

## **SUMMARY OF KEY PRIORITIES FROM PREMIER WYNNE'S SEPTEMBER 2016 MANDATE LETTERS OF RELEVANCE TO OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS**

On September 23, 2016, Premier Kathleen Wynne forwarded new Mandate Letters to her 35 Cabinet Ministers to identify key priorities for their Ministry over the remaining term of government. Each Ministry letter identifies the Ministry's unique priorities as well as priorities for collaboration with other Ministries. Key accomplishments to date are also noted. Common to all Mandate Letters were the following three priorities:

- to work together, in co-operation with our Indigenous partners, to help achieve real and measurable change for Indigenous communities
- to ensure that the Premier's Special Advisor on Community Hubs and the Community Hubs Secretariat, at the Ministry of Infrastructure, are given the support they need to continue their vital cross-government work aimed at making better use of public properties, encouraging multi-use spaces and helping communities create financially sustainable hub models.
- it is essential that we work collaboratively across every sector of government to support evidence-based decision-making to ensure programs and services are effective, efficient and sustainable, in order to balance the budget by 2017–18, maintain balance in 2018–19, and position the province for longer-term fiscal sustainability.

While the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's priorities are most obviously of relevance and import to occupational therapists, the priorities of eleven (11) ministries touch on areas of interest to OTs. The following identifies a fulsome list of the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care's priorities (so as to be able to see where the priorities of OTs fall amongst all other health priorities) and a selected list of those priorities of other ministries that may impact OTs, their practice in Ontario and/or the clients they serve.

### **Minister of Health and Long-Term Care**

- Ensure that patients who want a primary care provider have one.
- Implement a publicly available performance report to track and report on primary care access, including attachment, same day/next day, after hours and weekend access.
- Improve availability of same-day, next-day, after-hours and weekend care by primary care providers to improve care and help reduce unnecessary emergency department visits.
- Bring down wait times for specialists by improving the referrals process, better co-ordinating care, improving access to the right providers and making capital investments where appropriate.

- Implement the expanded scope of practice of registered nurses to allow them to prescribe some medications directly to patients.
- Implement the First Nations Health Action Plan to improve access to service and culturally appropriate care for Indigenous people in collaboration with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and Indigenous partners.
- Work with the Minister Responsible for Accessibility to establish a Standards Development Committee in fall 2016 to begin work on developing a health standard under the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.
- Ensure, as you work to improve access to services, that a focus on equity of access is reflected in solutions.
- Develop a capacity planning framework to help support the provision of care in the most appropriate setting possible across the health care continuum — hospital, long-term care and community — by reducing the rate of Alternative Level of Care, lowering hospital readmission rates, implementing the Home and Community Care Roadmap, improving palliative care in all settings and making capital investments where appropriate.
- Connect and integrate the mental health and addictions system for all patients, including co-ordination with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services, to ensure patients receive high quality care wherever they access services, following advice received from the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council.
- Improve the safety and quality of life for those living in long-term care homes today and in the future, by considering necessary investments, including staffing, and by advancing the Enhanced Long-Term Care Home Renewal Strategy as quickly as possible and ultimately eliminating all four bed wards in Ontario's long-term care homes.
- Bring forward a plan to make Ontario a leader in digital health care, in collaboration with the Minister Responsible for Digital Government, centred on the principle of improved patient access to information and health care services.
- Expand culturally and ethnically appropriate continuum of care services for seniors, including in long-term care homes
- Develop a one-stop website that provides information to help people make choices about their health and effectively navigate the health care system.
- Make tangible improvements to the province's immunization system and aim to ensure caregivers can easily access the information they need on school-aged immunization.
- Provide education, information and targeted programs for Ontarians on responsible alcohol consumption to help people make better informed choices.
- Explore opportunities to enhance the environmental health of Ontarians, including supporting research and engaging key stakeholders such health care providers, public health partners, and patients on potential areas of action.
- Undertake additional initiatives that will reduce the misuse of prescription opioids across Ontario, and provide support to those with addictions.
- Increase low-risk birthing options and availability to improve quality of care and value for the system.
- Work with the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues and the Violence Against Women Roundtable to take action to protect patients from sexual abuse, based on the recommendations of the Minister's Task Force on the Prevention of the Sexual Abuse of Patients and the *Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991*.
- Ensure the voices of patients, caregivers and stakeholders are heard and actively consulted through transformation of the health care system.

- Partner with health service providers on transformation. Make efforts to support health care workers to ensure the demands we are placing on all levels of front-line workers are sustainable.
- Support the mandate of the newly established Patient Ombudsman as well as the planned provincial Patient and Family Advisory Council.
- Work with the Minister Responsible for Seniors Affairs on initiatives, such as the development of a dementia strategy that will especially impact seniors.
- Continue implementation of Immunization 2020 to improve vaccine coverage at all stages of life, from newborns to seniors.
- Continue to advance a national approach to public drug benefits that ensures equitable access to high quality prescription drugs for all Ontarians.
- Work with the Chief Health Innovation Strategist to drive collaboration across the health care system, and champion Ontario as a leading centre for new and innovative health technologies and processes.

### **Minister Responsible for Accessibility**

- Launch a public education campaign to raise awareness of accessibility issues for both business and the public.
- Deliver a provincial employment strategy for people with disabilities that builds on the Partnership Council on Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities by the end of 2016, in partnership with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development, and the Ministry of Economic Development and Growth.
- Complete the review of the Transportation Standard.
- Report, in 2018, on progress towards making Ontario fully accessible.
- Building on work with the Attorney General and the Minister of Government and Consumer Services, lead the ongoing review of legislation and regulations across government with the goal of eliminating barriers for persons with disabilities and update government on your progress in 2017.
- Establish a Standards Development Committee in fall 2016 to develop a Health Standard under the AODA.
- Establish Standards Development Committees in fall 2016 to review the Information and Communications Standard and the Employment Standard.

### **Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development**

- Drive implementation of the new Ontario Student Grant, the single-largest modernization to the Ontario Student Assistance Program, which will make average tuition free for eligible low- and middle-income students, and will reduce the cost for many more. Implementation of the Ontario Student Grant, which takes effect in September 2017, should include working with universities and colleges to develop tools to more accurately calculate actual tuition costs and better communicate them to families, as well as implementing net tuition billing by 2018. This work should also be aligned with efforts to make it easier for students to complete online tasks that support their postsecondary education or training
- Work with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, college and university leaders, students and other partners to enhance access to mental health services for students.

## **Minister of Children and Youth Services**

- Work with the Minister of Education and Minister of Community and Social Services, implement the new Ontario Autism Program beginning in 2017, a year earlier than originally planned and supported by enhanced supports during this transition period, so that children with autism spectrum disorder receive individualized and evidence-based interventions with a continuum of support at home, at school, in the community, and as they prepare for adulthood.
- Build on the life promotion supports included in the Youth Suicide Prevention Plan, with particular attention to work with Indigenous partners, to provide culturally specific supports for Indigenous youth.
- Implement the three pillars of the Special Needs Strategy (the developmental screen, co-ordinated service planning and the integrated delivery of rehabilitation services) in 2017, in partnership with the ministers of Community and Social Services, Education, and Health and Long-Term Care.
- Work with the ministers of Community and Social Services, Education, and Health and Long-Term Care to support smooth, timely transitions for young adults with special needs moving from children to adult services and develop a plan for action by fall 2017.
- Continue our internationally recognized work on the use of diversion, rehabilitation and reintegration for youth in, or at risk of, conflict with the law and continue to work to reduce the number of youth in custody.
- Continue to work with providers to create a transformed child and youth mental health system that connects youth and their families to high quality, easy to access supports.
- Continue work with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to align child and youth mental health services with adult mental health services so young adults experience smooth transitions.
- Continue to work with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Mental Health and Addictions Leadership Advisory Council to explore evidence-based options on how to improve addictions programming for children and youth.

## **Minister of Community and Social Services**

- Work with the ministers of Children and Youth Services, Health and Long-Term Care, Education, Housing, and Advanced Education and Skills Development, to support smooth, timely transitions for young adults with special needs moving from children to adult services and develop a plan for action by fall 2017.
- Implement the three pillars of the Special Needs Strategy in 2017, in partnership with the ministers of Children and Youth Services, Education, and Health and Long-Term Care.
- Working with the Minister Responsible for Accessibility, support the development of a provincial employment strategy for people with disabilities by the end of 2016.
- Through the Employment and Modernization Fund, continue to promote projects that develop job skills and employment and which promote service innovation and modernization across the developmental services sector.
- Develop a practical and implementable plan for social assistance reform, in a broader income security context, by winter 2017-18. It will be informed by the Income Security Reform Working Group, Indigenous engagement and the work to implement a Basic Income Pilot.
- While completing the larger plan, continue to work with people with lived experience and delivery partners to find immediate reforms and move toward a more simple, holistic, client-centred approach to the delivery of social assistance.

- Continue to work to end sheltered workshops by working with funded agencies, individuals and their families to develop transition plans to protect people with disabilities and give them competitive employment and meaningful participation in the community.
- Support the work of the Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy on implementing Realizing Our Potential, Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- Support the Minister of Housing in the implementation of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy and in the work to end chronic homelessness.
- Collaborate with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and others, as required to deliver the second phase of Ontario's Mental Health and Addictions Strategy and work together more broadly to meet the needs of adults with developmental disabilities.
- Provide more residential supports for more people with developmental disabilities in urgent need.
- With the Ministry of Housing, build on the success of the Developmental Services Housing Task Force with further innovative housing solutions for people with developmental disabilities with housing needs.

### **Minister of Education**

- In close partnership with the Minister of Advanced Education and Skills Development, and with advice from the Minister of Children and Youth Services, postsecondary institutions, education leaders, students, parents and researchers, develop an access strategy to address the non-financial barriers to postsecondary education for underrepresented groups, including Indigenous students, students from low-income backgrounds, students with disabilities and mature students.
- Develop a strategy to improve supports for children with special education needs in schools. The strategy should look at ways to improve school-based supports for students with autism spectrum disorder. The strategy should also complement Ontario's Special Needs Strategy to help families access the supports they need at home, at school, and in their communities.

### **Minister of Finance**

- Building on the almost 10 per cent average reduction in automobile insurance rates since August 2013, work with the Advisor on Auto Insurance on his recommendations for further improvements and reform to the system to pass on savings to consumers while reducing costs and ensuring accident victims get the care they need. Advice to government should be received by the end of 2016.

### **Minister of Housing/Minister Responsible for Poverty Reduction Strategy**

- Oversee the Implementation of Realizing our Potential: Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Continue to break the cycle of poverty for children and youth.
- Enable persons to move toward employment and income security.
- Work toward the goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025 as part of the longer term goal of ending homelessness in Ontario.
- Deliver on the commitments made in the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update that was released in March 2016, which includes:
- Support passage of the *Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016*.

- Introduce a framework for a portable housing benefit to give people more flexibility and choice and conduct a pilot program to test an alternative means of meeting the needs of survivors of domestic violence.
- Develop a policy framework to bring greater coherence to the supportive housing system, working with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Minister of Community and Social Services.

### **Minister Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation**

- Support the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care in the Northern First Nations Health Action Plan and investments to expand access to Indigenous Mental Health and Addictions Treatment and Healing Centres and mental health and wellness programs.

### **Minister of Labour**

- Informed by the Changing Workplaces Review, proposing amendments to the *Employment Standards Act* and *Labour Relations Act* to provide protections for employees while supporting business in today's changing economy and its workplaces. You will expedite the work to clarify personal emergency leave by end of 2016.
- Continue to expand mental health protections for Ontario's workers.
- Continue to ensure that the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board provides a fair and equitable system for injured workers and employers while supporting it in its efforts to eliminate the unfunded liability by 2021-2022, and also reducing overall premiums on average.

### **Seniors Secretariat**

- Continue to provide leadership for initiatives related to:
  - Age-friendly communities that promote policies, programs, services and environments to support and enable people to age actively. People in age-friendly communities are supported in maintaining their independence and having access to the community supports and services they require.
  - Wandering prevention for persons with Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.
  - Developing an enhanced governance and accountability framework for Elderly Persons Centres (i.e., proposed Seniors Active Living Centres) that drives best practice, encourages engagement and participation, and can inform any future expansion of the number of centres and program offerings.
- Continue to work with:
  - Inter-ministerial colleagues to explore the development of communication tools and forums to assist older Ontarians, their families and caregivers to increase awareness and accessibility of programs and services available within their communities.
  - The Minister of Housing to ensure seniors' perspectives on housing issues are reflected in on-going policy and planning.
- Recognizing Ontario's rich cultural diversity, work with partners to facilitate and engage in a dialogue with multicultural communities to gain a better understanding of their perspectives regarding retirement.
- Lead initiatives to raise public awareness of elder abuse and neglect among older adults, friends and family to help them recognize abuse, provide support, and seek assistance.

- Work with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, Attorney General, Minister of Community and Social Services, Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services, and the Minister Responsible for Women's Issues to support:
  - Training opportunities for sectors serving older adults to increase their ability to identify and respond to the signs of elder abuse.
  - Initiatives that will help co-ordinate community responses across sectors to better assist victims of elder abuse in communities across the province.
- Continue to invest in programming to help seniors stay engaged and connected to their communities including expanding the Seniors Community Grant Program and the Age-Friendly Community Planning Grant Program along with continued oversight of and support for Ontario's Elderly Persons Centres network.
- Continue to support implementation of the government's community hubs strategy.
- Continue implementation and oversight of the *Retirement Homes Act*.
- Work with the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care and the Parliamentary Assistant to support:
  - Delivery of a provincial dementia strategy that reflects the needs of Ontario's seniors and their caregivers.
  - Development of an Ontario Caregiver Strategy, to ensure Ontarians supporting their loved ones are equally supported to have health, quality of life and dignity.
  - Ongoing capacity planning for the health sector to ensure the future needs of Ontario's aging population are accounted for.