government. That is why we are providing a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions (MHA) system that offers high-quality, evidence-based services and supports where and when they need them.
- In 2020, the government released Roadmap to Wellness, our plan to build a world-class mental health and addictions system.
- In addition to investing in existing services, Roadmap to Wellness investments are supporting new innovative programs to begin to address wait lists and times and ensure access to timely and appropriate services.
- For example, Ontario recently expanded [One Stop Talk](#), a virtual walk-in mental health counselling service for children, youth and families. Once fully implemented, it will provide immediate access to brief counselling services through a single virtual access point from anywhere in the province.
- The Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services funds [children's rehabilitation services](#) for children and youth with special needs. These services include speech-language pathology, physiotherapy and occupational therapy delivered in schools and community locations. The [Preschool Speech and Language Program](#) provides assessments and services for children with speech and language difficulties and disorders from birth to transition to school.
- Families with questions about their child's development and support needs can [contact their local children's treatment centre or Surrey Place in Toronto](#).

### Quotes:

“By delivering Windsor Regional Hospital, John McGivney Children's Centre, and Connections Early Years Family Centre with over \$3.1 million in funding, the Ontario Government has come through for the youngest residents of Windsor-Essex. Our local pediatric health service providers are exceptional in their work and I'm happy to join Premier Ford, Minister Jones and my local colleagues in supporting them.”

Andrew Dowie, MPP Windsor-Tecumseh

“Speech and language services for children are very important. This investment is going to help our children get services, like speech and language, faster.”

Anthony Leardi, MPP Essex

“Ensuring every child has access to quality healthcare in their own community is essential. By investing in pediatric services in southwestern Ontario, we are making strides toward providing timely and accessible care for children and youth when they need it most. Every child deserves the opportunity to thrive, and by investing in accessible and timely healthcare, we are laying the foundation for a healthier, brighter future for all.”

Trevor Jones, MPP Chatham-Kent-Leamington

"Pathways Health Centre for Children is such an important resource for children and families in the Sarnia-Lambton community. Our government recognizes that and continues to grow its investment in Pathways so that more children can receive the services they need sooner."

Bob Bailey, MPP Sarnia-Lambton

“We know parents of pediatric patients seek and value appropriate high-quality care that is timely, and convenient. Pediatric ED diversion clinics offer new and evolving paradigms that serve this growing demand and complement services provided by our emergency departments.”

Dr. Sajit Augustine, Windsor Regional Hospital Chief of Paediatric Medicine

“All of us at the John McGivney Children's Centre are grateful for Ontario's historic investment in early childhood rehabilitation services, which are critical to offering every child the very best start. We are committed to ensuring kids with disabilities and developmental differences receive high quality, family-centred care. With this investment, we'll be able to reach more kids and families at the right time, close to home.”

Jennifer Jovanovski, CEO, John McGivney Children's Centre

“The funding the Ontario Government provided to the Preschool Speech and Language Program, called Talk 2 Me, will provide meaningful support and resources to an early intervention service. By addressing speech and language difficulties early, children can develop the necessary skills to communicate effectively with their peers and family, participate meaningfully in school, and give them the best opportunity for healthy development.”

Barb Brown, Executive Director, Connections Early Years Family Centre

“The Children’s Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent is very appreciative of the new funding and so excited for the impact it will have for our families. This boost will give us the capacity to increase speech and occupational therapy staff and provide more service, which reduces our waiting lists for children, youth, and families in our community!”

Tina Jamieson, Service Manager, Children’s Treatment Centre of Chatham-Kent

“Pathways Health Centre for Children is so appreciative of this investment in children – for our today and for our tomorrow. Children and youth in Sarnia-Lambton will benefit from responsive pediatric rehabilitation services close to home. Through these funds, our skilled and committed workforce will work to improve access, reduce wait times and explore innovative service options to provide the best of care for children and their families.”

Alison Morrison, CEO, Pathways Health Centre for Children

#### **Additional Resources:**

- [Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](#)
- [Ontario Connecting Children and Youth to Care Close to Home](#)
- [Ontario Expanding Mental Health Services for Children and Youth in Every Corner of the Province](#)
- [Roadmap to Wellness: A Plan to Build Ontario’s Mental Health and Addictions System](#)

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