

# CritiCall Ontario Backgrounder



## What is CritiCall Ontario?

- CritiCall Ontario is a one number to call, 24/7/365 emergency consultation and referral service for hospital-based physicians in Ontario caring patients who require urgent or emergent care.
- CritiCall Ontario assists hospital physicians by facilitating consultations with medical specialists and/or referral decisions for urgent and emergent patients to appropriate levels of care within Ontario and outside of the province if necessary.
- It is the only service of its kind in Ontario and is unique within Canada.

## CritiCall Ontario also:

- Provides hospitals with access to the Provincial Hospital Resource System (PHRS) which contains information on the specific services each hospital provides and the availability of critical and acute care beds
- Provides administrative, technical and educational support to all users of the provincial Critical Care Information System (CCIS)
- Provides CritiCall Ontario data in the form of reports and business intelligence dashboards from CORD BI to the province, regions, hospitals and provincial specialty groups. Data is based on hospital usage of Call Centre Centre case facilitation services and systems including PHRS and The Repatriation Tool.
- Provides dedicated client relations to assist hospitals, regions and provincial specialty groups with the utilization of CritiCall Ontario's services
- Facilitates the repatriation of patients sent outside of the province via CritiCall Ontario back to Ontario for the remainder of their care
- Provides support during times of local, regional or provincial crisis/disaster or occurrences that may require a coordinated response and extensive patient movement or unit decanting

## Who we serve

- Any hospital-based physician within Ontario who requires assistance caring for an urgently or emergently ill or injured patient can contact CritiCall Ontario. This assistance could be in the form of advice from a specialist physician or surgeon and/or possibly a referral for the patient to another hospital with the required patient care resources.

- CritiCall also works with hospitals and critical care service providers in provinces and states bordering Ontario including Manitoba, Michigan and New York, to expedite urgent and emergent care for Ontario patients when necessary.
- Physicians can access a broad range of specialists through CritiCall Ontario who can provide consultations for more than 30 different medical subspecialties including burns, cardiology, gastroenterology, neurosurgery, ophthalmology, spinal, and plastic surgery.

## **How does CritiCall Ontario's service work?**

CritiCall Ontario's focus is on connecting physicians on the telephone so they can work together to make clinical decisions about how best to care for each patient. Our Call Agents do not assess patients, approve transfers, make medical decisions or direct physician decision making.

## **The process is outlined below:**

- A hospital-based physician or designate calls CritiCall Ontario at **1-800-668-4357 (HELP)**
- The CritiCall Call Agent asks the physician or designate for their name, hospital site and location, contact phone number and the name of the most responsible physician (MRP)
- The MRP provides his/her College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO) number
- Patient information requested may include:
  - patient's name, age, sex
  - area of residence
  - location of the patient within the hospital
  - working diagnosis and specialty specific questions including pertinent medical history, medications, etc.
- The MRP will also be asked if other physicians or hospitals have already been contacted
- The Call Agent will refer to the consult referral patterns for the region to determine options based on available specialists and proximity to the referring hospital
- The first call will be a request for consultation; following consultation, the patient will stay in the home hospital with management or be referred to a hospital with the level of care required
- If referral is required, the first (consulting) physician will be asked to receive the patient; if the physician is unable, the Call Agent will contact other sites where the required resources are immediately available
- The order of referral options depends on the location of the home hospital, patient urgency and the current system capacity

## Benefits of using CritiCall Ontario

CritiCall Ontario is funded by the Ministry of Health as a resource for hospital-based physicians.

### We offer:

- **One phone call to access critical care support**  
CritiCall Ontario will make multiple calls on behalf of the calling physician to find a specialist who can provide a consultation; this saves physicians time that can be better spent caring for patients
- **Patient documentation and collection of data**  
Every call CritiCall Ontario receives, and initiates is documented; call related data is compiled into reports that can be used to assist in health care planning at the hospital, regional and provincial level
- **Maximization of health care resources**  
For physicians in community hospitals, CritiCall Ontario is a vital link to the resources of larger tertiary care hospitals in their region and the province
- **A system-approach to accessing patient care**

## Fast Facts 2022/2023

- Number of cases: 54,435
- Number of patients transferred: 19,275
- Number of patients not transferred: 35,160
- Median number of calls made per case: 7
- Median time to patient acceptance: 23 minutes

For more information about CritiCall Ontario, please visit our website at [www.criticall.org](http://www.criticall.org) or call (289) 396-7000.