

*For the patients of physicians who are part of a Family Health Network.*

**your  
family health network,**

**your  
doctor,  
and more...**



# YOUR FAMILY HEALTH NETWORK

Ontario's family physicians are the foundation upon which our health care system is based. Your family physician is your first stop for primary care and your guide through this system.

Your doctor's Family Health Network is a group of family physicians who are working together to give you and your family better access to quality primary care services.

## HERE'S WHAT IT MEANS TO YOU

### QUALITY AND CONVENIENCE:

- A doctor or nurse will be available to you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- Your family doctor will continue to see you during regular office hours.
- You'll also have access to a Family Health Network doctor during extended evening and weekend hours.
- Anytime another doctor in your Family Health Network treats you, your family doctor will receive documentation about the nature of your problem so that he or she will always be up-to-date about your medical condition.
- Should you need assistance after-hours, simply telephone a registered nurse at your Family Health Network's Telephone Health Advisory Service
- The Telephone Health Advisory Service nurse will suggest ways to address your health concerns, such as recommending an appointment with your doctor, telling you how you can treat the problem yourself, or advising you to go to the emergency department.
- And you can rest assured that, with your permission, your doctor will receive a written summary of your call the next day, so that your doctor is kept fully informed about the nature of the problem and the advice you received.
- Doctors in your Family Health Network may also choose to take advantage of special funding for information technology to organize your health information and share it securely with other health professionals.



## IT'S EASY TO JOIN A FAMILY HEALTH NETWORK

Simply read and sign the enclosed *Patient Enrolment Form and Consent to Release Personal Health Information* and return it to family doctor. By signing the form, you agree that, unless you're travelling or find yourself in an emergency situation, you will contact your Family Health Network doctor first when you have a health need. You also agree to allow the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to provide your doctor with some information about health services you have received from family physicians outside your network.

Should your doctor not be available, you'll be referred to another doctor in your Family Health Network. To ensure that the other doctors in your Family Health Network have the most complete information to care for you, your doctor may also choose to share part of your medical record with his or her network colleagues.

# **WHY HAS YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR JOINED A FAMILY HEALTH NETWORK?**

**TO BETTER MEET YOUR HEALTH NEEDS!**

Your family doctor is your first contact with the health care system. He or she provides primary health care services like illness prevention, health education, diagnosis and treatment to you and your family. The care your doctor delivers includes making referrals to specialists and being involved with, or informed about your care in hospital.

Now your doctor has joined a Family Health Network with other family doctors. You and your family are invited to enrol with your doctor and take advantage of the extra services outlined in this brochure.

## **OFHN – THE ONTARIO FAMILY HEALTH NETWORK**

**WORKING TO BRING MORE FAMILY HEALTH NETWORKS  
TO THE PEOPLE OF ONTARIO**

The Ontario Family Health Network has its roots in a pilot project undertaken by the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC).

The project's goal was to find new ways to enable doctors to bring more accessible primary care to the people of Ontario. Family Health Networks, like the one your family doctor practices in, are the result.

The Ontario Family Health Network is the agency appointed by the Ontario government to lead the expansion of Family Health Networks across the province.



# QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q.** What is the advantage of being part of a Family Health Network?

**A.** The new system ensures that you have access to primary health care treatment or advice, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Your Family Health Network doctor or another member of the network team who is familiar with your important health information will care for you during regular and extended hours. After-hours, you can speak to a registered nurse at the Telephone Health Advisory Service.

You may also benefit from your doctor's increased access to secure information technology. Secure IT makes it easier for doctors involved in your care to update and review your health information, so that they always have your most complete and current health history at their fingertips.

Finally, by getting more of your regular primary care through the Family Health Network, you can help relieve the pressure on hospital emergency rooms, making them easier to access when you need them most.

**Q.** When I enrol with my family doctor in a Family Health Network can I still see specialists or other health care providers?

**A.** Your Family Health Network physician will be able to refer you to a specialist - one you choose together. He or she will also be able to refer you to another family doctor; either for a second opinion or because another doctor has more expertise about a particular condition.

**Q.** How confidential is my medical information?

**A.** Information about your health is as confidential as it has always been. Your doctor is required to respect the confidentiality of your health information, as are the other health professionals in your Family Health Network who care for you. Your doctor decides if there's a need to share your personal health information with other health professionals. If your records are shared through computer systems, it will be done under the strictest conditions of confidentiality that meet or exceed approved privacy standards and regulations.

**Q.** Can I go to emergency if my child is sick in the middle of the night?

**A.** Of course you can. If you think it's an emergency, don't hesitate to go. If you're not sure, simply take advantage of your network's after-hours Telephone Health Advisory Service. A registered nurse will provide you with advice about what to do. And you can be sure that in the morning, with your permission, your doctor will have a record of your call and the advice you received.

**Q.** I like my doctor and want to continue to see him or her. Do I have to join my doctor's Family Health Network?

**A.** No. The choice is yours. You can continue to use the services your doctor offers without joining. But be sure to talk to your doctor about the Family Health Network. He or she can tell you more about the advantages of enrolling.

**Q.** Do I have to sign the *Patient Enrolment Form and Consent to Release Personal Health Information*?

**A.** You must sign the form to enrol in a Family Health Network.

**Q.** What type of information am I agreeing to share?

**A.** By consenting to the limited release of personal health information, you are allowing your family doctor to share that information with other health care providers involved in your care or other doctors in the Family Health Network.

In addition, you are allowing the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to release, to your Family Health Network doctor, the dates of immunizations, cervical screenings and mammograms and the dates and types of other primary care services that you have received from doctors outside your Family Health Network.

Also, you are allowing the Ministry – on behalf of your family doctor – to give the Telephone Health Advisory Service your name, address, date of birth and Health Number when you call so that the so that the service can report back to your family doctor about your call.

**Q.** Can I enrol my children as well?

**A.** To enrol your children under 16 years of age, simply sign the appropriate section of the *Patient Enrolment Form and Consent to Release Personal Health Information* on their behalf. Young people 16 years and over need to sign the form themselves.

**Q.** I have a personal care Power of Attorney for my father. Can I enrol him with his doctor?

**A.** Yes. Just sign the enrolment and consent form on the “Attorney for Personal Care” line. Please make sure you have the Power of Attorney for Personal Care document available, in case we contact you for a copy.

**Q.** What happens if I want to change doctors or cancel my enrolment with my doctor?

**A.** You are free to change the doctor you are enrolled with up to twice a year.

If, however, you are seeing another general practitioner on a regular basis, the doctor with whom you have enrolled can remove you from his or her Family Health Network roster of patients.

If you decide to cancel your enrolment in your doctor’s Family Health Network, you don’t have to change your family doctor. He or she can continue to see you on the same basis as before you joined the network.

If you do want to cancel your enrolment or consent, or plan to change your doctor, simply advise the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care by calling the patient information line at 1-888-218-9929.

**FOR OTHER QUESTIONS ABOUT ENROLLING WITH YOUR FAMILY DOCTOR OR ABOUT The *Patient Enrolment Form and Consent to Release Personal Information* PLEASE CALL THE PATIENT INFORMATION LINE AT 1-888-218-9929. TTY 1-800-387-5559.**