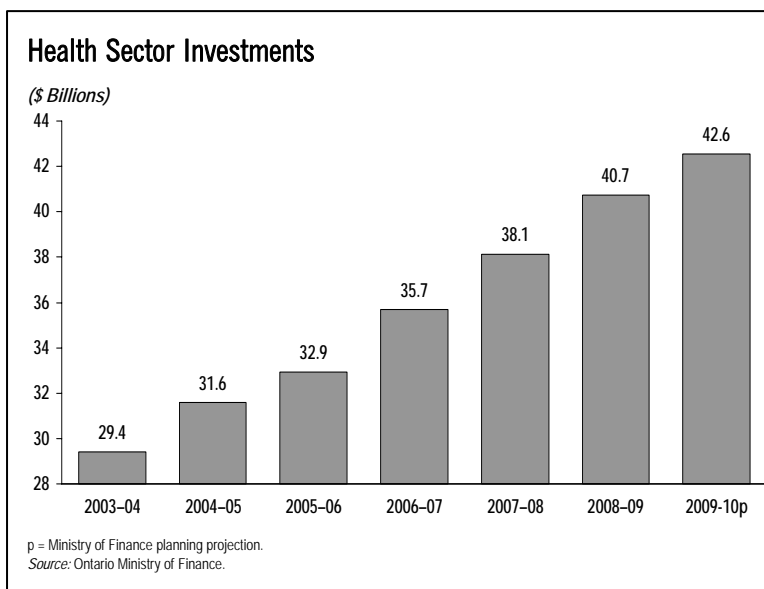
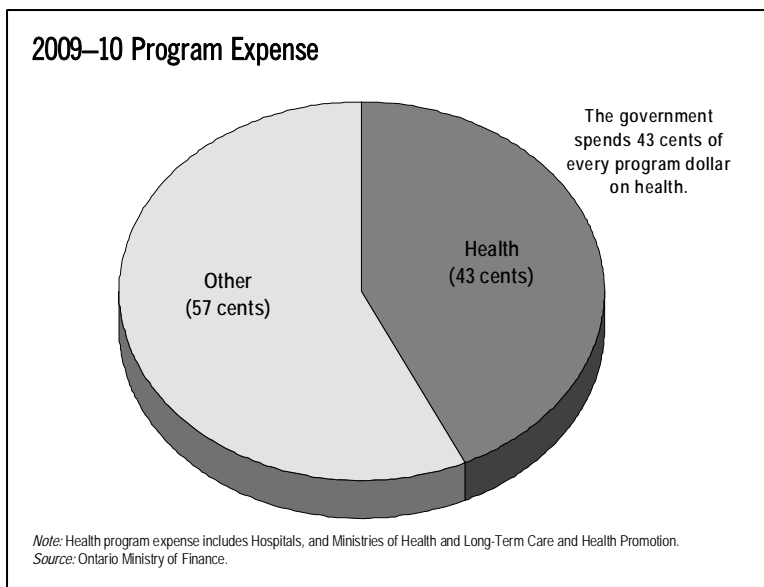


## HEALTH

The McGuinty government believes in a strong universal health care system. Since 2003, the government has taken significant steps to restore services and critical funding to the health care sector. In 2009-10, the government is investing \$13.2 billion more than in 2003-04, a 45 per cent increase. The government spends 43 cents of every program dollar on health.



Since 2003, the McGuinty government has made strategic investments to improve the quality and sustainability of health care for Ontarians. Building on these investments, the 2008 Budget introduced substantial multi-year initiatives for health promotion, disease prevention and the health care system.

## **2009 Ontario Budget**

Even in these difficult economic times, the 2009 Budget is committed to protecting the health care system and the strategic investments that have generated important improvements to the quality of health care that Ontarians receive. The McGuinty government will continue to implement multi-year initiatives, including:

- Reducing Emergency Room (ER) Wait Times
  - Hospitals' net expense will increase 3.5 per cent in 2009-10. This includes a 2.1 per cent increase in the overall base funding formula to meet the service requirements of hospitals
  - \$40 million in 2009-10 to high-growth hospitals to help increase hospital services in Ontario's fastest-growing communities to improve care and reduce wait times
  - \$361 million in 2009-10 to implement the comprehensive ER Wait Time Strategy
  - \$223 million in 2009-10 for the Aging at Home Strategy to provide support to seniors and their caregivers to stay healthy, live with dignity and independence, and also ease Alternate Level of Care (ALC) pressures.
  
- Improving Access to Family Health Care
  - \$35 million over two years to create 22 nurse-practitioner-led clinics in addition to the three already announced
  - 50 more Family Health Teams planned over the next two years
  - \$65 million, including \$39 million provided in 2008-09, for increased home care, personal support and homemaking services and enhanced integration between hospitals and Community Care Access Centres.
  
- Modernizing Health Infrastructure
  - Approximately \$2 billion in the next three years to implement eHealth initiatives including the creation of an electronic health record by 2015
  - More than 40 hospital projects are under construction, with over 15 expected to be completed in 2009-10
  - Adding 1,750 long-term care beds in 10 communities across the province by 2012
  - \$35 million in capital investment to support the creation of 100 additional medical school spots. This initiative will be supported by associated operating funding.

## **Achievements Since 2003**

### ***Reducing ER Wait Times***

Reducing the time patients spend in emergency rooms (ER) is a complex issue that requires improvements throughout the entire health system. That is why the McGuinty government has taken a comprehensive approach to reducing the amount of time patients are spending in emergency rooms. The strategy includes:

### Providing appropriate alternatives to ER care:

- Ontario is moving forward with implementing the Chronic Disease Prevention Management strategy, starting with a \$741 million investment over four years to implement the Ontario Diabetes Strategy, which will improve patient care and reduce emergency room wait times
- Developed the Your Health Care Options website ([www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions](http://www.ontario.ca/healthcareoptions)), a one-stop source of information that will enable Ontarians to make informed decisions about where to go for immediate care in their communities. This website has already received 120,000 visits from Ontarians since launching in February 2009
- In partnership with the Ontario Medical Association, implemented the Health Care Connect program, an innovative, made-in-Ontario program devoted to helping Ontarians without a family health care provider find one in their community
- Invested \$4 million to create Nurse-Led Long-Term Care Outreach Teams to provide residents of long-term care homes with timely and appropriate care and provide interventions to reduce avoidable hospital visits
- Established 150 Family Health Teams since 2003 to provide quality health care to Ontarians.

### Speeding the flow of patients from the ER:

Close to 19 per cent of patients in acute care hospital beds in Ontario are in need of ALC beds. The government has invested in a number of initiatives that are working to relieve the ALC pressures in hospitals, thereby freeing up hospital beds and shortening ER wait times. Investments include:

- \$1.1 billion over four years in the Aging at Home Strategy, an unprecedented initiative to provide support to seniors and their caregivers to stay healthy and live with dignity and independence
- \$38.5 million for increased home care, personal support and homemaking services and enhanced integration between hospitals and Community Care Access Centres
- \$22 million in priority funding for Ontario's 14 Local Health Integration Networks to invest in local solutions to further address ALC pressures
- Opened over 7,700 new long-term care beds since 2003.

### Increasing capacity and improving performance within the ER:

- \$39.5 million for the Emergency Room Performance Fund, an initiative designed to improve performance at 23 hospital ERs facing the greatest challenges
- The introduction of process improvement programs that help hospitals improve processes and patient flow in the ERs
- Funding for dedicated nurses to care for patients who arrive by ambulance
- Measuring and reporting on a public website the time patients spend in ERs, so that Ontarians can see the steady progress being made.

## ***Improving Access to Family Health Care***

Improving access is about creating a patient-centred approach in which care is provided by the appropriate health care professionals when and where it is needed.

The McGuinty government's achievements include:

- 10,000 more nurses employed in nursing since 2003. The McGuinty government has hired over 2,300 nurses since the fall of 2007, and more than 900 nurses in 2009-10
- Announcing the locations of three Nurse-Practitioner-led clinics in Belle River, Sault Ste. Marie and Thunder Bay. Another 22 clinics will begin to move forward this spring
- Ensuring Ontarians have more access to family doctors:
  - Approximately 500,000 more people who did not have a family doctor in 2003 now have one
  - Developed Health Care Connect, an innovative, made-in-Ontario program devoted to helping Ontarians without a family health care provider find one in their community
  - More than doubled the number of training and assessment positions offered for International Medical Graduates, from 90 in 2002 to 200 per year since 2004
  - In 2008, 3,467 certificates of registration were issued for physicians to practise in Ontario
  - Opened the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM) in September 2005, with 56 students, the first new medical school in Canada in more than 30 years. In September 2008, the NOSM enrolled its fourth class of 56 students. There are currently 224 students in undergraduate training at the school.

## ***eHealth***

The government launched eHealth Ontario in September 2008 to lead implementation of a coordinated eHealth strategy and the creation of an electronic health record for Ontarians by 2015. Electronic health care records will enable better sharing of health information that will improve patient care and create a more effective and cost-efficient health care system.

The eHealth strategy initially focuses on three priorities:

- Building a diabetes registry to help people with diabetes and their health care providers to control and manage diabetes more effectively in order to reduce associated complications and costs
- Implementing online management of prescription medications to minimize preventable adverse drug reactions
- Developing an eReferral and Resource Matching system in Ontario's hospitals in order to better manage wait times in their emergency departments and to expedite patient referrals to appropriate care settings

A planned investment of approximately \$2 billion over the next three years will be made to advance eHealth initiatives, further modernizing the province's health care infrastructure.

## **Success So Far**

Since the implementation of the Wait Times Strategy in 2005, wait times for various key procedures are down:

- Cataract surgeries: wait time down by 204 days or 66 per cent
- Angiography: wait time down by 33 days or 59 per cent
- Knee replacements: wait time down by 256 days or 58 per cent
- CT scans: wait time down by 46 days or 57 per cent
- Hip replacements: wait time down by 198 days or 56 per cent
- Angioplasty: wait time down by 14 days or 50 per cent
- Cancer surgeries: wait time down by 18 days or 22 per cent
- MRI scans: wait time down by 14 days or 12 per cent
- Pediatric surgeries (since 2006): wait time down by 24 days or nine per cent
- General surgeries (since 2008): wait time down by eight days or seven per cent.

## **Hospital Infrastructure**

The government has been investing in health infrastructure that supports the public health system valued by Ontarians. More than 40 projects in the hospital sector are under construction, with over 15 expected to be completed in 2009-10, including:

- Quinte Health Care's Sills Wing project in Belleville
- Trillium Health Centre's Expansion and Redevelopment of its Mississauga and West Toronto Sites
- Hamilton Health Sciences' General Site Redevelopment project
- Sudbury Regional Hospital's Phase 2 Redevelopment project.

Another nine hospital projects are scheduled to begin in 2009-10.

## **Promoting Health and Preventing Illness**

To promote wellness and prevent illness, the government has:

- Implemented the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion (OAHPP), the province's first-ever, arms'-length public health agency to provide specialized and technical advice and on-the-ground support to front-line health care workers, public health units and government. OAHPP is a centre for research and knowledge of public health in the areas of infectious disease, infection control and prevention, health promotion, chronic disease and injury prevention, and environment and occupational health. One of the key functions of OAHPP will be to provide scientific and laboratory services and expertise
- Launched a public reporting system in September 2008, requiring all hospitals to collect and report patient safety indicators in a clear and standardized manner. Hospitals began by reporting on the rate of Clostridium Difficile Associated Disease. A patient safety website was set up to provide information for patients, health care professionals and the public on patient safety issues. Three additional patient safety indicators were added in December 2008. Ontario is now a leader in the timely reporting of patient safety indicators. By April 2009, Ontario hospitals will be reporting on a total of eight patient safety indicators that will provide valuable data

- Continue to provide three free vaccines to the roster of recommended childhood vaccinations: pneumococcal conjugate, varicella and meningococcal C-conjugate. This saves families about \$600 per child
- Implemented the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination program for grade 8 females in Ontario. HPV is the major cause of cervical cancer. The HPV vaccine, alongside routine cervical screening, will prevent cases of cervical cancer
- Launched the Ontario Diabetes Strategy, the first disease to be tackled under the Chronic Disease Prevention Management Strategy
- The government is investing \$193.5 million over five years to implement Canada's first colorectal cancer screening program. If detected early through regular screening, colorectal cancer is 90 per cent curable
- Implemented the Smoke-free Ontario Strategy to prevent young people from starting to smoke and help smokers quit by offering education and cessation programs. Ontario enacted legislation and developed the award-winning website, [www.stupid.ca](http://www.stupid.ca), aimed at youth and other social marketing campaigns
- Banned the display of tobacco products as set out in the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act*
- Banned smoking in cars where children are present, effective January 2009
- \$10 million annually in an after-school strategy to encourage children to make healthy food choices and be physically active and well
- Investing \$154 million over three years to build on the province's cancer screening strategy, including Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) and breast and cervical cancer screening.