

ONTARIO UNIVERSITIES: REBUILDING ONTARIO'S HEALTH-CARE SYSTEM



The Issue: A healthy economy depends on a healthy population. Ontario's health-care system needs a robust workforce and continuing innovation in health care, life sciences and medical technologies. Ontario's universities will continue to partner with government and stakeholders to address these challenges in the immediate and long-term.

Background

- A [2021 report](#) released by Ontario's Financial Accountability Office estimates that it will take more than three years to eliminate the backlog of elective surgeries at a cost of approximately \$1.3 billion.
- In response, the Ontario government has increased investments to bolster our healthcare workforce and infrastructure. Ongoing support and investment in the sector will be essential to ensuring our health-care system is prepared to meet the needs of Ontarians in the years to come.
- Ontario will need a strong pipeline of workers in health care, life sciences and medical technologies to address the labour shortage and backlog within Ontario's health-care system.
- In addition, innovation in health care is critical to navigate through COVID-19 and beyond, through future outbreaks and the rapidly changing needs of the province's health-care system.

Ontario's universities are acting to supply the highly skilled health-care workforce needed to support the long-term prosperity of our province.

For example, Ontario's nursing programs are developing additional pathways to graduate nurses with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing in as little as 19 months.

Additionally, programs are streaming students into high-needs clinical areas such as critical care and long-term care to build the skills and hands-on knowledge needed to practice post-graduation.

Applications data indicates that Ontario secondary school applications to health professions and related programs at universities increased by more than 33% between 2020 and 2022. In addition, during this same timeframe, all applications to Ontario university nursing education programs have increased by 35%.

How Universities Are Supporting Ontario

Amid the challenges brought on by COVID-19, Ontario's universities are helping Ontario rebuild its health-care system by meeting the need for a strong health-care workforce, creating Ontario-made innovations and advancing health-focused research.

- Universities graduate more than 10,000 students each year from health-care programs. They have the ability to educate and train greater numbers of doctors, nurses, nurse practitioners and other health professionals and managers needed to navigate COVID-19 and beyond in order to reduce the growing burden placed on our province's health-care system.
- There is strong demand in the health-care programs universities offer and record-high applications to these programs. This highly skilled, in-demand talent is ready to meet the need today and into the future, ensuring Ontario's patients receive critical care.
- University researchers are also conducting ground-breaking research in health care that has led to vaccine development, treatments and outcomes modeling, supporting the fight against COVID-19.



Nearly
148,000

New health-care positions requiring a university education in Ontario over the next decade, according to a recent labour needs projection report from [Stokes Economics](#). These labour market projections are in addition to the critical gaps and unfilled positions in health care Ontario faces today.

Partnering for a Strong Ontario

A vibrant and healthy university sector is critical to meeting the needs of students, fostering community economic growth, driving research and innovation and developing the highly skilled talent critical to Ontario's economy.

It is why, in order to fully unleash their potential, Ontario's universities are asking for support – to allow greater flexibility to increase their revenue sources.

It is now more important than ever for government and universities to continue to work together to allow Ontario's universities to build the better and brighter future for our province that we all want to see.