

# IMPROVING ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE IN ONTARIO

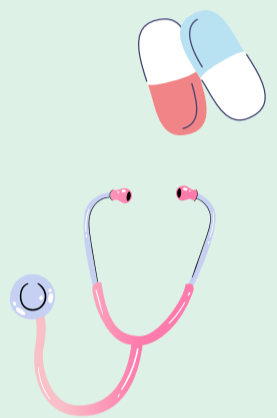
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## BACKGROUND

- There is an increasing demand for healthcare services in Canada, largely because of our aging population.
- An estimated six million Canadians do not have a family doctor.
- Many nurses have left the industry or shifted to private agencies due to increased workloads and pressures during the pandemic.
- There are longer wait times, particularly in emergency rooms, largely because of a lack of access to primary care across the province.
- Canada's healthcare sector continues to see high levels of job vacancies, with 90,000+ unfilled positions across the country.

## CURRENT STATUS

- The Government of Ontario has expanded pharmacists' scope of practice and medical school education.
- The Government of Canada has launched the Express Entry healthcare category-based draw and committed \$86 million in funding to increase capacity for foreign credential recognition.
- Since the COVID-19 pandemic, there have been only modest increases in healthcare spending.



## KEY CONSIDERATIONS



Access to healthcare providers varies across different regions and communities in Ontario.



Healthcare professionals lack the necessary incentive to enter and remain in the public sector when the private sector offers higher wages and better work-life balance.



Internationally educated healthcare professionals (IEHPs) continue to face lengthy and expensive licensing and registration processes that can delay their ability to work in their field, or even deter them from working in their field altogether.

## OPTIONS + RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1 Regulate pay rate of for-profit healthcare staffing agencies.
- 2 Regulate pay rate of private staffing agencies + increase the number of nurse practitioner led clinics (NPLCs) in Ontario.
- 3 Regulate pay rate of private staffing agencies for nursing + increase the number of nurse practitioner led clinics (NPLCs) in Ontario + introduce a province-wide academic bridging program, specifically catered to IEHPs (called Healthcare Bridge Ontario).



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