

2020 OCC AGM POLICY RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION TITLE: Healthcare Crisis: Demands Exceed Supply

SUBMITTED BY: Todd Letts, CEO, Brampton Board of Trade

ISSUE:

Ontario's healthcare system is not meeting population demographics.

BACKGROUND

Hospital overcrowding has become the new normal in too many of Ontario's growing cities. This is not because of inefficiencies, rather Ontario's hospitals are the most efficient in the country¹. According to the Ontario Hospital Association, clinical innovation has led to Ontario's hospitalization rate being the lowest in Canada, and when patients end up in a ward, their average stay is cheaper and shorter than in any other province.

The issue is that the supply of 30,000 hospital beds on Ontario has not increased since 1999, even though Ontario's population has grown 27%, from 11.5 million to 14.6 million². In addition, the segment of Ontario's population that is 65 years or older has increased by 1 million. As a result, hospitals in high growth cities operate at over 100% capacity on a near daily basis.

Another significant factor is that 1 in 6 hospital beds are occupied by patients who require an 'alternative level of care' (ALC), which on average is less expensive than hospital beds and come in such forms as long-term care, assisted living, and rehab³. The majority of ALC patients are waiting for a long-term care beds, which in 2019 had a wait list of 161 days. While the current provincial government has invested in more long-term care beds, it takes 3 years to get those beds in operation. Just 21 new long-term care beds opened in Ontario in 2019, while the waitlist grew by more than 2,000. Under the previous provincial government, only 611 new long-term care beds opened from 2011 to 2018.

Matching patient needs to the appropriate healthcare resources will reduce the strain put on hospitals and will contribute to sustainable and inclusive growth.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Ensure provincial funding commitment for new hospital beds to match cities projected population growth.
2. Speed up the process to get new long-term care beds into operation - and make sure the beds are created where they are needed.
3. Ensure provincial funding commitment for variety of 'alternative level of care' options that meet diversity of needs, including at-home, community, and mental health support.
4. Research healthcare technology in comparable jurisdictions where remote patient monitoring and crisis management is used effectively to curtail hospital stays.

¹ Ontario Hospital Association. 2019. Ontario Hospitals - Leaders in Efficiency

<https://www.oha.com/Documents/Ontario%20Hospitals%20-%20Leaders%20in%20Efficiency.pdf>

² Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. 2019. Hallway Health Care: A System Under Strain.

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/public/publications/premiers_council/docs/premiers_council_report.pdf

³ Matt Gurney. 2019. TVO: How to end hallway medicine, Part 3: Doug Ford's plan is a start, but it's not the solution.

<https://www.tvo.org/article/how-to-end-hallway-medicine-part-3-doug-fords-plan-is-a-start-but-its-not-the-solution>