

## Access to health care for uninsured patients during COVID-19

The Ontario Ministry of Health has expanded health care coverage for patients without OHIP during the COVID-19 outbreak.

## Important updates about access to hospital services during COVID-19:

**Hospitals will provide service to all patients regardless of whether they have a valid OHIP card or health care coverage in Ontario:** March 20, 2020, the Ontario Ministry of Health directed all hospitals to: "provide **all medically necessary services** to all persons who present at hospital, regardless of whether the person presents a valid OHIP card, or does not have health insurance under OHIP or another provincial health insurance plan." This includes **all** medically necessary hospital services, not just COVID-19 related care.

**Patients without OHIP should not be asked for payment upfront or receive any bills for hospital care:** The directive states that: "Services for uninsured persons should be prioritized consistent with the prioritization of service for insured persons." The directive also makes physician and hospital reimbursement clear: "Payment for hospital services [for uninsured persons] will be provided at the 2019/2020 inter-provincial hospital billing rates and physician services will be provided at the existing Schedule of Benefit for Physician Services (the "Schedule") rate(s)."

**What Identification Information will be collected?:** The Ministry only requires hospitals to record the following information for uninsured clients: patient name, gender, and age. This means people should be able to access services without ID (although we are not sure whether hospitals will still ask for ID).

With the community quarantine still in place, we encourage everyone to:

**Stay home and #StopTheSpread.**

# COVID-19: Uninsured & Access to Health

as of April 3, 2020

**OHIP Waiting Period:** To ensure that anyone in need of care can receive it, Ontario is **waiving** the three-month **waiting period** for Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP) coverage.

## **Additional no cost options that are available for people who are uninsured:**

- **Walk-in clinics:** There are several community health centers that will see people who are uninsured.
- All **COVID-19 assessment centers** should be accessible without OHIP. This includes both assessment and tests for those who meet the testing criteria.
- **Telehealth Ontario** is open to everyone, and accessible without OHIP. People can call to discuss health concerns at 1-866-797-0000. (In an emergency people should always call 911.)
- **LOCAL Public Health** provides services to everyone.

You can reach SALCO for access to healthcare issues at: (416)-487-6371

or

Find your local legal clinic at  
[www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics/](http://www.legalaid.on.ca/legal-clinics/)  
or call: 416 979 1446

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