

## MEDIA RELEASE

**OHA Welcomes Historic Investments to Stabilize Ontario Hospital Finances**

**March 24, 2021, Toronto, ON** – As the third wave of the pandemic intensifies, the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) appreciates the historic financial support for hospitals in the 2021 Ontario Budget. These investments will be vital to stabilizing the hospital sector for the duration of the pandemic and preparing for COVID-19 recovery.

Over the past year, Ontario hospitals and other health care providers have been fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, an effort that has massively disrupted traditional hospital activities and their financial underpinnings. Ontario hospitals have been the anchor of the COVID-19 response, caring for hospitalized COVID patients, including many requiring life-saving intensive care, while also attempting to minimize disruption to non-COVID related health services. Simultaneously, they have been running assessment units, conducting lab testing, deploying staff to assist in long-term care, and administering vaccines to those most at risk. The pandemic has resulted in many unexpected expenses and lost revenues for the 2021-22 fiscal year due to the large role hospitals have played in the pandemic response.

“COVID-19 has been incredibly disruptive to the hospital sector and has exposed longstanding gaps and vulnerabilities across the entire health care system,” said Anthony Dale, OHA President and CEO. “The OHA greatly appreciates the investments announced today and thanks the Government of Ontario for providing hospitals with additional financial resources in an effort to maintain stability during this ongoing crisis.”

The 2021 Budget will provide enhanced flexibility for hospitals as they continue to respond to the pandemic and plan for addressing post-pandemic health care needs. In addition to a massive backlog of surgical procedures, the pandemic has had many other health consequences, including unprecedented demand for mental health and rehabilitation services. A full-scale health system recovery plan is needed to address wait times and maintain access to vital health care services.

Unfortunately, hospitals have long faced financial and occupancy pressures, well before the arrival of COVID-19. Hospitals have been operating in a state of semi-permanent overcapacity, marked by hallway health care, for far too long.

“We cannot afford to return to the status quo, even once the immediate threat of COVID-19 has passed,” said Dale. “When the pandemic is behind us, we must come together and end hallway health care permanently by building a true health care system with appropriate capacity and capability in key areas, such as long-term care, home care and primary care. This will only be possible with the full support and cooperation of the Government of Canada, working in true partnership with the Government of Ontario.”

A state-of-emergency continues to exist in Ontario’s hospitals. The OHA calls on the people of Ontario to continue to follow the public health measures that we know keep people safe from COVID-19 as the hospital sector strives to cope with fast-moving variants in the third wave of the pandemic. Continued discipline is needed in the weeks ahead to combat this virus. Please continue to stay home where possible, avoid unnecessary gatherings, wear a mask indoors and outdoors, wash hands frequently, and maintain physical distancing. These measures will be essential to maintaining the

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province's finite health system capacity, particularly critical care services, and to ensuring hospitals can address the surgical backlog as quickly as possible.

**Ontario Hospital Association**

The Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) is the voice of Ontario's public hospitals. Founded in 1924, the OHA uses advocacy, education and partnerships to build a strong, innovative and sustainable health care system for all Ontarians.

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