

February 2012

# Introducing thehealthline.ca to Ontario

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Ontario's CCACs have an important and growing role as health system navigators and care connectors. One of the key enablers is the CCAC's Information and Referral (I&R) function. CCAC staff members provide information to clients, family members, the public, and other health system partners about health services, electronically, by telephone, and in person. They also make referrals to a variety of community supports, health care and other services. As the role of CCACs continues to expand, the I&R function also grows.

A provincial CCAC Work Group was formed in 2011 to enhance this critical function. One of the Group's first major initiatives is the deployment of thehealthline.ca.

## thehealthline.ca, a proven resource

To navigate a complex and multi-faceted health system, most CCACs have developed electronic tools and databases. After some study, the leaders of Ontario's CCACs have decided to consolidate current information tools and databases into a single solution. They have selected thehealthline.ca, currently in use in the South West and Champlain, as the provincial model.

Developed in 1992 as an innovative partnership between hospitals, the health unit and the CCAC in London, Ontario, thehealthline.ca has proven to be popular, flexible, easy to use, reliable, robust, and cost-effective. It is the resource of choice for

consumers, health providers, CCAC Information & Referral staffers, and a key source for planning information by the South West LHIN, an important partner and funder. Each year, the site receives more than 1.5 million visitors. thehealthline.ca spread first to Champlain and now will go province wide.

Visit <http://informationnetwork.thehealthline.ca> to learn more about thehealthline.ca.

## Going Ontario-wide

Over the next 18 months, thehealthline.ca will be implemented across Ontario. This project will create:

- A single provincial database of more than 50,000 health service profiles
- A common provincial portal designed to guide users to regional CCAC sites
- 14 regional sites

It is expected that one regional site will be deployed each month, beginning in March 2012.

The province-wide access phone numbers:

- 310-CCAC (310-2222)
- 310-CASC (310-2272), French

will continue to operate as they currently do.

## The Benefits

Ontario's thehealthline.ca will be a valuable tool for consumers, CCAC staff members, other health

professionals, the LHINs and the system as a whole. Information supports the delivery of outstanding care, client self-management and wellness, and system efficiency and effectiveness. It's good news for all of us.

#### Benefits for consumers

- thehealthline.ca makes it easy and quick to find health information, using geography, topics, or Google searches.
- Regular updating ensures the information is accurate and up-to-date.
- Service profiles provide a wealth of information including special features such as video links and mapping.

#### Benefits for CCACs

- A centralized provincial database makes it easier to share, import and export data across the province.
- Special features make it easy for health organizations to update profile information regularly, ensuring greater accuracy and reliability.
- Good searchability makes providing information and referral more efficient and effective.
- A robust and consistent system will provide a foundation for other enhancements, such as e-referral tools.

#### Benefits for health providers and the system

- Consumers can find the information they need easily, reducing demand on other system resources.

- Better informed consumers are empowered and more likely to practice self-management.
- Family physicians and other health professionals have a reliable source of information about health resources in their communities at their fingertips.
- Health providers can profile their services for free within a centralized provincial web site that attracts many more visitors than a stand-alone site.
- thehealthline.ca serves as an integrator, bringing together information from public, non-profit and for-profit health organizations and supporting partnership and collaboration.

### Other enhancements to I&R

The I&R Work Group will also be looking at other aspects of the I&R function, including standards of care, e-referral systems, data collection and maintenance, and training and organizational development.

### Give us a test drive!

Visit thehealthline.ca to explore its many features. Stay tuned for updates on when thehealthline.ca is coming to your community.

For more information contact Sandra Coleman, CEO, South West CCAC (519 641-5496) or contact the CEO of your local CCAC.

