

Pre-Budget Recommendations

2019 Ontario Budget

The Alliance for Healthier Communities provides team-based health and social services, under one roof and close to home, for Ontario's most vulnerable residents. Our 106 Community Health Centres, Aboriginal Health Access Centres, Community Family Health Teams and Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinics are ready to work with the government to end hallway health care. For Ontario Budget 2019, we propose investments in four key areas to help keep people out of emergency rooms while ensuring efficient use of healthcare funding:

1. Act Now to Provide Dental Care for Seniors

Research shows that too many people turn to hospital emergency rooms and physicians when unable to afford dental care. Each ER visit costs at least \$513.00 and each physician visit costs at least \$33.70, with a total cost to Ontario's healthcare system of over \$38 million each year – with no solution of the dental problem¹. We support the PC government commitment to a dental program for low income seniors. Community Health Centres with dental suites could help deliver a seniors program by expanding services with additional funding.

Budget Request:

Make a down payment on the promised \$98 million/year seniors' dental program with a commitment of \$38 million to allow Community Health Centres, Aboriginal Health Access Centres and Public Health Units with full treatment dental suites to start seeing low income seniors.



2. Support Service Innovations for Frequent Health System Users – TeamCare and Social Prescribing

We deliver two innovative projects that better coordinate care for the most socially and medically complex people, keeping them out of hospitals through prevention and targeted

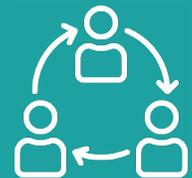
interventions while saving the health system money.

Community Health Centres help deliver **TeamCare**, an evidence-driven model that connects the most complex clients of fee-for-service physicians with supportive inter-professional teams, saving from \$10-\$90 per patient per visit in the processⁱⁱ. TeamCare saves taxpayers' money and ensures that primary health care services help those most in need.

Our in-demand social prescribing project complements clinical treatments without disrupting trusted doctor-patient relationships, by referring people to a range of community supports that directly improve their health and wellbeing. This work advances Ontario's mental health and addictions strategy by supporting people with mild to moderate mental health issues, freeing up clinicians to focus on people with severe mental health issues. These two initiatives help ensure an integrated health system through more effective system navigation.

Budget Request:

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care should keep investing in innovative projects like TeamCare and social prescribing where evidence demonstrates cost efficiencies and improved health outcomes.



3. Support Community-governed Primary Health Care Teams

Our sector has had a decade-long budget freeze. We need sustainable resources to keep leading and delivering the innovative services that help end hallway health care. Our high-tech EMR system and custom-built data analytics software help identify health inequalities. We use these tools to leverage granular sociodemographic data and service interactions to improve systems efficiencies and increase value for money through a focus on health equity. But the costs are increasing and the technologies are aging.

Budget Request:

A 5 per cent budget increase equivalent to \$30 million would help stabilize community health, and fuel innovations like TeamCare and social prescribing for the people who need it most. An annualized investment of \$16.5 million would support performance and information management for Community Health Centres to address increased costs.



4. Tackle opioid crisis with investment in harm reduction services

Ontario remains gripped in a public health crisis with an average of three people dying every day from drug overdoses. There is a poisoned drug supply that is not going away. The Province has committed to fund 21 sites to provide Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS), but some of the communities with the highest rates of opioid-related deaths and hospital admissions are not on the list.

Budget Request:

Increase investment in Consumption and Treatment Services to ensure that every community in Ontario fighting the overdose crisis has access to nimble, evidence-based care that saves lives and connects people to health and social services.



Alliance for Healthier Communities
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ⁱ Research by Alliance for Healthier Communities, using MOHLTC data <https://www.allianceon.org/oral-health>

ⁱⁱ Reid, R.J., Coleman K, Johnson, E.A, et al. The group health medical home at year two: cost savings, higher patient satisfaction, and less burnout for providers. *Health Affairs*. 2010; 29(5):835-843

Reid, R.J, Fishman P.A, Yu, O, et al. Patient-centred medical home demonstration project: a prospective, quasi-experimental, before and after evaluation. *American journal of Managed Care*. 2009;15(9):e71-87