



## 2013/14 Provincial Budget Highlights

May 2, 2013

### **Overview**

The 2013 Ontario Budget, *A Prosperous and Fair Ontario*, builds on the government's commitment to eliminate the province's deficit by the 2017-18 fiscal year. The government's social policy focus includes continued investment in health care, education, the environment and significant transformation of social assistance.

There is a continued focus on expanding investments in the home and community care, by 1 percent. There will be no increases in base operating funding for hospitals. An Ontario Action Plan for Seniors will be launched to build on Dr. Samir Sinha's recommendations. Specific to the mental health and addictions sector, there is express mention of support for a range of community-based services and supports, and the expansion of the implementation plan for the Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy to include adults in 2014/15.

There is significant emphasis on social assistance and poverty reduction. A new cross-governmental Poverty Reduction Strategy will be launched, led by a Cabinet Committee. As of fall 2013, there will be a 1% increase to Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program rates, a \$200 earnings exemption, and other modifications to existing rules. Recommendations from the Lankin/Sheikh Commission will be implemented.

Budget highlights include:

- Government will slow growth of health care spending to annual average of 2%
- Additional 1% funding increase for home and community care, including community mental health and addictions, building on the 4% commitment from the 2012 budget
- No increase for hospital base operating funding
- An Ontario's Action Plan for Seniors will be launched, building on the recommendations of Dr. Samir Sinha's *Living Longer, Living Well* report
- Continued implementation of Comprehensive Mental Health and Addictions Strategy (\$93 million dollars was previously committed to 2013/14 activities) and expand current child/youth focus to improve services for adults and youth in year 4
  - There is express support mentioned for mental health and addictions services across Ontario including "early intervention, community-based counseling, employment training, supportive housing, residential treatment, and prevention of and treatment for substance abuse and problem gambling" (page 74)
- Launch of new cross-governmental Poverty Reduction Strategy in 2013, led by a new Cabinet Committee on Poverty Reduction

- Committee will also lead government's transformation of social assistance and implementation of the Lankin/Sheikh Commission recommendations
  - 1% increase for OSDP (as of September 2013) and OW (as of October 2013) rates; added \$14/month top up for single adults without children
    - Additional social assistance changes include earnings exemption of \$200, changes to asset limits and rules, and consideration of self-employment earnings as similar to other employment earnings
  - Partnership Council for Employment Opportunities of People with Disabilities to champion hiring of people with disabilities.
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The full document is available on the Ministry of Finance website at:  
<http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/budget/ontariobudgets/2013/>

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