

[St. Joe's 'bundled care' model lauded by patients, caregivers](#)

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A new way to treat patients created by **St. Joseph's Healthcare** has been so successful the provincial government is expanding it to Kitchener with the hope of one day implementing it across the province.

"I have every expectation that this model will be rolled (out) not just within Ontario but well beyond," Health Minister Deb Matthews said. She was in Hamilton Friday to announce funding for the **Integrated Comprehensive Care Project**.

"It's much better care at a lower cost," she said. "It is nothing short of remarkable."

The pilot project provides patients with a co-ordinator who organizes their care in hospital and the community right from the moment they are referred to **St. Joseph's**. A contact is available 24 hours a day so patients can be immediately directed to the right provider when there are issues.

It has cut hospital stays by 24 per cent since it started being tested at **St. Joseph's** in March 2012 with lung cancer, joint replacement, chronic pulmonary obstructive disease and congestive heart failure patients.

Emergency room visits after discharge are down 15 per cent and there are half as many readmissions to hospital.

"St. Joe's is a real leader," said Matthews. "**They're pioneering this and by all accounts this is a great success.**"

She gave \$1.6 million to keep the pilot project going at **St. Joseph's and expand it to St. Mary's in Kitchener.**

So far, 1,200 patients have used the program in Hamilton and the funding will allow 1,200 more to take part here along with 300 in Kitchener.

"Kitchener is great but I'd like to see it all over," said Ilene Mulholland, who has been part of the program since October.

The 77-year-old north Hamilton woman with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) broke down in tears as she talked about how she had been in the hospital twice in three months and was depressed when she was asked to join the program.

"It's very emotional," Mulholland said. "You wouldn't believe the support."

She says twice the team saved her from going to the hospital.

"When you start to feel bad and you're not sure, you call the nurse," said Mulholland. "She's there 24 hours a day. That takes away the fear. You have that feeling of safety."

St. Joseph's CEO says the new model of care works because patients are led through the system instead of being expected to navigate it themselves.

"This model is truly a better, faster and less expensive way to meet the increasing needs of patients in the province," said **Dr. David Higgins**. "We are breaking down barriers. We're engaging people and driving innovation to ultimately transform the patient and family experience."

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