



News Release

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MORE FOCUS NEEDED ON DIABETES PREVENTION, AUDITOR GENERAL SAYS

(TORONTO) While the availability of care for people with diabetes has definitely improved in the last few years, only 3% of the \$741 million provided for the Ontario Diabetes Strategy since 2008 has been earmarked for prevention initiatives, Auditor General Jim McCarter says in his *2012 Annual Report*.

“Type 2 diabetes accounts for 90% of diabetes cases in Ontario and is largely preventable. While the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care needs to support people who already have diabetes, many of the organizations that receive funding from the province told us that more of the money should be targeted toward prevention,” McCarter said today after the Report was released.

The number of people with diabetes in Ontario has more than doubled, from 546,000 in 2000 to 1.2 million in 2010, and that number is expected to grow to 1.9 million by 2020. People with diabetes use the health-care system at about twice the rate of the general population, and the cost to Ontario's health-care system is expected to grow from \$4.9 billion in 2010 to \$7 billion in 2020.

Following are some of the Auditor General's other significant findings:

- The Ministry has set up 152 Diabetes Education Programs (DEPs), each with one or more Diabetes Education Teams, yet many hospitals and physicians' clinics have set up education programs of their own, leading to service overlaps and under-utilization of about 90% of the DEPs.
- eHealth Ontario has had problems developing an electronic Diabetes Registry that would allow doctors and the Ministry to monitor patient data. eHealth had been working with a private-sector vendor on the Registry, but the original April 2009 completion deadline was not met, and the release date was extended many times. The contract with the vendor was terminated in September 2012. Although eHealth and the Ministry have made no significant payments to this vendor, they have still incurred \$24.4 million in internal costs related to the Registry since 2008.
- A not-for-profit organization that received \$20 million a year from the Ministry to manage and fund 47 diabetes education programs and service providers in northern Ontario had some questionable practices. The organization paid a consulting firm \$105,000, including a \$5,000 monthly “retainer fee,” since 2009/10 for such services as “advice on election strategizing” and “developing relationships with relevant political decision-makers.”

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