



2022 Ontario Pre-Budget Submission

From

The Ontario Association of Prosthetics and Orthotics

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Ontario Association of Prosthetics and Orthotics (OAPO)

Putting Patients First – Fixing Ontario’s Prosthetic & Orthotic Funding Support

Ontario’s outdated funding for prosthetics and orthotics is putting an unsustainable burden on patients

- Tens of thousands of patients across Ontario are entirely dependent upon medically-necessary, custom-made prostheses (artificial limbs) and orthoses (braces) to live, work and learn independently.
- This includes people born with missing or underdeveloped limbs, those who have lost limbs to injury or medical amputation for causes such as diabetes or necrotizing fasciitis, patients with neuromuscular conditions like stroke, multiple sclerosis or muscular dystrophy, and individuals impacted by many forms of muscular weakness or imbalance, including the effects of long-COVID.
- Ontario patients deserve prosthetic and orthotic treatments that are up to the current standard of care and medically-appropriate for their condition and improved quality of life.
- However, the Ministry of Health’s Assistive Device Program (ADP) Prosthetic and Orthotic policies and pricing have not received any meaningful change or vital updates in over 15 years. They have not kept up with either increasing costs or the current standard of care.
- OAPO estimates over the same time, commonly used materials in orthotics and prosthetics have increased by an average of 47%.
- As a result, prosthetic and orthotic patients are receiving proportionally less funding support every year from ADP, and orthotic patients are also unable to receive ADP funding for many necessary treatments. This is forcing them and their families to face an ever-increasing out-of-pocket cost burden, as well as putting a strain on the limited budgets of charitable organizations that many of them rely upon.

- Without access to additional funding for prosthetics and orthotics through ADP, even more patients will be unable to afford the critical assistive devices they need.

Put patients first by providing urgently needed funding for prosthetic and orthotic treatment through ADP

- In 2018, the Auditor-General of Ontario identified inconsistent and outdated pricing reviews as a major problem with the Assistive Devices Program (ADP), resulting in patients receiving compensation for prosthetic and orthotic devices well below the actual cost and leaving them ineligible to get funding support for more appropriate treatments.
- OAPO strongly supports the Auditor-General's recommendation to institute regular, consistent pricing reviews to ensure that patients are eligible for the compensation and access to the prosthesis or orthosis that they need.
- The most urgent priority is ***immediate additional funding through ADP for prosthetic and orthotic treatments***. This is required to address over a decade of significant underinvestment preventing thousands of patients from receiving the standard of care that they require.
- The annual need is calculated based on CPI increases since the last price adjustments times the average annual ADP spent on orthotic and prosthetic devices over the past four years.
 - o ***Annual cost:*** \$9.7 million

Ensuring adequate funding support for prosthetic and orthotic treatments ensures patient quality of life and prevents unnecessary health care expenditures

- The Ontario Association of Prosthetics and Orthotics (OAPO) is the not-for-profit professional association representing Ontario's prosthetic and orthotic health professionals.
- Certified Prosthetists and Certified Orthotists are the only health care professionals recognized by ADP with the authority to provide prosthetic and orthotic treatments. Our members work with Registered technicians and allied health professionals to provide comprehensive care, evaluating patients and constructing & adapting the patient-specific treatments our patients require for independent living.
- This customized and patient-specific approach mitigates long-term cost impacts on both ADP and the Ontario health care system. Properly built and fit prosthetic or orthotic treatments, as only a Certified Prosthetist and Orthotist can provide, are crucial to reducing fall risk, the most avoidable cost to our healthcare system.

- Short-term cost containment does not only hurt patients' pocketbooks and quality of life; it leads to long-term cost impacts.
- Inappropriate or ill-fitting treatments will always lead to patient complications, either requiring the replacement with a new device at greater cost (with resulting impacts on ADP), or the need for costly and avoidable clinical attention to address serious infections, subsequent amputations or other physical ailments.
- Inadequate funding also places a significant strain on space in our healthcare system, as patients in hospitals and rehabilitation facilities cannot be safely discharged until they have the prostheses and orthoses they need.