

Our Toxic Times

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Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Is Taking MCS, CFS, and FM Seriously

Time for Leadership: Recognizing and Improving Care for those with ME/CFS, FM and ES/MCS by the Task Force on Environmental Health Phase 1 Report by Howard Hu, MD, Task Force Chair, July 2017
The report is available at: www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/environmental_health_2017/task_force_on_environmental_health_report.pdf

Under Canada's Ontario Ministry of Health's commitment to *Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care*, a three year investigation into how to help people with chemical sensitivity, chronic fatigue, and fibromyalgia is under way. After completing the first year, the task force has issued its first report. The following is the executive summary from that report:

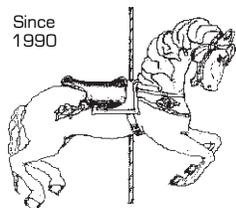
The more than half a million Ontarians of all ages living with myalgic encephalomyelitis/ chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), fibromyalgia (FM) and environmental sensitivities/ multiple chemical sensitivity (ES/MCS) face overwhelming barriers accessing high quality, appropriate patient-centred care. Despite the large number of people affected by these devastating, life-altering medical conditions, there is a discouraging lack of: recognition and understanding of their impact and severity; knowledge about

their underlying causes and treatment; effective clinical care pathways; and knowledgeable care providers. People struggle to get the care, support and accommodation they need. They also face significant stigma and discrimination within the health care system, in the workplace and in society at large.

The Task Force on Environment Health was established by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to provide advice on how to overcome these gaps in knowledge, care and attitudes. In the first year of its three-year mandate, this group of expert clinicians, patients, researchers, advocates and representatives from health system organizations has identified a number of early concrete steps can be taken now to establish the foundation for an effective, patient-centred system of care.

1. Change the conversation and increase understanding and recognition of these

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