



MAKE KIDS COUNT

Investment in Pediatric Care Needed to Safeguard the Future of Our Children and Our Province

February 11, 2022

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy
Minister of Finance
c/o Budget Secretariat Frost Building North, 3rd Floor
95 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 1Z1

Dear Minister Bethlenfalvy:

Long-standing capacity challenges in pediatric care have worsened in the pandemic. With needs far outstripping capacity, a generation of children are at risk of significant long-term health problems because critical early intervention windows are being missed. As Ontario recovers from the pandemic, returning to 'normal' is not good enough, especially for children that are vulnerable, racialized or live with disability.

As the province plans for pandemic recovery, improving access to children's health services and addressing shortfalls in capacity must be a top priority. Our children are our future, and they cannot wait any longer for care.

An integrated approach across service settings and across physical, developmental and mental health is required to address both new and long-standing barriers to timely access to care. In an environment with already constrained health human resources, system-wide planning is essential and the need for investment spans the care continuum.

Across the province as of August 2021:

- **Over 31,000 children were on ambulatory service waitlists**
- **Over 28,000 children were waiting for mental health treatment**
- **Over 28,000 children were on diagnostic imaging waitlists**
- **Over 25,000 children were waiting for community child development and rehabilitation care**
- **Over 8,300 children were on surgical waitlists**

CHILDREN'S HEALTH COALITION



Significant investments are needed to ensure the system is equipped to manage longstanding pressures, the ongoing demands of the pandemic, and the backlog for care. **The Children's Health Coalition has identified a need for an investment of \$541 million in pediatric care over the next 2 years.**

Priority	Total Investment
Address long wait times and the backlog in surgeries, post-surgical inpatient rehabilitation, ambulatory services and procedures, and diagnostic imaging , ensuring care within target wait times	\$228 M
Expand community-based rehabilitation and development resources to ensure children access services within a window of opportunity to maximize their potential and recovery	\$79 M
Augment capacity for pediatric intensive care to right-size the system and manage upcoming pressures	\$44 M
Add acute mental health surge capacity in hospitals and through hospital community partnerships for children/youth in crisis	\$35 M
Provide immediate support for specialized tertiary child and youth eating disorders programs	\$24 M
Reduce the need for hospital care and ensure step-down care is promptly available by investing in community-based child and youth mental health treatment and innovative partnership models	\$131 M
Total	\$541 M

We thank you for the opportunity to provide input leading up to the next budget. To see our full submission, please visit: [Make Kids Count Full Report-Action Plan](#)

CHILDREN'S HEALTH COALITION



Sincerely,

Jatinder Bains

VP Clinical Programs, Children's Hospital – London Health Sciences Centre

Jennifer Churchill

CEO, Empowered Kids Ontario

Dr. Ronald Cohn

President and CEO, The Hospital for Sick Children

Lauren Ettin

Executive Director, Kids Health Alliance

Julia Hanigsberg

President and CEO, Holland Bloorview Kids Rehabilitation Hospital

Mary Kloosterman

CEO, Children's Mental Health Ontario

Alex Munter

President and CEO, Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario

Dr. Ram Singh

President (Interim), Children's Hospital – London Health Sciences Centre

Bruce Squires

President, McMaster Children's Hospital