





Central Intake for Outpatient MRI


In December 2019, the hospitals in Eastern Ontario will be launching a new Central Intake service for MRI.

The Central Intake Program will provide a single point of entry for semi-urgent and non-urgent outpatient referrals to MRI services in the region. All MRI referrals will be sent to one central hub, and distributed to the most appropriate site in the region, based on several factors. Hospitals in the region have worked together to develop this service in order to help manage the large number of requests for adult MRI scans covered by OHIP. To support this, they have developed a new regional standardized MRI requisition form that captures important information to help the Central Intake Program route requests appropriately. This information includes the patient's age, where they live, their health-care needs, and any other requirements like preferred MRI site or language of service delivery. Additionally, the program will deploy support tools to help referring clinicians and their patients make better evidence-based decisions about whether or not an MRI scan may be the most valuable next test for the patient. The Ottawa Hospital will be hosting the Central Intake Program and managing the IT infrastructure for the service on behalf of the hospitals in the region.

Motivating factors for this initiative

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Adult MRI wait times far exceed provincial targets
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Demand for adult MRI services is increasing
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Current referral practices distribute demand unevenly

Part of the solution: a single point of entry for referrals

Central Intake is part of a larger initiative to support better patient care. It will:

- ✓ **Simplify the intake process for referrers** through a single point of access and standard processes.
- ✓ **Improve the appropriate use of available resources** through reduction of duplicate referrals and improved application of referral guidelines for some types of scans.
- ✓ **Improve equity in access to care** by coordinating the distribution of referrals to the shortest available queue, while also accommodating the individual needs and preferences of each patient.
- ✓ **Optimize available scan time** through regional resource planning and adoption of standard protocols.
- ✓ **Support regional planning** with shared metrics and standard reporting.

The Central Intake process

