

Today's News - Friday, April 20, 2018

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Ontario is making major investments in the health care system to address capacity issues, reduce wait times and provide better care closer to home. Premier Kathleen Wynne was at the annual meeting of the Registered Nurses' Association of Ontario in Toronto today to discuss how the government is supporting nurses by strengthening the health care system so it can better meet the needs of a growing and aging population. Premier Wynne shared how Ontario is increasing funding for the hospital sector with an \$822 million investment in 2018–19 — a major increase of 4.6 per cent on average. This increase, in addition to the over 3 per cent provided last year, is allowing hospitals to expand essential services, provide faster access to critical care and priority procedures, and invest with precision in the specific needs of their patients and community. Ontario is also providing more than \$19 billion over the next 10 years to build and expand hospitals. Together, these investments support nurses and other hospital staff in providing better care. To create a stronger, more integrated mental health system in Ontario, the government is launching a historic expansion of mental health and addiction services, with a funding boost of \$2.1 billion that brings total mental health care spending to more than \$17 billion over four years. This is the biggest mental health investment in Canadian history and will ensure that people are able to access mental health care where and when they need it. The Premier also highlighted how the province will continue to improve care in long-term care (LTC) homes by:

- Investing more than \$300 million over the next three years, including \$50 million in 2018-19, to hire an additional registered nurse at every LTC home
- Increasing the amount of direct care for each person in LTC to a provincial average of four hours daily by 2022, providing residents with more direct, one-on-one patient care, including nursing, personal support and therapeutic care
- Creating 5,000 new LTC beds across Ontario by 2022. These beds, which will include nearly 500 for Indigenous communities, are part of Ontario's commitment to create more than 30,000 new beds over the next decade.

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Also Today:

- Ontario is conducting more than two dozen inspection blitzes in 2018-2019 to ensure employers are meeting health, safety and employment standards at workplaces across the province. Enforcement staff will visit workplaces such as warehouses, "big box" retail, grocery stores, chemical manufacturing plants, pulp and paper mills, hotels, golf courses, health care organizations, mines and construction projects. In particular, sectors with new and young workers, temporary help, vulnerable workers and a history of low compliance will be targeted. Occupational health and safety inspectors will look for occupational health and safety violations involving issues such as working at heights, hazardous materials, machine guarding, conveyors, mobile equipment, violence, ergonomics and falls. The goals will be to raise awareness that safety is everyone's responsibility, to enhance workplace health and safety and to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and deaths. Employment standards officers will check for employment standards violations that could affect employees in the construction sector. The goal is to ensure that workers are receiving their entitlements and employers are aware of, and complying with, their responsibilities.

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Our government's plan to build a stronger, healthier Ontario includes **historic new investments in health care**, including free **medications for everyone under 25 and over 65 through OHIP+**, providing free **tuition to over 210,000 students** and on-the-job learning opportunities to help land a great job, helping 100,000 kids access quality, licensed child care and making it more affordable for families, making everyday life more affordable by **reducing electricity costs by 25 per cent** on average through our Fair Hydro Plan, and taking action to **make housing more affordable** for homebuyers and renters through our Fair Housing Plan.