

# Your Health

A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care





# Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care

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## A Message from the Minister

Since being appointed Ontario's Minister of Health, I have travelled across the province to the frontlines of our health care system.

I have seen the delivery of world-class cancer care in Toronto, lifesaving pediatric care in Ottawa, state-of-the-art mental health care in Penetanguishene, and I've had the opportunity to engage with dedicated health care workers across the province.

I have witnessed the brilliance of our health care workers and their dedication to providing care to their patients. I've met with nurses, doctors, personal support workers, pharmacists, hospital leaders and health professionals in long-term care homes and those who provide care directly in your homes. I've been grateful to hear from many of them that they are collaborating across the health sector in higher numbers than ever before.

But I have also seen that our health care system and our health care workers are under incredible pressure. For too many people, health care is too hard and slow to access.

The status quo is not working. Too many people are waiting too long to get an appointment or surgery, having to travel too far to get care, and spending too much time trying to navigate our health care system.

We can't accept this. We won't.

We need to be bold, innovative and creative. We need to build on the spirit of collaboration on display across the health care sector. We need to have the courage to look to other provinces and countries and borrow the best of what the world is already doing. And we need to be clear: Ontarians will always access the health care they need with their OHIP card, never their credit card.

## Our goal is to make health care more convenient for Ontarians by connecting you to care closer to home.

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We will do this by increasing access to services in health care settings near you – like in pharmacies by increasing the number of assessments and treatments that can be provided by your local pharmacist without a doctor's appointment. By expanding the number of community surgical and diagnostic centres. By cutting wait times for services like MRI and CT scans and cataract surgeries. And by expanding access to home and community care services so you can stay safely at home.

Over the last several years we have made progress. We have expanded Ontario's health workforce with more doctors, nurses and personal support workers. We're building new hospitals in every region of the province. We're adding nearly 60,000 new and upgraded long-term care beds and increasing the amount of care residents receive so seniors can live with dignity.

But we must do more – and we are doing more.

With *Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care* we will continue to prioritize making it easier for you and your family to connect to the care you need, whether that's by expanding access to services in your home or community, giving you the choice to book or take an appointment virtually, or ensuring a hospital bed is there for you when you need it.

We are preparing for the future by putting aside the ideas of the past. We are focused on connecting you to the care you need, when and where you need it.



**Sylvia Jones**  
Deputy Premier  
and Minister of Health

# A Vision for Patient-Centred Care

Our core promise to every person in Ontario is this: you will be connected to the health care you need when you need it.

Whether it's an unplanned 3:00 a.m. trip to the emergency room with your child or a routine check-up with your family doctor.

Whether your aging mother needs more support to keep living in the family home she loves, or you need cataract surgery to fix a problem that's been bothering you for years.

Whether you live in a big city, small town or in a remote spot in the north.

*Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care* puts people at its heart, by adding and expanding health care services closer to home.

We are taking action to strengthen all aspects of health care, particularly where you access it most frequently – in hospital emergency rooms, in community settings like pharmacies and doctors' offices, in long-term care homes and through care delivered right in your own homes.



We know we can't do it alone. That's why we're hiring and training more doctors, nurses and personal support workers to help us deliver on that promise.

This long-term plan is built on three pillars: The Right Care in the Right Place, Faster Access to Care, and Hiring More Health Care Workers. By focusing on improving the health care experiences of Ontarians and growing our health care workforce, we will improve the quality of health care delivery across the province for years to come.

Some of these changes will happen immediately as we take action to address pressing issues. Other changes will take time. They will be phased in over the months and years ahead as we educate and graduate new health care workers, build new hospitals, community surgical and diagnostic centres and long-term care homes, and deliver care in new and innovative ways. But over time, you will see and feel real improvements in the care you receive as we build a better health care system for the future.

You will have more information and better tools to make the right decisions about your health.

You will be able to book more appointments online or take an appointment virtually.

It will become faster and easier for you to connect to the health services you need in your community or at home, no matter where you live.

You will experience shorter wait times for key services – like surgeries, emergency care and supports for mental health and addictions.

Your health care workers will be set up to work together as a team for you, making it easier for you to navigate care at every stage of your life.

Following the best evidence available and successes of other jurisdictions, Ontario is taking action to connect you to care when and where you need it. It's about making health care more convenient. It's about connecting you to the care you need. It's about you and your health.





## Building on a Strong System: Actions to Date

We are building a health care system that works for you and your family.

We heard from Ontarians that you wanted to be able to get care where and when you need it. This means more hospital and long-term care beds in your community, more diagnostic testing - like MRIs - closer to home, and more skilled health care workers available to care for you. We are on our way to providing this.

We have added more than 3,500 hospital beds across the province in the last three years to ensure you and your loved ones have access to hospital care when you need it. And this year we added 24 more pediatric critical care beds.

Through 50 new major hospital development projects, we will add another 3,000 new hospital beds over the next 10 years.

We funded the operations for 49 new MRI machines in hospitals across Ontario (including three for pediatric hospitals) so you can be diagnosed faster and, if needed, begin treatment and follow-up care even sooner.

We have increased the number of surgeries performed in the province and decreased wait times. We have also created new programs to get you out of hospital and back home with support safely and quickly.

Seniors and those needing long-term care are moving into thousands of new or upgraded long-term care beds as we improve seniors' care across Ontario. We are investing \$6.4 billion to build more than 30,000 new beds by 2028 and 28,000 upgraded long-term care beds across the province which will result in shorter waits for many of our seniors to get the 24/7 care they need. We're investing nearly \$5 billion over four years to hire more than 27,000 long-term care staff, including nurses and personal support workers, to provide long-term care home residents with an average of four hours of direct care per day.

We continue to make it easier and faster for individuals of all ages to connect to mental health and addictions support by building on our *Roadmap to Wellness* with additional investments and innovative new programs, including opening eight new Youth Wellness Hubs, launching the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program and adding more than 150 new addiction treatment beds across the province.

We have made it more convenient to book or take a health care appointment by launching virtual care options and adding more online appointment booking tools. Through the new Health811, you can chat online or call 811 to talk to a registered nurse day or night for free in multiple languages. You can also use the service to find services like community health centres, mental health support or a walk-in clinic close to where you live.

**We have also invested in growing our health care workforce. Since 2018, over 60,000 new nurses and nearly 8,000 new physicians have registered to work in Ontario, with thousands more personal support workers now providing care in Ontario.**

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And we are better connecting health care organizations and providers in your communities through Ontario Health Teams.

Ontario Health Teams bring together health care providers from across health and community sectors, including primary care, hospitals, home and community care, mental health and addictions services, and long-term care, as one collaborative team to better coordinate care and share resources. Working together, they ensure that you can move between health care providers more easily with one patient record and one care plan that follows you wherever you go for help.

Ontario Health Teams are responsible for delivering care for their patients, understanding their health care history, easing their transition from one provider to another, directly connecting them to different types of care, and providing 24/7 help in navigating the health care system.

Ontario is making historic investments of more than \$75 billion annually in health and long-term care. But it's clear money on its own isn't enough. We need to innovate and continue to build on our successes to create tangible, lasting improvements in your health care.

### **Securing Sustainable Federal Health Funding**

Ontario is making record investments to improve health care delivery and to connect you to care faster, more easily and closer to home.

But we will be able to make quicker progress with increased financial support from our primary funding partner – the federal government. Over several decades the portion of health care funding provided by the federal government has decreased from a cost sharing agreement of 50 per cent from the federal government down to 22 per cent today – leaving the Ontario government responsible for covering 78 per cent of health care costs within the province.

Provincial governments of all political stripes across Canada remain united in their call for sustainable and predictable funding that supports the work provinces are already doing to add more health care workers, build more hospitals and deliver better health care to Canadians.

We aren't asking the federal government to do anything that we aren't prepared to do ourselves. Our governments have shown that when we work together, we can deliver real results. As we increase our investment in Ontarians and their health and well-being, we are asking the federal government to do the same. We look forward to continuing this work to strengthen health care in Ontario.



## A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care

Our plan to deliver connected and convenient care to you and your family is built on three pillars: The Right Care in the Right Place, Faster Access to Care, and Hiring More Health Care Workers.

These three pillars are designed to work together, and work for you. Delivering more care in the community frees up more space in hospitals and doctors' offices, while hiring more health care workers ensures you can get the care you need sooner, and in ways that are more convenient for you.

Connecting these pillars to each other and to patient care will mean a better experience for you and your family when you need care. Your local pharmacists will now be able to help you with more of your health care needs. Home care will be available to keep your loved ones safe at home. Your child will be able to access the mental health and addictions services and supports they need. There will be shorter wait times for common but vital surgeries such as cataracts and hip and knee replacements, and you can expect shorter wait times for diagnostic services such as MRI and CT scans.

Pillar 1

**The right care in the right place**

Supporting more care in the community, leveraging virtual care, supporting targeted care needs with specialized supports, building on mental health and addiction services, creating stronger long-term care, and reducing emergency department pressures.

Pillar 2

**Faster access to care**

Maximizing surgical capacity, expanding hospital and community bed capacity to provide needed services, and building new and improving our existing hospitals. Maximizing scope of practice to increase access to care.

Pillar 3

**Hiring more health care workers**

Recruiting, retaining, and optimizing to ensure we have the right number, type and distribution of health care professionals.

**Integrated Capacity and Health Human Resources Plan**

As we put our plan into action, you will be better connected to care when you need it most and where it's most convenient – in your community, closer to home, no matter where you live. You will be able to get the care you need more quickly when it can have the greatest impact to your health. And we will make all parts of the health care system more flexible and responsive to your needs, making it easier for you to navigate at every stage of your life.



## **Pillar One:** **The Right Care in the Right Place**

When people have health care available in their communities, and in ways that are convenient for them, they are more likely to seek and receive the treatment they need when they need it and stay healthier.

Delivering convenient care to people in their communities will help keep Ontario healthier by diagnosing illnesses earlier, starting treatment as soon as possible, and keeping emergency room wait times down when you and your family need urgent care.

Whether you need antibiotics to treat a bladder infection or medication for your child's pink eye, being able to get those prescriptions at your local pharmacy saves you a trip to the doctor's office or emergency room. Or whether your parent is aging, and you need support to keep them at home.

This care will be more convenient for you and take pressures off other areas of the health care system like doctors' offices, emergency rooms and long-term care homes.

We will bring the right care to the right places for you and your family wherever you call home. Through the innovations outlined below, we will expand our view of what is possible for health care in Ontario, by prioritizing the resources we need to deliver a new level of care and convenience to families across the province.

Here is how we will ensure you and your family have access to the right care in the right place.

### **Expanding care at your local pharmacy**

Pharmacists in Ontario are highly trained, highly trusted, and regulated health professionals. They are often the closest, most convenient option for health care in communities across Ontario.

Throughout the last few years, pharmacists played a critical role in supporting patients across the province by supporting COVID-19 testing and vaccinations efforts and educating patients about medication and treatment options. Pharmacists continue to offer families the kind of convenient care close to home we know Ontarians are looking for.

We are expanding the role of pharmacists by increasing their scope of practice so that you and your family will be able to connect to care closer to home at your local pharmacy.

As of January 1, 2023, pharmacists are able to prescribe medications for 13 common ailments to patients across Ontario. These medications treat everyday health concerns like rashes, pink eye, insect bites and urinary tract infections. Visiting your pharmacist to assess and treat these common medical conditions can save you a trip to the doctor, and give family doctors more time for appointments with patients who need more specialized care for more serious concerns.

As with visiting a family physician or walk-in clinic, there is no extra cost to Ontarians for receiving a prescription from a pharmacist for common ailments when showing an Ontario health card.

We've also made it more convenient for you to renew prescriptions for certain medications without having to first make arrangements with your family doctor. Pharmacists are able to renew prescriptions for chronic medications that no longer have refills to help you avoid interrupting drug therapy.

These initiatives are part of our ongoing work with frontline pharmacists, nurses and other regulated health workers to expand their scope of practice in ways that make it more convenient and faster for you to get care in your community.

### **Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics Deliver Timely Care**

Thousands of patients in communities across the province are connecting to health care quickly and closer to home through new clinics led by nurse practitioners.

Twenty-five of these clinics are now supporting nearly 80,000 people who have previously had challenges getting the family health care they need. In many cases, people are able to book same-day or next day appointments.

The Ontario government invests nearly \$46 million annually to fund these clinics. All nurse-practitioner-led clinics are funded for a lead nurse practitioner, a collaborating physician and a team of interdisciplinary providers such as nurse practitioners, registered nurses, social workers, registered dietitians, pharmacists, and health educators.

Ontario is the first jurisdiction that has adopted this model to make primary care more accessible and is exploring ways to bring this innovative way of delivering care to more people.



## **Improving access to care at home**

The only thing better than having care close to home is having care in your home.

We have heard loud and clear that you and your family want better and faster access to home care services.

Last year, we dedicated over \$1 billion to expand access to home care services over the next three years. This funding will benefit nearly 700,000 families who rely on home care annually by expanding home care services while recruiting and training more home care workers. It will help prevent unnecessary hospital and long-term care admissions and shorten hospital stays. Most importantly, it will provide you and your family with the choice to stay in your home longer.

We are also working with Ontario Health Teams and home and community care providers to establish new home and community care programs. Your home care plan should and will start as soon as you step foot in the hospital or other health care settings. Connecting home and community care through these teams will expand the reach of health care professionals all the way to your front door and will ensure you start to receive these important services sooner.



These investments and initiatives are only part of the solution. We know we need to do more to expand and improve home care services across the province, particularly in rural and remote areas. We will continue to make investments to ensure you and your family are able to connect to home care more quickly and easily, when you need support.

Ontario's expanded community paramedicine program is also helping people with chronic health conditions live independently at home, where they want to be.

The program enables paramedics to use their training and expertise beyond their traditional emergency response role. In part, they provide home visits to seniors for a range of services, including making sure they are taking their medications as prescribed, educating patients on managing chronic conditions and increasing assessments and referrals to local community services, such as home care. Through this program, which works alongside home care, primary care and home and community care, 55 communities are already benefiting from 24/7 non-emergency support.

Ontario's Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care Program has supported more than 30,000 people.

### **Improving access to mental health and addictions services**

We cannot talk about improving the health care experiences of people across the province without acknowledging the need to improve mental health and addictions services as well.



Every year, more than one million people in Ontario experience a mental health or addictions challenge, which can have a serious impact on their quality of life, including the ability to go to school or make a living.

The system to support individuals with these challenges has been broken and fragmented for many years. People who badly needed support were waiting far too long to connect to care or having difficulty figuring out how to even begin navigating a complicated, disjointed system to get help. Too often they were left to struggle on their own.

We are determined to fix long-standing issues in the mental health and addictions care sector once and for all. Doing so will take time.

Three years ago, we launched our comprehensive strategy – *Roadmap to Wellness: A Plan to Build Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System* – to improve mental health services for communities across Ontario, and support patients and families living with mental health and addictions challenges.

The plan is built on four central pillars – improving quality, expanding existing services, implementing innovative solutions and improving access – that are designed to work together to support the delivery of the services people need, where and when they need them.

We launched the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence within Ontario Health to guide our work. To ensure the plan's success, we are investing \$3.8 billion over 10 years to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system for Ontarians.

Since launching the plan, we have already invested more than \$500 million annually to help mental health and addictions services expand access to care and reduce wait times.

We have also launched innovative new programs including the Ontario Structured Psychotherapy Program to provide more Ontarians support for anxiety and depression with Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, new eating disorders prevention and early intervention programming.

To make it faster and easier for young people to connect to mental health and substance use support, primary care, social services, and more, we are significantly expanding the number of Youth Wellness Hubs.



These hubs help fill the gap in youth addictions services and also provide children and youth aged 12 to 25 a range of other services, such as vocational support, education services, housing and recreation and wellness.

We are adding eight new youth wellness hubs to the 14 that are already operating in communities across the province. Five of the new hubs are already providing services to youth while in development. These sites are supporting youth in Kingston, London, Sarnia, Sault Ste. Marie and Toronto. The three remaining new hubs – in Sagamok First Nation, Sudbury and Thorncliffe Park (Toronto) – are in development.

We have also invested \$4.75 million to support a new virtual walk-in counselling service for children, youth, and families. The service – One Stop Talk/Parlons maintenant – provides access to mental health care with a clinician by phone, video, text or chat. The counselling program began in November 2022 with six participating mental health organizations and has already served nearly 1,000 people. The service is now being expanded to additional agencies and their waitlisted patients and will be available to all children, youth and families across the province once the program is fully implemented. We know that reaching out for mental health or substance use support is not easy – it takes courage – and that is why we want to ensure help is there when people do reach out. We will continue to invest in mental health and addictions care as part of the ongoing rollout of the *Roadmap to Wellness*.

## **Connecting you to health information 24/7**

Health Connect Ontario has a new name: Health811.

Last Spring, we launched the service for people to call or chat online with a registered nurse and find the health care services and information all through one, easy-to-use website. We wanted a name that better reflects the service and how to use it.

With Health811, you can get support for health care questions or to find a service like community health centres, mental health support or walk-in clinics 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Through calling 811 or heading to the Health811 website, you can also use a symptom assessment tool to better understand your health, get an initial health assessment and health advice from a nurse, and get help finding a primary care provider, local health services or general guidance on your health care journey.

We are continuing to invest in Health811 to ensure that when you reach out for help, someone is there to support you right there, when you need it most.

Future improvements planned for Health811 will allow you to create a confidential profile, schedule video visits with clinical advisors and manage your health more easily through integrated records that can be shared with Ontario Health Teams, mental health and addictions supports, and other health providers.

## We're *Finally* Axing the Fax

Anyone under the age of 18 might be wondering: what's a fax? We don't blame them.

As we use technology to improve health care, it may come as a surprise to some that the old-school fax machine continues to occupy a place in hospitals, doctors' offices and other health organizations.

Well, not for much longer. It's time we *finally* axe the fax.

The Ontario government is replacing antiquated fax machines with digital communication alternatives at all Ontario health care providers within the next five years.

Eliminating faxing in health care settings will reduce the risk of delays in diagnosis and treatment, promote safer patient care and improve patient privacy. It also makes it easier and faster for health data to follow the patient wherever they access care.



## **Expanding Ontario Health Teams to deliver care in your communities**

We know that to ensure you have faster and easier access to the care you need, we need to better connect you to care within your own community.

Our work to better connect and coordinate care for you is underway with the expansion of Ontario Health Teams across the province. Throughout the pandemic, Ontario Health Teams demonstrated the importance of health providers working together to care for patients. With their leadership, communities across the province were able to establish community COVID-19 testing sites, vaccination programs and other vital services.

Across the province, 54 Ontario Health Teams are working to improve transitions between health care providers and are ensuring a patient's medical record follows them wherever they go for care. They are also focused on embedding home care and primary care services so that you and your family can get care in your home or in your community.

Applications for four additional Ontario Health Teams are being reviewed. Once approved, these remaining teams will result in the province achieving its goal of full provincial coverage, ensuring everyone has the support of an Ontario Health Team.

With an investment of more than \$106 million, Ontario Health Teams are also investing in digital and virtual care options so you can easily connect with a health care worker when you need to from the comfort of your home.

Beginning with a focus on helping people that suffer from chronic illnesses like congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, stroke and diabetes, Ontario Health Teams are developing stronger care pathways for patients.

Through Ontario Health Teams, patients who need support for a chronic illness will receive greater care throughout the lifecycle of their treatment, from screening and prevention to community support and recovery at home. A big focus of this will be better support at home or in the community – outside of hospitals. Prioritizing chronic disease management as a community or home care service will reduce hospital wait times and free up hospital beds for more patients in need.

## Ontario Health Teams

Ontario Health Teams are already transforming the way you access care. Here's how:

Ontario Health Team partners worked together to respond quickly to the COVID-19 pandemic to set up testing centres and vaccine clinics in your communities.

- **East Toronto Health Partners Ontario Health Team** put in place mobile teams and pop-up sites for high-risk populations, as well as establishing a mass vaccination site and speciality clinics to reach everyone in the community.
- **Hills of Headwaters Ontario Health Team** brought together primary care, home and community care, municipalities, and community services to create a one-stop COVID-19 Response Site for physical assessment, testing and vaccination across the region.

By implementing virtual and digital solutions, Ontario Health Teams are giving you faster access to care.

- **Durham Ontario Health Team** launched a virtual urgent care clinic, the first community and acute-care virtual urgent care clinic in the province.
- **Ottawa Ontario Health Team** opened free, bilingual (English and French) phone and video mental health counseling for residents with specialized counseling for children and youth, First Nations, Indigenous and Métis individuals, Black communities, substance abuse and gambling addiction, and LGBT2SQ+.

Ontario Health Teams are putting in place clear steps to take when someone is diagnosed with a chronic disease to create seamless care pathways and make transitions between health care providers smoother.

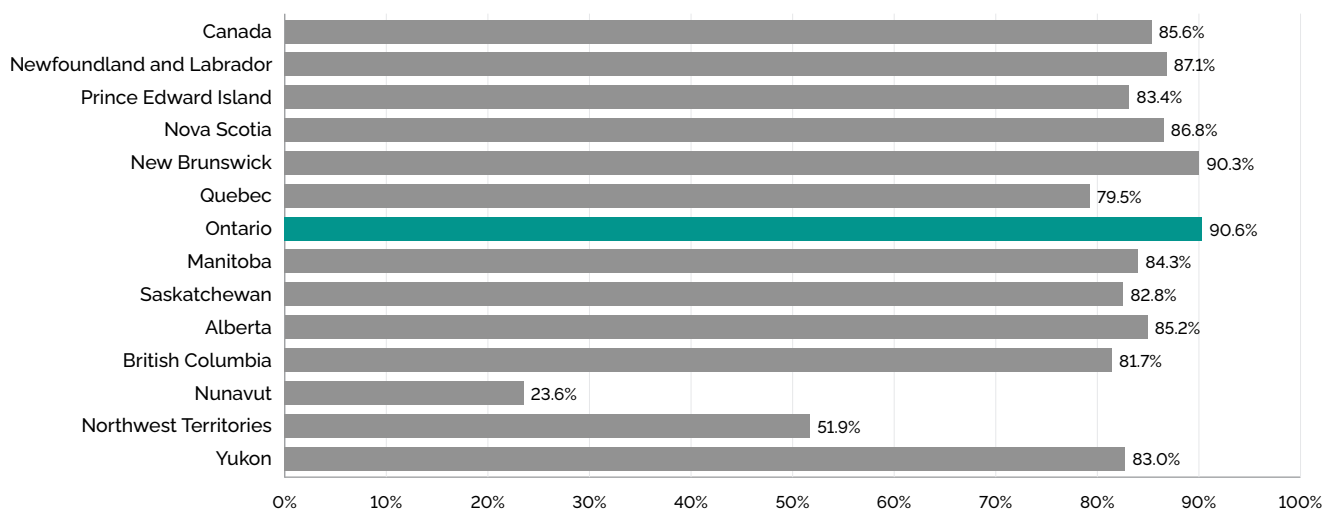
- **North Western Toronto Ontario Health Team** implemented a care pathway for Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease patients to streamline transitions from the hospital to home.
- **Barrie and Area Ontario Health Team** developed the Oncology Symptom Management Clinic to connect patients with palliative care specialists and ensure they receive follow up close to home.



## Bringing together primary care

Ontario leads the country in how many people benefit from a long-term, stable relationship with a family doctor or primary care provider. But we can do more. We are doing more.

### Has a Regular Health Care Provider



Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information

As our population grows and ages, we need more primary care providers in our province. Currently, primary care providers, including family doctors and nurse practitioners, are being asked to do more and more every day and we cannot expect them to keep up without reinforcements. We are supporting primary care by building collaborative networks and expanding access to team models of care that we know represent how family doctors and nurse practitioners want to work.

Primary care and family physicians are the foundation of our health care system in Ontario. To create a connected health care system for you through Ontario Health Teams, we are supporting collaboration and engagement with our primary care providers across the province through the creation of primary care networks. Every Ontario Health Team will include a group of primary care providers organized in a network to be part of decision-making and to improve access to care for patients.

Some local primary care partners have already created networks of primary care providers across the province and are working together for improved care delivery. These are open to all primary care providers and will be central to Ontario Health Teams as they develop.

We are also providing additional funding to create more interprofessional primary care teams, which include team members from two or more professions such as nurses, doctors, social workers and others.

Our investment of \$30 million will create up to 18 new teams and help bridge the gap in accessing interprofessional primary care for vulnerable, marginalized and unattached patients to ensure they are able to connect to care where and when they need it. In addition, this expansion will support primary care integration within Ontario Health Teams and sustain direct service delivery in existing interprofessional primary care teams that are experiencing increased operating costs.

### **Expanding Team Models of Primary Care in Ontario**

When family physicians work in a team model alongside other family physicians, nurses, dietitians, social workers, pharmacists, and other health care professionals to deliver programs and services, you get better continuity of care and more access to after-hours care.

We are increasing the number of spots for physicians to join a team model of care through the expansion of existing family health organizations and allowing new ones to form.

This will add up to 1,200 physicians in this model over the next two years starting with an additional 720 spots for physicians interested in joining the family health organization model in 2022-23 and 480 spots in 2023-24. These family health organizations will be required to provide comprehensive primary care services, extend evening and weekend hours of practice and provide more weekend coverage so you can access a family physician when you need it.

Team models of primary care have demonstrated how bringing health care providers together as one team can improve the patient experience and how you access care. We are building on this through the development of Ontario Health Teams. Teams of primary care providers, regardless of model, will be central to all Ontario Health Teams across the province.



## Pillar Two: **Faster Access to Care**

The sooner you have access to the care you need, the better the outcomes. Long wait times take a toll on people's physical and mental health, creating more anxiety and stress.

We have all seen loved ones struggle because the wait for their knee or cataract surgery is many months too long. Or maybe you've spent a stressful night in a busy emergency room waiting for your sick or injured child's name to be called. Delays and complications in care only add to the toll of dealing with health issues.

For health care to help, it needs to happen in a timely manner. This is how you and your family will receive faster access to care in Ontario:

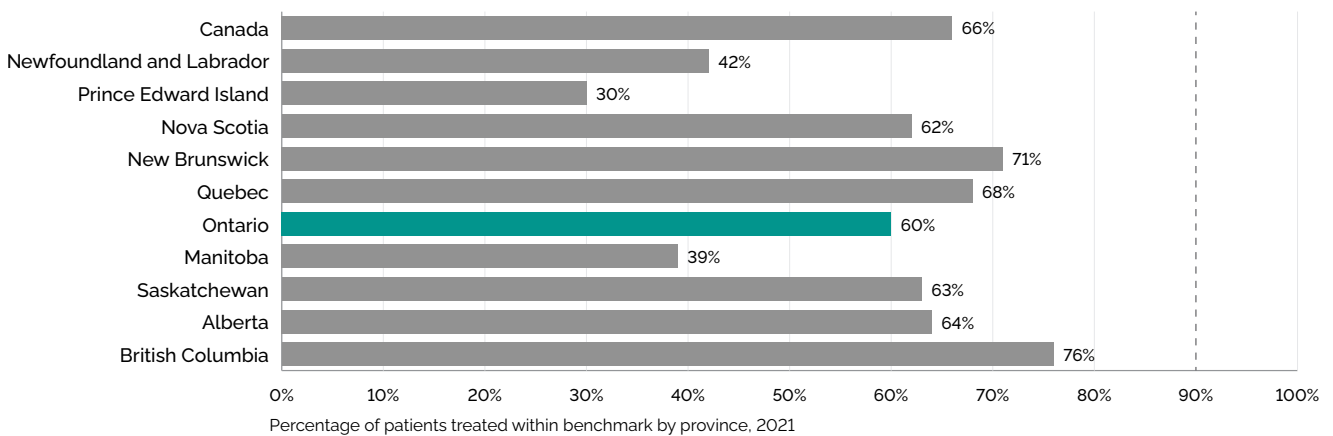
### **Reducing wait times for surgeries and procedures**

We know that lengthy wait times for surgeries are one of the biggest challenges you and your family are facing in Ontario. While Ontario leads the country in the number of people who receive the surgery they need for hip and knee replacements, we still aren't meeting the right benchmarks. We need to do more. We're doing more.

We are making it easier and faster for you to get the publicly funded surgeries and procedures you need. We are further leveraging the support of community surgical and diagnostic centres to eliminate surgical backlogs and reduce wait times.

As a first step, we are tackling the existing backlog for cataract surgeries, which has one of the longest waits for procedures. We issued four new licences to health centres in Windsor, Kitchener-Waterloo and Ottawa to support an additional 14,000 publicly funded cataract surgeries annually. These additional volumes make up to 25 per cent of the province's current cataract wait list, which will help significantly reduce surgical backlog.

### Cataract Surgery



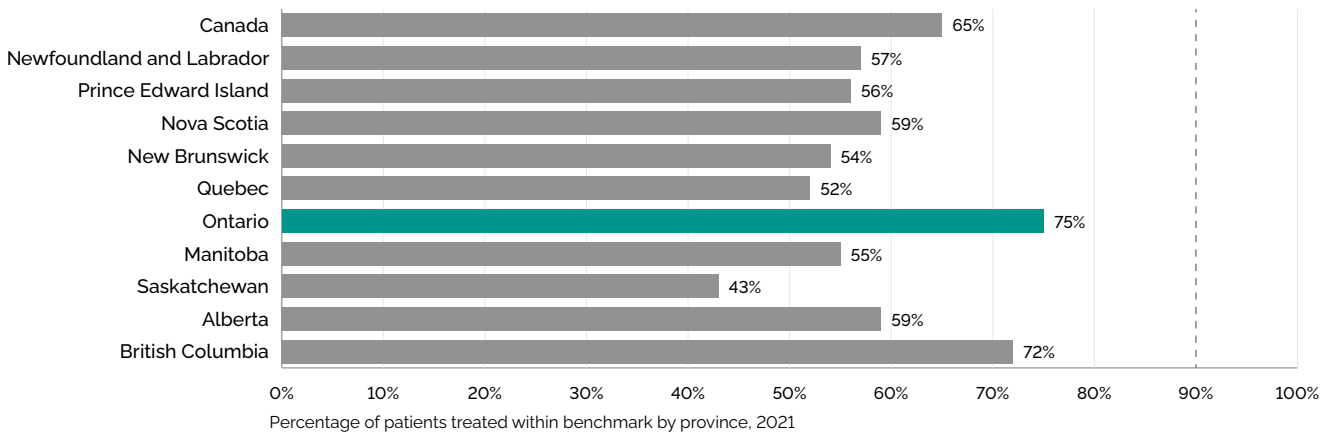
Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information

We are also investing more than \$18 million in existing centres to cover care for thousands of patients, including more than 49,000 hours of MRI and CT scans, 4,800 cataract surgeries, 900 other ophthalmic surgeries, 1,000 minimally invasive gynecological surgeries and 2,845 plastic surgeries. Surgical wait lists are anticipated to return to pre-pandemic levels by March 2023.

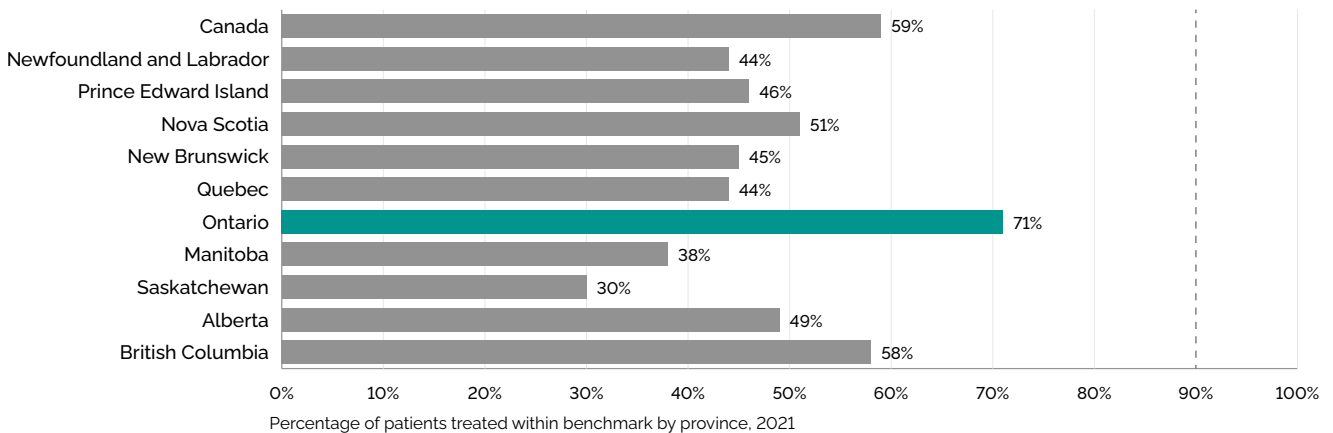
In addition to shortening wait times, providing these publicly funded services through community surgical and diagnostic centres will allow hospitals to focus their efforts and resources on more complex and high-risk surgeries.

In the coming months, we will make it even easier for you to get more minimally invasive surgical procedures such as regular colonoscopies and endoscopies, hip and knee surgeries, as well as MRI and CT scans.

### Hip Replacement



### Knee Replacement



Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information

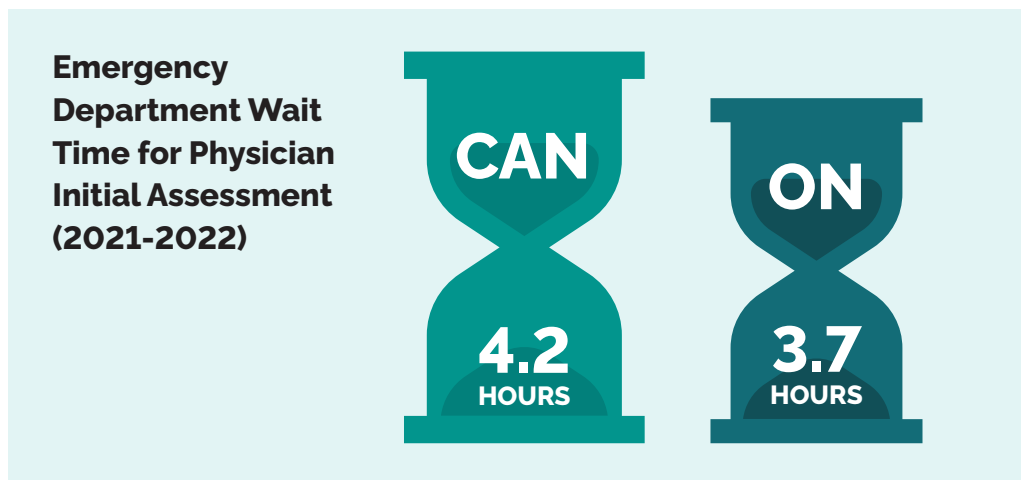
Early detection and diagnosis of a health issue is more than just a matter of convenience – it has an immense benefit on your quality of life, prognosis and treatment path. As a next step, the government will introduce legislation this February that will, if passed, allow existing community diagnostic centres to conduct more MRI and CT scans so that you can access publicly funded diagnostic services faster and closer to home. Starting in 2024, this next step will also expand surgeries for hip and knee replacements.

The care you receive in community surgical and diagnostic centres is covered through your Ontario health card, not out of your wallet.

As the government significantly expands the number of surgeries being done through community surgical and diagnostic centres, it will do so with measures in place to protect the stability of staffing at public hospitals, including requiring new facilities to provide detailed staffing plans as part of their application and requiring a number of physicians at these centres to have active privileges at their local hospital. Further, Ontario Health will ensure that these centres are included in regional health system planning. Funding agreements with new community surgical and diagnostic centres will require these facilities to work with local public hospitals to ensure health system integration and linkages, including connection and reporting into the province's wait times information system and participation in regional central intakes, where available. Community surgical and diagnostic centres will also coordinate with local public hospitals to accept patients that are being referred, ensuring people get the surgery they need as quickly as possible.

### **Faster access to emergency care**

When you or your loved ones experience a medical emergency, it's important that you get the attention you need quickly.



Source: Canadian Institute for Health Information

While wait times in Ontario emergency departments are below national averages, we continue to find innovative ways to reduce wait times and make it faster and easier for you to access timely care. Part of the solution is to divert individuals from emergency rooms when it's safe to do so and provide them care and treatment in the community.

In more than 40 communities across the province, we have expanded successful 9-1-1 models of care that provide paramedics more flexibility to treat certain patients who call 911 at home or on-scene in the community rather than in emergency rooms.

Patients diverted from emergency rooms through these initiatives received the care they needed up to 17 times faster with 94 per cent of patients avoiding the emergency room in the days following treatment.

Based on the proven success of the program, we're now working with key partners to expand these models to different patient groups, such as people with diabetes and epilepsy, and implement a new treat-and-release model with recommendations to patients for appropriate follow-up care.

These initiatives are helping to divert patients from emergency rooms and reducing repeat hospital visits, which helps reduce patient wait times and ensures these hospital beds are available for those that need them most.

In addition, we are working on a number of strategies to increase the availability of paramedics and ambulances by reducing delays they can encounter dropping off patients at hospital. A lack of available beds in a hospital's emergency room can prevent paramedics from quickly transferring a patient in an ambulance to hospital staff, typically referred to as an offload delay. We are reducing offload times at hospitals, including investing \$23.1 million to support dedicated offload nurses and other health care workers to allow paramedics to drop off patients more quickly and be available to get to their next call faster.

Together, these actions will help reduce the strain on hospitals and ensure you and your family get care sooner, with fewer complications and in state-of-the-art facilities.



## Freeing Up More Hospital Beds

Action we took last fall to clear hospital backlogs and free up patient beds is already having a significant impact, creating more space for patients who need hospital care.

Last fall, we passed legislation, the *More Beds, Better Care Act*, to support patients whose doctors have said they no longer need hospital treatment and should instead be placed in a long-term care home, while they wait for their preferred home. This new policy provides individuals with the care they need and a better quality of life in a more appropriate setting.

Since September 2022, the number of patients in hospitals waiting for long-term care has fallen by more than 25 per cent. Those beds are now available for people needing a surgery, or someone who arrives in the emergency department and needs to be admitted to the hospital.

Here's how else the policy change is helping:

- Since implementation, 4,845 patients in hospitals have accepted placements in long-term care homes.
- A total of 3,907 hospital patients waiting for long-term care placements have voluntarily added more long-term care homes to their list of preferred options.
- By freeing up more hospital beds, we continue to work towards clearing our surgical backlog:
  - Between August and December 2022, there were 25,000 fewer people waiting for scheduled surgery.
  - As of December 5, there were nearly 10,000 fewer people identified as “long waiters” for surgery (those waiting longer than the clinically recommended time for their specific surgery), compared to August.
  - As of December 5, there were 97,533 people identified as “long waiters” for surgery (those waiting longer than the clinically recommended time for their specific surgery), compared to 107,245 in August



## **Building new hospitals and adding more beds**

Since 2018, we have added 3,500 more hospital beds – but we aren't stopping there. We are moving quickly to expand and modernize Ontario's hospitals to ensure you are able to connect to quality care when and where you need it.

Our investments over the next 10 years will lead to \$40 billion in health infrastructure across the province. These investments will increase the number of people hospitals can care for, build new health care facilities and renew existing hospitals and community health centres.

As of the end of 2022, we have already approved 50 hospital development projects that will create more than 3,000 new hospital beds in communities across the province by 2032. We are also investing \$182 million this year to support vital repairs, maintenance, and upgrades to Ontario hospitals.

New and redeveloped hospitals with more space to care for patients will ultimately lead to shorter wait times and less hallway health care.



## Relieving pediatric pressures on hospitals

We are working closely with hospitals to provide them with additional tools to care for more children and youth, while reducing pressures created by surging pediatric demand.

Responding to an increase in seasonal respiratory illnesses over the late fall and early winter, we have been in regular communication with pediatric hospital leadership to come up with creative solutions to ensure patients get the care and treatment they need. We continue to work with pediatric hospitals to ramp up capacity, when possible.

This includes making a permanent investment of \$8.5 million at Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) in Ottawa to double the number of critical care beds to 12 from six. These beds are also for kids fighting severe infections such as meningitis, those with illnesses resulting in single organ dysfunction and those who may need non-invasive ventilation to support their breathing.

The funding will also enable CHEO to add six more beds for children with the most critical illnesses including sepsis, those requiring advanced ventilation to support their breathing, trauma victims and those on heart-lung bypass, among other conditions.

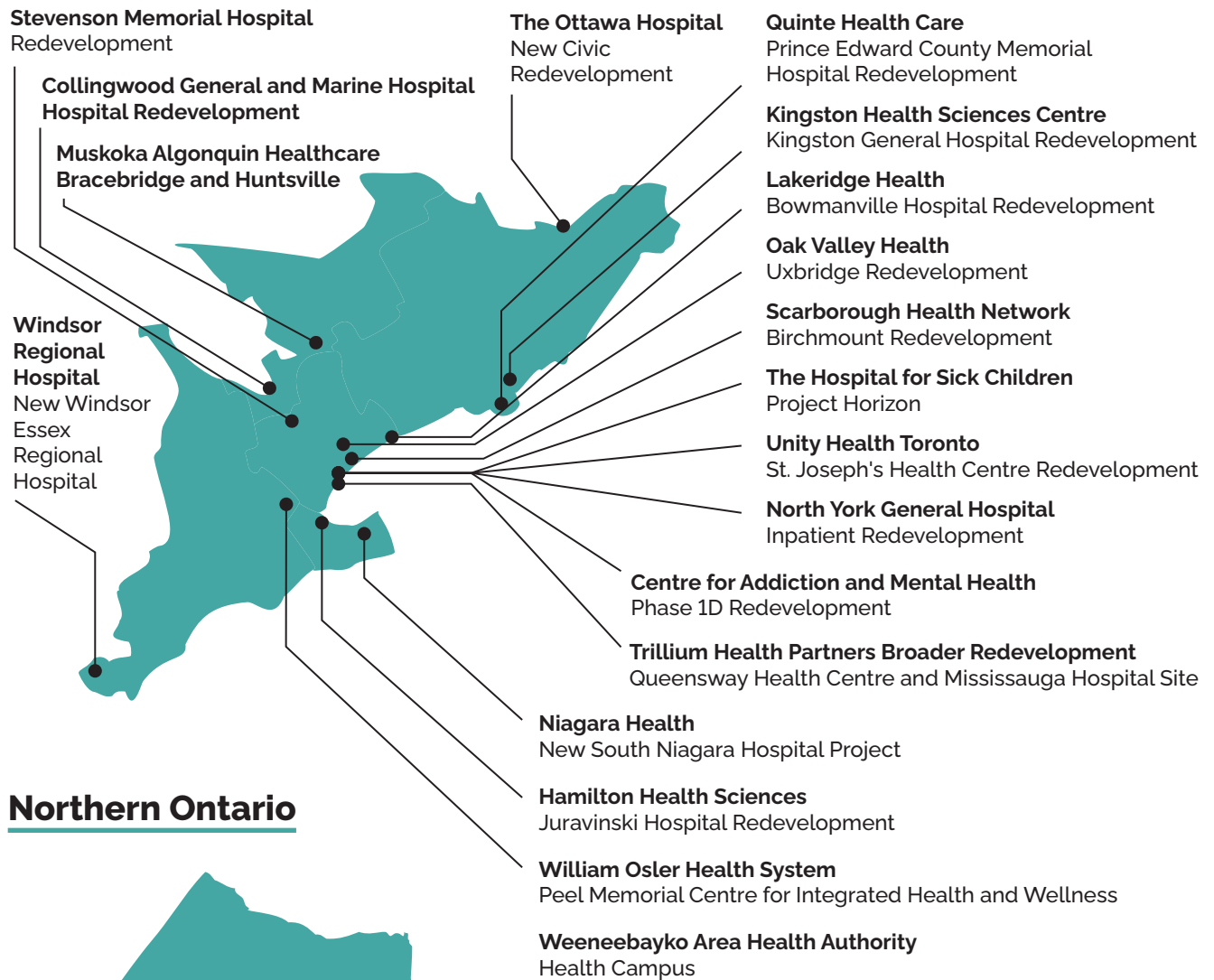
We are also investing \$547,500 to permanently increase the number of critical care beds at McMaster Children's Hospital, \$545,700 for the Hospital for Sick Children and \$3.3 million at the London Health Sciences Centre Children's Hospital.

At the same time, we have directed all hospitals to use beds traditionally designated for adults to create capacity to admit more pediatric patients, should it be necessary.



# Hospital capital projects in progress

## Southern Ontario



## Northern Ontario



### Projects in planning:

- **Brant Community Healthcare System**
- **Grand River Hospital and St. Mary's General Hospital**  
Joint Redevelopment Project
- **Lake of the Woods District Hospital (Kenora)**  
Redevelopment Project
- **Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre**
- **Southlake Regional Health Centre**  
Critical Care Tower
- **Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre**

## Improving long-term care, reducing wait lists

Seniors and those who can no longer live independently deserve to live with dignity in a safe, compassionate environment in long-term care homes – close to their loved ones and the communities they have helped build. These connections are key to their wellbeing and quality of life.

Through a total investment of \$6.4 billion, we are on track to build more than 30,000 new long-term care beds in Ontario by 2028 and upgrade more than 28,000 older beds to modern design standards.

These projects will increase the number of available beds to help address wait lists for long-term care and ensure seniors are being cared for in the right place, where they can connect to more supports, activities and social activities that may not be available if they are being cared for in a hospital while waiting to move into a long-term care home.

We have also already begun increasing how much direct care residents in long-term care homes receive on a daily basis. In 2021, we initiated the first phase of a \$4.9 billion investment over four years that will ensure residents receive an average of four hours of hands-on care by nurses and personal support workers each day by March 31, 2025. Ontario is the first province in Canada to begin delivery on this best-in-class standard of care. The funding is helping long-term care providers retain and expand their staff teams and hire additional registered nurses, registered practical nurses, personal support workers and allied health professionals.

In addition, we are making a new investment of over \$40 million this year to help long-term care homes provide specialized services and supports to residents with more complex needs. This support helps long-term care residents get the care they need without having to go to emergency rooms or be admitted to hospitals.

A portion of this expanded funding is also supporting the transfer of patients in hospitals who no longer require acute care to long-term care homes.



## **Expanding Long-Term Care for More Ontarians**

As Ontario's population of seniors grows, we are making historic investments to create new and upgraded long-term care homes where you and your loved ones can live safely and with dignity.

- As of December 2022, 364 projects are in the development pipeline. This includes 31,705 new beds as well as 28,648 older beds being upgraded to modern standards.
- Since July 2018 to December 2022, 19 long-term care projects have been completed and opened, representing 2,382 long-term care beds, of which 1,228 are net new beds, and 1,154 are older beds being upgraded to modern standards.
- 25 long-term care projects are under construction, representing 4,755 long-term care beds, of which 1,802 are new beds, and 2,953 are older beds being upgraded to modern standards.

## **Enhancing diagnostic services for long-term care residents**

Connecting seniors to faster, more convenient care means providing improved access to health services to residents of long-term care homes, improving their quality of life and sparing them avoidable visits to emergency departments or hospital stays.

Initially, we are partnering on pilot projects with Humber River Regional Hospital in Toronto and Royal Victoria Regional Health Centre in Barrie to enhance access to more diagnostic services for long-term care residents. The projects will support residents through various stages of their care, including assessment, diagnostic testing and timely interpretation of results.

We will work with our partners, such as hospitals and community labs, on a provincial plan that will look at all stages of care typically accessed by long-term care residents and identify solutions to close service gaps, increase timeliness and convenience and improve their overall experience.

## **Supporting end-of-life care**

When you or your family are at the end of your life, you deserve to know that you can die with dignity and support.

Ensuring Ontarians have a choice about where they spend their final days is an important part of ensuring access to health care throughout your entire life.

We are working to expand palliative care services in local communities and adding 23 new hospice beds to the 500 beds already available so that Ontarians are provided comfort and dignity near their communities and loved ones at the end of their lives.

## **Expanding access to mental health and addiction treatment in your communities**

When someone reaches out for help with their addiction, they shouldn't have to wait. By adding more addiction treatment beds in communities across the province, we are making it possible for you to get more timely, convenient care.

In February 2022, the government announced a one-time investment of \$90 million over three years through the Addictions Recovery Fund to meet the anticipated surge in demand for substance use services. This funding will open new addictions beds and other substance use services across the province.

In addition, we are opening new beds to care for children and youth with complex mental health needs. We are investing \$10.5 million to address gaps in care and improve access while decreasing existing wait lists and extensive wait times. Through this investment, we are expanding the child and youth mental health Secure Treatment Program and adding up to 24 new beds to serve vulnerable children and youth. This program provides intensive care for children and youth experiencing acute and complex mental health challenges that may put them at risk of self-harm or harm to others.

An investment of \$3.5 million for two new step-up, step-down live-in treatment programs will connect more youth to care in communities in western and northern regions of the province. We will add up to 16 new beds to meet the needs of youth who don't require the highly intensive care provided at a hospital or secure treatment setting but need more support than a community-based live-in treatment program is designed to offer. Expanding this program will connect more youth to less-intensive services in their communities and eventually help them return to their homes.





## **Pillar Three:** **Hiring More Health Care Workers**

Ontario has one of the most dedicated and highly trained health work forces in the world. They step up, day in and day out, to keep you and communities across the province safe and healthy.

We've made significant progress recently to increase the number of health workers available to provide you care and support. Together, we've come so far. Over 60,000 new nurses and nearly 8,000 new doctors have registered to work in Ontario. In fact, last year was a record-breaking year for new nurses in Ontario with over 12,000 new nurses registered and ready to work and another 30,000 nursing students studying at a college or university – providing a pipeline of talent and reinforcements.

But we know we need to do far more – and we are doing more.



Hiring more health care professionals is the most effective step to ensure you and your family are able to see a health care provider where and when you need to. Well-trained and well-supported doctors, nurses, personal support workers and more, are the people you rely on when you need care.

### **Training More Health Professionals in Ontario Every Year**

- 455 new spots for physicians in training
- 52 new physician assistant training spots
- 150 new nurse practitioner spots
- 1,500 additional nursing spots
- 24,000 personal support workers in training by the end of 2023

Here is how we will Hire More Health Care Workers to provide you care:

### **Expanding the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant**

We know that there are unique health care challenges in small, rural and remote communities, and that recruiting and retaining health care workers in these regions requires a dedicated approach.

Last spring, we launched the Ontario Learn and Stay Grant to help these communities build their own health workforces. This program covers the costs of tuition, books and other direct educational costs for postsecondary students who enroll in high-priority programs in more than a dozen growing and underserved communities and commit to work in those communities when they graduate.

This year we are expanding the program beginning in Spring 2023, targeting approximately 2,500 eligible postsecondary students who enroll in high-priority programs, such as select nursing, paramedic and medical laboratory technology/medical laboratory science at the diploma, advanced diploma, undergraduate, masters and post-graduate levels.

This program focuses on building a stronger health care workforce in priority communities that have been challenged by staffing shortages. It will help ensure every community in our province is stronger and has access to the care they need, when and where they need it.

### **Helping those who want to work in Ontario**

There are many health care workers from across the country and across the world who want to work in Ontario. We are making innovative changes to make it easier and faster for them to begin working and providing care to people in Ontario.

We are significantly reducing unnecessary bureaucratic delays and bringing reinforcements to the frontlines of our health care system<sup>1</sup>.

With new "As of Right" rules, Ontario will become the first province in Canada to allow health care workers registered in other provinces and territories to immediately start caring for you, without having to first register with one of Ontario's health regulatory colleges. This change will help health care workers overcome excessive red tape that makes it difficult for them to practice in Ontario.

We will also help hospitals and other health organizations temporarily increase staffing when they need to fill vacancies or manage periods of high patient volume, such as during a flu surge. This will allow nurses, paramedics, respiratory therapists, and other health care professionals to work outside of their regular responsibilities or settings, as long as they have the knowledge, skill, and judgement to do so, providing hospitals and other settings with more flexibility to ensure health care professionals are filling the most in-demand roles at the right time.

Together, these new initiatives will strengthen our workforce during the busy months ahead and ensure care is there when and where you need it most.

<sup>1</sup> These changes are subject to the passing of legislation that the government intends to introduce in February 2023.

At the same time, we are continuing our work to make it easier for internationally trained health care professionals to use their expertise here in Ontario. We are working closely with regulatory colleges, including the College of Nurses of Ontario and the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario, to make it easier and faster for qualified health care professionals to work in Ontario. We are working with these regulatory colleges to ensure health care professionals are properly trained and qualified without facing unnecessary barriers and costs, including requiring colleges to comply with time limits to make registration decisions.

### **Portable Benefits Eyed as Tool to Retain Health Workers**

Our government is developing a new portable benefits program that will include a package of workplace health benefits that move with workers as they change jobs.

A portable benefits program would provide innovative benefits that are attached to a worker, rather than an employer. This would allow part-time, temporary and contract workers to seamlessly access benefits, even if they move from job to job.

Not only would the program improve workers' health and financial security, it would support labour mobility and help organizations attract and retain talent.

Portable benefits would be particularly helpful in the health sector, where many temporary and part-time workers don't have health, dental or vision benefits through their employment.

An advisory panel struck by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development is expected to issue recommendations on portable benefits this year.

### **Reducing fees for nurses**

We are expanding our work with the College of Nurses of Ontario to reduce the financial barriers that may be stopping some retired or internationally educated nurses from receiving accreditation so that they can resume or begin practicing in Ontario.

We are investing an additional \$15 million to temporarily cover the costs of examination, application and registration fees for internationally trained and retired nurses, saving them up to \$1,500 each. This will help up to 5,000 internationally educated nurses and up to 3,000 retired nurses begin working sooner to strengthen our frontlines.

Part of the investment will also be used to develop a centralized site for all internationally educated health professionals to streamline their access to supports such as education, registration and employment in their profession or an alternative career. This initiative will make it easier for internationally trained health professionals to navigate the system and get the support they need on their path to getting licensed to practice in Ontario.

### **Investing in educating and training our health workforce**

Work is already underway to train the next generation of doctors, nurses, personal support workers and other health professionals in this province.

We are actively investing in the educating and training of health care workers to help grow our health care workforce. This includes investing in postsecondary education and removing financial barriers to education and training wherever possible.

As part of this work, we are bolstering our supply of medical lab technologists to strengthen our testing and analytic capacity. We need to ensure we have the appropriate resources available to identify diseases and support physicians in diagnosing and treating patients.



We will develop a strategy to guide this initiative and work with our education partners to establish bridging programs and create additional education seats for more students to become medical lab technologists.

Last year, we promised to expand medical school education by adding 160 undergraduate seats and 295 postgraduate positions in the province over the next five years. Of the 295 new postgraduate positions, 60 per cent will be dedicated to family medicine and 40 per cent will be dedicated to specialty programs. This expansion, the largest of its kind in more than a decade, includes supporting all six medical schools across Ontario and allotting seats to the new Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Medicine, which recently found its new home in Brampton. In 2023, we will launch the physician practice ready assessment program, which will help internationally educated physicians, with previous medical practice experience abroad, undergo screening and assessment to determine if they are ready to enter practice in Ontario immediately without having to complete lengthy re-education programs. This will allow us to add at least 50 new physicians by 2024.

We will also permanently increase training spots for physician assistants by adding 52 new educational seats. Physician assistants are highly trained professionals who work under the supervision of a physician to take patient histories, conduct physical examinations, order and interpret tests, diagnose and treat illnesses, and counsel on preventive health care. They will support physicians in a range of health care settings and work alongside physicians, nurses and other members of interprofessional health care teams to provide patient care. With their help, we will reduce wait times and improve patient access in high-need areas including emergency medicine and primary care to improve the integration of physician assistants in our health care system, the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario will be delivering its framework for regulating physician assistants as a class of members in late 2023 and physician assistants will be regulated in 2024.

Since 2018, more than 60,000 new nurses have registered to join Ontario's workforce, but we know there is more we can do to increase our nursing numbers even further.



We are expanding access to training for our nurses over the next two years by adding up to 500 registered practical nurse and 1,000 registered nurse training spots to help create faster access to primary care. We are investing up to \$100 million to add an additional 2,000 nurses to the long-term care sector by 2024-25.

In a partnership between the Ministry of Long-Term Care, Ministry of Health and the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario, we are providing tuition support to current personal support workers to further their education to become registered practical nurses, and for current registered practical nurses to advance their education to become registered nurses. Applicants will be expected to commit to working in the long-term care sector for the same period of time as they receive these funding supports for their education.

We are also growing the supply of nurse practitioners to facilitate faster access to primary care, long-term care and to add capacity in northern and rural areas. We're adding 150 more education seats for nurse practitioners starting in 2023-2024. This expansion will bring the total number of seats to 350 annually.

We will be working with our partners to ensure that we're getting the nurses we need, when we need them. We will continue to look at innovative ways to provide education to strengthen our workforce, such as streamlining our education programs and running double cohorts of students.

To continue to support our health system, we will scale up the Enhanced Extern Program and Supervised Practice Experience Partnership Program for an additional year. Since January 2022, more than 2,000 internationally educated nurses have been enrolled through the Supervised Practice Experience Partnership Program and over 1,300 of them are already fully registered.

We are providing additional funding to hire over 3,100 internationally educated nurses to work under the supervision of regulated health professionals in order to give them an opportunity to meet the experience requirements and language proficiency requirements they need to become fully licensed to work in Ontario. New funding will be extended to the home and community care sector to extend the reach of the program this year. This investment also expands the Enhanced Extern Program for an additional year. Last year, the program helped hire up to 5,000 qualified nursing, medical, respiratory therapy, paramedic, physiotherapy, occupational therapy students and internationally educated nurses to work in hospitals across the province. Increased funding for both the Supervised Practice Experience Partnership and Enhanced Extern Program will also allow hospitals to continue to hire more preceptors, mentors and coordinators to work with students and internationally educated nurses.

And we are fulfilling our commitment to funding the training of 24,000 personal support workers by the end of 2023. Between Winter 2020 and January 2023, over 23,600 are in training or have completed their training.

In addition to expanding these programs, we will engage our education and health sector partners to look for other innovative ways to accelerate health provider training, so students move into practice and providing care to people sooner.

We are also providing the new Health and Supportive Care Providers Oversight Authority with the funding and support they need this year so they can become fully operational by December 2023. This authority will begin by ensuring quality care, consistency of education and training of personal support workers and will eventually expand to other health care provider groups.

## **Maximizing expertise of health care workers**

As we expand education and training opportunities for those interested in working in health care, we are making it easier for regulated health care professionals, such as nurse practitioners, to work to the full extent of their training and expertise by expanding their scope of practice. For example, we have been working with the College of Nurses of Ontario on proposed regulation changes to allow registered practical nurses increased responsibilities that would help patients access care for certain procedures more quickly. This may include starting an IV when an individual requires medical attention and delaying it is likely to be harmful to the individual, or initiating additional wound care procedures.

We know that nurse practitioners' and registered nurses' scopes of practice can be optimized to better serve Ontarians and so we continue to explore and consult with our partners on how best to do this.

We have also been working with the Ontario College of Pharmacists to explore options to continue to expand the pharmacy scopes of practice in ways that make it more convenient and faster for you to get care in your community.

In addition, we recognize that health care requires an integrated approach that includes the knowledge, skill and expertise of many dedicated regulated health care professionals. We continue to explore and consult with midwives, respiratory therapists, naturopaths and other partners regarding possible changes to scopes of practice.



## Investing in Other Innovative Models that Maximize the Skills of Health Care Professionals

Building on the success of 9-1-1 models of care that are providing you better access to services, we will be creating a Models of Care Innovation Fund for individual hospitals, long-term care homes, home care providers and Ontario Health Teams that want to find innovative ways of maximizing the skills and expertise of their current health care workers.

Some examples of these projects could include:

- Allowing health care providers to work to the full scope of their abilities.
- Interprofessional Staff Pooling, such as a Registered Nurse whose time is shared in both a hospital and a long-term care home.
- Using health care providers in innovative and unconventional ways, such as 9-1-1 models of care.
- Virtual care delivery in rural areas, such as virtual peer support for Emergency Department physicians.
- Including family caregivers as part of the care team.



## Long-Term Support: The Capacity Plan

Ontario's population is projected to increase by almost 15 per cent over the next 10 years. The population of seniors aged 75 and older is expected to increase by 49.3 per cent, from 1.2 million to 1.8 million over the same period. We need to continue to grow our health care workforce to meet the needs of our growing population.

Last fall we began our work to develop an *Integrated Capacity and Health Human Resources Plan for Ontario*. We are analyzing current gaps in our system, anticipating needs over the next 10 years and determining solutions to address growing health care demands. The plan will focus on how to meet this demand through investments, health human resources and innovative solutions.

This year we are building on this work and shifting our focus to working directly with leaders in our health care system on a workforce plan that includes: where to prioritize current and future resources, addressing and minimizing system gaps and building a strong health system for the long term.

We will also look at specific strategies for increasing the number of health care professionals starting with physician assistants, nurse practitioners, registered nurses, registered practical nurses and medical laboratory technologists and will also look at the retention of our health workforce through incentives, leveraging programs like the Learn and Stay program.

We will ensure we have a greater understanding of each community and their needs and that we have a plan to recruit and retain the health care workers needed, including family doctors, nurses, specialists and other health providers. We will prioritize areas most in need, like rural and remote communities, where gaps already exist.

This plan will incorporate our lessons learned from COVID-19 and ensure we are prepared and equipped to meet the health care needs of Ontarians for years to come.

## Measuring and Reporting Progress

As the saying goes, you can't manage what you don't measure. Better data is crucial to better understand how our health care system is working.

If we don't measure our performance, we can't fully see how gaps in service are affecting patient care and come up with solutions to fix them quickly.

That's why Ontario is in full support of the federal government's call for national health care data reporting as part of its funding partnership with provinces and territories. Sharing information can only help us learn from each other and grow stronger. We will continue to work with our provincial and territorial partners to gain their support to create a national health care data system that will benefit all of us.

To ensure we are building a system that works for you, Ontario will continuously measure our progress, including tracking your ability to access services like primary care and mental health care, wait times for MRI and CT scans, and time spent waiting in the emergency room.

We will also track how we are expanding our health care workforce to ensure it grows as our population in Ontario grows and ages.

Over the next several years, as we continue to roll out this plan, we will remain focused on one thing: connecting you to the health care you need when you need it most.



Ontario

