



## alPHa Summary 2024 Ontario Budget: *Building a Better Ontario*

The 2024 Ontario Budget was tabled on March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024. It is focused on the themes of rebuilding the provincial economy, continuing to build infrastructure; a range of measures related to improving outcomes for workers, including employment opportunities, buffers against cost-of-living increases, and increasing housing stock and affordability; and improving services, which includes the measures related to education and health.

As always, there is a section devoted to health care expenditures, which is where measures related to public health are typically found. This year's budget includes only one mention of public health, and it is specific to Indigenous supports. There is no mention of the ongoing Strengthening Public Health initiative or any of its elements (mergers, OPHS Review, PH Funding Review).

Nevertheless, there are a few points of interest to our members, based on existing positions on a range of public health issues. alPHa has taken note of these and may refer to them in future advocacy (links to related alPHa positions are provided):

- The planned 4.6% increase to levies on alcoholic beverages will not proceed for at least two years (pp. 73-74). ([alPHa Positions: Substance Use](#))
- Investing in Indigenous and Northern Community Supports includes a reference to public health (the only such reference in the entire budget document), with specific commitments to mental health and addictions, vaccination, and prevention-focused activities related to diabetes, chronic diseases, and smoking (p. 89). ([alPHa Positions: Determinants of Health](#)).
- Supporting Women's and Children's Health includes a reference to increasing access to the Indigenous Healthy Babies Healthy Children program (p. 89). ([alPHa Positions: Early Years](#)).
- Enhancing School Safety includes a reference to providing funding for the installation of "vape detectors" in schools (p. 95). ([alPHa Positions: Tobacco, Vape, Cannabis](#)).

Please note that the practice of inviting interested parties to a full budget lockup, which provided access to the complete budget documents at least four hours in advance of the Minister rising to present it in the house, was suspended at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic. These have not been reinstated, having since been replaced with 30-45-minute, high-level technical briefings. The consequence of this is that we must wait until the documents are public to begin our analysis.

### Links to the 2024 Budget documents

- Landing page for the 2024 Ontario Budget is [here](#).
- The full Budget can be read online and downloaded [here](#).
- Budget highlights are [here](#).
- The News Release is [here](#).

**Selected Media Coverage:** [CBC News](#); [Globe and Mail](#); [Toronto Star](#).

We hope you find this information useful.