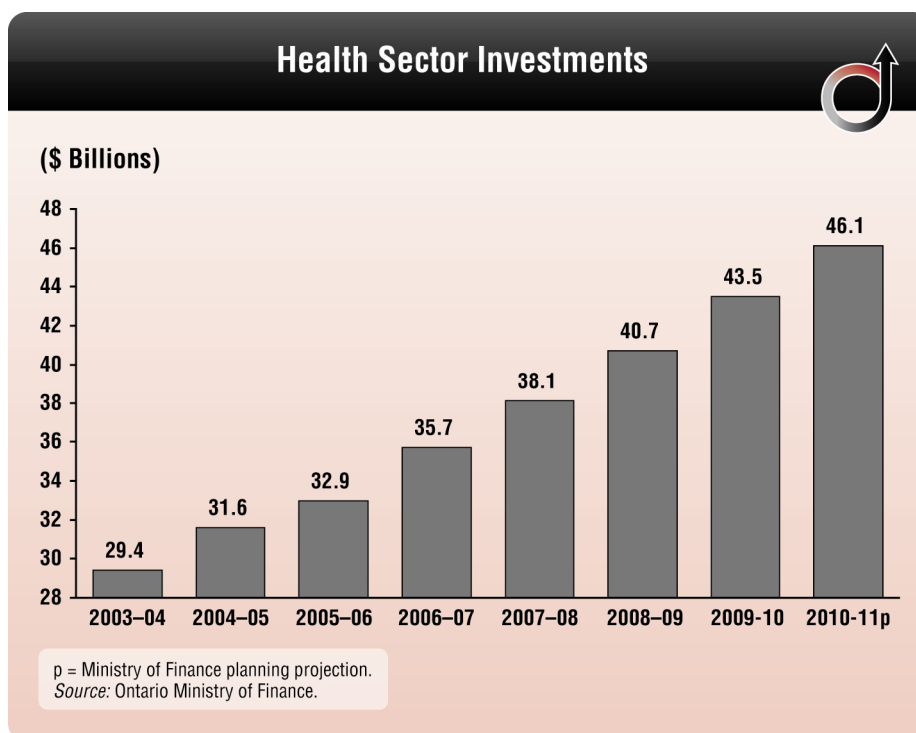




## HEALTH

The McGuinty government believes in a strong, universal health care system. Since 2003, the government has taken significant steps to transform the health sector while creating a system that is focused on patients. In 2010-11, the government is investing \$16.7 billion more than in 2003-04, a 57 per cent increase.



Ontario, like other jurisdictions, faces the challenge of rising health care costs that account for a large share of government budgets. The province will continue to face challenges managing the growth of health care spending without crowding out other priorities such as investing in schools, helping the vulnerable, protecting the environment and investing in infrastructure and economic development.

Today, health sector spending accounts for about 46 cents of every program dollar. If left unchecked, cost drivers could push health care spending to 70 cents of every program dollar in 12 years.

## 2010 Ontario Budget

Health sector expense is projected to increase by \$6 billion from 2009-10 to 2012-13. In addition to maintaining funding growth in major program areas such as hospitals, OHIP and long-term care, the government will continue to support priorities such as:

- Reducing Emergency Room (ER) wait times through investments of \$100 million in 2010-11 for the ER Wait Times Strategy
- Achieving results through the Ontario Diabetes Strategy by:
  - Investing \$8.5 million in 2010-11 to create up to 14 Regional Coordination Centres, which will help organize and manage local diabetes programs
  - Expanding chronic kidney condition services and diabetes care and prevention resources, as well as tracking progress against public targets to ensure that the strategy is producing results for Ontarians.

To maintain investments that are intended to achieve better health outcomes, the McGuinty government is moving forward on strategies to improve the quality and accountability of the health care system. To do this, the government is proposing to:

- Increase hospitals' overall base funding by 1.5 per cent to meet their service requirements
- Introduce changes to Ontario's drug system that would facilitate lower generic drug prices, increase support for pharmacies in rural and under-served areas and support the expansion of clinical services provided by pharmacists
- Increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the health care system by:
  - Introducing legislation to make health care providers and executives more accountable for improving patient care
  - Reviewing the Public Hospitals Act to create a hospital system that taps into the expertise of community partners and health care professionals
  - Creating an independent, expert body to provide recommendations on clinical practice guidelines
- Examine the hospital working capital issue and apply appropriate remedies for hospitals struggling the most with inherited debt in a manner that will reinforce accountability.

## Achievements Since 2003

### *Shorter Wait Times*

Since the implementation of the Wait Times Strategy, Ontarians are getting:

- Cataract surgery 201 days faster
- Hip and knee replacements 203 days and 268 days earlier, respectively
- Cardiac procedures up to 32 days quicker
- MRI and CT scans five and 43 days faster, respectively
- Cancer surgery 17 days sooner
- Pediatric surgery (since 2006) 80 days earlier
- General surgery (since 2008) 21 days faster.

Since 2008, patients with complex conditions are spending 7.9 per cent less time waiting in the ER, and patients with minor, uncomplicated conditions are spending 4.2 per cent less time.

The government has invested in a number of initiatives that are working to relieve the Alternative Level of Care (ALC) pressures in hospitals, thereby freeing up hospital beds and shortening ER wait times, in particular:

- \$1.1 billion over four years, beginning in 2007, in the Aging at Home Strategy, an unprecedented initiative to provide support to seniors and their caregivers to help seniors stay healthy and live with dignity and independence in the comfort of their own homes.

### ***Better Access to Care***

To give Ontarians greater access to health care, the McGuinty government has created a patient-focused approach, where care is provided by the appropriate health care professionals when and where it is needed. As a result, since 2003:

- About 900,000 more Ontarians who did not have a family doctor in 2003, now have access to one
- 2,295 more doctors are practising in Ontario
- 170 Family Health Teams have been created, comprised of a range of health care professionals, working collaboratively to provide care
- Canada's first nurse practitioner-led clinic was established, and the government is moving forward on 25 new nurse practitioner-led clinics across the province by 2012
- The Northern Ontario School of Medicine was opened. The school celebrated its first graduating class of 55 students in 2009
- The travel grant mileage rate under the Northern Health Travel Grant Program has been raised to 41 cents a kilometre, and, for the first time, an accommodation allowance of \$100 per eligible trip was introduced
- More than 8,200 beds have been added to long-term care homes across the province to ensure Ontarians receive the long-term care they need
- Investments in home care have expanded services to about 500,000 Ontarians annually.

### ***Promoting Health and Preventing Illness***

To promote wellness and prevent illness, the government has:

- Toughened tobacco laws, banned smoking in public places and encouraged more Ontarians to quit
- Expanded Ontario's newborn screening program in 2006 to make it Canada's most comprehensive, while continuing to provide three free-of-charge vaccines as part of the roster of recommended childhood vaccinations: pneumococcal conjugate, varicella and meningococcal C-conjugate. This saves families about \$600 per child in fees for vaccines
- Helped young people and families lead healthy, more active lives by mandating 20 minutes of physical activity every day for students in all Ontario elementary schools, passed a new law that requires schools to ban trans fat from food and beverages and announced new nutrition standards for food and beverages sold in schools
- Launched the Ontario Diabetes Strategy, the first disease to be tackled under the chronic disease prevention strategy, including the creation of 51 new diabetes education teams across the province.

### ***Modernizing Infrastructure***

The government has been investing in infrastructure that supports the public health system valued by Ontarians. Construction is underway or completed for more than 100 major hospital projects, including:

- Credit Valley Hospital Redevelopment: the Phase 2 restructuring project consists of two blocks of new construction, as well as renovations to existing space; expansion of 120 acute care beds and related clinical services; maternal/newborn (including special care nursery); regional paediatrics; mental health; rehabilitation (both inpatient and outpatient); complex continuing care

- Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre: Bayview M-Wing addition of four new floors for a perinatal and gynaecology program, including a new ICU, Ambulatory Care and Obstetrics and neonatal follow-up clinic
- York Central Hospital: includes renovations and new construction to expand the emergency department, modernize outdated inpatient facilities, increase maternal/newborn capacity, more than double ambulatory care visits and add adult mental health beds
- Rouge Valley Health System (Ajax-Pickering site): expansion to the emergency department, diagnostic imaging department, cardiac diagnostics, ambulatory care unit, laboratory and mental health services, as well as construction of a new 30-bed Complex Continuing Care Wing
- North Bay Regional Health Centre: a partnership between the North Bay General Hospital and the Northeast Mental Health Centre will create an integrated facility for both acute and specialized mental health care. The project includes more than 834,000 square feet of new construction on an 80-acre site.

For a complete list of Ontario's infrastructure projects, please visit [www.ontario.ca/infrastructure](http://www.ontario.ca/infrastructure).