

CHRISTINE'S CHRONICLES: February Update

By Christine Elliott, MPP
Newmarket-Aurora

Since my last column in January, I have been focused on meeting with people, patients and families, and the people who plan and work on the front lines of our health care system as we look toward building a sustainable public health system for the people of Ontario. Our government made a promise to the people of Ontario, including Newmarket and Aurora that we would end hallway health care, and I want you to know that we are committed to that promise.

In our wonderful riding of Newmarket-Aurora, I have been meeting with groups who make our community better such as Community Living Central York and Ontario Homes for Special Needs Association. I also had the pleasure of meeting with Mayor John Taylor, the new Mayor of Newmarket. I look forward to continuing to work together to ensure prosperity in our community. On January 28, SOYRA came to change the artwork in our office. The office now has a series of black and white photography on display. They showcase different scenes like, 'The Falls', 'Old Newmarket', 'Louvre-Under the Pyramid', 'First Light', 'Stepping Stones', 'Lake Simcoe Dreamscape' and 'Western Brook Pond'. All works are photographed by Newmarket artists Steve Silverman and Linda Welch.

Our government has made many accomplishment in the past month. We are:

Supporting 263 non-profit organizations to improve community spaces in the province, as well 141 organizations that are expanding or adapting projects that are already making a difference for the people of Ontario.

Supporting innovation and growth within Ontario's automated vehicle industry.

Reducing red tape and easing regulatory burden, to lower business costs and improve competitiveness for young farmers and new entrants in the agri-business sector.

Discussing ways to improve teacher hiring practices, while also seeking feedback on class sizes in kindergarten to Grade 12.

Providing \$30 million over five years to 39 municipalities to partner with community organizations to co-ordinate local transportation services, so more rides can be provided to more people, and to more destinations.

Attending the 2019 Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference, an annual event that brings together rural Ontario municipal leaders to discuss priorities and ways to strengthen their communities.

Proposing legislative amendments that, if passed, would make it easier for home-based child care providers and authorized recreational and skill-building programs to serve more children.

Working for the people to reduce burdens on job creators, as well as workers by improving training programs that certify those who promote health and safety at workplaces.

Taking decisive action to help more families with autism. We will clear waitlist for autism services and provide direct financial supports for families of 23,000 children previously denied funding in Ontario Autism Program.

Funding \$1.6 million in repairs and renovations at more than 60 community agencies.

We have also taken steps towards building a sustainable public health care system that is centred around the patient. We are:

Prioritizing the health and safety of patients by taking immediate action and providing 128 hospitals across the province with funding to upgrade, repair and maintain their facilities.

Signing two bilateral agreements with Health Canada that will provide Ontario with funding to support a comprehensive and connected mental health care system. The funding will also help address critical gaps and create a more integrated home and community care sector so patients are supported throughout their care.

Continuing our engagement sessions with health care leaders, subject matter experts, sector partners and associations, health service providers and people with lived experience to identify mental health and addiction needs across the province. These discussions will help inform decisions as we move forward with finally building a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system in Ontario.

Reviewing the findings of The Premier's Council on Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine's first report, Hallway Health Care: A System Under Strain, providing an overview of the problem of hallway health care in Ontario.

Committing to build a public health care system centered around the patient and redirecting money to front-line services ? where it belongs ? to improve patient experience, and provide better, connected care and capturing better value for our health dollars.

I look forward to providing you more updates next month on our constituency, public health care system and province.