

Ministry of Health

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173-2022-XXX

December 22, 2022

Mr. Bill Hatanaka
Chair
Ontario Health
525 University Ave, 5th Floor
Toronto ON M5J 2L3

Dear Mr. Hatanaka:

Let me start by thanking you and your fellow board members for your ongoing support and continued dedication to the health of Ontarians.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of ensuring the health care system is prepared to respond to crisis and protect the health and well-being of Ontarians. Together, we took action that enabled the health system to respond quickly and effectively. While we adapt to managing and living with COVID-19, we will build on this partnership to reduce health inequities, transform care delivery, and enhance outcomes and service excellence. In this changing environment, we will continue to work together with health system partners to deliver quality health care services to Ontarians and protect the health system for future generations.

I am pleased to provide you with a letter that sets out the expectations and direction for Ontario Health for the 2023-24 fiscal year, pursuant to the requirements of the Agencies and Appointments Directive. The direction outlined in this letter is consistent with our government priorities, your agency mandate, key policies, and directives.

As part of the Ontario government, agencies are expected to act in the best interest of Ontarians by being efficient, effective, and providing value for money to taxpayers. This includes:

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1. Competitiveness, Sustainability and Expenditure Management

Provincial agencies that have been given the authority to make financial decisions must:

- Identify efficiencies and savings through innovative practices, and/or program sustainability;
- Operate within the agency's financial allocations;
- Comply with applicable direction related to supply chain centralization, including contract harmonization for planned and pending procurements, accounting practices and realty interim measures for agency office space; and,
- Leverage and meet benchmarked outcomes for compensation strategies and directives.

2. Transparency and Accountability

Provincial agencies are expected to continue to:

- Abide by applicable government directives and policies, and ensure transparency and accountability in reporting;
- Adhere to accounting standards and practices, and respond to audit findings, where applicable; and,
- Identify appropriate skills, knowledge and experience needed to effectively support the Board's role in agency governance and accountability.

3. Governance: Risk Management

- Provincial agencies must develop and implement an effective process for the identification, assessment and mitigation of agency risks, including COVID-19 impacts and any future emergency risks.

4. Workforce Management

Agencies must improve their workforce and responsibly manage compensation by:

- Optimizing organization capacity to support the best possible public service delivery, including redeploying resources to priority areas, where needed; and,
- Supporting the implementation of the Community Jobs Initiative (CJI) by identifying opportunities to relocate new or existing agencies to lower cost communities.

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5. Diversity and Inclusion

Agencies must support a diverse and inclusive workplace by:

- Developing and encouraging diversity and inclusion initiatives by promoting equitable, inclusive, accessible, anti-racist and diverse workplaces; and,
- Adopting an inclusion engagement process that ensures all voices are heard to inform policies and decision-making.

6. Data Collection

To ensure the timely, accurate reporting of outcomes, agencies must:

- Improve their use of use of data in decision-making, information sharing and reporting to inform outcome-based reporting and improve service delivery; and,
- Increase data sharing with Supply Ontario, where applicable, regarding procurement spending and planning, contract arrangements and vendor relations to support data-driven decision-making.

7. Digital Delivery and Customer Service

Agencies must develop and encourage digital delivery and customer service by:

- Exploring and implementing digitization for online service delivery to ensure customer service standards are met; and,
- Using a variety of approaches or tools to ensure service delivery in all situations, including pursuing delivery methods that have evolved since COVID-19.

Ministry of Health Priorities for Ontario Health

In addition to these priorities, I expect Ontario Health to continue to work with the Ministry of Health on ongoing health system transformation while also supporting integrated, efficient, and effective health service delivery.

The Ministry of Health, working with Ontario Health and other health system organizations, will continue to address the immediate pressures facing the health system and deliver on the following objectives:

1. Providing the right care in the right place;
2. Better and faster access to treatments and supports; and,
3. Hiring more health care workers.

To support these objectives, Ontario Health will contribute to a provincial health system capacity assessment to inform the development of a provincial Capacity Plan.

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For the 2023-24 fiscal year, I am asking Ontario Health to focus on the following key health system transformation goals, strategic and ongoing priorities, and operational management initiatives, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and health system partners including local public health units.

Health System Transformation Goals

1. Working with the Ministry of Health, and external organizations where appropriate, Ontario Health shall:
 - a. Develop and implement initiatives to advance the Ontario Health Team service delivery model, including:
 - i. supporting the standardization of Ontario Health Team membership, governance, structure and capabilities;
 - ii. implementing clinical standards and pathways for Ontario Health Teams to drive equity, access and quality;
 - iii. supporting the involvement of primary care providers within Ontario Health Teams and providing enhanced oversight and performance management of interprofessional primary health care linked to Ontario Health Teams that facilitates improved health sector planning, accessibility and integration with all partners including public health;
 - iv. implementing and strengthening Ontario Health oversight of Ontario Health Teams, including transfer payment oversight;
 - v. advancing funding and accountability instruments to support Ontario Health Teams accountability for the continuum of care;
 - vi. implementing a standardized Ontario Health Team performance measurement framework focused on population health outcomes, patient and provider experience, and value for money; and,
 - vii. coordinating the implementation of supports for Ontario Health Teams that leverage capacity, experience and expertise of all Ontario Health areas, including regions, quality improvement, digital and analytics, and other areas.
 - b. Review community-based health services (e.g., community support services, community mental health, addictions and supportive housing/assisted living providers) and determine opportunities for alignment with standardization of Ontario Health Team membership and governance;

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- c. Advance the Case Costing Program to effectively measure performance and savings, and support health system funding models. The Case Costing Program will:
 - i. support the sustainment of existing facilities by enabling uptake of best practices, such as quarterly or better submission frequency, and use of information to support quality and efficiency; and,
 - ii. develop an expansion roadmap in Community Sectors for prioritized Ontario Health Teams while ensuring the sustainment of existing facilities.
 - d. Continue to work with the Ministry of Health and Home and Community Care Support Services to:
 - i. plan for and implement approved transitions of resources, functions and responsibilities for home and community care service provision, including the management of contracted service providers, referrals, and placements;
 - ii. engage the Ministry of Long-Term Care regarding implications for the transition of long-term care placement functions now performed by Home and Community Care Support Services;
 - iii. evaluate and update templates for home and community care client services contracts, and provide guidance on their implementation and management; and,
 - iv. implement changes to the pre-qualification, provider selection and contracts.
2. Working with the Ministry of Health and health system organizations, including local public health units, the Mental Health and Addictions Centre of Excellence will deliver on its requirements to implement *Roadmap to Wellness*, the provincial mental health and addictions strategy. This includes increasing overall access to community mental health and addictions services for key clinical focuses, including anxiety, depression and eating disorders, substance use disorders, and psychosis and schizophrenia, and the ongoing implementation of:
- a. A Mental Health and Addictions Provincial Program based on provincial clinical, service and quality standards to support the delivery of consistent, high-quality care across the care continuum, including across the mental health and addictions sector;
 - b. The Mental Health and Addictions Data Digital Initiative; and,

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- c. Mental Health and Addictions Provincial Coordinated Access.
- 3. Implement the Ministry of Health's Digital First for Health strategy, and any additional digital strategies provided by the Ministry of Health, to deliver a more modern, integrated and digitally-enabled health system experience for patients and providers, including:
 - a. Operating and modernizing our current provincial Electronic Health Records systems and key public-facing assets such as Health Connect Ontario and the provincial patient portal;
 - b. Working with the Ministry of Health to advance the digital integration of key Ontario Health Team elements including hospitals, primary care, home and community care and public health; and,
 - c. Implementing a refreshed provincial health data service, with considerations for strategic data management and analytics to facilitate policy-making, quality health care, and health system planning.

Strategic and Ongoing Priorities

- 4. Support the Ministry of Health's leadership of health system integration, recovery, and COVID-19 preparedness planning. In particular:
 - a. Reduce health inequities and improve access to care and health outcomes for priority populations, including Indigenous, Black, and racialized communities as part of the pandemic response and recovery process;
 - b. Develop an evidence-based Capacity Plan that informs policy, programming and investment decisions supporting health system integration;
 - c. Develop an aligned Health Human Resources plan that will stabilize and re-build the health care workforce by addressing fatigue, attrition, emergent staff shortages and capacity challenges, and recruitment and retention issues, as well as support new acute and critical care beds brought online during the COVID-19 pandemic;
 - d. Optimize and expand existing hospital and community assets with a goal of addressing surgical long-waiters in Ontario;
 - e. Increase access to home and community care services through integrated care and outcome-based pathways between primary care and home and community care;
 - f. Expand access to hospice and palliative care;

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- g. Work with the Ministry of Health, hospitals and other health care providers to ensure Ontarians have access to COVID-19 therapeutics;
 - h. Operate the Provincial Diagnostic Network to:
 - i. maintain timely, equitable access to publicly funded COVID-19 testing for eligible Ontarians; and,
 - ii. with direction from the Ministry of Health and input from Public Health Ontario, oversee expansion of eligible publicly funded and/or insured laboratory tests with a focus on efficiency, appropriateness, and a sustainable infrastructure for broader laboratory services.
 - i. Support ongoing COVID-19 vaccine administration through hospitals, Ontario Health Team and other providers, for health care workers, staff, inpatients, and immunocompromised outpatients;
 - j. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health, support work to develop and implement a patient-centred and evidence-based approach to care for patients with post COVID-19 condition;
 - k. Provide support and guidance on patient-centred, evidence-based approaches to care for patients diagnosed with COVID-19; and,
 - l. Report to the Ministry of Health on Infection Prevention and Control Hubs' fiscal, operational, and human resources matters.
5. Recognize the diversity within all of Ontario's communities and reduce inequities experienced by priority populations as part of the oversight and coordination role of the health care system, including developing and implementing efforts to improve health equity and respond to the needs of priority populations, including Indigenous, Black, racialized, low-income, Francophone and 2SLGBTQQIA+ populations, who face ongoing systemic marginalization both within and beyond the health system. In particular:
- a. Work to address racism in the health sector and advance health equity with Indigenous, Black, and racialized partners and populations regardless of where they live in the province;
 - b. Collaborate with French Language Health Planning Entities and engage with Francophone stakeholders and communities to support equitable health care for Francophones across Ontario;

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- c. Operate in the spirit of Active Offer in all of your service delivery by including a French Language Services clause in all of your agreements;
 - d. Support continued engagement with First Nations, Inuit, Métis and urban Indigenous partners, as well as French Language Health Planning Entities, in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of health services; and,
 - e. Integrate the perspectives of 2SLGBTQQIA+ stakeholders in policy and program design and consider that 2SLGBTQQIA+ people have intersecting identities, many of which expose them to further marginalization.
6. Together with the Ministry of Health and other health system organizations, where applicable, I ask that you focus your efforts on achieving the following health system strategic priorities. In particular:
- a. Integrate and oversee key health services, such as cancer and renal care, organ and tissue donation and transplantation, as well as post-stroke rehabilitation;
 - b. Improve the New Drug Funding Program by reducing the time required to implement the Ministry of Health's decisions to fund new cancer therapies and collaborate with the Ministry of Health to explore options to provide Ontario patients with improved access to publicly funded take-home cancer drugs;
 - c. Complete the development and proceed with implementation of a chronic disease strategy in partnership with public health, addressing prevention, management and treatment, with an initial focus on diabetes, and aligned with the existing Indigenous diabetes strategy, in accordance with Ministry direction and approvals;
 - d. Implement genetic testing and develop a comprehensive provincial genetics program for all genetic services;
 - e. Continue the development and implementation of an efficient, effective and coordinated Emergency and Risk Management Program;
 - f. Integrate a disease prevention lens to all clinical activities and continue to partner with public health in prevention and population health strategies;
 - g. Support and implement quality improvement related initiatives that will help drive continuous improvement across the health care system, including patient care, safety and experience; and,
 - h. Coordinate and support the implementation of effective community paramedicine models and initiatives and support the ongoing development of the program.

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7. Continue supporting the Ministry of Health in its renewed relationship with the Ontario Medical Association by ensuring its actions are in compliance with the Ministry of Health's obligations under the Ontario Medical Association Representation Rights and Joint Negotiations and Dispute Resolution Agreement.

Operational Management Initiatives

8. Collaborate with the Ministry of Health, partner ministries, and Supply Ontario on the development of an integrated clinical supply chain management model for the health care sector with clear accountabilities among Ontario Health, Supply Ontario and ministries that achieves the best value for taxpayers and delivers quality outcomes for patients.
9. As Ontario Health continues to mature as an organization, focus on driving organizational efficiencies through further integration, reducing duplication, and ensuring consistency and improved quality. In particular:
 - a. Establish an operating model and governance structure to define Ontario Health's roles and responsibilities with respect to data, analytics, reporting and disclosure of data to external (non-Ontario Public Service) clients and for clients within the Ontario Public Service. This includes building systems of communication with the Ministry of Health to reduce duplication of products and ensure consistency in methodologies;
 - b. Develop a performance measurement framework that reflects core Ontario Health performance management and accountability functions. The framework should include measures that reinforce the Ministry of Health's strategic priorities including the elements of the quadruple aim, along with outcomes that demonstrate Ontario Health performance in the areas of integrated care/system of care, quality of care, and funding; and,
 - c. Maintain the effectiveness of Ontario Health programming and oversight, and work with the Ministry of Health and health service providers to find health system efficiencies and base savings to support a sustainable health care system for Ontarians. This includes advancing the Case Costing Program to drive best value and validate cost pressures.

Please note that Ontario Health is also required to implement the priorities related to long-term care that will be forthcoming from the Ministry of Long-Term Care. Ontario Health's plan to address all these priorities must be outlined in the agency's Annual Business Plan, which will cover the period from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2026.

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Ontario Health, like all other agencies in Ontario, is accountable to the citizens of Ontario. As we recover from the pandemic and focus on the health, well-being and sustainability of the health care system and workforce, how we work together, align and deliver will ensure trust from Ontarians and ongoing public confidence.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please contact Rhonda McMichael, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Partnership Division, at Rhonda.McMichael@ontario.ca.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Jones', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Sylvia Jones
Deputy Premier and Minister of Health

- c: Catherine Zahn, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Health
Matthew Anderson, President and Chief Executive Officer, Ontario Health
Alison Blair, Associate Deputy Minister, Health Integration and Partnerships
Rhonda McMichael, Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Partnerships