



March 2024

The Ontario Budget was handed down on March 26th. Here are some of the highlights:

- \$155M more to build or redevelop long term care homes to fast track construction.
- Additional funding for a total of \$546M, over three years (starting next year), to connect 600,000 people to primary care interprofessional teams.
- An additional \$46 million over three years, starting in 2024–25, to support the continued operation of 59 Behavioural Specialized Unit (BSU) beds added in 2023–24, and to add more than 200 net new BSU beds to expand care for individuals with complex needs.
- Creating a new York University affiliated medical school in Vaughan for training family doctors.
- Expanding hospice sector 84 new adult hospice beds, and 12 new paediatric hospice beds in Hamilton to bring the total number of hospice beds in Ontario to over 750.
- \$152M for housing for people with mental health and addictions.
- \$2B over three years to expand access to home care and increase compensation for PSWs and nurses plus \$1B more for hospitals in 24/25
- The government is having to backpay public sector workers after the lost court battle to the tune of \$6B.
- A higher deficit projected for next year, double previously projection, at \$9.8B. A surplus is projected for 2026/27 – the election year.

Link to full Budget: <https://budget.ontario.ca/2024/contents.html>.

Excerpt from Budget on LTC:

Building Long-Term Care Homes

Ontario continues to make progress on its plan to build modern, safe and comfortable long-term care homes for seniors and residents. Through planned investments that total a historic \$6.4 billion since 2019, Ontario is making progress to build 58,000 new and upgraded beds across the province by 2028.

Increasing the Construction Funding Subsidy

The government is investing \$155 million in 2024–25 to increase the construction funding subsidy, to support the cost of developing or redeveloping a long-term care home. This additional investment will fast-track construction for the next tranche of beds so that work can begin by November 30, 2024. Eligible projects will receive an additional construction funding subsidy of up to \$35 per bed, per day, for 25 years. In addition, eligible not-for-profit applicants will be able to convert up to \$15 per bed, per day, of the supplemental funding into a construction grant payable at the start of construction, to increase projects' upfront equity and enable applicants to secure financing.

The government first provided a supplemental increase to the construction funding subsidy in November 2022 to stimulate the start of construction for long-term care homes across Ontario. Since introducing the supplemental increase, Ontario advanced construction for over 60 long-term care homes and over 10,000 beds between April 1, 2022, and August 31, 2023.

Making Progress to Build Long-Term Care Homes

Through the Accelerated Build Pilot Program, four new long-term care homes have been built on hospital-owned lands. These homes have created 1,272 new long-term care beds and are helping to meet urgent needs for more long-term care homes in Mississauga, Ajax and Toronto.

The government continues to make progress towards its commitment of building 58,000 new and upgraded beds to modern design standards across the province by 2028 with over 18,000 beds that are either open, under construction, or have approval to start construction. This includes:

- Over 4,500 beds open with new capacity of 2,246 beds and 2,336 upgraded beds;
- Over 12,500 beds under construction with 6,745 new beds and 5,789 upgraded beds; and
- Approximately 1,200 beds that have governmental approvals to start construction.

In response to higher costs in the sector, the government is increasing operating funding to help support the financial stability of new and existing long-term care homes.

The Loan Guarantee Program also continues to be available to support financing of the development of long-term care beds in non-municipal, not-for-profit projects.

Since the 2023 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review, the following long-term care homes have been completed and opened to new residents:

- **Wellbrook East and Wellbrook West**, two new state-of-the-art long-term care homes, opened in November 2023, with 632 new long-term care beds in Mississauga, developed under the Ontario Accelerated Build Pilot Program; and
- **Woodland Villa** opened in December 2023 with 17 new long-term care beds and 111 upgraded long-term care beds in Long Sault.

Adding More Specialized Long-Term Care Beds

The government is investing an additional \$46 million over three years, starting in 2024–25, to support the continued operation of 59 Behavioural Specialized Unit (BSU) beds added in 2023–24, and to add more than 200 net new BSU beds to expand care for individuals with complex needs. Behavioural Specialized Units provide timely and appropriate support for individuals with responsive behaviours requiring increased levels of care. The government continues to provide connected and convenient health care for the people of Ontario by providing the right care in the right place.