STRENGTHENING ONTARIO'S HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM

The Issue: To meet the health-care needs of all Ontarians today and in the future, universities, government and health providers must work together to promote a comprehensive approach to care, ensure access to the latest health research and technology, produce advances in preventive care, train the health professionals our province needs, and support the development of age-friendly communities.

KEY FACTS

10,000

Number of students that graduate from university health programs each year, including nearly 4,500 nurses and more than 3,000 doctors.

[1] Statistics Canada, "Age and sex, and type of dwelling data: Key results from the 2016 Census." http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quoti-dien/170503/dq170503a-eng.htm

[2] Ontario Ministry of Finance. "Ontario Population Projections Update, 2016-2041." http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/projections/

[3] Financial Accountability Office of Ontario. "Long-term Budget Outlook 2017." October 2017.

The background

- Ensuring Ontario continues to have strong and accessible health care requires hard work across the whole system and in our communities. It calls for:
  - Scientists and researchers who are developing the latest medical technology and treatments.
  - A full assortment of programs and initiatives including continued improvements to our hospitals, greater access to home care and long-term care homes, and a renewed focus on mental health, preventive care and strategies to preserve health.
  - Communities with services, infrastructure and cultural activities that are accessible for people of all ages to help Ontarians enjoy healthy, enriching lifestyles at every stage of their lives.
  - Equal access to high-quality services in all parts of the province.

- Today, 16.7 per cent of Ontarians are 65 and over, outnumbering Ontarians who are under 15 for the first time.[1] By 2041, the Ontario Ministry of Finance estimates that one in four Ontarians will be a senior.[2]

- As Ontario's population grows and ages, it is estimated that health-care spending will account for 55 per cent of Ontario's program spending by 2050, up from 42 per cent today.[3]

- Whether it's through educating nearly 4,500 nurses and more than 3,000 doctors every year, investigating how to use the latest artificial intelligence (AI) technology to improve medical treatments, or partnering with communities to offer care to those who don't have access to a family doctor or nurse practitioner, universities play a pivotal role in providing Ontarians with a comprehensive and robust health-care system.

> **"Ontario's health-care system is facing some remarkable challenges, particularly over the next 20 years, and universities are going to be key partners, not just to hospitals but all providers, in coming up with ideas that ultimately address those core challenges."**
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> – Anthony Dale, President and CEO of the Ontario Hospital Association, at the Ontario's Universities Roundtable on the Aging Population
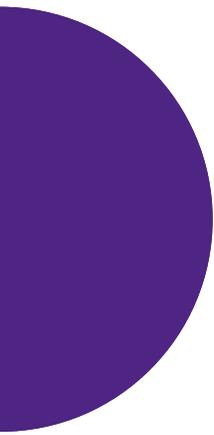
What Ontario's universities are doing

In partnership with hospitals and health organizations across the province, universities are having an impact on every aspect of care. This work includes:

- Conducting health research that helps develop personalized cancer treatments, therapeutic robotics, mental-health treatments and much more.

- Producing research that keeps Ontario's health-care system efficient and cost-effective. This includes work looking at how to help patients move comfortably and efficiently from hospital to community and long-term care.

- Educating the doctors, nurses and other medical professionals and managers who provide our communities with the highest-quality care. More than 10,000 students graduate each year from a variety of university health programs, including rehabilitation sciences, dentistry, medicine, nursing, occupational therapy, optometry, pharmacy, physician assistant, optometry, physiotherapy and midwifery.

- Working with communities to support the development of age-friendly policies and infrastructure, and to help ensure our health-care system is equitable and accessible to people of all ages.

How government can help

In order to ensure Ontario's health-care system can meet the needs of an aging population and continue to provide Ontarians of all ages with access to the latest treatments, technology and high-quality care, the Ontario government should:

- Continue to financially support research in medicine and health care.

- Work with universities, hospitals, start-ups and others so that the best health research and inventions reach Ontarians when they need them.

- Continue working with universities to ensure Ontario has the right number and mix of health-care professionals working where they are most needed so that all Ontarians have access to high-quality health care close to home.

Partnerships on health:

Health Ecosphere, a collaboration led by York University and Southlake Regional Health Centre, works with dozens of partners, including businesses and other research institutes, to develop personalized health-care technologies and state-of-the-art care.

Ontario's universities are committed to ensuring Ontarians all over the province have access to high-quality care. Since 2011, family physicians educated by the Northern Ontario School of Medicine have given approximately 190,000 Northern Ontarians improved access to a family doctor.

Universities also educate Nurse Practitioners who have been providing quality care to Ontarians, especially those in remote and under-serviced communities, for more than 20 years – health care that, along with family physicians, has helped improve Ontarians' access to care close to home.

For more examples of how universities are partnering for success, visit *ontariosuniversities.ca*.

Partnering for a better future

- By investing in health research, comprehensive care and age-friendly communities, we can ensure that Ontarians across the province, no matter their age or where they live, have access to strong and reliable care that helps them lead healthy and fulfilling lives.

Stay informed

- Go to *ontariosuniversities.ca* to learn more about how to invest in Ontario's health-care system.