



## **Ontario Connecting More People to Primary Care in Scarborough** *\$14 Million Historic Investment In Community Health Centres in Toronto*

### **NEWS**

July 18, 2024

**SCARBOROUGH, ON** — The Ontario government is investing over \$14 million to connect up to 49,000 people to primary care teams in Toronto. This is part of Ontario's \$110 million investment to connect up to 328,000 people to primary care providers, bringing the province one step closer to connecting everyone in Ontario to primary care.

Today, Raymond Cho, MPP for Scarborough North, joined by Sylvia Jones, Deputy Premier and Minister of Health, as well as the Scarborough Caucus, made the above announcement in Malvern. This historic expansion of interprofessional primary care teams includes a designated investment of over \$2.8 million for Scarborough, going to two leading local community health centres: TAIBU Community Health Centre (\$1,478,000) and the Scarborough Centre for Health Communities (SCHC, \$1,325,000).

"Scarborough is thrilled and thankful for this critical investment by our government to TAIBU and SCHC who have been true pillars in keeping our community healthy," said MPP Raymond Cho. "This funding will enhance primary care services locally, ensuring that more residents can have access to primary care they need. It underscores our government's commitment to bridging gaps in healthcare access and improving the well-being of Scarborough residents."

Ontario currently leads the country with 90 per cent of residents connected to a regular health care provider. As a next step to close the gap for people not connected to primary care, the province is supporting expanded interprofessional primary care teams across Ontario, bringing together healthcare providers under one roof to connect more people the primary care services they need in their community.

"Our government is making record investments to ensure that everyone that wants to have a primary care provider can connect to one," said Minister Jones. "While there is more work to do, giving hundreds of thousands of more Ontarians the opportunity to connect to primary care brings us that much closer to this goal."

Interprofessional primary care teams connect people to a range of health professionals that work together under one roof, including doctors, nurse practitioners, registered and practical nurses, physiotherapists, social workers and dietitians, among others. Timely access to primary care helps people stay healthier for longer with faster diagnosis and treatment, as well as more consistent support managing their day-to-day health while relieving pressures on emergency departments and walk-in clinics.

In addition to other historic investments to expand medical school spots and efforts to break down barriers so highly-skilled internationally-trained doctors can care for people in Ontario, Ministry of

Health modelling shows that these initiatives will help connect up to 98 per cent of people in Ontario to primary care in the next several years.

Since the launch of *Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care* one year ago, the government has been making steady progress to ensure the health care system has become better equipped to respond to the needs of patients and provide them with the right care in the right place, faster access to services and access to an expanded health care workforce.

## QUOTES

“TAIBU and our partners Rexdale and Black Creek Community Health Centres express our gratitude for this important investment by the Ontario government to the development and implementation of the Africentric – Interprofessional Primary Healthcare Team in Scarborough, the Northwest and Etobicoke. Anti-Black racism is the root cause for the various disparities and inequities that Black communities face. This culturally appropriate service will enable Black, Francophone and newcomer communities connect with primary healthcare and wrap around service that is aligned with the Ontario Health Equity Diversity Inclusion and Anti-Racism Framework and the Black Health Action Plan.”

**– Liben Gebremikael, CEO, TAIBU Community Health Centre**

“Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities (SCHC) is committed to providing accessible and transformational health and social service choices, for the well-being of Scarborough’s diverse communities, SCHC applauds the Ministry and Ontario Health for our shared commitment to this mission. This recent investment in expanding interprofessional primary care in Scarborough will make a significant impact to improving the health and well-being of marginalized and vulnerable people with timely access to primary care, including family physicians, nurse practitioners, mental health professionals, foot care, dieticians and other allied health professionals to help alleviate the pressures on emergency departments. SCHC is privileged to be one of the recipients of this funding to help expand our interprofessional primary care team and ensure quality care for those most at risk.”

**– Jeanie Argiropoulos, CEO, Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities**

“I am proud that our government is investing nearly \$1.5 million into TAIBU Community Health Centre and over \$1.3 million into Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities (SCHC), as a part of our government’s historic expansion of interprofessional primary care teams. TAIBU and SCHC have a long track record in Scarborough, providing necessary care for residents in our community.”

**– Vijay Thanigasalam, MPP – Scarborough-Rouge Park**

“I want to thank TAIBU Community Health Centre and the Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities (SCHC) for their steadfast approach in meeting the growing demands for primary care in Scarborough and beyond. They have been instrumental. Thank you, Premier Ford and Minister Jones, for understanding the medical needs and investing the necessary funds to help families seeking this form of care. TAIBU and SCHC, as core organizations, have always been at the forefront of ensuring that residents of Scarborough can rely on these professional services to cope with their family needs and concerns.”

**– David Smith, MPP – Scarborough Centre**

“I am so excited that TAIBU Community Health Centre and the Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities are receiving this critical funding ensuring that people will get access to the primary care services they need. Under our government, with the leadership of Premier Doug Ford and Minister Sylvia Jones, Scarborough is no longer a forgotten part of Ontario, and we are making the necessary investments to improve healthcare here in Scarborough.”

**– Aris Babikian, MPP – Scarborough-Agincourt**

## **QUICK FACTS**

- As a next step to close the gap for the 1.3 million people not connected to primary care in the province, the government is making a record investment of \$90 million to add over 400 new primary care providers as part of 78 new and expanded interprofessional primary care teams. The new and expanded teams will include Family Health Teams, Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics, Community Health Centres and Indigenous Primary Health Care Organizations.
- Ontario’s investment of \$90 million triples the original \$30 million earmarked to expand interprofessional primary care teams and will deliver over four times as many initiatives as outlined in our *Your Health Plan* almost a year ago.
- The new and expanded teams are the result of a province-wide call for proposals that took place in 2023. All proposals were thoroughly reviewed by Ontario Health based on criteria prioritizing areas of greatest need, to connect a greater number of people currently without a regular primary care provider with these services closer to home.
- Ontario invests over \$1 billion in interprofessional primary care teams annually.

## **CAPTIONS:**

Photo 1: Minister Jones, joined by MPP Cho, visits TAIBU CHC in Malvern, Scarborough. TAIBU CHC CEO Liben Gebremikael on the right.

Photo 2: Minister Jones delivers her remarks the Interprofessional Primary Care Teams announcement at TAIBU Community Health Centre.

Photo 3: MPP Cho gives opening remarks to welcome Min. Jones to TAIBU CHC in Malvern, Scarborough.

Photo 4: Minister Jones, joined by the Scarborough Caucus, presents a symbolic cheque of \$1,478,000 to TAIBU and its two partner organizations Rexdale and Black Creek CHCs.

Photo 5: Minister Jones, joined by the Scarborough Caucus, presents a symbolic cheque of \$1,325,000 to SCHC.

Photo 6: Minister Jones, joined by the Scarborough Caucus, tours TAIBU with its CEO Liben Gebremikael.

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## **MEDIA CONTACT**

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