

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

Office of the Minister
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto ON M7A 2C4
Tel. 416 327-4300
Fax 416 326-1571
www.ontario.ca/health

**Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

Bureau du ministre
Édifice Hepburn, 10^e étage
80, rue Grosvenor
Toronto ON M7A 2C4
Tél. 416 327-4300
Télééc. 416 326-1571
www.ontario.ca/sante



July 20, 2017

Dear Colleagues,

In February 2015, the province launched our *Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care* to transform our health care system into one that puts patients at the center by making our health care system more accessible, equitable and integrated. During the last two years, we have made considerable progress to improve the health care experience and outcomes for patients in Ontario. But we know there is still more work that needs to be done in order to make our system truly integrated.

Improving access to care is one priority of Patients First, but the vision is much broader. Patients First is also about promoting health and reducing health disparities. A key factor in achieving this vision is to strengthen linkages and partnerships within the health system, including public health. Patients First includes a requirement for the public health sector and the province's local health integration networks (LHINs) to work together in an integrated health system: one that actively promotes health and reduces health disparities as well as improves access to health care services. As a first step in realizing this requirement, the Government of Ontario established the Expert Panel on Public Health ("Expert Panel") in January 2017. Over the course of five months, the expert panel met to develop recommendations on proposed structural, organizational, and governance changes for Ontario's public health sector.

I am sharing with you the report of the Minister's Expert Panel on Public Health: "*Public Health within an Integrated Health System.*" On behalf of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, I would like to thank the expert panel for its important work. The recommendations of the expert panel's report provide a framework for the government to consider as it continues to implement Patients First. I look forward to engaging with you and other stakeholders to discuss the opportunities offered in this report. Details about consultations will be forthcoming.

This report is an important first step to help us realize the vision for all health programs and services – hospitals, home and community care, primary care and public health – to have strong connections and to work together to enhance Ontarians' health and well-being at all ages and stages of life.

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Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric Hoskins". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister