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Invest in initiatives that change lives

McGuinty's new cabinet sworn in

June 29.

Last week's announcement of a new minister for health promotion is welcome news for those of us working to promote better health for all Ontarians. The timing couldn't be better given the reality of rising health-care costs in this province. Much of this spending is on costly hospital treatment for chronic diseases that are, largely, preventable.

We urge the new minister to "move upstream" and invest in initiatives that address the prerequisites for health — income, housing, education and lifestyle choices about diet and exercise. New health promotion approaches that reach the homeless, Aboriginal people, women, new immigrants and investments in early childhood development are all of critical importance. Ontario has an opportunity to lead Canada by creating a robust, multi-sectoral prevention system to help people and society become and remain healthy. This will require collaboration across government ministries and with us, at the local level, in the health promotion sector.

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