

“...through Health Links, we have worked with providers across the system to deliver quality care in appropriate settings, to our most complex patients, and [we] will continue to build on these successes.”

(Premier Kathleen Wynne: 2014 Mandate letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care)

The Basics

Ontario is taking steps to further transform the delivery of local health care with the creation of community Health Links across the province.

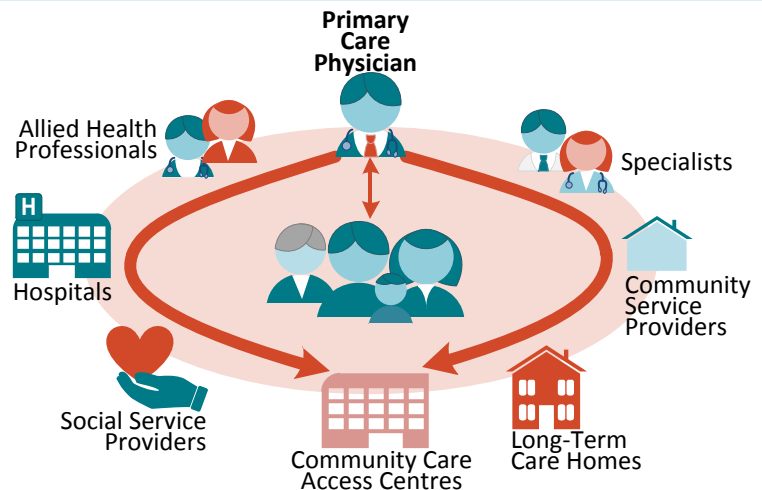
Health Links work to encourage collaboration between existing local health care providers to provide better coordinated health care for Ontario’s most complex patients.

Through increased communication and collaboration, patients receive timely access to the most appropriate care in the most appropriate place, and will be supported by a team of health care providers at all levels of the health care system.

Results will include better care and better value for our investments.

Health Links are a made-in-Ontario innovation that provide coordinated local health care for patients who:

- often see multiple health care providers
- access a range of health care services (e.g. primary care providers, specialists, long-term care, social service, hospitals)
- find it hard to navigate the entire health system



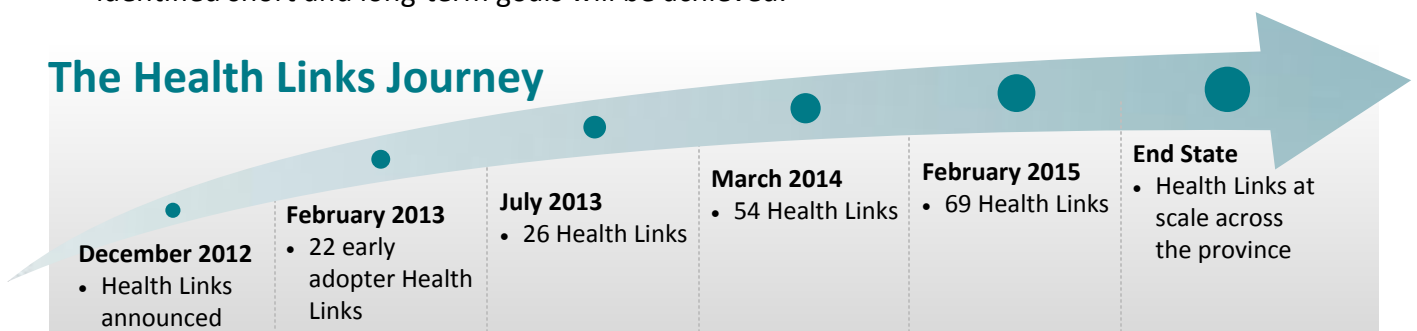
Operational Health Links have demonstrated success in a number of different ways:

- More patients have coordinated care plans
- More patients are attached to a primary care provider
- Patients have been engaged in their care to a much greater degree
- Health Links are focusing on system gaps and how to better care for specific population sub-groups
- Relationships and communication between providers have been strengthened in local areas
- Providers are improving their ability to identify complex patients in their community

How a Health Link Gets Started

- All Health Links have a coordinating lead organization such as a Family Health Team, Community Health Centre, Community Care Access Centre or a hospital.
- Each Health Link completes a readiness assessment to demonstrate an ability to improve coordinated care for complex patients through collaboration.
- Each Health Link also submits a business plan to the ministry and the LHIN, providing details on identified short and long-term goals will be achieved.

The Health Links Journey



Health Links by the numbers

69 APPROVED HEALTH LINKS
At least one Health Link in every LHIN

12,371 PATIENTS ATTACHED

4,291 CARE PLANS PRODUCED

9 Million Ontarians live within the catchment area of the approved Health Links

5% of patients account for two thirds of health care costs in Ontario

1,500+ Health and social service providers have joined a local Health Link

Health Links Advanced Model and Getting to Maturity

Our **Rapid Cycle Evaluation (RCE)** of Health Links took place between October 2013 and March 2014 to gauge Health Links' progress to date, catalogue early program success and impacts, and provide insight into best practices, lessons learned and challenges. The findings are being used to improve the operation of existing Health Links and inform the development and implementation of future Health Links.

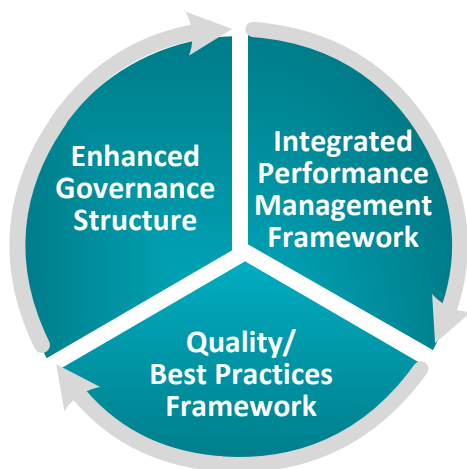
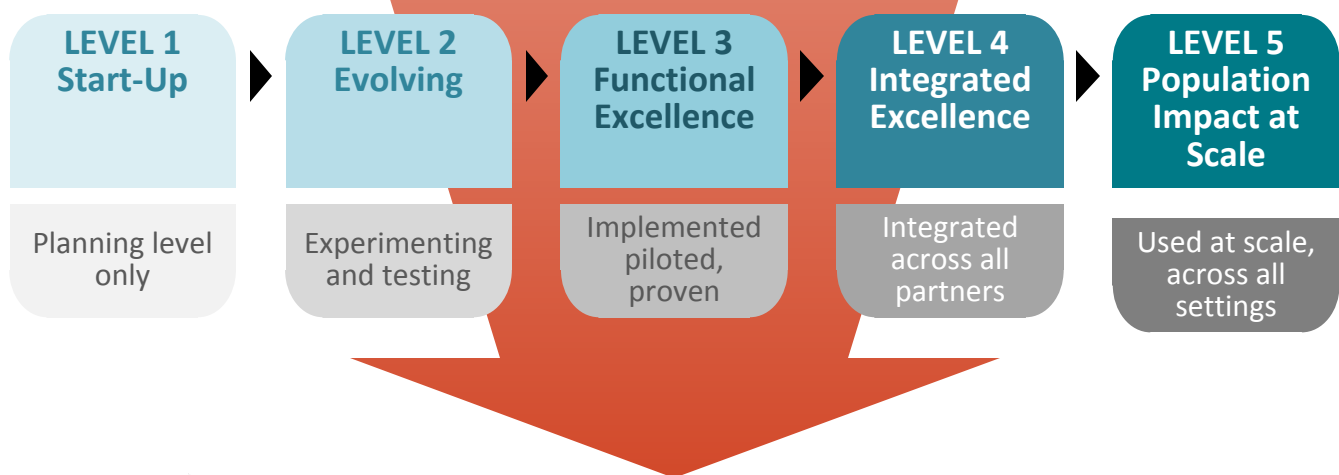
LESSONS LEARNED – Rapid Cycle Evaluation

Supporting and accelerating the Health Links maturity journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Links and LHINs will face new challenges integrating and scaling across sectors • Focus on process, tools and communication is required at each level to develop new capabilities
Balancing operational optimization and ongoing innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Latter stages require as much or more innovation as early stages from Health Links, providers and LHINs • Need to plan and develop the structures and metrics to enable continued innovation through the Health Links journey
Understanding impact of Health Link governance structure on trajectory along maturity journey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selecting the best evolutionary path for Health Links based on internal governance structure may accelerate progress and benefits realization • Intra- and inter-Health Link structures, relationships and process may be constructed to optimize maturity journey

HEALTH LINKS MATURITY JOURNEY

The Health Links **Maturity Journey** is a five level process maturity continuum based on leading practice review. As Health Links **evolve**, they will pass through different stages of maturity.

Population Impact At Scale is demonstrated by processes that are clearly defined, implemented across the Health Link at scale, and systematically managed through continuous process improvement.



An advanced Health Links model is proposed to move from early implementation to a provincial model to:

- Enable coordinated care at scale through all provincial Health Links
- Promote quality care across the continuum and sectors and an improved patient/ provider experience
- Ensure shared accountability with LHINs for performance
- Drive sustainability of Health Links and health system savings
- Drive broader health system integration

Shaping the Future of Health Links

Working with LHINs, the ministry is focused on an end state of Health Links in these areas:

