

**Ministry of Health
and Long-Term Care**

Office of the Minister

Hepburn Block, 10th Floor
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto ON M7A 1R3
Tel.: 416 327-4300
Fax: 416 326-1571

**Ministère de la Santé
et des Soins de longue durée**

Bureau du ministre

Édifice Hepburn, 10^e étage
80, rue Grosvenor
Toronto ON M7A 1R3
Tél. : 416 327-4300
Télééc. : 416 326-1571



December 1, 2015

MEMORANDUM TO: Health workers, health sector employers and other health system partners

FROM: Honourable Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

RE: Update on Syrian Refugee Resettlement

As a follow-up to my memo from last month, I would like to provide some details on the federal government plan to resettle Syrian refugees in Canada over the coming months and how it will impact Ontario's health system. The Federal government originally indicated as part of their election platform a commitment to resettle 25,000 government-assisted refugees to Canada before the end of 2015. As per the revised federal government plan, they will now identify 25,000 Syrian refugees (a mix of privately-sponsored and government-assisted) by Dec. 31, with a target of 10,000 arriving by Dec. 31 and the remainder by the end of February.

According to federal arrangements, a full immigration medical examination will be conducted prior to arrival in Canada, including screening for communicable diseases such as tuberculosis. Upon arrival in Canada, all refugees will be welcomed and processed by Border Services Officers for admission into Canada. This will include screening for signs of illness when they arrive in Canada, as per the Quarantine Act. Refugees who came to Canada as privately sponsored refugees will then continue directly to the community where their private sponsor is located. Government assisted refugees will be matched with communities where there are already settlement supports in place and most will continue on to their new home communities across Canada. For those whose final destination has not yet been determined, temporary accommodation will be provided before they are moved to new host communities across Canada. Six federal Refugee Assistance Program (RAP) centres will play a role and, potentially, military bases – five of which have been identified across Ontario.

The Ministry of Health of Health and Long-Term Care is developing an Action Plan to support the health system in wrapping health services around refugees at each stage of their resettlement journey in Ontario. This plan is meant to guide preparedness activities at both the provincial and local levels. An overview of the various planning activities is attached with further

guidance forthcoming. We have asked our Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) to engage their local service providers and primary care partners in particular to assess capacity and coordinate access to care for these individuals as communities are identified while keeping in mind the need for translation and psychosocial support. The ministry will also play a role in coordinating activity at a provincial level through the Ministry Emergency Operations Centre.

It is important that we work closely together and with the various resettlement agencies to ensure that these individuals are directed towards primary care as a top priority. As refugees will arrive here as permanent residents, they will have access to the Interim Federal Health Program upon arrival for a period of 12 months. Providers are encouraged to [register](#) with that program if they are playing a role in the care of this population.

This past weekend, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, released an initial [list of 39 communities](#) and [map](#), outside of Quebec, where private sponsors have put forth an application for a Syrian refugee. This information will help inform your planning activities moving forward. At this time, we understand that flights will not arrive now until December 7th.

We are still working on details and planning activities with our federal partners and, as more information is made available, we will communicate with partners across the health system to ensure that we can provide all of the necessary supports that this population deserves. Further guidance will be provided in the coming days and will be posted on the Ministry [website](#).

Health system partners may direct any questions to the ministry's Health Care Provider Hotline by phone at 1-866-212-2272 or by email at emergencymanagement.moh@ontario.ca.

Thank you in advance for helping to make a difference in the lives of thousands of new Ontarians.



Yours truly,

Dr. Eric Hoskins
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

c: Deputy Minister Dr. Bob Bell