

**Opening remarks by David Caplan, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, delivered at *IPE Ontario*, hosted by the Ontario Interprofessional Health Collaborative  
January 19, 2009**

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I'm very pleased to be here.

Unfortunately, my colleague, Minister Milloy from the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities is unable to make it and sends his regrets.

How many of you like basketball?

It's one of my favourite games. I'm a huge fan of Michael Jordan, who – in my opinion – is the best basketball player of all time.

He once said, "Talent wins games, but teamwork and intelligence wins championships."

That was on the court. But you know what?

In health care, a similar, team-based approach is also a win-win for all players: patients and providers alike.

This team-based or inter-professional approach means that we have different health care professionals working together under one roof.

And it's this approach that brings us here today...to this year's Conference of the Ontario Inter-professional Health Collaborative.

Today's conference is a great opportunity to meet and share ideas, learn from one another and swap business cards.

And we have a full house today- we have folks from regulatory colleges, researchers, teachers, students and health care providers.

Everyday, Ontarians come to rely on the collective expertise in this room to meet the complex challenges facing the health care system.

And while many of you have different backgrounds and areas of expertise, you all share the same goal:

To build the sustainable health care system we all want, and need.

That's the same goal behind HealthForceOntario - the province's health human resources strategy.

It's designed to ensure that Ontarians have access to the right number and mix of qualified health care professionals, now and in the future.

Inter-professional care is the cornerstone of this strategy.

Inter-professional care improves access to care for the patient while at the same time...

Inter-professional care provides a more satisfying work environment for the provider.

And finally, Inter-professional care can help us retain health care providers and attract new ones to serve the future health care needs of our growing and aging population.

Michael Jordan also said that "Some people want it to happen; some wish it would happen and others make it happen."

In the mission to improve health care in Ontario....you are all making it happen.

But change and improvement doesn't happen overnight. Any athlete can tell you that.

You need dedication, desire and a determination to succeed.

And so, over the past three years, we've invested over \$40 million in projects that promote collaborative, interprofessional care.

Projects like "Learn Together, Practice Together: A Northern Inter-professional Health Initiative" in North Bay lead by Teri-Lynn Christie, a nurse and educator.

Here, six professionals – doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, medical lab technologists and medical radiation technologists come together to learn with and from one another.

The purpose is to develop skills and knowledge *before* they take up their professions. It's a way to start the communication process going early and help future health care workers understand the role of team members in their health care practice.

It's projects like this - that many of you, like Teri-Lynn, lead - which are helping to transform health care in Ontario.

And long after these students graduate, they'll see this type of approach mirrored in their professional lives –

...in Family Health Teams;

...anaesthesia care teams;

...ER outreach teams;

We are committed to helping Ontario's Interprofessional Health Collaborative grow.

We know that education and practice intersect.

For to be successful in creating a culture of interprofessional care, it needs to be fostered in both education and practice.

Education and practice intersect in our funded projects.

Health education and health care delivery practice intersect in government.

At the end of the day the health care system is not about buildings or machines...its about people: people seeking care and people delivering care.

You are the leaders in every part of the system from front line to senior management

You - health care educators and providers – are helping us to meet the challenges of building a sustainable and thriving health care system today and for future generations.

I hope you have a fruitful and stimulating conference.

Thank you.