

2020 Ontario Government Budget Analysis

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On Thursday November 5, 2020, the government tabled their provincial budget titled “[Ontario’s Action Plan: Protect, Support and Recover](#).” This budget built on the commitments announced in “[Ontario’s Action Plan: Responding to COVID-19](#)” from this spring. It also highlighted a number of the announcements previously made in the [Fall Preparedness Plan](#), released on September 30, 2020. With the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and required investments, the government has stated it is projecting an overall deficit this year of \$38.5 billion.

New investments in the Home and Community Care Sector

We were very pleased to see that the province will continue with investments in the Ontario Community Support Program (OCSP) overseen by OCSA. The budget committed an additional \$5 million to continue this program into the fiscal period from 2021-2022.

We noted that the province is also increasing investments around seniors' services including:

- An additional \$3.1 million in 2021-22 in Seniors Active Living Centres.
- Investments enabling clients to have virtual visits with their health care providers including home and community care and community paramedicine.
- Proposing the new Seniors' Home Safety Tax Credit for the 2021 taxation year 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 or not they owe income tax for 2021. Family members who live with them and support them would also be eligible.

The budget announced that the government will also be creating an Emergency Volunteer Unit to develop and oversee a pool of volunteers who pre-register to help during an emergency. Regarding PSW compensation, the government noted that they will consider reviewing and extending the temporary wage enhancement for PSWs beyond March 31, 2021.

New Investments in Health Care

Overall, the government has committed to \$7.5 billion in new spending on healthcare, building on the existing \$7.7 billion in supports to date. Health sector investment highlights include:

- \$4 billion in 2021–22 and a further \$2 billion in 2022–23 in dedicated emergency support to protect people’s health and to support the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- \$30 million over two years for infection prevention and control (IPAC) in congregate care settings.
- An additional \$2.5 billion into the hospital sector with the focus on an additional 2,250 hospital beds (announced last week).
- Creating hospital capacity by investing \$18 billion in capital grants over 10 years, with \$175 million this year dedicated to 129 hospitals across the province.
- \$283.7 million to address the surgical backlog while ensuring hospitals have the capacity to manage COVID-19 and the flu season.
- An additional \$540 million to protect LTC residents, staff and caregivers from future surges and spread.
- \$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.