

MEDIA RELEASE

New Regional Breakdown of Growing Health System Demands Underscores Need to Prevent, Detect and Better-Treat Chronic Illness

March 5, 2026, Toronto, ON – Today, new [analysis](#) and [key findings](#) commissioned by the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) and prepared by the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto, provides critical insights into the future burden of chronic disease across Ontario. Building on the 2024 key findings in the [Projected Pattern of Illness in Ontario report](#), the study delivers a detailed regional breakdown of health system demand that underscores the urgent need for prevention, early detection, and effective treatment of chronic disease.

By 2040, approximately 3.1 million people are expected to be living with major illness — up from 1.8 million in 2020. In addition, one in four adults over the age of 30 will be living with a major illness in 2040. This represents the most significant increase among any age group and highlights the scale of challenges the province's health-care system is facing. Projections also indicate a notable rise in both the prevalence and complexity of chronic disease across all age groups, signaling earlier onsets of chronic illness across the province.

Expanding on the Dalla Lana School of Public Health's previous research, this year's [analysis](#) and [key findings](#) include region-specific data that illustrates how communities will be affected differently, providing valuable insight for health care professionals and policy makers to develop tailored solutions and anticipate the evolving needs of local hospitals.

"Our research shows that the burden of chronic disease is increasing across Ontario, and every region will face its own unique challenges," said Dr. Adalsteinn Brown, Dean of the Dalla Lana School of Public Health and co-author of the study. "This region-specific data are crucial for developing effective public health interventions that truly meet the needs of diverse communities across Ontario."

The findings equip the health system with the information necessary to respond effectively to shifting demand. "The data released today demonstrates that the years ahead are fraught with unprecedented challenges, but our hospitals are preparing to meet them head-on," said Anthony Dale, President and CEO of the OHA. "Our member hospitals consistently lead the nation in efficiency while delivering high-quality care, but the data in today's report is signaling an urgent need for renewed collaboration, innovative strategies and continued investments to ensure Ontario's health system can meet the demands of a rapidly aging population."

As Ontario prepares to address these growing demands, the OHA and its partners remain committed to collaborating with decision-makers and supporting hospital and health system leaders in safeguarding the health of Ontarians for generations to come.

The full analysis and key findings, including detailed projections for each Ontario Health region, is available at <https://www.oha.com/health2040>.

Regional Breakdowns

The 2025 report outlines specific findings that are tailored to different Ontario Health Regions, who are experiencing different demographic transitions. Some of these key regional findings include:

- **Western Ontario:** Projected to see a significant rise in illnesses by 2040, particularly among 40–49-year-olds including major illnesses.
- **Central Ontario:** Rising rates of illness expected, especially among populations aged 70-79.
- **Toronto:** Notable increase of illness among 30-39-year-olds, with pronounced growth in major illnesses requiring preventative intervention among those aged 70-89.

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- **Eastern Ontario:** Rise in illness among many age groups – spanning from those aged 30-59 with older adults (aged 70-89) experiencing an increase in major illness.
- **Northeastern Ontario:** Significant increase in major illness among those aged 70-89, including multiple chronic conditions.
- **Northwestern Ontario:** Growth in major illness across diverse age groups – including younger Ontarians aged 30-39.

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Ontario Hospital Association

Established in 1924, the OHA serves as the voice of the province's public hospitals, supporting them through advocacy, knowledge translation and member engagement, labour relations, and data and analytics with the goal of helping hospitals build a better health system. The OHA is also attuned to the broader strategic questions facing the future of the province's health care system, and we work to ensure Ontario's hospitals have a voice in shaping this longer-term vision.

Dalla Lana School of Public Health

The Dalla Lana School of Public Health is a faculty of the University of Toronto, and Canada's largest public health school. Their community is comprised of internationally recognized teachers, students, practitioners, policymakers, and citizens. They create new knowledge, educate changemakers, advance practice and guide the way to better, more equitable outcomes in population health and health systems – locally, nationally and globally.

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