

Local Health Integration Network

2008 Ontario Budget Healthcare Highlights

Ontario's Minister of Finance released the 2008 provincial budget on March 25. More LHIN-specific details are expected in the coming weeks, but in the meantime the Ministry of Health and Long-Term has shared a special budget highlights issue of their bulletin *Inside Health*. Budget information as it relates to healthcare is provided under the following headings:

- Reducing Wait Times
- Improving Access to Family Health Care
- Health System Improvements

Read [Inside Health Budget 2008 Special Edition](#).

If interested, visit the Ministry website to [view the entire budget](#) (from this link you can download a pdf of the entire budget).

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Health

Ontario Budget 2008



Strengthening Ontario's future by investing in health care

As part of the McGuinty government's 2008 Budget announced on March 25, Finance Minister Dwight Duncan said Ontario's publicly funded health care system helps make the province attractive for businesses to invest and create jobs.

"Investments in public health care contribute to Ontario's advantages as a place to invest by lowering costs to business, enhancing the productivity of the province's workforce and supporting a high quality of life that is attractive to skilled workers," Duncan said.

The finance minister said the government's plan for achieving better health is about keeping Ontarians healthy, providing high quality care if they become

sick, and sustaining the public health care system for generations to come.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will have a budget of just over \$40 billion in 2008/09.

The McGuinty government's investments in health care will reduce wait times for health services, improve access to family health care, and make health system improvements.

**SPECIAL
Edition**

Reducing Wait Times

The government is reducing wait times for key services, including:

- \$180 million over the next three years to provide incentives to make continuous improvements in emergency department



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Health-related highlights of the 2008 Budget include:

- wait times and patient satisfaction
- \$64 million over the next three years to provide about 12,400 additional general surgeries starting in 2008/09, growing to about 30,000 additional surgeries in 2010/11
- \$120 million over the next three years to help hospitals in areas experiencing high population growth to meet anticipated demand
- \$190 million over the next three years to implement a Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Strategy, starting with diabetes
- \$80 million over the next three years to improve mental health and addiction services, including funding to increase treatment for eating disorder services and early intervention for psychosis
- \$17 million over the next three years to fund the operation of an additional five MRI machines, resulting in about 21,900 additional MRI scans
- \$278 million over the next three years to address various program needs in long-term care homes
- \$154 million over the next three years to increase early detection and treatment of breast, cervical and colorectal cancers. This will also cover the cost of the Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) test used to diagnose and monitor treatment of prostate cancer and extend the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program
- \$135 million over three years to provide better dental care to low-income families.



Improving Access to Family Health Care

The government is improving access to family health care, including:

- \$53 million over the next three years to add 50 more Family Health Teams by 2011/12, targeting rural and under-served communities
- \$38 million over the next three years to create 25 nurse practitioner-led clinics by 2011/12
- More than \$500 million over the next three years towards the hiring of 9,000 nurses by 2011/12 (including 2,000 nurses to be hired in long-term care homes over the next four years)



- \$107 million over the next three years to move towards 2,500 more personal support workers for long-term care homes.

Health System Improvements

The government is making health system improvements by:

- Investing \$14 million in 2007/08 for 10 residential hospices across the province to provide end-of-life care in a home-like environment for patients who cannot be cared for at home
- Contributing \$9 million in 2007/08 to support the development of the new and expanded Ronald McDonald House in Toronto, which will provide support and accommodation for seriously ill children and their families who must travel to Toronto for specialized medical treatment
- Investing \$47 million in 2008/09, growing to \$239 million in 2010/11, in e-health systems such as diagnostic imaging, drug and lab information, and a diabetes registry which will help people with diabetes actively manage their disease in conjunction with their health care providers. ■



Need more information

You can access the Budget papers, speech and news releases on the Ministry of Finance's public website. A link to the site is in place from both INFOweb at:
<http://intra.moh.gov.on.ca>
and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's public website at:
<http://www.health.gov.on.ca>
(click on the **Budget 2008** button).

All media calls regarding the Budget should be directed to Scott Blodgett, Ministry of Finance, Media Relations, at **416-325-0324**.

All calls from the public should be referred to INFOline:

- Toll-Free 1-866-532-3161
- TTY 1-800-387-5559

Inside Health Budget Special Edition, published for the employees of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care by the Communications and Information Branch, can be read online at INFOweb at <http://intra.moh.gov.on.ca>.

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INSIDE Health