

## Letter from the Minister

**T**his special edition of *Healthcare Quarterly* presents a great opportunity to highlight the transformation that is under way in Ontario's healthcare system. It's a chance to remind ourselves of the importance of this transformation, to celebrate the early successes and to focus on the change that is ahead of us. It's also an opportunity to celebrate the remarkable leadership in Ontario's healthcare system – the people who have the vision to imagine what the healthcare system could be if we all focused on improving patient care, and the determination and courage to make that vision a reality in their personal workplaces. These leaders are an inspiration for others across the province and, indeed, around the world.

Ontario's healthcare system is faced with unprecedented challenges. We are slowly pulling out of the worst economic downturn since the advent of medicare, and, for the foreseeable future, economic growth – and tax revenues – will be slower than we have come to expect. As the post-war Baby Boomers become seniors, their reliance on our healthcare system will grow. And while healthcare innovations offer new hope for patients, they will add new costs to the system.

We are poised – indeed, eager – to meet those challenges. Across Ontario, people are developing partnerships and driving positive change in their communities. And patients are noticing the difference.

The Excellent Care for All Act (ECFA Act) sets the foundation for improving the quality of care. This is important not just because it means better quality of care, but also better value for the money we spend. In the long run, high-quality care costs the system less.

The ECFA Act also supports the notion that we must use the best available evidence to guide our decisions about what to fund and what not to fund. We will increasingly rely on research and evidence because we simply must put our precious healthcare dollars where they will deliver the most effective care for patients.

As we implement The Action Plan for Healthy Change, we're moving forward on better integration of care, particularly for those patients who have complex health needs. It is just too hard on patients, and too expensive for the system, to have people navigate their way through multiple specialists and other healthcare providers. High-quality care for patients includes the notion that the healthcare system is designed for them and responsive to their needs, that their care is managed by someone who can ensure they are getting the right care, the right tests and the right drugs from the right providers.

We are also committed to accountability and transparency. We have learned that measuring results – and publicly posting

those results – drives positive change. After all, Ontario's healthcare system is there for Ontarians, and paid for by Ontarians. We have a responsibility to show them where their money is going, and what results they're getting!

I am enormously encouraged by the strides that we are already making to improve the quality of care Ontario patients are receiving. While we have much work ahead of us, Ontario's healthcare leaders are moving decisively and confidently in the right direction. As Ontario's minister of health and long-term care, I thank you for leading the way.

Sincerely,



Deb Matthews  
Minister of Health and  
Long-Term Care