

## For Information Only

### Changes to the Drug Benefit Eligibility Card for Social Assistance Clients

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### Resolution

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### Finance Implications

There will be no financial impact to the operational budget.

## HEALTH IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Ministry of Community & Social Services (Ministry) changed the way social assistance clients access their monthly drug benefits. This is a positive impact for the recipients.

## BACKGROUND

As of September 2016, the Ministry of Community & Social Services (Ministry) changed the way social assistance clients and members of their benefit unit obtain access to drug coverage under the Ontario Drug Benefit Program. Prior to September 2016, the Ontario Works Program provided a monthly drug eligibility card (a paper drug card) to eligible social assistance clients. The Ministry has now changed the card from a separate paper card to the utilization of the Client's Ontario Health Card to access prescription medication. Coverage under the Ontario Drug Benefit Program has not changed.

This initiative is one of several different improvements around service delivery as the Ministry moves forward with benefits transformation. The Ministry's current priorities include streamlining service delivery to reduce administrative costs, create efficiencies, and improve client service.

There are several benefits to using an Ontario Health Card to access drug coverage:

- Convenience – Clients will no longer have to wait for the monthly paper drug eligibility card to arrive in the mail.
- Saves time – Paper drug cards were frequently lost or stolen. Clients will no longer need to visit their

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social assistance office to request a replacement paper drug eligibility card, and will no longer need to wait for pharmacies to obtain a faxed copy of their paper drug eligibility card from their caseworker.

- Reliability - Clients using an Ontario Health Card will be able to access drug coverage with fewer delays than experienced with the paper drug eligibility card (e.g., lost in the mail).
- Easy to manage - With an Ontario Health Card, clients will only need to carry one card and each benefit unit member can access drug coverage using their own Ontario Health Card.
- Privacy - Allows for greater discretion for clients in accessing the drug benefits.

## **NEXT STEPS**

The Ministry will continue to streamline the service delivery for social assistance programs.