



Ontario's Unattached Patient Program

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Objectives

1. Provide an overview and background on the Health Care Connect program
2. Describe program processes and Care Connector roles and responsibilities
3. Provide results and successes of Health Care Connect to date
4. Describe challenges experienced and ongoing improvement strategies

Primary Care... The Gap

- Access to a primary care a consistent concern for Ontarians
- Primary Care Access Survey estimates that 834,000 Ontarians are unattached
- Chronic diseases & aging population – Increased demand for primary care
- Variation in access to primary care across province
 - Urban vs. rural

The Vision: Health Care Connect

- Signature component of the “Family Health Care for All Strategy” which aims to deliver access to primary care to 500,000 more Ontarians by 2011/12
- In April 2008, Cabinet approval was received to:
“Implement an Unattached Patient Registry to help identify Ontarians who are looking to access a family health care provider. Those on the list will be prioritized based on urgency of need and Care Connectors will connect them with available family health resources”

HCC Expert Panel – Prioritization of Patients

Key program feature – those with the highest need for primary care to be linked first

Expert Panel

- Physicians, academics and other experts provided clinical recommendations to inform need for health care services for HCC
- The Panel identified criteria to be considered as independent predictors of need for primary care:
 1. Self assessed health status
 2. Prevalence of chronic conditions
 3. Activity limiting disability
 4. Mental health
 5. Obesity

HCC Expert Panel – Prioritization of Patients

- A complementary prioritization scoring methodology was created to prioritize patients according to need for primary care services (i.e. high vs. low needs)
- Based on the scoring methodology, various factors can contribute to a patient being assigned as ‘Complex Vulnerable’ (and the physician then being able to bill the incentive code associated with HCC), including:
 - General health status
 - Presence of one or more chronic conditions
 - Activity limiting disability
 - Mental health issues
 - Obesity

HCC – Key Program Features

Registration

- Telephone (Monday to Friday, 9am-5pm)
- Service is available in 120 languages.
- Online registration launched in July 2009 (20% register online)

Ministry IT Database

- Patient registration information is stored in a database that automatically prioritizes patients based on health score

OACCAC Care Connector Software

- Pulls information from Ministry database; various case management functions (documentation, status management, health care provider info and preferences, distance tool)



The screenshot shows the Health Care Connect website interface. At the top, there is a banner with a man and a woman and the text "Health Care Connect". Below the banner, there are social media sharing options: SHARE, E-MAIL, and PRINT. The main heading is "Health Care Connect" followed by the sub-heading "Helping you find a family doctor or nurse practitioner". The text explains that the program helps Ontarians without a family health care provider find one. Below this, there is a section titled "How can I sign up for the program?" which provides instructions on how to sign up and where to find more information. At the bottom, there is a "Before You Begin" section with three steps: Step 1: Make sure you have a valid Health Card; Step 2: Make sure your mailing address is up-to-date; Step 3: Make sure that you are not already enrolled with a family doctor.

Health Care Connect

SHARE E-MAIL PRINT

Health Care Connect

Helping you find a family doctor or nurse practitioner

Health Care Connect helps Ontarians who are without a family health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) to find one. People without a family health care provider are referred to a family doctor or a nurse practitioner who is accepting new patients in their community.
[Find out more about the program](#)

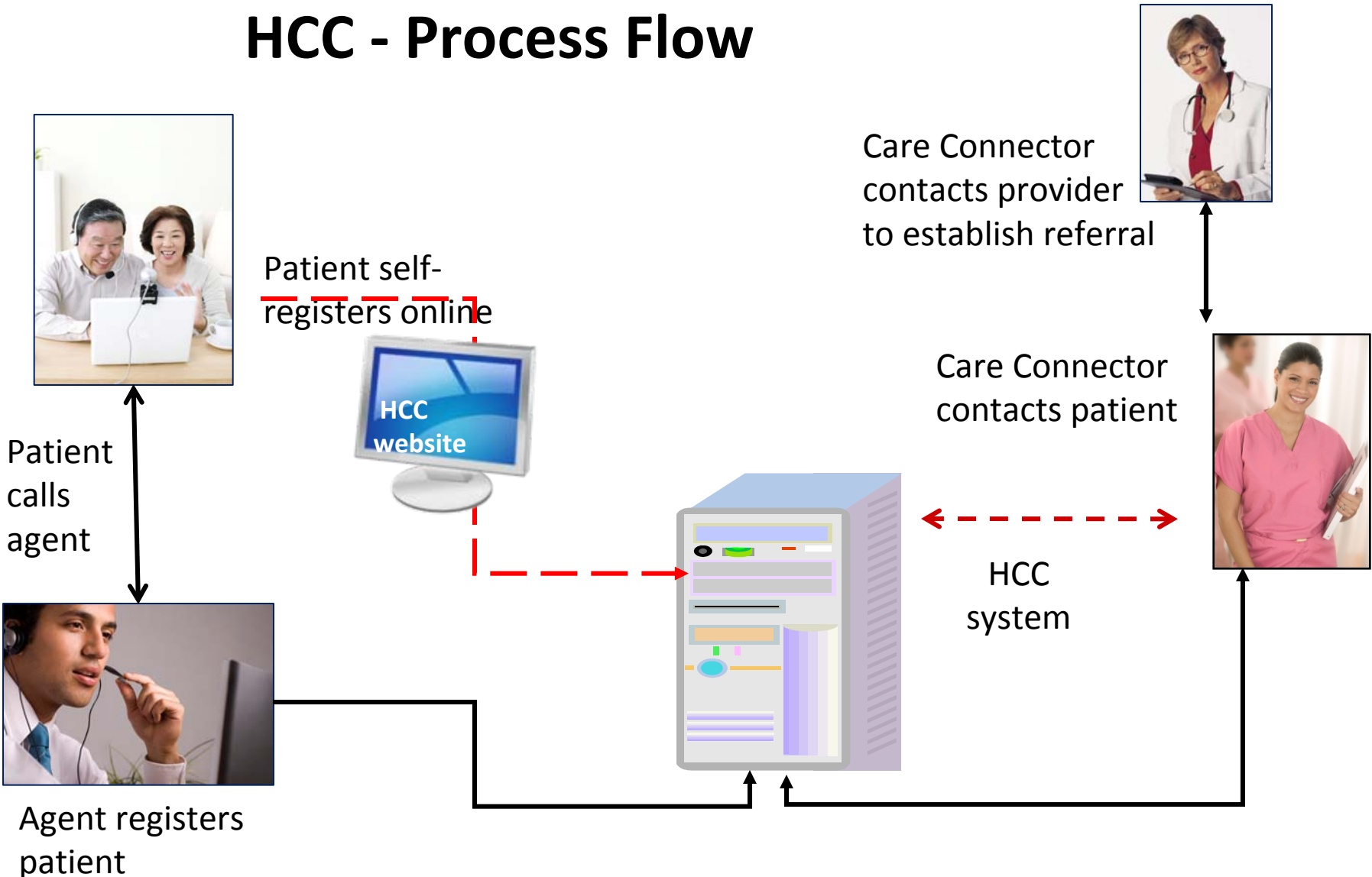
How can I sign up for the program?

You can sign up for Health Care Connect if you do not already have a family doctor. If you already have a family doctor and want to change, please see the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) for more information.

Before You Begin

 <p>STEP 1</p> <p>Make sure that you have a valid Health Card.</p> <p>Find out more about the Ontario Health Insurance Plan and how to apply.</p>	 <p>STEP 2</p> <p>Make sure your mailing address is up-to-date.</p> <p>You can change your address with ServiceOntario and it will take effect right away.</p>	 <p>STEP 3</p> <p>Make sure that you are not already enrolled with a family doctor.</p> <p>If you'd like to end your enrolment with the doctor you have now, contact them directly or call ServiceOntario at 1-866-532-3161.</p>
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HCC - Process Flow



Care Connectors... Who are they?

- Registered Nurses or Registered Practical Nurses
- Two Care Connectors per LHIN
- Employed by each CCAC – funded by local LHIN
- Provincial Lead Care Connector
 - Works as primary liaison between Ministry and 28 Care Connectors
 - Leadership for education, reporting, administration, engagement and program enhancements

Care Connector Role

- Access information on registered patients and connect them to a provider on a priority basis
- Refer registrants to family health providers that are best suited to their needs
- Plan and implement primary care engagement strategies
- Promote HCC to health care providers within the LHIN to encourage participation
- Establish and maintain external contacts / relationships to increase visibility of HCC (ex. Community Partnership Coordinators)

Care Connector Role

- Identify local trends and opportunities for overall improvement in the patient experience
- Define and report outcome measures for the program
- Serve as a program ambassador internally, within CCAC and LHIN
- Updates and maintains a local primary care provider database

Program Results to Date

- HCC launched in February 2009
- As of June 11, more than 60,000 patients have registered (8% are high needs patients)
- 52% have been referred to a provider (31,100)
- 76% of high needs patients have been referred (3,500)
- 73% of referred patients have been referred to a provider within 10 km of home
- Median wait time for referral is 14 days (13 days for high needs patients)
- Referral rates vary by LHIN (variation is not unexpected, given different levels of physician supply and capacity across the province)

Media Coverage... Sharing the Successes



Health care works together (The Peterborough Examiner, June 2010)

“While spending several hours in the emergency, a few times, I was encouraged to call the number that was provided to find a doctor. The whole idea was foreign to me and I did not like it. Dealing with change is not easy. I called and was connected with Nancy Pelletier at Health Care Connect. I left what I hoped was a clear description of my needs and hopes. I got a response and I was not disappointed; I was delighted. Just as our needs are changing with age, our world is changing too. Our health care system is no exception.”

Media Coverage... Sharing the Successes



Helping make a connection (The Sudbury Star, Sept. 2009)

Six years after moving to Chelmsford from Timmins, Diane Comeau finally has a family doctor, and the 61– year old woman couldn't be happier. “When you have suffered two open-heart surgeries, a stroke and survived esophageal cancer, having your own physician is more than just a convenience, it's a necessity”. Comeau called Health Care Connect and was asked to complete an application by telephone for a family doctor. It took six months, but she was delighted to hear from the service that it had found her a spot with a doctor in Coniston.

Challenges, Responses and Strategies

Challenges

Improvement Strategy

Physician availability and capacity	→	Ministry review of primary care gaps (other Ministry strategies and initiatives)
Geographical differences	→	Local strategies and creative solutions
Physician buy-in	→	Engagement strategies, payment, Ministry
Prioritization criteria	→	Review with OMA

Program Resources

- Registration
 - Program registration line: 1-800-445-1822
 - Telephone agents equipped with program guide and frequently asked questions.
 - Refer callers to Care Connectors or ontario.ca/healthcareconnect for more information
 - Online registration: ontario.ca/healthcareconnect
- Your Health Care Options Website: ontario.ca/healthcareoptions
 - Lists of physicians, emergency rooms, and other health resources in the community
 - Links to HCC frequently asked questions, terms and conditions, and program information
 - Refers general inquiries to INFOLine and refers queries from patients to their Care Connector
- A Care Connector nurse within a local Community Care Access Centre: 310-CCAC
 - Main contact for program inquiries from physicians, nurse practitioners, and registrants
 - Refers registrants to available physicians and nurse practitioners
 - Refer individuals to community health resources or INFOLine, where appropriate
- Service Ontario INFOLine: 1-866-532-3161
 - Main contact for general program inquiries
 - Main contact regarding de-enrolment from a physician
 - Equipped with program guide, terms and conditions, and frequently asked questions

Thank You - Questions?

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