

Media Backgrounder: The *Ontario Cancer Screening Performance Report 2016*

About the report

The [Ontario Cancer Screening Performance Report 2016](#) highlights the strengths and future directions of Ontario's cancer screening programs. The report has a special focus on screening participation and retention, as well as a feature on Ontarians who are overdue for screening. It is the first time that performance for all three cancer screening programs has been consolidated into one report.

The findings in this report will be used to inform evidence-based and locally relevant strategies to strengthen cancer screening in Ontario. They also serve as a call to action for primary care providers to discuss regular cancer screening with their patients.

Cancer screening in Ontario

The number of people newly diagnosed with cancer in Ontario has increased over the last two decades and will continue to rise, largely due to an aging population. One in four Ontarians will die of the disease and nearly one in two people will develop it in their lifetime.

As Ontario's advisor on cancer prevention and care, Cancer Care Ontario designs, plans, implements and evaluates three province-wide organized screening programs: the Ontario Breast Screening Program (OBSP), the Ontario Cervical Screening Program (OCSP) and ColonCancerCheck (CCC). The goal of these programs is to reduce mortality associated with cervical, breast and colorectal cancer.

Regional trends in cancer screening participation

- In 2013–2014, the Local Health Integration Network (LHIN) with the highest breast cancer screening participation was North Simcoe Muskoka (69 percent). The Toronto Central LHIN had the lowest participation at 60 percent. The Central West LHIN showed the greatest improvement in participation from the 2007–2008 reporting period to the 2013–2014 reporting period (up three percentage points)
- A decrease in cervical cancer screening participation in 2012–2014 was seen across all LHINs and age groups. The timing of the decrease in participation and retention in the OCSP coincides with the release of updated cervical screening guidelines in 2011, which extended the recommended screening interval from annually to once every three years.
- In 2014, the LHINs with the lowest percentage of people overdue for colorectal cancer screening were North Simcoe Muskoka (36 percent) and Central (36 percent). The LHIN with the highest percentage overdue for colorectal cancer screening was North West (44 percent). Similar to the overall trend, the percentage overdue improved (decreased) in all LHINs from 2008 to 2014. The LHIN that showed the greatest improvement during this period was North West, which decreased 13 percent over seven years.

Future directions for Ontario's cancer screening programs

Cancer Care Ontario is working to decrease the burden of cancer in Ontario. A number of improvements to the cancer screening programs are underway:

- Bringing non-OBSP sites into the program has been identified as a priority. This will ensure that all eligible women will receive the benefits of an organized breast cancer screening program.

- Cancer Care Ontario is exploring the feasibility of human papillomavirus (HPV) testing as the primary screening test for cervical cancer, which is able to detect persistent, high-grade abnormalities earlier than the Pap test.
- CCC is transitioning from the fecal occult blood test (FOBT) as the primary screening test for colorectal cancer to the fecal immunochemical test (FIT). FIT is expected to increase colorectal cancer screening participation because it is an easier test to complete and has greater sensitivity for detecting colorectal cancer and advanced adenomas.

A copy of the *Ontario Cancer Screening Performance Report 2016* is available at cancercare.on.ca/cancerscreeningreport.

About Cancer Care Ontario:

Cancer Care Ontario equips health professionals, organizations and policy-makers with the most up-to-date cancer knowledge and tools to prevent cancer and deliver high-quality patient care.

It does this by collecting and analyzing data about cancer services and combining it with evidence and research that is shared with the healthcare community in the form of guidelines and standards. It also monitors and measures the performance of the cancer system, and oversees a funding and governance model that ties funding to performance, making healthcare providers more accountable and ensuring value for investments in the system.

Cancer Care Ontario actively engages people with cancer and their families in the design, delivery and evaluation of Ontario's cancer system, and works to improve the performance of Ontario's cancer system by driving quality, accountability, innovation and value.

For more information, please contact:

Cancer Care Ontario

Phone: 1.855.460.2646

Email: media@cancercare.on.ca

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