

**Subject:** **Musculoskeletal (MSK) Strategy**

**To:** South West LHIN Clinical Leads

**Date:** May 31, 2018

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- Based on successful implementation of various pilot programs, the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has mandated the adoption of “Rapid Access Clinics” – a central intake and assessment model for MSK patients as a way to improve patient experience and make wait times more equitable across the province.
- The MSK Strategy **is the first step in an ongoing process to improve wait times for hip/knee and spine treatment** and should help identify the true number of surgery patients and funding needed.
  - While this strategy will be rolled out based on a provincially standardized model, it will evolve with process improvements as learnings are obtained over time.
- The MSK Strategy should help 9,500 patients receive optimal treatment – surgery or more conservative treatment options in an equitable fashion.
  - Currently, 60 per cent of hip and knee and 10 per cent of spine referrals are surgical; this means that many patients could benefit from more conservative treatment options.
- Physicians will no longer have to seek and send their patients to various facilities for assessments, and treatments.
  - In using this model, physicians will now be able to refer their patients to a single point of contact focused on assessment and education, and will work to ensure that patients referred to surgeons are likely surgical, while non-surgical will be connected to community-based resources.
- Centralizing intake will improve patient education, coaching for physiotherapy and referral for injections, while deepening the review of suitability for surgery.
- Patients will experience less frustration and many will be relieved of surgical anxiety sooner.
  - Within 2-4 weeks, patients will be assessed by an advanced practice clinician working in close relationship with the surgeons.
  - Patients will also receive clear and transparent information about how long they can expect to wait at each stage of assessment and treatment.
  - As some patients may wish to see a specific surgeon, they will be advised of wait times and be able to make informed choices.
- This strategy supports patient choice, allowing patients to seek assessment or surgery anywhere in the province.