

Protecting Our Progress

Together, the people of Ontario have come a long way. After months of perseverance and sacrifice, there is a light at the end of the tunnel with Ontario achieving one of the highest vaccination rates in the world.

In consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, the government has released *A Plan to Safely Reopen Ontario and Manage COVID-19 for the Long Term*, which outlines the Province's gradual approach to lifting remaining public health and workplace safety measures by March 2022. This phased approach will be guided by the ongoing assessment and monitoring of key public health and health care indicators, such as the identification of any new COVID-19 variants, increases in hospitalizations and intensive care unit (ICU) occupancy, and rapid increases in transmission.

But the job is not done. This is why the government is taking action to protect the progress the people of Ontario have made against COVID-19, while building a health and long-term care system that delivers the quality of care our loved ones deserve.

Highlights of Ontario's plan to protect our progress include:

Protecting People's Health

- To protect the people of Ontario against COVID-19, more than 22 million doses have been administered as part of Ontario's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, resulting in one of the highest vaccination rates in the world.
- To ensure hospitals can continue to provide high-quality patient care, the government is providing hospitals with over \$1.8 billion in 2021–22 to support 3,100 new and additional beds, reduce surgical and diagnostic imaging backlogs and to help hospitals keep pace with patient needs and increase access to high-quality care.
- To strengthen the health care and long-term care workforce, Ontario is investing \$342 million, beginning in 2021–22, to add over 5,000 new and upskilled registered nurses and registered practical nurses as well as 8,000 personal support workers. In addition, Ontario is investing \$57.6 million, beginning in 2022–23, to hire 225 nurse practitioners in the long-term care sector.
- To help hospitalized patients continue their recovery and rehabilitation at home, where they are most comfortable, the Province is investing an additional \$548.5 million over three years to expand home and community care. This funding would support up to 28,000 post-acute surgical patients and 21,000 patients with complex health conditions every year.

Protecting Seniors

- To help seniors stay safely in their homes, the government proposes to extend the Seniors' Home Safety Tax Credit to 2022. The 2022 credit extension would provide an estimated \$35 million in support to about 32,000 people, or \$1,100, on average, up to a maximum benefit of \$2,500.
- To address decades of neglect and help those waiting to get into a long-term care home, Ontario plans to invest an additional \$3.7 billion, beginning in 2024–25, to build an additional 10,000 net new long-term care beds and upgrade 12,000 existing beds. This would bring total investment to \$6.4 billion since spring 2019 — a historic investment that will lead to more than 30,000 net new beds and about 28,000 upgraded long-term care beds across the province.
- To ensure long-term care resident safety, the government is providing an additional \$72.3 million over three years to increase enforcement capacity including doubling the number of inspectors across the province by 2022–23. This will make Ontario's inspector to long-term care homes ratio the highest in Canada.

Protecting People

- To ensure students have a safe and successful 2021–22 school year, the government is providing more than \$1.6 billion in resources to protect schools against COVID-19.
- To help schools remain safe, Ontario has allocated over \$600 million to improve ventilation and filtration in schools, including installing over 70,000 standalone high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters and other ventilation devices.
- To help ensure the province's most vulnerable and those who care for them are safe, the government is investing an additional \$8.9 million for COVID-19 supports in congregate care settings including homes for children or adults with developmental disabilities and shelters. This funding will help to provide supports such as personal protective equipment, Infection Prevention and Control measures, and HEPA filters to improve ventilation.