



Canada Social Report  
Provincial/Territorial  
Policy Monitor

May 2015



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

### HEALTH

Effective July 2, 2015, under the Adult Dental Program, the annual cap for basic dental services will increase from \$200 to \$300 and the annual cap for dentures will increase from \$750 to \$1,500. This initiative represents a provincial government investment of \$5.7 million.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2015/health/0519n06.aspx>

## New Brunswick

### CHILDREN

A task force has been appointed to conduct a child care review for the province. The task force's mandate will be to provide a path for creating the right conditions for child care and to suggest ways to address the challenges parents face in obtaining access to quality, affordable child care services.

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2015.05.0473.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2015.05.0473.html)

### INCOME SECURITY

The provincial government is enhancing burial and related-expenses benefits for families of eligible firefighters and former firefighters. Equivalent to those in the *Worker's Compensation Act*, benefits under the *Firefighters' Compensation Act* will be paid out of a disability fund administered by WorkSafe NB and maintained by yearly assessments calculated and levied against municipalities, rural communities and local service districts on a per-firefighter basis.

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2015.05.0396.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2015.05.0396.html)

Amendments to the *New Brunswick Income Tax Act* were introduced. A new personal income tax rate of 21 percent will be imposed on taxable income between \$150,000 and \$250,000, and 25.8 percent for taxable income greater than \$250,000. Effective in the 2015 taxation year, the new rates will raise an estimated \$30 million per year in additional tax revenue for the province..

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2015.05.0399.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2015.05.0399.html)

### SENIORS

Effective in the 2015 taxation year, the province will provide a refundable personal income tax credit of up to \$1,000 per year to assist seniors with eligible home renovation expenses worth up to \$10,000. It will be available to seniors who are homeowners and renters as well as to family members who are living with a senior.

[http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2015.05.0394.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2015.05.0394.html)

The province has launched a new initiative aimed at helping seniors leave the hospital sooner or avoid hospitalization altogether by offering intensive rehabilitation and re-ablement services in the community or at



home. The pilot project is part of a \$10.3 million investment being made this year as part of New Brunswick's three-year Home First Strategy. [http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news\\_release.2015.05.0463.html](http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2015.05.0463.html)

## Nova Scotia

### EDUCATION

A streamlined curriculum with a strong foundation in math and literacy will better support important learning for grades Primary-to-3 students beginning in September. The streamlined P-to-3 curriculum addresses several challenges teachers have identified, including extra time to teach core subjects, supports for combined grade classes, and constant monitoring and intervention as students learn to read, write and do math. The P-to-3 curriculum is one of the more than 20 new initiatives coming to Nova Scotia schools this September as part of the government's five-year education action plan to renew, refocus and rebuild the education system.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150520005>

### TRANSPORTATION

Connect2, a new provincial grant program, provides funding to communities to create short sustainable transportation connections between community hubs, like multi-use paths for walking and biking, and dedicated bicycle lanes.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20150526004>

## Prince Edward Island

*No updates this month.*

## Québec

### INCOME SECURITY

Between 1999 and 2012, economic inequality widened between families earning in the bottom 40 percent of earners and the 60 percent earning higher incomes. Median net worth grew by less than 50 percent for disadvantaged families, while wealthier families experienced a net worth increase of approximately 100 percent.

[Link](#)

## Ontario

### ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

Ontario is helping produce Anishinabek Nation's We Are All Treaty People teachers' kit to build public awareness and promote a greater understanding of treaties across the province. Raising awareness about treaty relationships and working with First Nations is part of the Ontario government's treaty strategy. It aims to promote constructive engagement with First Nation communities, revitalizing treaty relationships and

improving social and economic outcomes for Aboriginal peoples.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/maa/en/2015/05/ontario-anishinabek-nation-launch-new-treaty-education-resources.html>

### CAREGIVING

The province released *Patients First: A Roadmap to Strengthen Home and Community Care* – a new plan to improve and expand home and community care over the next three years. Funding for an additional 80,000 hours of nursing care is part of the 2015 Budget commitment to increase investment in home and community care by more than \$750 million in the three-year time period. Other key initiatives include:

- expanding supports for family caregivers
- giving clients and caregivers greater say in choosing a provider, and how and when that provider delivers services
- offering clear and consistent levels of home and community care services regardless of location
- enhancing support for personal support workers
- providing greater choice for palliative and end-of-life care.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2015/05/ontario-launches-home-care-plan-to-improve-access-and-expand-service.html>

### DISABILITY

The province is continuing its work towards an accessible province by 2025 by exploring options for a new accessibility certification program. Ontario will consult with industry, disability advocates, certification experts, municipalities and not-for-profits to develop a voluntary, third-party certification program – inspired by the success of the LEED designation promoting excellence in green building – to recognize businesses and organizations that have championed accessibility.

<http://news.ontario.ca/medt/en/2015/05/ontario-moving-forward-with-accessibility-certification-program.html>

The province will spend \$52 million for the construction of ErinoakKids children's treatment centre in Mississauga, which will offer a range of services for children with special needs. The centre will replace ErinoakKids' existing patchwork of 11 outgrown and outdated sites in Halton, Dufferin and Peel, while more than doubling the existing treatment therapy space. <http://www.news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2015/05/ontario-investing-52-million-in-new-centre-for-special-needs-children.html>

To help more people with developmental disabilities find and keep jobs in the community, the province is contributing \$800,000 to create a Centre for Excellence for Employment Services. The new centre, which will be run by the Ontario Disability Employment Network, will provide resources to help local community agencies and employers across the province:

- improve employment services, like on-the-job supports, offered to



people with developmental disabilities

- build community and employer networks to share best practices and research about employment for people with developmental disabilities
- increase awareness about the benefits of hiring people with developmental disabilities
- develop new employment opportunities for people with developmental disabilities across Ontario.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcss/en/2015/05/new-resource-to-improve-employment-opportunities-for-people-with-developmental-disabilities-in-ontar.html>

### EDUCATION

A new York University – Markham Centre campus, in partnership with Seneca College, will serve an estimated 4,000 students in York Region, with the potential for more students over time. As a university/college partnership, the campus will offer a broad range of programs that incorporate experiential learning with an academic focus on business, arts and social sciences. It will also be close to local transit options and other facilities such as sports fields, the YMCA and the Atos Markham Pan Am/Parapan Am Centre.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2015/05/university-education-closer-to-home.html>

### EMPLOYMENT

The province will target violations of minimum wage, overtime pay, meal breaks and other worker entitlements during two simultaneous enforcement blitzes at workplaces across Ontario this spring and early summer. <http://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2015/05/inspection-blitzes-target-precarious-employment-violations-in-ontario.html>

Changes to the *Employment Standards Act, 2000* were announced, including a requirement that employers provide employees with a copy of the province's employment standards poster, as well as continuing to post it in the workplace where it is likely to be seen. In the case of new hires, employers will have 30 days from the employee's start date to provide them with the poster and it must be provided in languages other than English if an employee requests a translation. As of May 20, 2015, employment standards officers have the authority to require employers to conduct a self-audit to ensure the protection of workers' rights covered under the *Employment Standards Act*. These changes are among the provisions of Bill 18, the *Stronger Workplaces for a Stronger Economy Act, 2014*.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2015/05/ontario-ensuring-workers-understand-rights-and-obligations-in-the-workplace.html>

### HEALTH

The province is investing \$5.2 million in a mental health facility in Toronto for transition-aged youth (16 to 19 years old). Operated by Youthdale

Treatment Centres, the facility will have 10 beds to treat approximately 175 youth each year as well as a day program to care for 150 young people and services to respond to approximately 6,000 referrals.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2015/05/ontario-investing-52-million-to-expand-mental-health-care-for-teens.html>

The government is adopting all six recommendations from the Ontario Health Innovation Council and will spend \$20 million to support more Ontario-made health technologies, improve patient care and spur economic growth.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2015/05/ontario-investing-20-million-in-health-innovation.html>

New suicide prevention standards for hospitals are being created to improve care for Ontarians dealing with a mental illness crisis.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2015/05/suicide-prevention-standards-being-developed-for-ontario-hospitals.html>

The province is removing barriers for nurse practitioners to directly refer their patients to a specialist, and to directly receive the specialist's advice. Ontario is amending the *Health Insurance Act* and changing the way specialists receive consultation fees to:

- remove barriers for patients to receive specialist services
- ensure patients in rural Ontario are not travelling unnecessarily to get physician referrals that could otherwise be provided by a nurse practitioner closer to home
- allow nurse practitioners to use their training to better meet patient needs
- support the delivery of collaborative, team-based care that puts patients first
- strengthen continuity of care by allowing specialists to provide advice directly to the referring nurse practitioner.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2015/05/ontario-providing-faster-access-to-medical-specialist-services.html>

The province will contribute \$23.5 million over five years to establish a new Canadian Centre for Aging and Brain Health at Baycrest Health Sciences in Toronto.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2015/05/province-to-invest-235-million-in-new-brain-research-centre.html>

### HOMELESSNESS

Ontario is investing \$390,000 in a research pilot project to stop the cycle of homelessness for Toronto youth. The pilot, which will improve the health and quality of life of 30 previously homeless youth, includes:

- social support, including guidance from both a transition support work-



er and a trained peer support worker to help youth address challenges such as mental health issues

- counselling for groups to address complex trauma and for families to help them reunite and resolve issues
- psychotherapy for those whose level of distress cannot be addressed through counselling.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2015/05/ontario-launches-pilot-to-support-at-risk-youth.html>

The province is investing more than \$15 million to launch the second rounds of Youth Skills Connections, Strategic Community Entrepreneur Projects and High School Entrepreneurship Outreach programs.

<http://news.ontario.ca/medt/en/2015/05/ontario-expands-programs-to-help-youth-find-jobs-and-start-businesses.html>

## HOUSING

New legislation will increase protections for condominium owners, improve how condo corporations are run and ensure that condo boards are governed professionally. The proposed *Protecting Condominium Owners Act* marks the first major overhaul of the province's condominium laws in more than 16 years. It is based on more than 2,200 consultation submissions from condo owners, developers, managers and industry experts during a public review of the *Condominium Act*.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mgs/en/2015/05/ontario-increasing-protections-for-condo-owners.html>

## INCOME SECURITY

The province has passed the *Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act, 2015*, which creates a framework for Ontario businesses to offer Pooled Registered Pension Plans (PRPPs) to their employees, as well as make PRPPs available to the self-employed. PRPPs offer a voluntary, low-cost, tax-assisted option to increase retirement savings.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2014/12/pooled-registered-pension-plans.html>

## Manitoba

### CAREGIVING

The Manitoba government has introduced legislation that would require officials to notify current or former employers as well as professional licensing and regulatory bodies when an alleged offender is reported to the Adult Abuse Registry. Current confidentiality provisions in the *Adult Abuse Registry Act* do not permit Adult Abuse Registry Committee members, designated officers (or others in Manitoba Health, Healthy Living and Seniors or Manitoba Family Services) or the registrar to advise employers or regulatory bodies that an individual has been reported to the registry, unless a request is made by the employer.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=34893&post-ed=2015-05-19>

As announced in Budget 2015, the province will increase the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit by 10 percent this year, giving additional financial support to Manitoba families that provide care. The maximum credit for caregivers will increase to \$1,400 annually from \$1,275. Primary caregivers can claim up to three care recipients on their income tax return, for a maximum annual tax credit of \$4,200, which is fully refundable to the caregiver.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=35012&post-ed=2015-05-29>

## HEALTH

The Manitoba government will invest \$2 million in the first year of a comprehensive, multi-year strategy to support child and youth mental health. Key initiatives will include:

- identifying and supporting critical services and workforce needs
- increasing services and training in support of children and youth with mental health problems and illnesses, including those with complex needs
- launching a program that will equip home visitor staff to provide mental health supports to at-risk parents and families
- expanding the PAX Good Behaviour Game to additional classrooms across the province
- expanding Roots of Empathy and Seeds of Empathy programs to more classrooms and child care centres across Manitoba.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=34761&post-ed=2015-05-04>

A successful program that provides specialized emergency care to stroke patients in rural communities has been expanded to The Pas. The Te-lestroke program allows emergency physicians in rural and northern hospitals to work with stroke neurologists and radiologists in other communities through videoconferencing and shared CT images. This means the specialists can work with the local provider to determine if a stroke has occurred, the type of stroke and the most appropriate treatment options.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=34935&post-ed=2015-05-22>

## HOUSING

Manitoba's Rent Assist program provides financial benefits for people who pay more than 25 percent of their income on rent for a modest apartment in the private market. The benefit is available to people who earn a low income, not just for people who receive social assistance. Budget 2015 invests \$22 million to fully implement Rent Assist. These benefits will increase in July, and again in December as part of a plan to raise shelter benefit rates to 75 percent of median market rent.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=34932&post-ed=2015-05-22>



## SOCIAL ECONOMY

The province will spend \$1 million on the second phase of a strategy to strengthen and expand co-operatives. Plans include:

- creating a more supportive policy and financial environment for the establishment and ongoing operation of co-operatives
- providing better awareness and understanding of the values and principles of co-operatives
- improving infrastructure supports and services for co-operatives
- securing the financial and human resources needed to sustain the strategy.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=34831&post-ed=2015-05-12>

## Saskatchewan

### HEALTH

New legislation will give patients the ability to choose to pay privately for a Magnetic Resonance Imaging scan in Saskatchewan.

<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2015/may/06/mri-legislation>

## Alberta

### EDUCATION

The province is restoring \$103 million in funding to previously announced reductions to school and classroom resources, such as transportation, inclusive education and First Nations, Métis and Inuit, among other support services.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3811415AD1411-C424-7322-880FFF36C19DE3A>

## British Columbia

### DISABILITY

Eight public post-secondary institutions on the Lower Mainland will receive a total of \$600,000 to develop training and resources aligned with in-demand occupations for post-secondary students with disabilities.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2015/05/lower-mainland-students-with-disabilities-get-skills-for-jobs.html>

The province is helping British Columbians with disabilities access training, resources and technology to secure employment through \$1.2 million in funding for post-secondary institutions and \$9 million over three years for the new Technology@Work program.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2015/05/supporting-employment-in-the-classroom-and-the-workplace.html>

## HEALTH

The province is providing \$175,000 to ACT – Autism Community Training – to develop an online training program that will help qualified health professionals better recognize the mental health challenges that often accompany Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). ACT is an information and referral service that supports individuals with ASD and their families throughout BC.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2015/05/new-help-for-kids-with-asd-mental-health-challenges.html>

The province announced \$850,000 in funding to the Families Organized for Recognition and Care Equality Society to support child and youth mental health in British Columbia. This investment will help families access mental health supports, services and resources.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2015/05/investing-in-child-and-youth-mental-health-in-bc.html>

## INCOME SECURITY

The province's new *Pension Benefits Standards Act*, which accommodates alternative pension plan designs and improves plan governance, comes into force on September 30, 2015.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2015/05/new-pension-standards-legislation-in-force-this-fall.html>

The provincial government and the Canada Revenue Agency have created a detailed list of available child and family tax benefits at both provincial and federal levels. The list includes short descriptions of benefits as well as direct links to appropriate webpages to find more information.

To view the list: [http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child\\_protection/pdf/tax\\_benefits.pdf](http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/child_protection/pdf/tax_benefits.pdf)

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2015/05/child-and-family-tax-in-bc.html>

## Yukon Territory

### HEALTH

The federal and territorial governments announced a three-year total investment of \$17 million to strengthen access to services in the areas of mental wellness and chronic disease in the Yukon. This funding, provided through the Territorial Health Investment Fund (THIF), will reduce reliance on out-of-territory health systems and medical travel. Yukon will use \$13 million for a project targeting mental wellness care and chronic disease management. This project will focus on three major activities:

- improving health service quality through training and skill development for front-line providers
- increasing local access to health services by establishing integrated health provider teams at the community, mobile and virtual level



- strengthening care by finding innovative ways to ensure better information flow among acute, community-based and out-of-territory specialized services.

Yukon will also receive \$1.5 million under the THIF's pan-territorial fund to undertake a project in mental health to support tele-psychiatry and electronic mental health supports for youth and young adults.

<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=978459>

## Northwest Territories

*No updates this month.*

## Nunavut

*No updates this month.*