



DOWNEY DIGEST

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A NOTE FROM DOUG

Happy New Year!

I may be a little late in sharing that greeting, as we're now facing down the start of spring, but your Ontario government has been hard at work since the Christmas break. The province has continued to make strides towards ensuring that Ontario is a place where you can live, work and grow with affordable housing, common sense legislation and investments in communities where they need it the most.

I look forward to sharing our progress and the next steps for our government over the coming months with you.

ONTARIO CONNECTING LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS TO SPECIALIZED CARE

The Ontario government is investing an additional \$15 million this year through the Local Priorities Fund to invest a total of \$35 million in 2023-24, to help long-term care homes support residents with complex needs like dementia and bariatric care. The funding will ensure residents can connect to the right care in the right place and help reduce avoidable emergency visits and hospital stays.

Launched in 2022, the Local Priorities Fund invested \$20 million in 2022-23 to help long-term care homes purchase specialized equipment and train staff to provide more specialized care.



The fund also helped current residents avoid hospital admissions who have new, or increasingly complex medical or specialized equipment needs which could not be previously accommodated in their long-term care home.

Some examples of the 173 successful projects invested in last year include:

- 15 long-term care homes in central Ontario purchased bladder scanners to quickly assess and treat residents, avoiding trips to the hospital
- in Toronto, \$1.3 million was used to create four new nurse-led outreach teams and expand three existing teams to provide staff training and time-sensitive medical supports to help reduce avoidable emergency department transfers
- A \$1.7 million investment in Royal Ottawa Place to hire specially trained staff that can connect residents to mental health and behavioural care
- In the North East and North West regions, close to \$3 million supported a range of projects, including training of staff on dementia, wound care, and how to use specialized equipment such as bariatric lifts and bladder scanners. Long-term care residents also received support from a speech language pathologist, personal support workers and a Cree translator/interpreter.

ONTARIO PROTECTING COMMUNITIES AND KEEPING PEOPLE SAFE

The Ontario government is investing \$24 million over three years to help prevent repeat and violent offenders from committing serious crimes while on bail. The investment is being delivered through the Bail Compliance and Warrant Apprehension (BCWA) Grant program and will help police services establish dedicated bail compliance and/or warrant apprehension teams to monitor high-risk individuals. It will also support new technology for a provincewide bail compliance monitoring system.

As part of this investment, the Barrie Police service will receive \$1.2 million.



ONTARIO FIGHTING BACK AGAINST RISE IN HATE CRIME

The Ontario government is investing more than \$1.7 million to help stop hate-motivated crimes across the province. The funding will be delivered over two years through the Safer and Vital Communities (SVC) Grant program as part of the province's plan to promote safe and inclusive communities.

The SVC grant is open to community-based, not-for-profit organizations and First Nation Band Councils. The theme of this year's grant is Preventing Hate-Motivated Crime Through Community Collaboration with a focus on cultural, ethnic and faith-based hate in communities that have experienced an increase in hate-motivated crime. Applicants are required to partner with their local police service and are encouraged to partner with at least one other organization from a different sector to ensure a broad range of community engagement.

The 2024 SVC grant builds on the Ontario government's \$20.5 million investment in the Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism to combat antisemitism and Islamophobia.

GOVERNMENTS INVESTING UP TO \$8 MILLION IN ONTARIO'S DAIRY PROCESSING SECTOR

The governments of Canada and Ontario are investing up to \$8 million, through the Sustainable Canadian Agriculture Partnership (Sustainable CAP), to create or increase processing efficiencies and enhance food safety in the province's dairy processing sector.

Eligible dairy business are invited to apply or funding through the Dairy Processing Modernization Initiative to acquire modern technologies that increase production efficiency and ensure food safety in their facilities. Cost-share support through this initiative can be used to help cover the purchase and installation of new and refurbished equipment and its associated cost, such as training.



The investment supports the objectives of the government's Grow Ontario Strategy to strengthen the agriculture and food supply chain and build resiliency in the face of any future disruption.

The Dairy Processing Modernization Initiative is open to cow, goat, sheep and water buffalo milk processors. Each eligible applicant can receive up to \$200,00 in cost-share support. Applications open on April 2, 2024, and will remain open until the initiative is fully subscribed. Eligible project costs can be incurred as of April 2, 2024.

The Sustainable CAP is five-year (2023-2028), \$3.5 billion investment by federal, provincial and territorial governments to strengthen competitiveness, innovation, and resiliency of the agriculture, agri-food and agri-based products sector. This includes \$1 billion in federal programs and activities and a \$2.5 billion commitment that is cost-shared 60 per cent federally and 40 per cent provincially/territorially for programs that are designed and delivered by the provinces and territories.

ONTARIO TAKING NEXT STEPS IN PLAN TO FURTHER REDUCE WAIT TIMES FOR SURGERIES AND DIAGNOSTIC PROCEDURES

As part of the next step to implement *Your Health*, a plan for connected and convenient care, the Ontario government is proposing regulatory changes that, would name Accreditation Canada as the inspection body responsible for ensuring the highest quality standards and strong oversight 900+ current and all future community surgical and diagnostic centres, effective April 1, 2024.

Beginning in Spring 2024, the government will also take the next step in expanding the number of community surgical and diagnostic centres licensed in the province to deliver additional OHIP insured services.



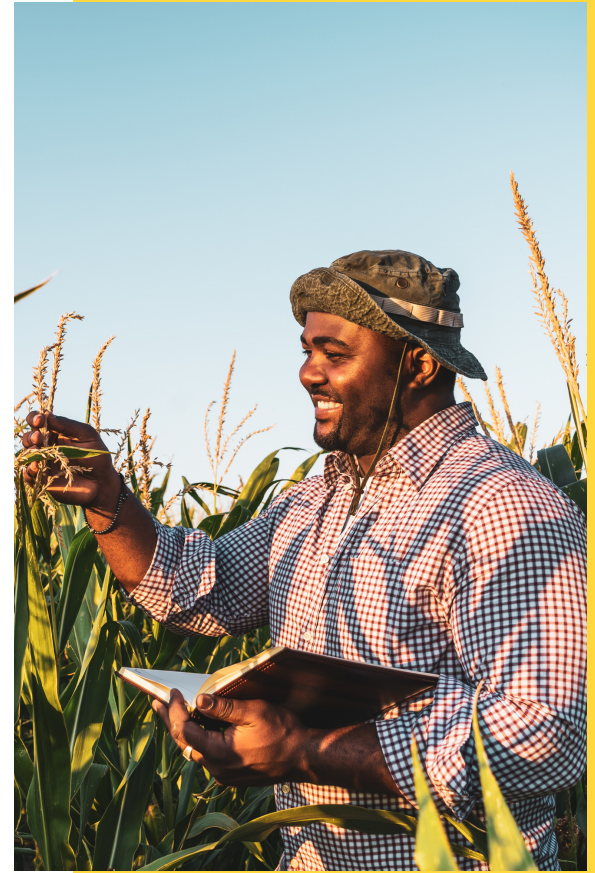
Through the actions taken to date as part of Your Health, Ontario is connecting more people to surgeries and diagnostics care and reducing wait times. Progress over the past year includes:

- Achieving the shortest surgical wait times of any province in Canada in 2023, with nearly 80 per cent of people receiving their procedure within clinically recommended target times;
- Reducing the surgical waitlist since its peak in March 2022, resulting in 16,000 fewer people waiting for the surgeries they need;
- Eliminating the backlog of cervical cancer screening tests at the end of August 2023. Testing turnaround times returned to the pre-pandemic standard of 10 to 14 days;
- Completion rates of pediatric surgeries are reaching 112 per cent of pre-pandemic levels, as of December 2023; and
- Increasing diagnostic imaging capacity by an additional 97,767 MRI and 116,443 CT operating hours.

ONTARIO HELPING BUILD RURAL COMMUNITY LEADERS

The Ontario government is investing up to \$836,250 over three years to increase the capacity of rural volunteers and organizations across the province. The Ontario Association of Agricultural Societies is partnering with the Rural Ontario Institute to build upon the good work done by the agricultural society volunteers by providing training and workshops that will enhance the leadership and governance skills as well as management practices.

This funding will help to provide educational supports focused on leadership, governance, and community engagement to more than 200 agricultural societies across the province.



My office is always here to help with any provincial matters and concerns. While we endeavour to respond to every matter in a timely manner, our team is often busy helping constituents. Take a look at the month so far:



6,422

email contacts



180

phone calls



59

walk-in visits



13

new cases

You can always contact us at Doug.Downey@pc.ola.org or 705-726-5538.