

**Building a Stronger, Healthier Ontario**  
*2017 Budget Highlights Major Health Care Investments*  
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Ontario is continuing to put patients first by making significant investments in the 2017 Budget to support vital health care services that families depend on.

Today, Dr. Eric Hoskins, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, spoke in Toronto to The Empire Club of Canada to highlight the province's commitment to delivering high quality health care services for patients and their families across Ontario.

The budget includes important health care investments, such as:

- Making prescription medications [free for everyone with OHIP coverage 24 years of age and younger](#). Starting January 1st, 2018, the OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare Program will provide access to more than 4,400 drug products to young people, regardless of family income, with no upfront costs.
- Improving access to high quality health care services with [additional investments to reduce wait times](#), allowing patients to have tests done more quickly, see a specialist when needed and get surgery faster.
- Boosting access to primary care and helping more people [access teams of health care professionals](#), to ensure patients can receive comprehensive and personalized health care where they need it.
- [Increasing operating funding](#) to every public hospital across Ontario to provide faster access to care and expand crucial services and procedures, as well as \$9 billion in additional investments in the [construction of new hospital projects](#) to address the growing demand for health care services.
- *Improving access to [high-quality care for people living with dementia](#)* and their care partners, including increasing access to adult day programs and enhancing caregiver respite services so they can schedule breaks for rest, family commitments or other priorities.
- Expanding access to existing [psychotherapy services](#) to help people living with conditions such as anxiety and depression.

Ontario is increasing access to care, reducing wait times and improving the patient experience through its [Patients First Action Plan for Health Care](#) and [OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare](#) - protecting health care today and into the future.

## QUOTES

" Our government remains committed to transforming our health care system to ensure patients and their families receive high quality services. The 2017 Budget delivers on that commitment

with significant new investments, including a new program that will give four million children and youth a better start in life by providing free prescription drugs to everyone age 24 and under"

- Dr. Eric Hoskins

Minister of Health and Long-Term Care

## QUICK FACTS

- As part of the 2017 Budget, Ontario is investing an additional \$7 billion in health care over the next three years.
- Ontario's health care budget will total \$53.8 billion in 2017–18 — a 3.8 per cent increase from the previous year.
- 94 per cent of people in Ontario now have a primary health care provider.
- A Fraser Institute study showed that the median wait time — from family doctor to specialist to treatment — was 15.6 weeks in Ontario in 2016, the lowest of any province.
- The province is set to balance the budget this year and maintain a balanced budget for the next two years. A balanced budget means more funding for the programs and services people rely on most.

## LEARN MORE

- [2017 Ontario Budget](#)
- [Patients First: Action Plan for Health Care](#)

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