

Overview of the Projected Patterns of Illness Report

Regional Analysis

As Ontario's population ages, anticipating the future burden of chronic disease is crucial to ensuring the health care system is prepared for the rise in serious health conditions. New **analysis** and **key findings** commissioned by the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) and conducted by the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto, offer vital projections on illness trends in Ontario by 2040. Building on the 2024 report on the **Projected Pattern of Illness in Ontario**, the comprehensive study analyzed disease patterns and leveraged demographic forecasts from the Ontario Ministry of Finance to deliver a detailed regional breakdown of health system demand, underscoring the urgent need for prevention, early detection, and effective treatment of chronic disease.

This year, the study went further by looking at regional trends. By categorizing the population into “no illness,” “some illness,” and “major illness” groups, the research provides a clear overview of historical and projected illness patterns across Ontario Health Regions. This structure provides valuable insights to support health care professionals and policymakers in developing target strategies for the evolving needs of local hospitals.

This fact sheet summarizes the study's findings, presenting key provincial results and region-specific implications.

North West Ontario Health Region (OHR)

- In the North West OHR, the top five **fastest growing** chronic conditions, based on % change over time between 2020 – 2040 are substance use disorders, kidney disease and failure, hearing loss, Crohn's and colitis, and dementia.
- By 2040, the top five **most common** chronic conditions in the North West OHR based on total number of cases will be osteoarthritis, hypertension, diabetes, substance use disorders, and asthma.
- In the North West OHR, projections predict that there will be a significant decline in the proportion of individuals aged 30-49 experiencing “no illness” in 2040. Among those 30-39, this proportion is expected to decrease from approximately 22,000 in 2002, to approximately 8,000 by 2040.
- Rates of “some illness” remain relatively stable between 2002-2040.

- Increases in “major illness” are projected across diverse age groups by 2040, including a significant increase among individuals 30-39 (growing from approximately 1,000 in 2002 to approximately 17,000 by 2040), and individuals aged 70-79 (7,000 in 2002 and 18,000 by 2040). Individuals aged 80-89 are also projected to experience significant increases in rates of “major illness” (approximately 4,000 in 2002 and 16,000 in 2040).
- While the age groups above experienced the steepest increases in “major illness”, growth was observed in projected rates of “major illness” between 2002-2040 across all age groups.

North West OHR Key Takeaways

- The North West OHR is expected to experience some declines in the proportion of individuals experiencing “no illness” by 2040, largely among younger populations (aged 30-49).
- There will be increases in “major illness” across diverse age groups, including those in younger age groups (i.e., 30-39), as well as those aged 70-89. The approach to addressing “major illness” in these OHRs in 2040 will need to be mindful of these distinct age groups.