



Canada Social Report  
Provincial/Territorial  
Policy Monitor

December 2016



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. 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

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador agreed to new targeted federal funding for investments in home care and mental health care. Over the next 10 years, the federal government will support home care and mental health initiatives in the province through combined funding of \$160.7 million – \$87.7 million for home care and \$73 million for mental health initiatives. Funding will be available to the province as of April 1, 2017.

[Link](#)

### INCOME SECURITY

The province announced enhancements to Compassionate Care Leave under the *Labour Standards Act* to bring provincial legislation in line with recent changes to the federal Employment Insurance Program and the *Canada Labour Code*. The government introduced an amendment to increase Compassionate Care Leave provisions from eight to 28 weeks.

[Link](#)

### MENTAL HEALTH

The province announced new legislation that will allow young people who severely and persistently abuse drugs to receive treatment when they lack the capacity for informed consent. Bill 55, *An Act Respecting Secure Withdrawal Management for Young Persons*, allows for the apprehension, detainment, assessment, stabilization and treatment of young people who meet the criteria outlined in legislation. The goal of the legislation is to ensure those young people who are most at-risk of harming themselves or others will go through withdrawal in a secure facility. Once withdrawal has occurred, they will be in a better place to discuss their treatment options.

[Link](#)

### SENIORS

Members of the legislature are in the process of establishing an Office of the Seniors' Advocate. The office will collaborate with seniors, their families, caregivers, policy-makers and frontline service providers to address systemic issues facing seniors.

[Link](#)

## New Brunswick

### COMMUNITIES

Municipalities, rural communities and local service districts will receive \$74.7 million in community funding and equalization grants from the provincial government in 2017, a \$285,000 increase over last year.

[Link](#)

### EDUCATION

The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development is introducing an enhanced model for its Preschool Autism Intervention Program



and increasing the average funding from \$27,500 to almost \$33,000 per child.

[Link](#)

### HEALTH

The Drug Information System is now operational in all community pharmacies across the province. The system contains a real-time medication history for patients who have a prescription filled in any pharmacy in New Brunswick. The *One Patient, One Record* vision involves each resident having a single, up-to-date electronic health record that contains their important health information. Both the Drug Information System and New Brunswick Prescription Monitoring Program display a patient's prescription information within the provincial electronic health record.

Over the next year, additional elements of the prescription monitoring program will be implemented so that alerts can be triggered in real time to help prescribers and pharmacists identify potential issues such as so-called "double-doctoring," prescriptions being filled at multiple pharmacies and high quantities of monitored drugs. This information will allow clinicians to make safer, more informed decisions at the point of care.

[Link](#)

Over the next 10 years, the federal government will provide New Brunswick with \$229.4 million:

- \$125.1 million for better home care, including critical home care infrastructure requirements
- \$104.3 million in support of mental health initiatives.

[Link](#)

## Nova Scotia

### HEALTH

The provincial government has reached a 10-year agreement that will increase federal health-care funding to improve health care. Under the agreement, the province will receive an estimated \$287.8 million in new funding. Home care will go up by \$157 million and \$130.8 million will be directed towards mental health.

[Link](#)

The province is advancing a plan to modernize Nova Scotia's health information systems. The *One Person, One Record* approach will support health care providers who provide care to Nova Scotians in family practices, hospitals, pharmacies and at home.

[Link](#)

## Prince Edward Island

### SENIORS

The province has created a new position that will focus on seniors' health. The Principal Advisor for Seniors Health will develop, coordinate, and evaluate strategies that support seniors' health and wellness.

[Link](#)

## Québec

### EDUCATION

\$12 million will be added to the \$55 million for the *Plan for success in higher education* announced in the last budget. This amount brings the total investment for 2016-17 to \$67 million. Funding will be used as follows:

- \$3 million to secure resources that promote the success of all students, especially those with special needs
- \$3.2 million for more training programs for Indigenous and immigrant students to help them move more quickly into the labour market
- \$3.75 million to attract, supervise and retain foreign students
- \$0.6 million to improve the knowledge of French among all college students
- \$0.6 million to coach and promote best practices for intervening against violence and sexual radicalization on college and university campuses
- \$0.85 million to support innovation, including the development of a distance education strategy.

[Link](#)

### INCOME SECURITY

On January 1, 2017, the approximately 864,000 Québec families who receive child assistance payments will receive an increase of 0.74 percent as a result of indexing the personal income tax for 2017. The amount varies according to family income, number of dependent children, marital or partner status and the number of children in shared custody. Last year, more than \$2.2 billion was distributed to families in the province.

[Link](#)

### YOUTH

The province released *Youth Action Strategy 2016-21*, which will be accompanied by investments of \$200 million over five years. The strategy includes more than 90 interventions based on five action pillars:

- health: healthy living habits in a safe environment
- learning: a school environment favoring perseverance and educational success
- citizenship: youth committed to culture, community and society



- employment: young people ready for work, an economy ready to receive them
- entrepreneurship: support for entrepreneurship and business success.

For details on the *Québec Youth Policy* and the *Youth Action Strategy 2016-21* see [website Link](#)  
[Release Link](#)

## Ontario

### CHILDREN

The government introduced the *Child, Youth and Family Services Act*. If passed, the bill would put children at the centre of decision-making; support more accountable, responsive and accessible child and youth services; and strengthen oversight for children's aid societies and licensed residential services.

[Link](#)

### EDUCATION

The province is continuing to limit average tuition fee increases to a maximum of three percent per year. The new Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) will make tuition free for more than 150,000 students whose families make less than \$50,000 per year, and more affordable for students from middle-income families. Once the OSAP changes are fully implemented, about 80 percent of all OSAP recipients will graduate with less provincial debt.

[Link](#)

### EMPLOYMENT

Ontario has finalized a landmark agreement with government agencies, business, labour and the local community to help people from disadvantaged communities along the Eglinton Crosstown Light Rail Transit corridor get construction jobs on the largest transit project in Canada. Project partners have set a goal that 10 percent of all trade and crafting hours needed for the project will be performed by apprentices and journey persons who live along the transit corridor and who have had trouble finding jobs. The experience will help them develop careers in the construction sector.

This is the first of several major transit projects that will include an agreement providing a range of social and economic benefits for communities. These include employment opportunities for youth and training programs.

[Link](#)

### HEALTH

Ontario passed *The Patients First Act*, legislation that will ensure patients are at the centre of the health care system. Once implemented, changes supported by the new legislation will:

- improve access to primary care for people in Ontario, including a single number to call when they need health information or advice on where to find a new family doctor or nurse practitioner
- improve local connections among primary care providers, multidisciplinary health care teams, hospitals, public health and home and community care to ensure a smoother patient experience and transitions
- streamline and reduce administration of the health care system and direct savings into patient care
- enhance accountability to ensure better access to care
- formally connect Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) and local boards of health to leverage their community expertise and ensure local public health units are involved in community health planning
- strengthen the voices of patients and families in their own health care planning
- increase the focus on cultural sensitivity and the delivery of health care services to Indigenous peoples and francophone Ontarians.

Ontario will continue working with French language health leaders, First Nations, Métis, Inuit and urban Indigenous partners and health providers to ensure their voices are heard, particularly with respect to equitable access to services that meet their unique needs. The province will also continue to work with health care partners across the system as well as patients, families and caregivers to ensure that patients have reliable, efficient access to health care services.

[Link](#)

Ontario has introduced legislation that would, if passed, support the implementation of medical assistance in dying by providing more protection and greater clarity for patients, their families and their health care providers.

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The province introduced *The Protecting Patients Act, 2016*, legislation that would, if passed, further protect patients in Ontario and keep them healthy, including strengthening and reinforcing Ontario's zero tolerance policy on sexual abuse of patients by any regulated health professional.

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### HOUSING

The province passed *Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016* which amends four acts to increase the supply of affordable housing and modernize social housing by:

- giving municipalities the option to implement inclusionary zoning, which requires affordable housing units to be included in residential developments



- making secondary suites, such as above-garage apartments or basement units in new homes, less costly to build by exempting them from development charges. Secondary suites are a potential source of affordable rental housing and allow homeowners to earn additional income
- giving local service managers more choice in how they deliver and administer social housing programs and services to reduce wait lists and make it easier to access a range of housing options
- encouraging more inclusive communities and strengthening tenant rights by preventing unnecessary evictions from social housing and creating more mixed-income housing
- gathering data about homelessness in Ontario by requiring service managers to conduct local enumeration of those who are homeless, so that Ontario can continue to work towards its goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025.

[Link](#)

The Governments of Canada and Ontario announced federal and provincial program funding that will assist low-income Toronto residents to purchase a home. \$865,000 in funding, allocated through the Canada-Ontario agreement for Investment in Affordable Housing, will assist lower-income residents in purchasing a condominium at The Village by Main Station, a project by non-profit housing developer Options for Homes.

Options for Homes strives to make home ownership available to those in the Greater Toronto Area and Southern Ontario by providing affordable, quality housing. As part of the purchasing requirement, eligible families will require a down payment that ranges from zero to five percent of the purchase price of the condominiums which will be at or lower than the market price of similar condominiums.

[Link](#)

#### INCOME SECURITY

Ontario is lowering the maximum total cost of borrowing for a payday loan from \$21 to \$18 per \$100 borrowed as of January 1, 2017. Ontario has also introduced legislation – *Putting Consumers First Act* – to strengthen protections for consumers who use financial services such as payday loans, instalment loans, rent-to-own services and cheque-cashing services, as well as for consumers who have debts in collection.

[Link](#)

## Manitoba

*No updates this month.*

## Saskatchewan

### DEMOGRAPHICS

Saskatchewan continued to experience steady population growth in the third quarter of 2016, according to Statistics Canada's latest quarterly population estimate. There were 1,155,393 people living in the province on October 1, 2016, 4,761 more people than in the previous quarter, and up by 18,007 people over the past year.

[Link](#)

## Alberta

*No updates this month.*

## British Columbia

### EDUCATION/EMPLOYMENT

The province is helping 41 school districts connect students with the skills of the future, including trades and tech training, through two grant programs totalling almost \$728,000.

The first grant, the Shoulder Tappers Program, provides school districts with career coordinators and recruitment specialists. These individuals will mentor students and connect them with workshops and on-the-job experience in skilled trades and technology careers, such as aircraft engineering and heavy-duty mechanics. Thirty-three districts met the requirements and received the 2016-17 Shoulder Tappers grant.

The second grant, the Skills Training Access Grant, helps school districts connect students with training in fields such as carpentry, coding and culinary arts by providing funding each year to qualified districts. This year, 30 districts met the requirements and received the 2016-17 grant. Mobile training units are visiting students around the province. Small skills training classes are running to ensure students receive the attention they need to succeed.

[Link](#)

### HOUSING

A change to British Columbia's residential tenancy rules has come into effect, providing additional support for victims of family violence and individuals who require long-term care. The change to the *Residential Tenancy Act* allows for the early end to a fixed-term tenancy, commonly known as a lease, by a tenant who is fleeing family violence or who has been accepted into a long-term care facility. This will make it easier for tenants who fear for their safety to terminate their leases.

Previously, tenants in these situations could only end a lease early if their landlord agreed; otherwise, they faced a financial penalty. Now that this change is in effect, tenants with personal safety or health care needs can end their lease by giving their landlord one month's written notice,



accompanied by written third-party verification confirming the tenant's eligibility to end their tenancy under the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

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## Yukon Territory

*No updates this month.*

## Northwest Territories

*No updates this month.*

## Nunavut

### DISABILITY

People living with a mobility-related disability, and non-profit organizations that support people living with a mobility-related disability, are invited to apply for a Nunavut Solutions Grant. The grant covers the cost of programs, equipment and services that improve the quality of life for individuals with mobility-related disabilities. Successful applicants will share \$20,000 to support the needs of Nunavummiut.

In the past, the grant has funded wheelchairs and lifts; home renovations to increase accessibility; training or education opportunities; support services including respite care; and community programs for individuals living with a disability.

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