



## Ontario Budget November 2020 Ontario's Action Plan: Protect, Support, Recover

Government released the 2020 Budget on November 5, 2020. [View news release.](#)  
[View Ontario Budget 2020 full document.](#)

The following are the key elements of the budget that impact occupational therapists:

### Managing COVID-19

- **Identifying, managing and preventing COVID-19 outbreaks by strengthening infection prevention and control across hospitals and long-term care homes with an investment of \$60 million.** An additional \$540 million in new funding will help protect residents, caregivers and staff in long-term care homes from future surges, including \$405 million to help homes continue prevention and containment through enhanced screening, staffing supports, and purchasing additional supplies and PPE.
- **Accelerating efforts to reduce surgical backlogs while ensuring hospitals have the capacity to manage COVID-19** and the influenza season by investing \$283.7 million to address the backlog and enable over 60,000 surgeries.
- Preparing for surges in COVID-19 cases by alleviating pressure on hospitals and the broader health care system through **expanded access to home and community care services, expanding community paramedicine programs and ensuring hospitals have bed and staff capacity, with an investment of an additional \$116.5 million to add up to 766 additional beds across the province.** This means Ontario has invested \$351 million to create more than 2,250 hospital beds to give the system capacity to address COVID-19 surges in this second wave.

### Long-Term Care Homes

- **Increasing average daily direct care from a nurse or personal support worker (PSW) to four hours a day,** making Ontario the leader among Canadian provinces in terms of care provided to loved ones. This ambitious plan requires significant changes in the long-term care sector, including recruiting and training tens of thousands of new staff. The government will collaborate with its partners throughout implementation over the next four years.

- **Launching a Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care pilot program to help seniors remain stable in their own homes while on the waitlist to access a long-term care bed.** This innovative program will provide 24/7 access to non-emergency support so people can stay in their homes longer.
- **Advancing a long-term care staffing strategy to confront long-standing challenges faced by chronically overworked staff in long-term care** and provide more direct care. This includes accelerating and expanding qualification pathways to increase the supply of qualified health professionals.

## Mental Health

This year, the Roadmap includes \$176 million in 2020–21 to help expand access for critical mental health and addictions support and reduce wait times, including:

- **Additional community supports in both English and French, with a focus on stabilizing and enhancing mental health and addictions service delivery, as well as mobile crisis teams and safe beds to support those experiencing a mental health crisis.**
- **More core children and youth mental health services, including walk-in clinics, counseling and therapy, day treatment and live-in treatment supports, focused on helping children in school, keeping children out of child welfare and supporting those in need of intensive services.**
- **Additional supports to Indigenous peoples, seniors, those with disabilities, first responders and vulnerable populations.**

The Province is also increasing mental health funding for postsecondary students by investing \$19.25 million into mental health supports for postsecondary students in 2020–21, an increase of \$3.25 million over last year.

## Hospitals

- **Investing an additional \$572 million in Ontario’s hospitals to support additional costs of COVID-19 including testing, assessment centres, laboratory and medical equipment and PPE.** This brings the total funding to hospitals above and beyond what was provided last year to over \$2.5 billion.
- **Building new and expanded hospital infrastructure, creating much-needed capacity by investing more than \$18 billion in capital grants over 10 years.** This funding will also allow hospitals to prioritize urgent upgrades, including repairs and maintenance, to help modernize facilities across the province.

- **Managing wait times and backlog by providing additional funding to add 17,000 new MRI operating hours and the following new service volumes:** 180 additional neuroservices procedures, 3,413 additional cardiac procedures and over 6,000 additional procedures related to hip and knee replacements, cataracts, stroke, cancer and renal care. The government will also be screening 140,000 Ontario newborns for spinal muscular atrophy.

## Seniors

- **Proposing the new Seniors' Home Safety Tax Credit for the 2021 taxation year — a 25 per cent credit on eligible renovations of up to \$10,000** — to help seniors stay in their homes longer by making their homes safer and more accessible. Seniors would be eligible regardless of their incomes and whether they owe income tax for 2021. Family members who have seniors living with them would also be eligible. See <https://budget.ontario.ca/2020/annex.html#section-2> and <https://www.advisor.ca/tax/tax-news/ontario-proposes-seniors-renovation-tax-credit/>
- **Continuing the Ontario Community Support Program with a total investment of \$16 million over two years to connect people with disabilities, older adults and others with underlying medical conditions who are self-isolating with meals, medicines and other essentials while they stay at home.** Since April 2020, the program has delivered more than 230,000 meals and essential supplies to vulnerable individuals.
- **Expanding Seniors Active Living Centres with an additional \$3.1 million in funding for 2021-22.**

## Autism/Children with Disabilities

- **\$70.3 million over three years, beginning in 2020–21, in the Special Services at Home program,** which supports families caring for children with developmental and/or physical disabilities including autism.
- **Doubled funding in the Ontario Autism Program to \$600 million annually, beginning in 2019–20.** (previous commitment)

## Auto Insurance

- **Increasing competition and innovation in the auto insurance sector by modernizing outdated, burdensome requirements.** This includes permitting insurers to electronically terminate policy contracts, with consumer consent, to enable fully digital insurers to operate in Ontario. The government is also proposing to allow FSRA to operate an insurance regulatory sandbox to pilot initiatives that bring new consumer-focused products and services to market more quickly in response to changing consumer needs. This work would complement recent action taken by FSRA to enable innovative usage-

based insurance products to be offered in the market.

- **Improving deterrence of fraudulent activities that drive up auto insurance system costs by proposing changes that would allow insurers to reject vehicle damage claims where misrepresentation or fraud is involved.** The government has also established a task force to improve provincial oversight of the towing industry.
- **Increasing choice for consumers by enabling insurers to offer more coverage options, including optional not-at-fault property damage coverage** (known as Direct Compensation – Property Damage) for drivers who may determine that insuring their older vehicle costs more than the vehicle is worth. The government is also proposing to increase convenience for consumers by allowing credit unions to sell insurance in their branch, and online through a subsidiary or partnership.