



Canada Social Report  
Provincial/Territorial  
Policy Monitor

January 2014



CANADA SOCIAL REPORT



The [Caledon Institute of Social Policy](#) regularly scans provincial and territorial government websites in order to follow policy and program developments related to our core work and interests. A partial list includes: disability, education, health, housing, income security, poverty reduction, recreation, seniors and youth. This tracking is intended to inform our analysis of policy trends. Monitors can be searched on the Canada Social Report website by date, jurisdiction and category.

## Newfoundland and Labrador

### CHILDREN

Beginning January 2014, the province is piloting Early Literacy Foundations, a partnership between the Department of Education, public libraries and outreach programs. Early Literacy Foundations will provide parents and children, birth to age 3, the opportunity to participate in activities that support early literacy and stress the importance of reading, singing, talking and playing with children to enhance their literacy development.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2013/edu/1231n02.htm>

### EDUCATION

The province is investing \$71,000 in an interprovincial online autism training program, which builds on a model first introduced in New Brunswick in 2011. The online training program is the latest in a series of investments and initiatives to support school-aged children diagnosed on the autism spectrum.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2014/edu/0131n01.htm>

## New Brunswick

### INCOME SECURITY

A new, integrated Bundled Birth Service will give parents the option to apply for Canada child benefits and a social insurance number at the same time they register their newborn's birth.

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2014.01.0012.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.01.0012.html)

### YOUTH

The province will spend \$480,000 to create jobs and training opportunities for up to 12 journeypersons and 24 apprentices while supporting the development of an emergency housing facility for homeless and at-risk youth.

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2014.01.0079.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2014.01.0079.html)

## Nova Scotia

### GOVERNANCE

A growing provincial debt, poor internal financial controls and missing information required to verify entitlements to pensioners, were among issues identified in the provincial Auditor General's report

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140123001>

### INCOME SECURITY

The province's minimum wage will increase by 10 cents an hour, to \$10.40 an hour on April 1. The hourly wage for someone with less than three months' experience is also going up by 10 cents an hour to \$9.90. Minimum wage rates are adjusted annually and are based on the previous year's national Consumer Price Index.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140131002>



## SENIORS

The government and the Alzheimer Society of Nova Scotia are co-leading an advisory committee to guide the development, consultation and implementation of the province's first comprehensive plan to care for people with dementia and their families. Nova Scotia has the oldest population per capita in the country; 17.7 percent of Nova Scotians are age 65 or over.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20140127003>

## Prince Edward Island

*No updates this month.*

## Québec

### WOMEN

Québec's Superior Court invalidated some of the 2009 amendments to the province's *Pay Equity Act*. The judge agreed with the Health Federation of Québec that the amendments had the effect of penalizing female employees. Instead of being entitled to a retroactive wage adjustment from the time they were hired, a change would be made only during regular pay equity adjustments which occur every five years.

[Link](#)

### GOVERNANCE

Adoption of a regulation that, effective January 1, 2014, will provide an increase in eligibility thresholds for legal aid. The increase will ensure free coverage for seniors living alone and most recipients of the Guaranteed Income Supplement. In June 2015, eligibility will be extended to provide free legal assistance to people working full time at minimum wage. This correction is in response to recommendations by the judiciary and the Québec Bar Association, and is consistent with the originally-stated principles of legal aid when it was established in 1973.

[Link](#)

## Ontario

### CAREGIVING

In 2013, the province spent \$260 million to help more than 637,000 seniors and their families get appropriate, timely care while reducing unnecessary hospital visits and readmissions. Recently-funded measures will assist 46,000 more seniors in accessing home care and nursing and personal support worker services. These include:

- expanding community adult day programs to include more evenings and weekends, and to provide additional caregiver relief and meaningful activity for people with moderate to severe dementia
- helping seniors with complex needs live independently in Toronto through personal support services and supportive housing provided by LOFT Community Services
- expanding programs in Northeastern Ontario to safely discharge high-

risk seniors from hospital acute care or ER, and get them back to their homes sooner

- providing overnight respite for caregivers of seniors with dementia in the South West Local Health Integration Network through Adult Day Programs, benefiting approximately 75 to 100 families in the region annually.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/01/helping-seniors-get-the-care-they-need-at-home.html>

### EDUCATION

The province is creating a Centre of Excellence for Online Learning. To launch in 2015-16, Ontario Online will improve collaboration between colleges and universities by minimizing duplication and allowing students to take the same, centralized online courses. The online platform will also give students the flexibility to receive instruction wherever and whenever works best for them. It will operate through three related hubs:

- a course hub will offer state-of-the-art online courses that are fully transferable between participating colleges and universities, giving students more options to earn credits and complete their education
- an instruction hub will allow institutions to develop and share best practices, research, and data on how best to teach online courses
- a support hub will provide academic and technical assistance to students, instructors, and institutions.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2014/01/province-improving-online-learning.html>

A new course-to-course database on ONTransfer.ca will provide students with the information they need to make informed decisions about their education while limiting delays in entering the labour market. It will also reduce education costs for both students and taxpayers by showing which credits are needed to complete diploma or degree programs when combining courses from different colleges and universities.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2014/01/increasing-credit-transfer-options-for-students.html>

The province will help about 5,000 more postsecondary students by expanding eligibility for the 30 Percent Off Ontario Tuition Grant. Students in their final year of a five-year co-op program and those attending private career colleges and other private postsecondary institutions that are eligible for financial aid through the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) will now be eligible for the grant. Students who apply for aid through OSAP will automatically be considered for the grant without a separate application, including those who have already applied this year.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2014/01/province-expanding-30-off-ontario-tuition-program.html>



## HEALTH

Ontario is investing \$6 million to support the expansion and development of community paramedicine initiatives. These programs allow paramedics to apply their training and skills beyond the traditional role of emergency response, and can include:

- providing home visits to seniors known to call emergency services frequently, in order to offer a range of services such as ensuring they are taking their medications as prescribed
- educating seniors in their homes about chronic disease management and helping to connect them to local supports, such as Diabetes Education Teams
- helping refer patients to their local Community Care Access Centre in order to provide appropriate home care services.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/01/ontario-expanding-community-role-for-paramedics.html>

The province is partnering with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Hospital for Sick Children, Trillium Health Partners, University of Toronto and a private donor to provide a total of \$60 million in new funding for the creation of the Medical Psychiatry Alliance. Its goal is to help up to 500,000 people who are either at-risk of, or currently living with both physical and mental illnesses, get the care and treatment they need.

The Medical Psychiatry Alliance members will lead the initiative, which will support people across the province over the next six years by:

- developing new screening and diagnostic tools to ensure patients are properly diagnosed
- ensuring physical and mental illnesses are treated simultaneously so patients and their families receive the best available care
- developing specialized clinical training for medical students focused on the management of co-occurring physical and mental illness
- creating a simulation centre for students and professionals to learn and test new approaches to treating physical and mental illness using actor patients in realistic scenarios
- researching and testing new ways to deliver psychiatric care at home.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/01/helping-ontarians-living-with-mental-and-physical-illnesses-1.html>

The province announced \$10 million to support local programs devoted to the prevention of type 2 diabetes, including the Diabetes Prevention Program through seven local Public Health Units and five Community Health Centres across Ontario. The program provides:

- screening of high-risk populations and referral to relevant health services
- resources that encourage healthy eating and increased physical activity
- training to health professionals and educators on diabetes prevention
- local awareness campaigns to direct people to appropriate programs and services.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2014/01/stepping-up-the-fight-against-type-2-diabetes.html>

## INCOME SECURITY

The Right Honourable Paul Martin has agreed to serve as Special Advisor to the Minister of Finance. Mr. Martin will work with the government on a made-in-Ontario solution to enhance retirement income security.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2014/01/paul-martin-named-special-advisor-on-retirement-income-security.html>

Ontario is increasing the minimum wage from \$10.25 to \$11 per hour on June 1, 2014. This new rate reflects the rise in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) since the last minimum wage increase in 2010. The government will also introduce legislation that would tie future minimum wage increases to the CPI. This change will ensure that the minimum wage keeps pace with the cost of living, and that increases are predictable for businesses and families. Under the proposed legislation, increases would be announced by April 1 and come into effect on October 1. The proposed legislation would act on the recommendations of Ontario's Minimum Wage Advisory Panel, which included business, labour, youth and anti-poverty representatives.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2014/01/ontario-increasing-minimum-wage.html>

## POVERTY REDUCTION

Ontario is introducing new rules for procuring government clothing to ensure it is purchasing goods from manufacturers that follow local laws regarding the ethical treatment of their employees.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mgs/en/2014/01/new-ethical-purchasing-rules-for-government-clothing.html>

## RECREATION

Launch of the Healthy Kids Community Challenge. The province will supply 30 communities with funding, training, advice, social marketing tools and other resources over four years to develop and implement community-based programs and activities that promote healthy habits.

Communities are encouraged to partner with schools, public health organizations, local businesses and other organizations to submit an application to participate in the challenge. If selected, they will plan and implement initiatives together that promote healthy eating, physical



activity and adequate sleep.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2014/01/helping-children-get-a-healthier-start-in-life.html>

## WOMEN

At the request of the government, the Ontario Securities Commission (OSC) has published a report containing recommendations designed to increase the number of women in high-ranking positions. The OSC recommends requiring companies listed on the Toronto Stock Exchange to be more upfront about their gender diversity policies and practices for selecting board members and those in senior management roles.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2014/01/supporting-more-women-in-senior-roles.html>

## Manitoba

### EDUCATION

A new course for adult literacy instructors, "Adult Literacy: From Theory to Practice," will be available online starting in January 2014. The course will be part of new credentials which recognize adult literacy instructors as a profession and ensure learners enrolled in programs funded by the province are taught by instructors who demonstrate the skills of the Manitoba competency standard for adult literacy instructors.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2013/12/2013-12-06-104700-19854.html>

## Saskatchewan

*No updates this month.*

## Alberta

### CHILDREN

The province's new Human Services Minister has appointed a team of professionals to accelerate activity on a new five-point plan and prioritize responses to previous recommendations for improving the child intervention system. The plan focuses on enhancing information sharing, addressing the root causes that bring children into care, and supporting collaborative research to improve services to children and their families.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?x-ID=356508278A59E-EEE1-519A-9BC2DF933CADF1B6>

### FAMILIES

The province is investing \$3.25 million in four new Parent Link Centres and improved home visitation training. Each centre provides services based on the needs of families in its particular community. Currently, 46 centres work reach out to more than 160 communities across the province, qualified staff deliver parenting programs, answer questions and offer advice about positive parenting, and deal with parenting and family issues.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=356434F454042-9B0A-23FD-4AD0402F87D70805>

## HEALTH

Alberta Health Services released new performance measures that will allow residents to see improvements in their health system over time. Measures will also enable comparisons to other jurisdictions in Canada. <http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=35759C5B77853-C58C-29B7-1AC92474C5271254>

## British Columbia

### CAREGIVING

An international forum held January 15 brought together government and health authority leaders, researchers and international experts to discuss best practices in home care for seniors.

A summary of the findings from the forum will be made public in the coming months. The Health ministry will review the ideas in the summary to examine its practices and improve the care seniors receive in BC. Key forum objectives included:

- a review of the driving forces for reforms in home care for seniors and strategies currently in place
- an examination of the changes under way in how home care is organized, financed, provided, governed, regulated and assessed
- a review of evidence from other jurisdictions as a way of showing the effect of system-level policy changes to home care and to the outcomes for seniors and their caregivers.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/01/seniors-home-care-forum-focuses-on-best-practices.html>

### CHILDREN

The new Provincial Office for the Early Years will focus on the needs of families with children up to age 6 and help ensure they have easy access to a range of early years services no matter where they live. The Office is the foundation of the BC Early Years Strategy, announced in February 2013. The government has committed \$76 million to support the first three years of the Strategy, including \$32 million for the creation of up to 2,000 new licensed child care spaces.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/01/provincial-office-for-the-early-years-launched.html>

### DISABILITY

The province is launching a series of 19 in-person community consultation sessions around the province as part of a comprehensive Disability White Paper Consultation on issues facing people with disabilities.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/01/consultation-to-shape-vision-for-accessibility-in-bc.html>

### FAMILIES

New training and practice standards now require that family dispute resolution professionals meet minimum training and practice standards,



including training on how to screen for family violence.  
<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2014/01/new-training-standards-focus-on-family-violence.html>

## Yukon Territory

*No updates this month.*

## Northwest Territories

*No updates this month.*

## Nunavut

*No updates this month.*