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NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Connecting People to More Consistent, High-Quality Health Care

New registration and oversight for personal support workers and physician assistants will help build a more connected, patient-centred health care system

June 04, 2024

[Ministry of Health](#)

TORONTO — The Ontario government is improving consistency and patient understanding in the health care system through new changes that will allow personal support workers (PSWs) to register with the new Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority (HSCPOA) and that will regulate physician assistants (PAs) through the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO). These changes will provide better oversight in the health care system, supporting patient confidence and helping PSWs and PAs deliver connected and convenient care across Ontario.

“Our government is taking bold action to grow and support Ontario’s health care workforce now and for years to come,” said Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health. “Through these changes, our government is reinforcing the critical role personal support workers and physician assistants play in our health care system while supporting the confidence of patients and their families.”

Beginning December 1, 2024, the more than 100,000 personal support workers in Ontario will have the option to register with the new HSCPOA. The HSCPOA will ensure consistent education and training for personal support workers, regardless of where they work and if they are part-time or full-time, to support their career growth and give patients confidence they are receiving high-quality care.

Those registered with the authority will also be listed on an online public register and be easily identified with the HSCPOA’s quality mark on their

identification badge or paperwork in order to show employers, patients and their families proof of registration.

On April 1, 2025, physician assistants will be regulated with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to improve their integration within Ontario's health care system and facilitate quality care and patient safety. Physician assistants help reduce wait times and improve patient access to care, especially in emergency departments and primary care in rural communities. Under the supervision of a physician, physician assistants may work individually or alongside nurses and other members of health care teams to provide health services such as:

- Taking patient histories
- Conducting physical examinations
- Ordering and interpreting tests
- Diagnosing and treating illnesses
- Counselling on preventive health care

Together these new regulatory changes will help build a more connected, patient-centered health care system by ensuring people continue to have access to timely, high-quality care when connecting to care in settings including emergency departments, primary care, home care and long-term care.

Through [Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](#), the Ontario government continues to take every action to support the province's highly-skilled workforce work the full extent of their training and experience to ensure people have access to timely, high-quality care in all health care settings including emergency departments, primary care, home care and long-term care.

Quick Facts

- HSCPOA will begin working with personal support workers and employers this summer to raise awareness about the benefits of registration and when PSWs may begin to pre-apply online before December 1, 2024.
- CPSO will advise physician assistants this fall on when they may begin to apply online so that all eligible PAs are registered by April 1, 2025.
- As part of the 2023 budget, Ontario began to add the first of 52 new physician assistant training spots. Twenty-four have been added to date and once fully implemented, the investment will bring the total number of seats to 104.

- Since 2018, Ontario has seen a record-breaking number of new health care professionals join the workforce, adding 80,000 new nurses with another 30,000 nurses currently studying at Ontario colleges and universities, and adding over 24,000 new PSWs since 2020.
- The Ontario government is investing \$300 million over three years, or up to \$25,000 per student, to help thousands of people launch their careers as PSWs.
- More than 920,000 pharmacist assessments have been completed since [allowing pharmacists to treat and prescribe for 19 common medical ailments](#), including pink eye, uncomplicated UTIs and acne. Currently, more than 4,800 pharmacies (98 per cent of the pharmacies in the province) have participated in the program.
- Since [expanding the role of registered nurses to prescribe medications](#), 122 registered nurses have been authorized to prescribe, after meeting specific requirements, with close to 900 others in the process of meeting education requirements for RN prescribing.

Quotes

"I am delighted that the HSCPOA can now move forward with oversight of this important group of care providers in support of public protection. The public, including residents in their homes, hospitals, long-term care facilities, retirement homes, or other health care environments, can expect that registered PSWs will be held accountable by HSCPOA for their supportive care services provided."

- Kathy Wilkie
CEO, Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority

"Physician Assistants are skilled professionals who play an important role in the health care system. We look forward to welcoming them as CPSO registrants and supporting them in providing high-quality care to the patients of Ontario."

- Nancy Whitmore
Registrar and CEO, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario

"Regulation in Ontario is long overdue. The announcement that it is forthcoming, once again confirms the value and effectiveness of our profession. The government is to be commended for making a move that will not only improve healthcare efficiency, but also catch Ontario up with the other provinces that regulate PAs."

- James Dougan
Ontario Director, Canadian Association of Physician Assistants

"Personal support workers (PSWs) are the backbone of long-term care in Ontario, accounting for nearly two-thirds of the sector's direct-care staff. From medication reminders to meal preparation to companionship, the impact PSWs have on the everyday lives of all long-term care residents cannot be understated. Allowing PSWs to register with the Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority will foster greater transparency and accountability within the profession and help PSWs grow their careers by offering more consistency when it comes to education and training."

- Stan Cho
Minister of Long-Term Care

Additional Resources

- [Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care](#)
- [2024 Ontario Budget: Building a Better Ontario](#)
- [Health Human Resources](#)
- [Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority](#)

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