

2023 Ontario Budget Summary

Ontario's Financial Position

- Ontario's economy has remained resilient and has continued to grow despite ongoing economic uncertainty.
- Real gross domestic product (GDP) exceeded the COVID-19 pre-pandemic level by 4.0 per cent as of the third quarter of 2022.
- Ontario created 338,300 jobs (+4.6 per cent) in 2022, following a gain of 367,400 (+5.2 per cent) net jobs in 2021, which were the two strongest years of job growth on record.
- Ontario's unemployment rate is near historic lows.
- The government's plan will balance the budget with the province on track to post a surplus in 2024–25, three years earlier than forecast in the 2022 Budget.
- In 2022–23, Ontario is projecting a deficit of \$2.2 billion.
- Over the medium term, the government is projecting a deficit of \$1.3 billion in 2023–24 before planning for surpluses of \$0.2 billion in 2024–25 and \$4.4 billion in 2025–26.
- Ontario's program expense outlook is expected to grow from \$189.1 billion in 2022–23 to \$202.5 billion in 2025–26.
- Base health sector expense is projected to increase from \$74.9 billion in 2022–23 to \$87.6 billion in 2025–26, representing 5.4 per cent average annual growth over the period.

Hospital Investments

- An expected increase of 4% for hospitals.

HHR Initiatives

- Investing \$80 million over three years to further expand nursing education by increasing enrolment by 1,000 registered nurse, 500 registered practical nurse, and 150 nurse practitioner seats.
- Ontario is adding 52 new physician assistant training seats, beginning in 2023.
- Providing \$200 million in 2023-24 to extend supports to address immediate health care staffing shortages, including investments in the Enhanced Extern Program and Supervised Practice Experience Partnership Program, which includes:
 - Offering up to 6,000 health care students training opportunities to work in hospitals providing care and gaining practical experience as they continue their education through the Enhanced Extern Program. This program has offered these opportunities to over 5,000 health care students; and
 - Supporting up to 3,150 internationally educated nurses to become accredited nurses in Ontario through the Supervised Practice Experience Partnership Program. More than 2,000 internationally educated nurses have enrolled in this program and over 1,300 of them are already fully registered and practicing in Ontario.
- Investing \$100.8 million over the next three years to expand and accelerate the rollout of medical training seats, resulting in an additional 160 undergraduate positions and 295 postgraduate positions by 2028.
- Investing \$33 million over three years for 100 additional undergraduate seats, beginning in 2023, as well as 154 additional postgraduate medical training seats to prioritize Ontario residents trained at home and abroad beginning in 2024 and going forward.
- Investing an additional \$51 million over three years to support the Dedicated Offload Nurses Program to support timely 911 response in Ontario communities.
- The government is providing an additional \$3.3 million over the next three years, beginning in 2023–24, to expand access to dual credit opportunities in health care-related courses for an additional 1,400 secondary students.

- \$22 million to hire up to 200 hospital preceptors to provide mentorship, supervision and training to newly graduated nurses.
- \$15 million to keep 100 mid-to-late career nurses in the workforce.
- \$4.3 million to help at least 50 internationally trained physicians get licensed in Ontario.

Home Care

- Accelerating funding in 2023-24 to \$569 million, including nearly \$300 million to support contract rate increases to stabilize the home and community care work force.

Primary Care

- Providing \$60 million over two years to expand existing teams and create up to 18 new primary care teams in communities with the greatest need.

Paediatric Health Care

- The recent health care funding agreement in principle between the governments of Canada and Ontario includes a one-time top-up in 2023–24 to address urgent needs such as pediatric surgical backlogs, emergency departments and other priorities.
- The Ontario government has committed more than \$200 million to connect children and youth to care at hospitals and close to home in their communities, including new funding for surgical and diagnostic wait times, pediatric hospitals and rehabilitation programs, as well mental health and other community-based supports.
- As part of the one-time top-up provided by the agreement in principle, Ontario will also allocate additional funding and work with frontline pediatric health partners to identify more ways to connect children and youth to the care they need.
- The government is investing \$3.1 million in 2023–24 for an expansion of the RMHC Ottawa House. The expansion will more than double the capacity of RMHC Ottawa House from 55,000 to 115,000 overnight stays per year, for families with children being treated at the Children’s Hospital of Eastern Ontario.
- To support children and youth with complex special needs, the government is investing \$12 million over three years to fund 14 additional beds at Safehaven, a not-for-profit organization providing residential and respite care at community sites in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).

Mental Health and Addictions Services

- Investing an additional \$425 million over three years to support mental health and addictions services. This investment will provide community-based mental health and addictions service providers — funded by the Ministry of Health — with a five per cent increase in base funding
- This additional funding is provided to:
 - Support mental health programs that are community-led and delivered, making it more convenient for people to connect to mental health services closer to home;
 - Make a broad range of addictions services available across Ontario that are easy to access and there when needed;
 - Support children and youth, by providing access to mental health and addictions services, primary care, and social and community supports to youth aged 12 to 25 through Youth Wellness Hubs;
 - Support for children and youth suffering from eating disorders, including inpatient and specialized outpatient services;
 - Identify the data and digital health needs of service providers to deliver better care for clients;
 - Maintain supportive housing and services for people living with mental health and addictions challenges as they transition from hospital to the community; and
 - Work with Indigenous partners and communities to maintain co-developed programs and services that support Indigenous people’s access to high-quality, culturally appropriate care.

Surgical Backlog

- Investing an additional \$72 million in 2023-24 to make more surgeries available at community surgical and diagnostic centres.