

ONTARIO

Jurisdictional Profile

2023 Report

A profile of governance, programs, and services for the aging population in Ontario

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

The AGE-WELL National Innovation Hub, Advancing Policy and Practice in Technology and Aging (APPTA) welcomes comments about this report and would like to know how we can better meet your information needs. If you have any questions about the work APPTA conducts, please contact us.

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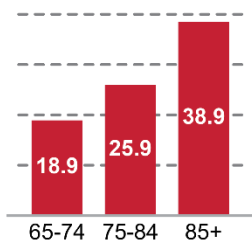
DISCLAIMER

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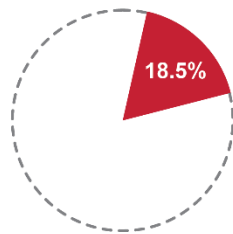
Preamble: Ontario's three bodies responsible for seniors' policy are the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Long-Term Care, and the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility. Health and Long-Term Care used to be combined but were separated into two ministries in 2019 while still sharing some programs and reporting organizations. The Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility was established in 2018 to oversee the Retirement Homes Regulatory Authority and administer seniors and disability legislation.

Ontario Seniors Demographics

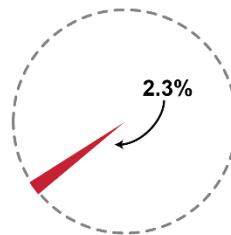
Percentage of older adults living alone^{1,2,3}



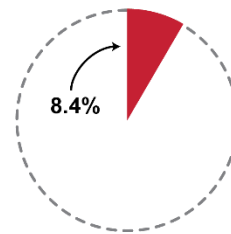
Residents aged 65 and older⁴



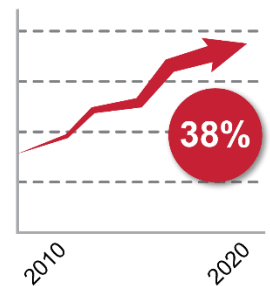
Residents aged 85 and older⁴



Multi-generational households⁵



Increase in elder abuse cases⁶



¹ Statistics Canada:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810013401&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.54&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1&pickMembers%5B2%5D=3.9&pickMembers%5B3%5D=4.1>

² Statistics Canada:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810013401&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.54&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1&pickMembers%5B2%5D=3.10&pickMembers%5B3%5D=4.1>

³ Statistics Canada:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810013401&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.54&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1&pickMembers%5B2%5D=3.11&pickMembers%5B3%5D=4.1>

⁴ Statistics Canada: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810002001&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.56&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1>

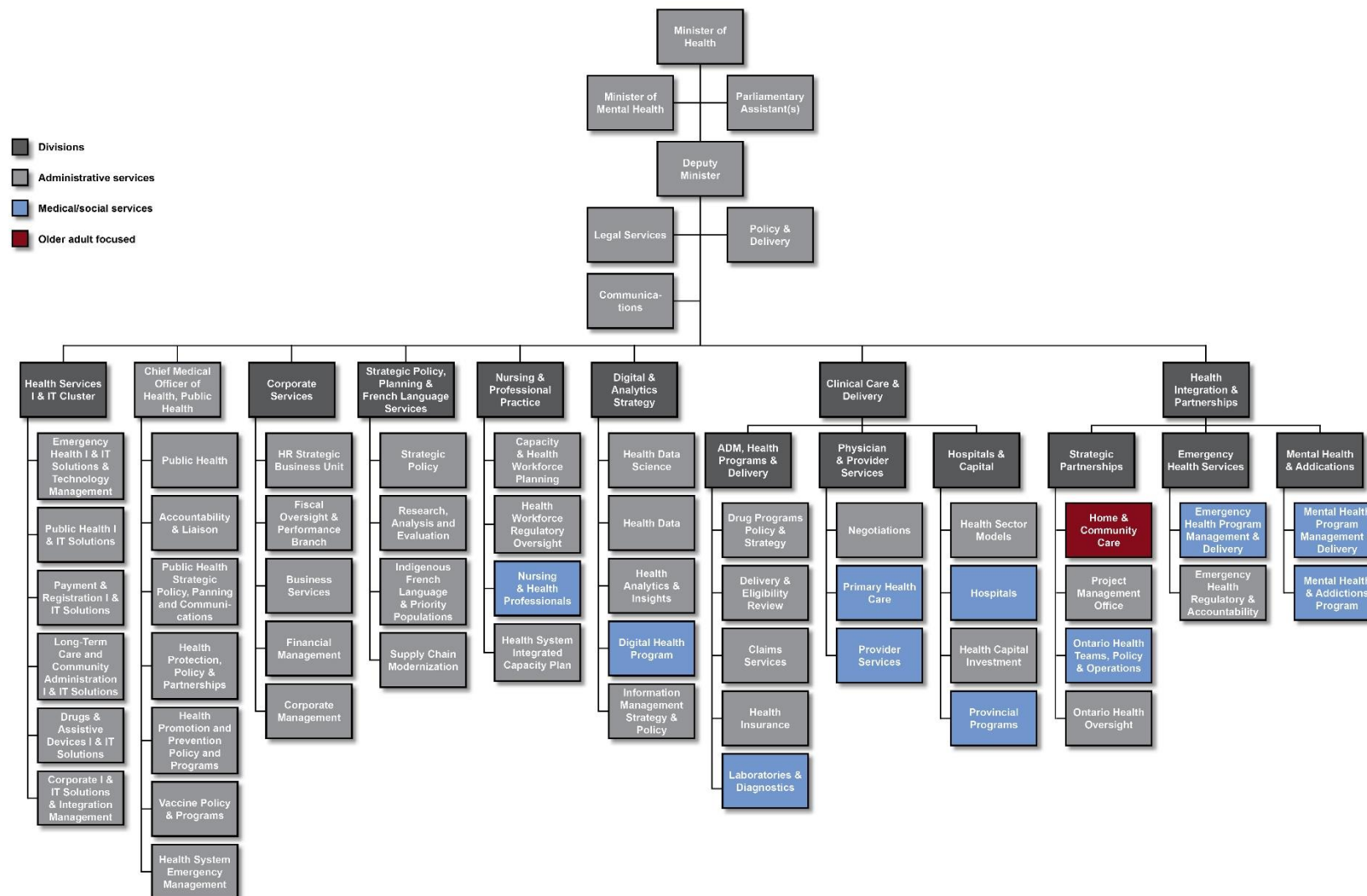
⁵ Statistics Canada: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=9810013801&pickMembers%5B0%5D=1.54&pickMembers%5B1%5D=2.1>

⁶ Statistics Canada: <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2022001/article/00011-eng.htm>

Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health is responsible for administering the health care system and providing services to the Ontario public through such programs as health insurance, drug benefits, assistive devices, care for the mentally ill, long-term care, home care services, community and public health, health promotion, and disease prevention. It also regulates hospitals, nursing homes, long-term care homes; operates psychiatric hospitals and medical laboratories; and coordinates emergency health services.

Governance Overview⁷



⁷ Ministry of Health: <https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/orgchart.aspx>

Strategies / Action Plans

This section includes strategies, action plans, and other relevant reports from government that outline commitments and progress toward serving seniors.

- Keeping Ontario Safe Framework
- COVID-19 Testing Strategy for Ontario
- COVID-19 Vaccine Rollout
- Ontario Health Teams
- Plan to Stay Open: Health System Stability and Recovery
- Roadmap to Wellness: A Plan to Build Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions System
- Digital First Health Strategy
- Taking Life Sciences to the Next Level
- Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care

Legal Framework⁸

The legal framework consists of legislation passed in Ontario that direct the Ministry of Health and/or any agencies or non-governmental entities under its purview. This list is not exhaustive, and contains only legislation related to seniors care in the province.

- Ambulance Act
- Commitment to the Future of Medicare Act, 2004
- Connecting Care Act, 2019 (not yet in force)
 - Home and Community Care Services
 - Reconciliation and Recovery
- Drug and Pharmacies Regulation Act
- Drug Interchangeability and Dispensing Fee Act
- Excellent Care for All Act, 2010
- Health Care Consent Act, 1996
- Health Facilities Special Orders Act
- Health Insurance Act
- Health Protection and Promotion Act
- Healthy Menu Choices Act, 2015
- Home Care and Community Services Act, 1994
- Homes for Special Care Act
- Independent Health Facilities Act
- Long-Term Care Homes Act, 2007
- Mental Health Act
- Ministry of Community and Social Services Act
 - Grants for Persons with Disabilities
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act
- Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Appeal & Review Boards Act, 1998
- Narcotics Safety and Awareness Act, 2010
- Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion Act, 2007
- Ontario Drug Benefit Act
- Oversight of Health Facilities and Devices, 2017
- Patient Restraints Minimization Act, 2001
- Personal Health Information Protection Act, 2004
- Private Hospitals Act
- Public Hospitals Act
- Quality of Care Information Protection Act, 2016

⁸ Ministry of Health: https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-health?_ga=2.227248669.108105007.1661196442-1767217221.1660922999

Programs & Services⁹

The following list provides an overview of some of the relevant and available programs and services for older adults.

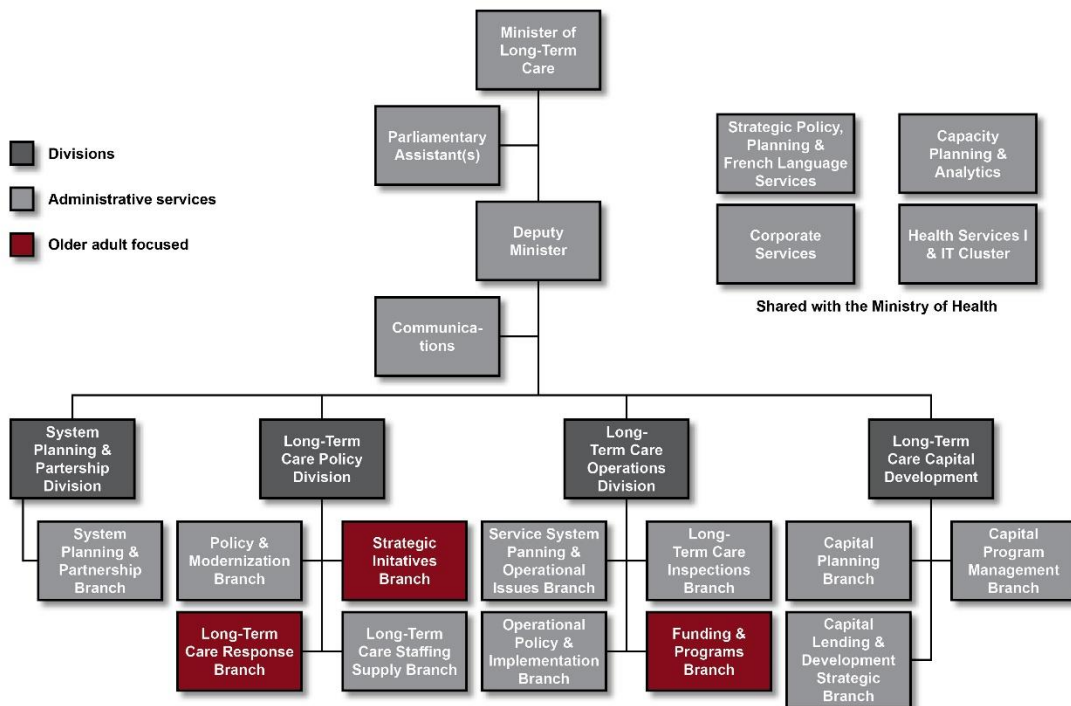
- Assistive Devices Program
- Community Commitment Program for Nurses
- Emergency Health Services
- Emergency Planning and Preparedness
- French Language Health Services
- Excellent Care for All
- Vaccines and Immunization
- Influenza Immunizations Program
- MedsCheck
- Tele-Mental Health Services
- Health Equity Impact Assessment
- Palliative and End-of-Life Care
- Health Connect Ontario
- Northern Health Programs
- Ontario Public Drug Programs
- Ontario Public Health Standards: Requirements for Programs, Services, and Accountability (Standards)
- Long-Term Care Home Development
- Seniors' Care: Home, Community and Residential Care Services for Seniors
- Outdoor Health
- Supervised Practice Experience Partnership
- Strengthening Home and Community Care

⁹ Ministry of Health Programs and Services: <https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/>

Ministry of Long-Term Care

To ensure Ontarians receive access to the quality long-term care they deserve, in a safe, home-like environment when and where they need it. Works with the ministry of health.

Governance Overview¹⁰



¹⁰ Ministry of Long-Term Care: <https://www.infoqo.gov.on.ca/org?id=176856>

Strategies / Action Plans

This section includes strategies, action plans, and other relevant reports from government that outline commitments and progress toward serving seniors.

- **A Better Place to Live, a Better Place to Work: Ontario's Long-Term Care Staffing Plan**
- **Modernized Funding Model for long-term care homes**
- **The Long-Term Care COVID-19 Commission**
- **Long-Term Care Staffing Study**
- **Implementation of the Gillese Report (Public Inquiry into the Safety and Security of Residents in the Long-Term Care Homes System)**
- **Attending Nurse Practitioner in Long-Term Care Homes Funding Policy**
- **Plan to Stay Open: Health System Stability and Recovery**

Legal Framework¹¹

The legal framework consists of legislation passed in Ontario that direct the Ministry of Long-Term Care and/or any agencies or non-governmental entities under its purview. This list is not exhaustive, and contains only legislation related to seniors care in the province.

- **Connecting Care Act, 2019 (not yet in force)**
 - **Home and Community Care Services**
- **Reconciliation and Recovery**
- **Fixing Long-Term Care Act, 2021**
 - **Replaced the Long-Term Care Home Act, 2007**
- **Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Act**
- **Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Appeal & Review Boards Act, 1998**

Programs and Services

The following list provides an overview of some of the relevant and available programs and services for older adults.

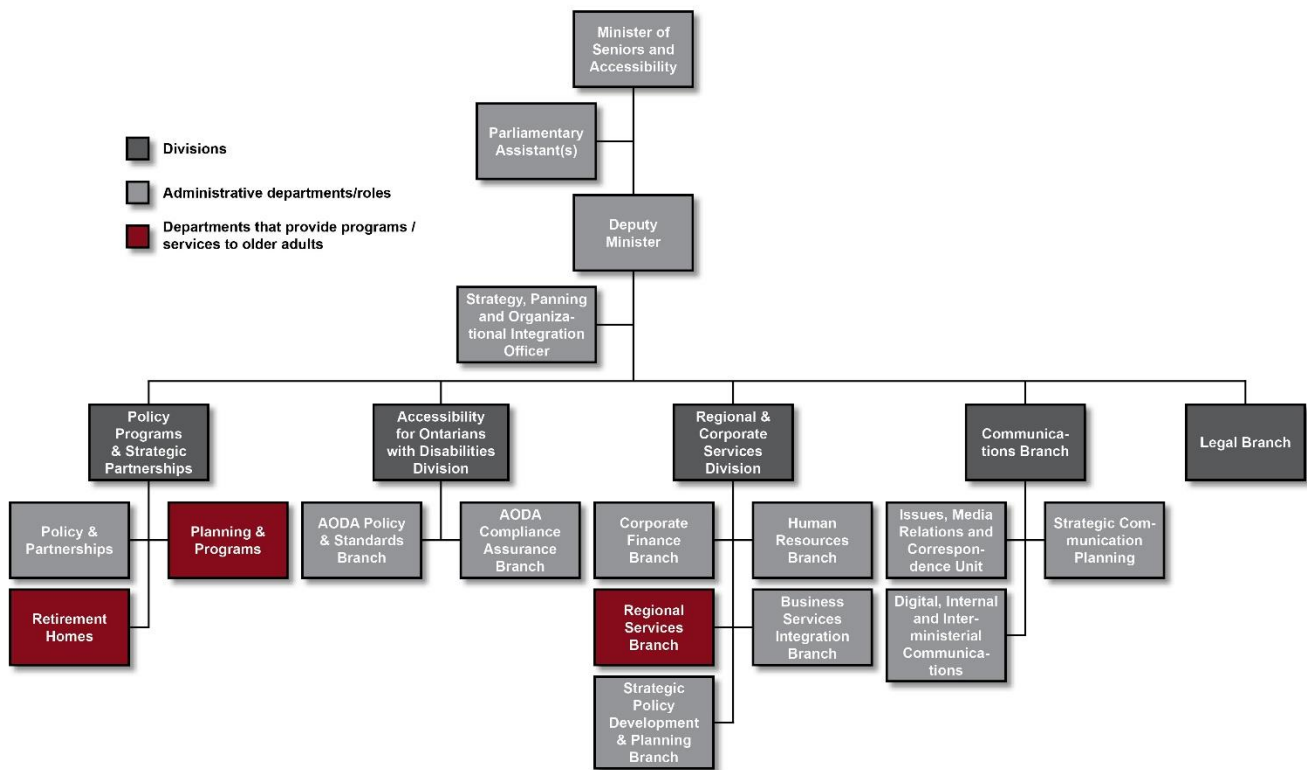
- **Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care**
- **Medication Safety Technology Program**
- **Ontario Workforce Reserve for Senior Support Program**
- **Ontario Matching Portal**
- **Prevention and Control Education and Training**
- **Accelerated Build Pilot Program**
- **Long-Term Care Home Quality Inspection Program**
- **Homes for Special Care Program**

¹¹ Fixing Long-Term Care Act: <https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/21f39>

Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility

The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility develops and facilitates access to public services to improve the quality of life for seniors and helps them lead safe, engaged, active and healthy lives; supports accessibility for people with disabilities by implementing the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act and by removing and preventing barriers in everyday life.

Governance Overview¹²



¹² Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility: <https://www.infoqo.gov.on.ca/org?id=163514>

Strategies/Action Plans

This section includes strategies, action plans, and other relevant reports from government that outline commitments and progress toward serving seniors.

- Strategy for an Aging Population (in development)
- Advancing Accessibility in Ontario Framework
- Hallway Health Care: A System Under Strain
- Accessible by Design: 2022-2025 OPS Multi-Year Accessibility Plan
- A Guide to Programs and Services for Seniors
- Your Health: A Plan for Connected and Convenient Care

Legal Framework¹³

The legal framework consists of legislation passed in Ontario that direct the Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility and/or any agencies or non-governmental entities under its purview. This list is not exhaustive, and contains only legislation related to seniors care in the province.

- Retirement Homes Act, 2010
- Seniors Active Living Centres Act, 2017
- Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005
 - Integrated Accessibility Standards
- Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2001
- Senior Volunteer Appreciation Week Act, 2021

Programs and Services

The following list provides an overview of some of the relevant and available programs and services for older adults.

- Seniors Community Grant Program
- Seniors Active Living Centres
- The Seniors Liaison Committee
- Seminars for Older Adults
- Inclusive Community Grants
- EnAbling Change Program
- Creating a More Inclusive Ontario: Age-Friendly Community Planning Guide for Municipalities and Community Organizations
- Elder Abuse Education

¹³ Ministry of Seniors and Accessibility: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ministry-seniors-accessibility>

Government of Ontario Agencies¹⁴

This section lists bodies that may have influence over policy or practice that impacts the delivery of services and supports to seniors.

- Health Services Appeal and Review Board
- Conducts appeals and reviews under twelve different healthcare statutes, such as the Health Insurance Act, the Long Term Care Homes Acts, and the Home Care and Community Services Act.
- Public Health Ontario
- Provides scientific and technical advice and support to clients working in government, public health, healthcare, and related sectors.

Provincial Priorities/New Initiatives/Announcements

The following section comprises a review of recent government announcements and budgets that have dedicated resources and action to improving programs, policy, and services offered to older adults in Ontario. These priorities span both government departments highlighted above.

Improving Healthcare

- In 2018, the province created the Premier's Council of Improving Healthcare and Ending Hallway Medicine to provide the government with strategic priorities and actions to improve health and wellness, increase patient satisfaction, improved value-for-money, and lower hospital wait times.¹⁵

Doctor and nurse training and retention

- The government will introduce the Learn and Stay Grant in spring 2023, which will provide funding for tuition, books, and direct educational costs to up to 2500 post-secondary students studying in priority programs such as medicine and nursing.
- Recipients of the grant will be required to remain in underserved communities (rural and remote, for example) that they studied in after graduation for at least two years.¹⁶
- The Community Commitment Program will reimburse full tuition amount for up to 1500 nurse graduates each year in exchange for committing to practice for two years in an underserved community¹⁷
- Ontario is providing nurses with a \$5000 retention payment to nurses working in hospitals, long-term care and retirement homes, home and community care, primary care, mental health and addictions, emergency services, and corrections, as well as community based and developmental services.¹⁸

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Premier's Council: https://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publications/premiers_council/default.aspx

¹⁶ Plan to Stay Open: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001878/ontario-introduces-a-plan-to-stay-open>

¹⁷ Budget 2022: <https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/chapter-1e.html#section-1>

¹⁸ Retention Payments: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001714/ontario-making-historic-investment-in-provincial-nursing-workforce>

- Budget 2022 announced \$230 million for existing hiring and retention programs for hospitals and health systems, as well as \$42.5 million over two years to support “the expansion of undergraduate and postgraduate medical education and training in the province” to support 160 undergraduate students and 295 postgraduate students over 5 years.¹⁹
- The province will introduce a permanent wage increase for personal support workers and direct support workers.²⁰
- Ontario is working with the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario to expedite the registration of doctors, including those from out-of-province and who may want to work in rural and northern emergency department.²¹
- Budget 2022 also calls for a number of deployment and redeployment measures, such as deploying more than 3300 and hiring more than 1700 health care students in hospitals, hiring more than 220 nursing preceptors and coordinators, redeploying more than 350 hospital support aides, training 540 interns for both respiratory therapist and registered nurse positions, and providing up to 400,000 hours of additional service delivery by redeployed medical residents in critical care.²²
- The province implemented the “As of Right” rules to allow healthcare workers registered in other provinces to immediately begin work without having to first register in one of Ontario’s health regulatory colleges.²³
- Internationally trained nurses are able to have their examination, application, and registration fees covered by the government with a \$15 million investment.²⁴

Reducing surgical waitlists

- Budget 2021 outlined investments in hospital care that aimed to reduce surgical wait times and perform more surgeries and diagnostic imaging. This included \$216 million for hospitals to extend operating room hours, \$35 million for more MRI and CT scan hours, \$18 million to increase electronic referrals and other centralized surgical waitlist management, \$1 million to support knowledge sharing and best practices for optimizing operating rooms, and \$30 million for the Surgical Innovation Fund to address barriers and increase surgical output.²⁵
- Ontario is using \$18 million to fund MRI and CT scans, cataract surgeries, ophthalmic surgeries, minimally invasive gynecological surgeries, and plastic surgeries across the province.²⁶
- The province is allowing publicly funded surgeries and other procedures in for-profit clinics in an effort to reduce surgical backlogs.²⁷

Reducing the number of seniors in hospital waiting to be placed in long-term care

- A Plan to Stay Open²⁸ and Bill 7, More Beds, Better Care Act, 2022²⁹ stipulate that patients in hospital who are determined by an attending clinician as requiring an alternate level of care may

¹⁹ Budget 2022: <https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/chapter-1e.html#section-3>

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ontario Introduces a Plan to Stay Open: Health System Stability and Recovery: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1002246/ontario-introduces-a-plan-to-stay-open-health-system-stability-and-recovery>

²² Budget 2022: <https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/chapter-1e.html#section-1>

²³ Your Health: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-your-health-plan-connected-convenient-care-en-2023-02-02-v3.pdf>

²⁴ Your Health: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-your-health-plan-connected-convenient-care-en-2023-02-02-v3.pdf>

²⁵ Ontario Ramping up Efforts to Reduce Surgical Wait Times: <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1000613/ontario-ramping-up-efforts-to-reduce-surgical-wait-times>

²⁶ Your Health: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-your-health-plan-connected-convenient-care-en-2023-02-02-v3.pdf>

²⁷ The Globe and Mail: <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-ontario-private-health-clinic-bill/>

²⁸ A Plan to Stay Open: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-plan-to-stay-open-en-2022-08-18.pdf>

²⁹ More Beds, Better Care Act, 2022: <https://www.ola.org/en/legislative-business/bills/parliament-43/session-1/bill-7>

- be placed by a placement coordinator in a long-term care home that is not of their choosing temporarily, until a bed is available at their preferred home. Consent is not required to make arrangements for alternative living, but consent is required to physically move the patient and the use of restraints is prohibited.³⁰

Making improvements to home care for seniors

- The government has said that they would like to expand adult day programs and supports for caregivers, although no details have been specified.³¹
- The Seniors' Home Safety Tax Credit³² is a temporary, refundable tax credit that can be claimed by those who are 65 or older, live with a senior relative, or will live with a senior relative within 24 months after the end of 2022. Eligible expenses to claim the tax credit are renovations that improve the safety and accessibility of a home or help a senior be more functional or mobile at home. Claimants can have 15% of up to \$10,000 refunded on their yearly tax return.
- Budget 2022 introduces plans for a refundable Ontario Seniors Care at Home Tax Credit. The credit would be available to low-to-moderate income Ontarians aged 70 or older with eligible medical expenses, including expenses that support aging at home.³³
- The Ontario Paramedicine for Long-Term Care program will be expanded to all regions and communities in Ontario so that non-emergency paramedicine services are available to seniors at home.³⁴

Internationally accredited healthcare workers

- The Plan to Stay Open includes the plan to cover the costs of examination, application and registration fees for internationally trained and retired nurses.³⁵
- The College of Nurses Ontario will help internationally trained nurses to fill in any gaps in their nursing education and accreditation. Applicants who have an identified gap in education will be directed to programs or courses to fulfill any outstanding requirements.³⁶
- Proposed legislation would prohibit regulatory colleges from requiring Canadian work experience as a qualification for registration.³⁷

Capital Investments

- Budget 2022 calls for \$40 billion in capital investments in Ontario hospitals.³⁸

Long-term care investments

- Ontario is using the Accelerated Build Pilot Program, which accelerates the development of long-term care homes by using hospital-owned land, rapid procurement and modular constructions.³⁹

30 CBC: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/ontario-hospital-patients-its-human-rights-1.6562413>

31 A Plan to Stay Open: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-plan-to-stay-open-en-2022-08-18.pdf>

32 Senior's Home Safety Tax Credit: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/seniors-home-safety-tax-credit>

33 Budget 2022: <https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/chapter-1e.html#section-3>

34 Ibid.

35 A Plan to Stay Open: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-plan-to-stay-open-en-2022-08-18.pdf>

36 College of Nurses Ontario: <https://www.cno.org/en/news/2022/august-2022/cno-helps-international-applicants-fill-the-gap/>

37 Budget 2022: <https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/chapter-1e.html#section-1>

38 Budget 2022: <https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/chapter-1e.html#section-3>

39 Infrastructure Ontario: <https://infrastructureontario.ca/Trillium-Health-Partners-Long-Term-Care-Homes/>

- More specialized beds are under development for long-term care residents with specialized needs. The most recent budget promises to add 40 Behavioural Specialized Unit beds in Ajax and Mississauga.⁴⁰
- The government has committed to creating more than 30,000 new long-term care beds by 2028, and upgrade more than 28,000 to a meet modern design standards.⁴¹
- Ontario is adding 23 new hospice beds across the province.⁴²

Improving information sharing of health data

- Ontario has promised to implement a unified provincial clinical viewer that is accessible to both long-term care and acute care. There are no details on this technology yet.⁴³

Dementia Strategy

- The government has invested in dementia services across the province, although no details on which services are available.⁴⁴

Pharmacist Prescriptions

- As of January 1, 2023, pharmacists may prescribe medications for 13 common ailments in Ontario, such as pink eye, UTIs, and rashes.⁴⁵

Health 811

- The government of Ontario launched Health811 (formerly Health Connect Ontario) to provide 24/7 phone and web support for Ontarians looking to ask health questions or to find community services.⁴⁶

Mental Healthcare

- Ontario has said they will invest \$3.8 billion over 10 years to develop and implement a comprehensive and connected mental health and addictions system in the province.⁴⁷

Ontario Health Teams⁴⁸

- The province is currently reviewing four applications for additional health teams to add to the current 54.
- Ontario Health Teams have invested \$106 million in digital and virtual care options for patients.

⁴⁰ Budget 2022: <https://budget.ontario.ca/2022/chapter-1e.html#section-3>

⁴¹ Your Health: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-your-health-plan-connected-convenient-care-en-2023-02-02-v3.pdf>

⁴² Your Health: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-your-health-plan-connected-convenient-care-en-2023-02-02-v3.pdf>

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Your Health: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-your-health-plan-connected-convenient-care-en-2023-02-02-v3.pdf>

⁴⁶ Your Health: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-your-health-plan-connected-convenient-care-en-2023-02-02-v3.pdf>

⁴⁷ Your Health: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-your-health-plan-connected-convenient-care-en-2023-02-02-v3.pdf>

⁴⁸ Your Health: <https://files.ontario.ca/moh-your-health-plan-connected-convenient-care-en-2023-02-02-v3.pdf>

Key Stakeholders in Ontario

This list only includes Ontario organizations that serve older adults.

- AdvantAge Ontario
- Advocacy Centre for the Elderly
- Alzheimer Society of Ontario
- Canadian Cancer Society – Ontario
- Canadian Red Cross - Ontario
- Care Watch
- Diabetes Canada - Ontario
- Elder Abuse Prevention Ontario
- Heart and Stroke Foundation - Ontario
- La Fédération des aînés et des retraités francophones de l'Ontario
- Older Adult Centres Association of Ontario
- Older Women's Network
- Ontario Association of Councils on Aging
- Ontario Public Service “Quarter Century Club” Retirees
- Ontario Community Support Association
- Ontario Interdisciplinary Council for Aging and Health
- Ontario Retirement Communities Association
- Ontario Senior Games Association
- Ontario Society (Coalition) of Senior Citizens' Organizations
- Provincial Geriatrics Leadership Ontario
- Senior Pride Network
- United Senior Citizens of Ontario Inc.