



February 11, 2020

The Honourable Rod Phillips, Ontario's Minister of Finance
c/o Budget Secretariat
95 Grosvenor Street, Frost Building North, 3rd Floor
Toronto, ON
M7A 1Z1

Re: 2020 OMSSA Provincial Pre-Budget Submission

Dear Minister Phillips,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide consultation on the 2020 provincial budget.

The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA) is a non-profit professional association whose members are Ontario's Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) and District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs). This includes:

- 37 Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs), or upper and single-tier municipalities across Ontario
- 10 District Social Services Administration Boards (DSSABs) in areas where no upper-tier municipality exists in Ontario's north

OMSSA's members are represented by senior human services staff, who are governed by local municipal councils or a board of directors, representing urban, rural and Northern communities across the province. Ontario's 47 Service System Managers partner with the Province to fund and deliver social assistance, employment supports, child care, early years and children's services, homelessness prevention, community housing, long-term care and emergency social services in communities across Ontario.

OMSSA's members collaborate regularly with local public health units, school boards, non-profits and local service providers within their communities. Some of our member municipalities also manage the local public health units in their areas. Our members support strong local service system management in collaboration with our provincial partners, and bring decades of technical expertise and experience to the table.

More information on Ontario's 47 Service System Managers and their respective roles and contributions in communities across Ontario can be found in our [Policy Brief: Local Service System Management in Ontario](#) (PDF).

OMSSA appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the 2020 provincial budget, with a focus on the following priorities outlined by the Province:

- Making life more affordable
- Preparing people for jobs
- Creating a more competitive business environment
- Connecting people to places
- Building healthier and safer communities
- Making government smarter

The pages below outline OMSSA and its members' priorities with respect to the 2020 provincial budget in the following areas:

[Partnership](#)

[Municipal Funding and Cost Sharing](#)

[Equalization and Provincial Spending](#)

[Human Services Integration and Modernization](#)

[Poverty Reduction](#)

[Homelessness Prevention](#)

[Community Housing Renewal](#)

[Rental Housing](#)

[Supportive Housing](#)

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[Public Health](#)

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[Community Safety and Well-Being Plans](#)

[Social Assistance Reform](#)

[Employment System Transformation](#)

[Early Years and Child Care Services](#)

[Transportation, Infrastructure and Environment](#)

[Seniors Supports and Long-Term Care](#)

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[Investing in People](#)



PARTNERSHIP

Ontario's model of service delivery is unique within Canada. In most provinces, provincial governments are solely responsible for services such as social assistance, social housing, child care, paramedic services, public health and others. In Ontario, the provincial and municipal levels of government share responsibilities for human services integration, social assistance, employment services, child care and early years services, community housing, homelessness, poverty reduction, community safety and public health.

OMSSA and its members appreciate our close relationship with our partners in the provincial government to ensure local voices are included in the policy development process. Our members have had the opportunity to consult with the Province through many provincial-municipal tables related to social assistance, early years and child care, reporting burdens and community housing.

OMSSA encourages increased engagement and consultation at existing municipal-provincial tables, particularly with the Ministry of Health, to continue to integrate human services and health outcomes. OMSSA also supports continued dialogue, engagement and consultation with all CMSMs and DSSABs where possible with our provincial colleagues.

MUNICIPAL FUNDING AND COST SHARING

In Ontario, core social services like income support, children's services and social housing are planned, managed and co-funded by Ontario's 47 CMSMs and DSSABs (Service System Managers). Service System Managers have an in-depth understanding of the unique social, economic, regional and demographic forces that shape and define their communities. They understand that what works best in Windsor may not be the right approach in Ottawa or Kenora, and they need the flexibility to deliver services in ways that meet unique local needs.

According to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), Ontario's municipalities take in a collective \$51 billion in annual revenues, of which \$41 billion is self-sourced – primarily from property taxes and user fees. Collectively, Ontario's municipalities receive \$1.6 billion in federal grants and \$8.5 billion in provincial grants annually.

Despite their growing list of responsibilities, the municipal level of government collects only 9 cents on every dollar taxed in Canada. On average, local residents (as opposed to commercial businesses) pay 68 per cent of property taxes collected in Ontario. Ontario's residents also face the second highest property tax burden in Canada, behind only Alberta.

OMSSA recognizes that all three levels of government are facing budget challenges and are searching for efficiencies. Ontario's municipal governments have been working hard to find efficiencies, reducing their spending from \$8,056 per household in 2010 to \$7,841 per household in 2016, despite increased cost and revenue pressures. **Both the provincial and municipal levels of government in Ontario are running lean and efficient operations, all while providing quality services that residents rely on.**

“Easy” cuts will be nearly impossible to find without impacting front-line services. According to AMO, municipal expenditures on health services, social housing, and social and family services exceeded total provincial grants by more than \$3 billion. Without the uploading that occurred between 2008 and 2018, this gap would be \$5 billion.

According to AMO, “about 27 per cent of aggregate municipal operations budgets go to services that are conventionally considered a provincial responsibility in most other Canadian jurisdictions,” such as child care, public health, social assistance and community housing.

Reduced funding transfers will result in either a reduction or elimination of services, or further increases in property taxes. Data from the 2016 Census showed that one in five homeowners in Ontario spend 30 per cent or more of their total household income on shelter costs. Residents and small businesses cannot afford additional property tax burdens resulting from reductions in provincial transfers. This is especially true in small municipalities with declining populations, as well as for individuals on fixed incomes.



OMSSA supports and endorses [AMO's 2020 Pre-budget Submission](#) (PDF). As AMO states in their submission, “municipal governments are a key partner, investing revenues of \$50 billion annually in important public services and infrastructure. For Ontario to grow and prosper, we need to ensure affordable and sustainable municipal services and infrastructure investment. This can only be accomplished by working together and respecting our single and shared taxpayer.”

OMSSA encourages the Province to maintain or increase municipal funding, and to avoid changes or surprises negatively affecting municipal cost-sharing, transfer or funding agreements, particularly after municipal budgets have already been passed. The provincial government should not attempt to balance the books through municipal downloading.

OMSSA further encourages exploring the alignment of provincial and local budget cycles, as suggested by Ontario's Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark in 2019.

EQUALIZATION AND PROVINCIAL SPENDING

The Ontario government spends the lowest per capita in Canada on government program spending. According to data from the Financial Accountability Office of Ontario, across Canada, average annual provincial government spending per capita is \$11,862, compared to \$9,820 in Ontario. Equalization payments cost Ontario \$12.9 billion per year, at a time when Ontario is investing the least per capita into services in the province. **The Province should prioritize working with the federal government to amend the equalization formula, to assist Ontario's ability to increase program spending per capita to the national average.**

Ernst & Young LLP's line-by-line review of Ontario government spending found the operation of ministries through the Ontario Public Service comprised 9 per cent of spending. Interest on debt was a further 9 per cent. Transfer payments represent 82 per cent. These transfer payments are made to individuals, businesses, hospitals, universities, school boards, service agencies, boards, commissions and municipalities. In 2018, these transfer payments amounted to \$133.7 billion of provincial spending. Transfers to municipalities accounted for just \$4.2 billion of that amount.

The Province has identified "making life more affordable for Ontarians" as a priority for its 2020 budget. This cannot happen if further costs are downloaded to municipalities, leading to an increased property tax burden or reduction in services.

HUMAN SERVICES INTEGRATION AND MODERNIZATION

The Province has identified “ideas for smarter government” as a priority for its 2020 budget.

Currently, Service System Managers are subject to over 200 service agreements with the provincial government.

OMSSA’s members support provincial initiatives that:

- lead to better human services program and policy alignment;
- streamline transfer and service agreements;
- increase information sharing; and
- reduce administrative and reporting burdens while enhancing the client experience.

OMSSA appreciates its close relationship with Ontario’s Human Services Integration Office (HSIO) as CMSMs and DSSABs continue to push forward on integrating and enhancing human services delivery for people in their communities.

OMSSA encourages the Province to continue to prioritize human services integration, and to enable greater data and information sharing with municipalities as part of the Ontario Data Strategy.

Recent funding announcements around broadband investment are needed to ensure all communities can participate in this transformation to digitization of government.

OMSSA and its members appreciate the Province’s ongoing efforts to reduce red tape, administrative and reporting burdens on municipal governments and Service System Managers. OMSSA encourages the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to continue its work in this area to allow front-line staff to dedicate more of their time serving people and providing services.

OMSSA also encourages the Province to continue investing in social services modernization, streamlined transfer payments, automated income verification, IT systems integration and technology that allows for smarter government, efficiencies and more time spent providing services to individuals.

POVERTY REDUCTION

The economic costs of poverty have been well-documented. In Ontario, it is estimated that poverty costs \$32 to \$38 billion per year – or \$2,300 per year per household.

In recent years, we have seen poverty reduction strategies developed and implemented by all three levels of government. The Province is currently consulting on its five-year review of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy and OMSSA looks forward to providing input on issues such as housing, homelessness prevention, child care, social assistance, employment, affordable transportation, food security, education, mental health, addictions and the social determinants of health.

All three levels of government have a responsibility to collaborate on reducing and eliminating poverty and homelessness in communities across Ontario and Canada. In recent years, much progress has been made at the municipal level and the opportunity is ripe to move closer to eliminating poverty and homelessness in Ontario.

The Province has identified “preparing people for employment” and “creating healthy and safe communities” as priorities for its 2020 budget. A housing first approach and investment in wraparound human services is essential to reducing poverty, ending homelessness, preparing people for employment and creating healthy and safe communities.

OMSSA and its members are ready to collaborate with the Province to improve outcomes for vulnerable populations across Ontario's communities.

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

Ontario's Service System Managers have pursued innovative solutions and achieved strong outcomes in homelessness prevention through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI). **It is vital that CHPI funding be maintained or enhanced to build on work to reduce homelessness and poverty in Ontario's communities. The province should also review allocations and the funding formula as some service managers have seen a reduction in funding.**

OMSSA encourages the Province to further invest in supportive housing as a means of preventing homelessness. Municipalities have found much success in addressing homelessness locally through the Home for Good initiative.

Emergency shelters are at, over or lacking capacity in many communities. Municipalities in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) and the City of Ottawa have seen significant increases in the number refugee claimants accessing shelters, placing further pressure on already overburdened systems.

The combined context of low rental vacancy rates, rising home prices and overburdened shelter systems has placed tremendous pressure on municipal governments to respond.

While many municipalities have made new temporary beds available and have found some success in moving people to permanent housing, the inflow into shelters continues at a rate that exceeds all efforts to get individuals and families out of the shelter system.

OMSSA supports Toronto City Council's request that the federal and provincial governments work together to develop an Ontario-wide strategy to direct refugee claimants where they are most able to find housing and settle, while providing sustainable funding to address increases in housing and shelter demands for municipalities.

COMMUNITY HOUSING RENEWAL

Ontario's Service System Managers are responsible for managing more than 260,000 affordable housing units, representing a combined \$40-billion asset. According to the latest available figures, the waiting list for rent-geared-to-income housing in Ontario has grown to more than 170,000 people, with little new development to accommodate it. OMSSA's members are also focused on supporting and housing victims of domestic violence and human trafficking through local Special Priority Policies.

OMSSA has been working closely with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on the Community Housing Renewal Strategy and we appreciate the progress that's been made on Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) simplification and community housing waitlists. Service System Managers are working towards implementing these changes locally and appreciate further consultation on Service Level Standards, end of mortgage and operating agreements and expanding community housing supply across Ontario.

As the federal and provincial government pursue investments in infrastructure, increasing community housing supply across Ontario should be a key priority. According to recent estimates on funding sources for community housing in Ontario (2017-2018), municipal service managers pay 58 per cent of the cost of community housing, compared to 26 per cent for the federal government and 16 per cent for the provincial government. Most of the community housing stock in Ontario is between 20 and 50 years old, with a significant backlog of needed repairs costing close to \$1.5 billion. **Funding from all levels of government will be needed to maintain and expand existing community housing stock.**

OMSSA also encourages the Province to engage in discussions with Indigenous organizations and stakeholders to develop an urban Indigenous housing strategy.

OMSSA has made previous submissions to the Province regarding its Community Housing Renewal Strategy and Housing Supply Action Plan, and has hosted consultations with senior Ministry officials on community housing, homelessness prevention and other issues.

OMSSA looks forward to continued collaboration on issues related to community housing and homelessness prevention with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and other stakeholder organizations.

More information on Service System Managers' role, contributions and priorities in Community Housing in Ontario can be found in our [Policy Brief: Housing and Homelessness Services in Ontario](#) (PDF).

RENTAL HOUSING

Adjudicator shortages and backlogs at the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) have created hearing backlogs and costly delays for landlords across the province. Delays for standard cases around non-payment of rent are reported to extend well beyond the LTB's service standard of 25 to 30 business days. **OMSSA encourages the Province to provide additional resources and explore alternative solutions to resolve issues at the LTB sooner.**

In Ontario, 46 per cent of rental households are paying more than 30 per cent of their income on rent – and more than one in five are putting more than 50 per cent of their income towards rent. In order to address Rent-Geared-to-Housing (RGI) waitlists, the provincial and federal governments recently announced new portable housing benefit tools. While this model is helpful for Service System Managers, low rental vacancy rates remain a barrier. This is also true for supporting special priority clients who are victims of human trafficking and domestic violence.

OMSSA and its members appreciate the Province's efforts to increase the supply of all forms of housing through the Housing Supply Action Plan. **Given the current housing and rental market, it is crucial to focus on increasing the supply of rental housing and community housing, rather than implementing policies that encourage increased consumer debt burdens and inflate housing prices further, resulting in greater affordability challenges for many.**

OMSSA and its members believe that more tools, incentives and support are needed to address rental supply shortages and community housing repair backlogs, and to develop new community housing supply across the province.

Development charges and community benefits are needed to fund infrastructure and services to pay for growth. **Provincial and local governments must work together to reduce speculation, vacant investment properties and short-term rentals that are negatively impacting housing and rent costs.**

Social Assistance Rent and Utility Scales also represent a persistent challenge to OMSSA's members. The existing scales do not reflect true costs and are not keeping pace with cost of living increases. Discrepancies in the current scales create additional costs for municipalities of more than \$200 million per year.

OMSSA encourages the Province to review the Social Assistance Rent and Utility Scales and to increase them incrementally, in order to reduce this cost burden on Service System Managers. Rising housing and rental costs are outpacing income growth, making life unaffordable for many Ontarians.



SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

OMSSA looks forward to providing input through the Province's upcoming consultations on supportive housing.

Supportive housing is funded by the Ontario ministries of Health, Long-Term Care, Children, Community and Social Services and others. **It will be important to coordinate and collaborate across ministries to develop a cohesive strategy designed to expand supportive housing in communities across Ontario.**

Additional supportive housing is needed for those with mental health and addictions challenges, seniors and those with developmental disabilities. **Investing in 30,000 new supportive housing units is crucial to creating healthy and safe communities across Ontario.**

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Resources to address mental health issues are needed across urban, suburban, rural and Northern communities in Ontario. **Mental health issues can be a significant barrier to employment-readiness, and services to address these challenges are a crucial component to life stabilization for many Ontario Works clients. Investing in mental health supports will also reduce pressures on hospitals, emergency shelters, the justice system and schools.**

OMSSA supports the recommendations put forth in the [Canadian Mental Health Association's 2020 Pre-Budget Submission](#), which would result in increased investment in supportive housing and community mental health services.

Ontario also needs a strategy to address the opioid crisis, which has impacts on nearly every community in Ontario. This strategy would require predictable long-term funding.

Ontario's municipalities are on the front lines of this crisis and many are working on local strategies, creating opportunities for provincial-municipal collaboration. **The Province should collaborate with Service System Managers, Ontario Health Teams and public health units to address this crisis.** OMSSA also supports the [recommendations made by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's \(AMO\) Health Task Force](#) (PDF) regarding a provincial response to the opioid crisis in Ontario.

OMSSA and its members are also concerned about the effects of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) on front-line caseworkers, EMS and emergency services workers. Given the challenges faced on their jobs, it is important to consider the mental health and wellness of municipal employees working in all Ontario communities.

Investing in mental health and addictions support is crucial to creating healthy and safe communities. OMSSA looks forward to learning more about the Province's upcoming Mental Health Strategy.

PUBLIC HEALTH

Many of Ontario's municipalities are actively involved and integrated with public health. There is a benefit to having public health, community housing and Ontario Works linked and managed within the same organization.

The role of local public health services is crucial to reducing hospital wait times and ending hallway medicine. There are many opportunities for better local collaboration with Ontario Health Teams, hospitals and other stakeholders when public health units are aligned locally. **Local representation and alignment are important, and public health units should maintain existing alignment with regional and municipal boundaries.**

OMSSA encourages better integration across human services and health services in the province. More clarity is needed regarding the respective responsibilities of Public Health Ontario and local public health units, in order to avoid duplication and maximize existing resources towards preventive health services.

Public health funding must be predictable in order to enable long term planning. Increased cost sharing burdens are putting further pressure on municipal budgets.

Amalgamations of public health units should be pursued only on a voluntary basis, and if a case can be made for the amalgamation to improve services based on local circumstances.

Efforts should be made to ensure that public health services are equitably distributed and consistent across all parts of the province. Increased alignment with human services and the broader health sector would result in better outcomes with respect to the social determinants of health.

Public health plays a crucial role in creating healthy and safe communities. OMSSA encourages the Province to proceed with caution when making changes to the existing public health system, and to continue to pursue effective integration with other community services to address the social determinants of health.

More details on OMSSA and its members priorities and recommendations with respect to public health can be found in [OMSSA's response to the 2017 report of the Minister's Expert Panel on Public Health](#) (PDF).

EMERGENCY HEALTH SERVICES

The quality of ambulance services have improved since these services were transferred to the municipal level of government in Ontario. Ontario's municipalities have invested in emergency health services and integrated these services within their organizations. Increased funding and cost-sharing demands are placing pressure on municipal budgets as demand for these services increases.

Rural and Northern communities face unique challenges due to geography and the transfer of medically stable patients. Offload wait times are a growing issue. Improved technology and dispatch systems are needed to better differentiate between emergency and non-emergency calls. Data-sharing and improved paramedic access to patient records is also needed to improve care.

Investing in ambulance and emergency health services is critical to connecting people to places and creating healthy and safe communities. OMSSA supports enabling new models of care to improve ambulance availability and promote patient-centred care. The Province should prioritize and fully fund initiatives designed to expand community paramedicine across Ontario.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND WELL-BEING PLANS

Municipalities are responsible for completing local Community Safety and Well-Being Plans by January 1, 2021, but no resources, financial or otherwise, have been provided to support their development. The Province has identified "creating healthy and safe communities" as a priority for its 2020 budget. **Municipalities should be provided with resources to produce the best possible plans, rather than relying on already stretched municipal tax dollars.**

SOCIAL ASSISTANCE REFORM

OMSSA has made a previous submission to the Province regarding social assistance reform and employment services transformation.

OMSSA and many of its members also have a regular opportunity to consult on social assistance and employment through the Provincial-Municipal Social Assistance and Employment Committee (PMSAEC) and through our close relationships with senior staff at the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.

OMSSA and its members look forward to continued consultation and collaboration on social assistance reform, social services modernization, human services integration, poverty reduction and employment.

OMSSA encourages the Province to exercise caution when considering changing the definition of disability or the requirements related to the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). These changes could lead to unintended negative consequences and could result in Ontario Works caseloads increasing by up to 30 per cent.

OMSSA also encourages the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to review social assistance rates and rent and utility scales, to address inflation and rising costs of living. OMSSA members are also facing challenges with program delivery funding frozen to 2018 actuals despite rising costs. OMSSA members are concerned with reductions to funding for employment services as funding is transferred to new service system managers for Employment Ontario.

Collaboration and integration across ministries and with Service System Managers is required in the areas of social assistance reform, employment services transformation poverty reduction, housing, child care, health and education, in order to maximize positive outcomes for Ontario's most vulnerable residents and reduce poverty in communities across Ontario.

More details on OMSSA and its members priorities and recommendations with respect to social assistance reform can be found in [OMSSA's 2018 Submission to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services on Social Assistance Reform](#) (PDF).

EMPLOYMENT SYSTEM TRANSFORMATION

The Province has identified “preparing people for jobs” as a priority for its 2020 budget.

Three prototype zones are currently subject to an active competitive bidding process for service system management of Employment Ontario services. **OMSSA and its members believes that the municipal level of government has strong service system management experience in child care, housing and social assistance, and are as a result best positioned to serve in this role for employment services.**

Through administering Ontario Works, municipal and DSSAB caseworkers have achieved positive outcomes in the areas of employment support and life stabilization. **OMSSA’s members continue to focus on improving employment outcomes and providing life stabilization support to enable job-readiness and prepare clients for employment.**

More information on Service System Managers role, contributions and priorities in Community Housing in Ontario can be found in our [Policy Brief: Income and Employment Services in Ontario](#) (PDF).

EARLY YEARS AND CHILD CARE SERVICES

OMSSA and its members appreciate the opportunities they have had to consult with senior Ministry of Education staff on the new child care funding formula, the five-year review of the Child Care and Early Years Act and the Province's new child care plan through the newly created Provincial-Municipal Early Years and Child Care Technical Table.

Recent changes to cost sharing and administration have placed increased pressures on municipal budgets. Recruiting and retaining Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) remains a pressing challenge and an important priority for OMSSA's members.

For parents and families, child care is becoming increasingly unaffordable. Ontario families are paying from \$750 to \$1,700 per month for child care and of the Canadian cities with the highest child care costs, 8 of the top 10 are in Ontario.

Investing in child care is crucial to the economy. Public investment in early years and child care has a multiplying or "ripple" effect of positive economic benefits. In Ontario, the multiplying effect of investing in child care is approximately 2.27, meaning that every dollar invested in child care results in an economic output of \$2.27.

Affordable child care can help boost women's workforce participation, with significant economic benefits. Mothers with young children are currently contributing an estimated \$53 billion per year to the Canadian economy.

Given these benefits, the Province should prioritize, maintain or increase investments in expanding licensed child care, child care fee subsidies, special needs resourcing, Indigenous child care and capital expansion. OMSSA members are concerned with increased cost sharing requirements and look forward to providing further consultation on the funding formula with the request that transitional funding be considered to assist those service managers who are impacted by changes to their allocations.

OMSSA has a keen interest in working closely with the Ministry of Education to work towards strengthening relationships with school boards, standardizing the sale of vacant public properties, creating community hubs and addressing school rents for child care programs. OMSSA looks forward to building on our strong relationship with the Ministry to address priorities including quality, affordability, access, choice and reducing administrative and reporting burdens.



OMSSA believes that investing in early years and child care is crucial to making life more affordable, preparing people for jobs and creating healthy and safe communities.

More details on OMSSA and its members priorities and recommendations with respect to child care and early years services can be found in [OMSSA's 2019 Submission to the Ministry of Education on Ontario's New Child Care Plan](#) (PDF).



TRANSPORTATION, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENVIRONMENT

The Province has identified “connecting people to places” as a priority for its 2020 budget.

Investing in public transit and broadband service across the province is important to connecting people with the services they rely on in their communities.

Municipalities face a significant infrastructure gap and require support from the federal and provincial governments to maintain existing infrastructure and protect public assets.

Investments in community housing, broadband and transportation infrastructure are badly needed and should be prioritized to support communities in all parts of the province.

Municipalities are also on the front-lines and are feeling the impacts of climate change. **Support is needed to adapt infrastructure, reduce emissions levels and find solutions to this global emergency. Major initiatives such as these cannot be funded off the property tax base alone.**

SENIORS SUPPORTS AND LONG-TERM CARE

OMSSA is interested in participating in ongoing consultations on long-term care in Ontario and supports the ten recommendations put forth in the [AdvantAge Ontario's 2020 Pre-Budget Submission](#).

Aging populations in Ontario and across Canada places additional pressures on multiple levels of government to meet increased demand for long-term care beds and health care services.

In 2010, the median age in Canada was 39.8. This will increase to 42.3 by 2030. Seniors now outnumber children under 15. By 2046, seniors will represent nearly 25 per cent of Ontario's population. In 2010, there were 2.3 working-aged Canadians for every youth and senior. By 2030 that number is expected to fall to 1.7.

As our population ages, the need to build fully accessible and inclusive communities becomes more urgent. **OMSSA encourages the Province to maintain access to grants related to elderly recreation programming, due to the increased demands resulting from an aging population.**

Our long-term care system is failing to keep up with demand, with long-term care waitlists reaching record highs. Many people are unable to access the supports they require either at home or within their communities. Too many seniors are unnecessarily taking up hospital beds, and in some cases are being treated in hallways.

OMSSA acknowledges that the Province has committed to adding 15,000 new long-term care beds over the next five years, and it is important to follow through on this promise. OMSSA also encourages the Province to reconsider pursuing changes related to the pharmacy model.

Investing in long-term care, services for seniors and supportive housing is crucial to creating healthy and safe communities. These issues become ever more urgent as our population ages, as demand increases for long-term care beds and as shortages Personal Support Workers (PSWs) persist. Additional funding is also required to cover operating costs that have not kept pace with inflation.

Federal, provincial and municipal governments must work together to support Canada's aging population and respond to changing demographics and their impacts on government services. In particular, the Province should work with the federal government and municipalities to increase the supply of affordable, appropriate and accessible housing for seniors.



ACCESSIBLE AND INCLUSIVE COMMUNITIES

OMSSA and its members have a keen interest in creating accessible and inclusive communities.

OMSSA's members support truth and reconciliation and full consultation with Indigenous partners including the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC), the Ontario Native Welfare Administrator's Association (ONWAA) and the Assembly of First Nations (AFN).

As our population ages, immigration will be central to supporting a strong economy. Municipalities also work to support newcomer settlement and help prepare them for employment.

OMSSA supports the province's goal of Ontario Accessibility Action Plan and the goal to support the creation of a fully accessible province by 2025. To reach this goal at the municipal level, the province should consider additional funding to help service managers reach their AODA requirements. This is a high priority as the population ages.

It is important for the federal, provincial and municipal governments to work together to address challenges in health and human services to ensure inclusive, accessible services for all.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE

A study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal compared funding for health care and social services from 1981 to 2011. They found that average per capita spending for health was \$2,900, almost three times the \$930 per capita spending for social services. The study suggests if governments had spent one more cent on social services for every dollar spent on health, life expectancy in this country could have increased by another 5 per cent and avoidable mortality could have dropped an additional 3 per cent.

Investing in people through human services makes sense. In partnership with the Province, OMSSA's members play an important role in supporting vulnerable people in vital areas including social assistance, housing, employment services, child care, ambulance services and public health.

OMSSA and its members believe that investing in local human services will help prepare people for employment, create healthy and safe communities, make life more affordable and help make government smarter as prioritized in the Province's 2020 provincial budget.

OMSSA understands the fiscal situation the Province is facing with current provincial deficit and debt levels. **Service System Managers are ready to partner with the Province to ensure we can maintain and enhance social services that Ontarians rely on, while improving efficiencies through integration, modernization and reducing administrative burdens.**



Ontario's Service System Managers bring more than 20 years' experience in outcomes-focused, integrated social services delivery to the table and they know their communities best. **It's crucial that Service System Managers be engaged and leveraged as partners in the design of social policy and programs, from the outset.** This is especially true when the municipality is funding the program.

Program design must have the flexibility to account for the unique circumstances and challenges of urban, rural, suburban, large, small, remote and northern communities, rather than employing a one-size-fits-all approach. To expand and maintain quality human services in Ontario, Service System Managers also require adequate, consistent, long-term funding.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to provide feedback and input on the Province's 2020 Budget. We wish you and Ministry officials all the best in finalizing the budget and look forward to continuing our work together on mutual priorities at the provincial and local levels of government.

Sincerely,

Doug Ball
Executive Director
OMSSA

Dan McCormick
President
OMSSA