

Today's News - Thursday, March 22, 2018

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Today, Premier Kathleen Wynne announced there will be an additional \$822 million investment in Ontario hospitals in 2018–19 — an increase of 4.6 per cent. The Premier was joined by Dr. Helena Jaczek, Minister of Health and Long-Term Care, and Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance, at North York General Hospital to explain how this major increase in hospital funding will provide better access to care, reduce wait times, address capacity issues and better meet the needs of Ontario's growing and aging population. This overall increase of 4.6 per cent is on top of the 3.2 per cent provided last year — allowing hospitals to invest with more precision in the care and supports that address the specific needs of their patients and community. Patients and families across Ontario will also directly benefit from this increased funding with the expansion of essential services to reduce wait times and priority procedures such as cardiac care, critical care, chemotherapy, treatment for strokes, hip and knee replacements, and medical imaging.

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Also Today:

Premier Kathleen Wynne released the following statement today: "Today, I was in Thunder Bay to mark a historic step on our path to reconciliation with Indigenous people. The federal and Ontario governments are partnering with 22 First Nations to provide funding for Wataynikaneyap Power to connect 16 remote First Nations communities in Northern Ontario to the provincial power grid. Ontario and First Nations partners have been working towards this day for many years. I want to thank our federal partner for coming to the table and helping us make this happen. When complete in 2023, the Wataynikaneyap Power Grid Connection Project will be the largest Indigenous-led and Indigenous-owned infrastructure project in Ontario history. It will mean thousands of people will no longer have to rely on dirty diesel fuel to meet their energy needs. Access to clean, reliable and affordable electricity will open up new economic opportunities. It will lower the cost of housing and help ensure a clean supply of drinking water. It will mean cleaner air and a healthier place to live right now — and in the future. I want to thank the 22 First Nations whose leadership and vision made this project possible. The way this project came into being as an Indigenous-led and Indigenous-owned initiative has given us a roadmap for the kind of nation-to-nation relationships that we need to keep building. And it sends a message to Indigenous youth that you don't have to leave your community behind to find opportunity, and you can develop a career there in engineering, or in a skilled trade, or as a senior manager in a major construction project. The other important message we are sending today is that reconciliation, fairness and equality are no longer just words — they are actions. We are walking this journey, together. This year marks the tenth anniversary of Ontario's Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation. We have looked long and hard at the pain and injustices of the past, and we are taking real steps to do better. We are showing that we care about the future of Indigenous communities, and the opportunities that will be available to Indigenous youth. And we are moving forward, together, with Indigenous partners leading the way. Today is a great day. We are building the kind of Canada that we know is possible. And we are building it together."

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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 24 and under through OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharmacare, 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.