

January 9, 2005

NEW KENSINGTON EYE INSTITUTE

The McGuinty government is significantly improving access to cataract surgeries with the opening of the Kensington Eye Institute.

Cataract surgery is a minor surgical procedure done as an outpatient service under local anesthesia. It involves the removal and replacement of a diseased lens with an artificial lens. It is most often performed in hospital. It's a relatively simple surgical procedure that is also well suited to being done in an outpatient care facility like Kensington.

Each year 5,000 new, routine cataract surgeries will be performed at Kensington. In addition, about 1,700 surgeries will be moved to the Institute from Toronto's four acute-care teaching hospitals (University Health Network, Mount Sinai Hospital, St. Michael's Hospital and Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre). This will free up operating facilities to allow those hospitals to increase their complex eye surgeries.

Kensington's downtown location will help to meet the needs of the Greater Toronto Area community for improved cataract services.

The new facility will also become an important University of Toronto teaching site for ophthalmology residents. Over thirty ophthalmologists will be affiliated with Kensington and with the University of Toronto Teaching Faculty.

What is an Independent Health Facility (IHF)?

Independent Health Facilities are community-based facilities that provide insured diagnostic and surgical/treatment procedures as part of the publicly funded health care system.

Insured services in IHFs are fully funded under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan; there are no charges to patients for insured services.

The Independent Health Facilities Act regulates IHFs in Ontario and requires that licensed facilities must have a quality assurance program to protect patients. It also prohibits charging facility fees.

There are 924 licensed diagnostic facilities in the province providing radiology, nuclear medicine, ultrasound, and pulmonary function studies, sleep studies and MRI/CT services. There are 24 licensed ambulatory facilities providing dialysis, plastic surgery, abortion, retinal and cataract surgery, vascular surgery, laser dermatology, and obstetrical/gynecological surgery.

Funding IHFs

Kensington Eye Institute is a not-for-profit corporation licensed by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care as an independent health facility.

Licensed IHFs are funded by the ministry to provide insured services to insured Ontario residents. The costs to provide insured services are covered by a funding arrangement between the IHF and the ministry.

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