

Government of Ontario Protecting the Health Care System from Fraud

Switching to Secure Photo Health Card is Easy and Free

NEWS

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Ontario is protecting the health care system against fraud by ensuring the final transition to a more secure photo health card. As of July 1, 2020, red and white health cards will no longer be accepted for Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) services.

“The advanced security features of the photo health card help protect our public health system and is another measure to improve value for taxpayers’ dollars,” said Christine Elliott, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “While there is no cost to convert or renew an Ontario photo health card, there could be significant costs by allowing red and white health cards, which could be used fraudulently, to remain in circulation. Each month, individuals using these outdated cards access up to \$108 million in health services.”

Starting this month, individuals with red and white health cards will begin to receive letters letting them know that they will need to get a photo health card at a ServiceOntario centre before the July 1, 2020 deadline.

Photo health cards can easily be obtained for free at ServiceOntario by:

- Bringing the [right original documents](#) (proof of Canadian citizenship or OHIP-eligible immigration status; proof of residency in Ontario and proof of identity);
- Completing a [Health Card Re-Registration form](#) ahead of time or by getting one at ServiceOntario; and
- [Visiting a ServiceOntario centre](#).

Regardless of an individual’s health card status, Ontario’s public hospitals cannot refuse to provide services to a patient who is faced with a life-threatening medical emergency.

Red and white card holders who do not convert by July 1, 2020 may be asked to pay up-front for insured health services as their red and white health card will not be valid. Once a photo health card is obtained, eligibility for Ontario health insurance is restored and any payments made for OHIP-insured health services will be promptly reimbursed once a valid health card is provided.

Quick facts

- Approximately 300,000 red and white health cards remain in circulation. This represents two per cent of all Ontario health cards.
- In addition to sending multiple notification letters, the province will also advertise the final transition at all ServiceOntario locations and promote these changes on the ministry’s social media channels.

Additional resources

- [Switching to a photo health card](#)

For public inquiries call ServiceOntario, INFOLine at 1-866-532-3161 (Toll-free in Ontario only)

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