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|  | ***NEWS*** |
| **Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care** | |

**Ontario Selects Christine Elliott as First-Ever Patient Ombudsman**

*Province Strengthens Voice of Patients in Ontario's Health Care System*

December 10, 2015 3:30 P.M.

Ontario has selected Christine Elliott as the province's first-ever Patient Ombudsman, following a rigorous recruitment process that included province-wide public input, and an independent search that considered almost 400 potential candidates.

In her role as Patient Ombudsman, once officially appointed, Elliott would help meet the needs of patients who have not had their concerns resolved through existing complaint mechanisms.

Christine Elliott's appointment would come into effect on July 1, 2016. She will begin her preliminary work in early 2016, and prepare the Patient Ombudsman's office to receive patient feedback following the official appointment and office opening this summer.

The Patient Ombudsman's powers and responsibilities will be specifically tailored to the health care system. The Patient Ombudsman will:

* Respond to unresolved complaints from patients, residents and clients about their health care experience at a health sector organization, which includes hospitals, long-term care homes or Community Care Access Centres
* Investigate a health sector organization on her own initiative
* Make recommendations to a health sector organization that is the subject of an investigation, following the conclusion of that investigation
* Make reports to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care on her activities and recommendations annually and provide reports to Local Health Integration Networks as appropriate.

Cabinet has approved the documents for the appointment, and they will be presented this afternoon to the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario.

Establishing a Patient Ombudsman is part of the government's plan to build a better Ontario through its [Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ms/ecfa/healthy_change/).

**QUOTES**

" Christine Elliott’s advocacy for vulnerable people, extensive knowledge of the health care system, and commitment to the betterment of this province make her the perfect choice for Ontario’s first Patient Ombudsman. I am delighted that she agreed to put her name forward for this critical role as we work to put patients first by improving both the quality of our health care system and the patient experience."   
- Dr. Eric Hoskins  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

" I feel honoured to have been chosen as the province’s first Patient Ombudsman and am so pleased to be able to continue to serve Ontarians in this new role. Ensuring that patients in Ontario’s health care system will now have a strengthened voice is a responsibility I am looking forward to taking on."   
- Christine Elliott  
Patient Ombudsman Designate

**QUICK FACTS**

* The candidate was selected after a recruitment process that involved public consultation. Hundreds of potential candidates were considered for the role and the most highly-qualified candidates were interviewed by a search committee with external representation that included health system and patient leaders.
* The term of the Patient Ombudsman's appointment will be five years, with the possibility of reappointment for an additional five-year term.
* As part of Ontario's [Open Government commitment](https://news.ontario.ca/tbs/en/2014/12/province-passes-legislation-to-strengthen-accountability.html), the public was invited to share their ideas on the skills, experience and personality traits that the Patient Ombudsman should have. Nearly 1,000 Ontarians responded and that input helped inform the recruitment process.
* The Patient Ombudsman position was created in December 2014 as part of Bill 8, the Public Sector and MPP Accountability and Transparency Act, 2014.
* The work of the Patient Ombudsman will complement the work of other existing organizations in the health care system that handle patient complaints, including the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Health Services Appeal and Review Board.