

## ELECTION 2022 TOOLKIT



ONTARIO  
PHARMACISTS  
ASSOCIATION

ONTARIO PHARMACY PROFESSIONALS  
**ARE READY FOR  
WHAT'S NEXT**



## PURPOSE

**The Ontario Pharmacists Association wants to arm its membership with necessary tools to advocate for pharmacy professionals' current policy priorities.**

## P U R P O S E

**THE NEXT PROVINCIAL ELECTION IS SET TO TAKE PLACE JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2022.**

Building on the critical role pharmacy professionals played throughout the pandemic, we can create additional capacity in the health care system and provide care to more patients in the community within a cost-effective model.

We want to see all provincial parties commit to partnering with pharmacy professionals to help improve access to care to keep Ontarians healthy in their 2022 election platforms.

# RX

## OPA WILL WORK TO...

- ✓ Amplify advocacy efforts to enable pharmacy professionals to work to their full potential through expansions of scope while also ensuring fair and reasonable funding
- ✓ Support long term stability for the profession by continuing to work with key stakeholders and government
- ✓ Develop a greater degree of unity and engagement across the profession
- ✓ Improve workplace standards for pharmacy professionals
- ✓ Execute immersive conference and event experiences

# HOW CAN YOU PARTICIPATE?

- Set up meetings with your local Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP) candidates and use key messages – don't forget to leave behind the one-pager!
- Use the one-pager to educate provincial candidates, your team members and the public.
- Share social graphics on social media.
- Encourage your colleagues and peers to get involved and take action.



# KEY MESSAGES

- ➊ Our profession is built around more than 25,000 pharmacy professionals, working in 4,700 pharmacies across the province, comprised of Ontario pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, assistants, students, and interns.
- ➋ Pharmacy professionals serve patients in traditional community pharmacies, patient's homes, hospitals, long-term care facilities, retirement homes, congregate settings, and family health teams in every community in Ontario.
- ➌ Over 95% of Ontarians live within 5km of a community pharmacy, even in rural and remote regions, making pharmacists the most accessible health care provider.
- ➍ On average, Ontarians see their pharmacists up to 14 times per year - far more than any other health care provider.

## KEY MESSAGES

### INCREASE SCOPE OF PRACTICE

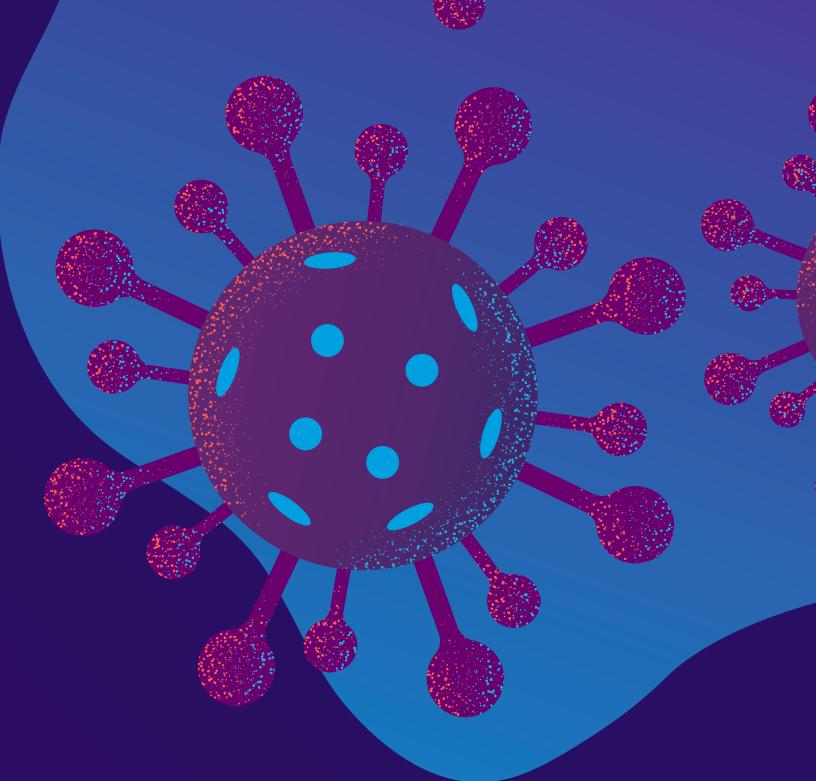
- Pharmacists have the clinical skills necessary to diagnose and treat minor ailments, saving patients time while reducing the government's overall health care costs.
- Ontario is one of two provinces in Canada to not increase pharmacists' scope of practice to diagnose and treat any minor ailments, such as urinary tract infections, eczema, and pink eye.
- By expanding pharmacists' scope of practice, more Ontarians will be able to access treatment for minor ailments outside their work hours and closer to home, especially in remote rural areas.
- Pharmacy professionals are ready and eager to help ensure patients have appropriate access to health care by playing a larger role in helping reduce pressures elsewhere in the health care system.

## KEY MESSAGES

### INCREASING IMMUNIZATION RATES

- ➊ Throughout the pandemic, pharmacists have provided consistent and accessible frontline care to patients by administering over 7.5 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine across over 2500 pharmacies and delivering over 800,000 publicly funded PCR COVID-19 tests while continuing to serve patients for their non-COVID needs.
- ➋ Enabling pharmacists to support the administration of other publicly-funded vaccines, such as routine childhood vaccines, will ensure patients have convenient and equitable access to vaccines.
- ➌ Pharmacy professionals have demonstrated their ability to strengthen public health initiatives through participation in the Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP) and the COVID-19 vaccine rollout.

## KEY MESSAGES



### ALIGN PHARMACY FEES WITH COST-OF-LIVING INCREASES

- The fees associated with Ontario Drug Benefit Program have remained stagnant since 2014. Ontario is now behind other provinces in Canada in pharmacy-funding.
- An investment in pharmacy is an investment in patient care and a more sustainable and efficient health care system.

# KEY FACTS

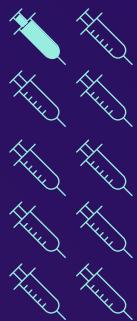


Visits to the emergency department, family physician, and walk-in clinic could be reduced by **2.6%, 12.2%, & 17% respectively** if pharmacists had increased scope of practice to treat for minor ailments.<sup>1</sup>



**73%**  
**OF ONTARIANS**

have a high level of trust for pharmacists to manage minor ailments.



**1 IN 10  
CANADIANS**

have missed receiving a vaccine due to the pandemic or had a family member who was unable to receive a vaccine.



**8 IN 10  
CANADIANS**

felt comfortable getting routine non-COVID-19 vaccines from a pharmacy or getting their children vaccinated at a pharmacy.



Over time, **\$1** invested in pharmacy, has an approximate **\$2.53 RETURN ON INVESTMENT**

A recent study shows that Ontario could **save \$42 Million per year** if pharmacists could **prescribe for just three minor ailments** – upper respiratory tract infections, contact dermatitis, and conjunctivitis.<sup>1</sup>

# FAQ

## GENERAL

### **What are the 2022 budget asks for the Ontario pharmacy professionals?**

To enable better access to care for Ontarians, pharmacy professionals are advocating for:

- ∅ Expanding pharmacists' scope of practice to include minor ailments to alleviate pressure on the health system, reduce wait times and increase access to care,
- ∅ Enabling pharmacy professionals to administer publicly funded vaccinations,
- ∅ Supporting Ontario's pharmacy sector by ensuring that pharmacy fees are appropriately aligned with cost-of-living increases.

### **What are minor ailments?**

Minor ailments are short-term conditions that don't usually require a lab to assess or prescribe for. Minor ailment treatments are minimal and have a low risk of masking underlying conditions. Several examples of minor ailments include urinary tract infections, dermatitis, insect bites, pink eye and cold sores.

## FAQ GENERAL

### **What is the cost to implement minor ailments in Ontario?**

A recent study to examine the potential economic impact of establishing a publicly funded program for pharmacists prescribing for three minor ailments (upper respiratory tract infections, contact dermatitis, and conjunctivitis) in Ontario found that visits to the emergency department, family physician, and walk-in clinic could be reduced by 2.6%, 12.2%, and 17%, respectively. This would translate to annual savings for the government of \$26.1M to \$42.8M, therefore, potentially slowing the annual growth in OHIP spending by approximately 2.7% to 4.5%.

### **Why is Ontario behind other provinces in Canada when it comes to pharmacists assessing and treating minor ailments?**

The Ontario Pharmacists Association and the Ontario College of Pharmacists (OCP) are committed to supporting the profession in implementing scope of practice changes safely and with confidence by providing the necessary guidance and tools. The OCP has submitted regulations to the government to increase pharmacists' scope of practice, however, there hasn't been a government that has included our advocacy asks in regulations or legislation yet.

## FAQ GENERAL

### **Can't pharmacists administer any vaccine?**

As accessible and trusted health care providers, pharmacy professionals have the education and skills to support public health vaccination efforts, if enabled to, by administering publicly funded vaccines to eligible individuals. Currently, of the 17 vaccine preventable diseases targeted by the Publicly Funded Immunization Program in Ontario, Part A pharmacists, interns and pharmacy students have the scope to administer vaccines for 10 of the diseases. However, pharmacy professionals do not have access to publicly funded vaccines. Therefore, despite having the knowledge and expertise to administer these vaccines, pharmacists must refer patients back to their primary care provider or local public health unit to receive them. This creates a barrier to access which can negatively impact immunization rates.

### **What does aligning pharmacy fees with cost-of-living mean?**

As of April 1, 2014, the dispensing fee payable to most pharmacies for each Ontario Drug Benefit prescription filled is \$8.83. Based on inflation statistics, the established fee of \$8.83 in 2014 was not reflective of cost-of-living-increases from the previous dispensing fee of \$5.95 established in 1986, which would have resulted to a corresponding fee of \$11.09 in 2014 and \$12.83 in 2021.

## FAQ GENERAL

### **What are other jurisdictions doing for the pharmacy sector?**

Most other provinces in Canada allow pharmacy professionals to assess and treat most minor ailments, while Ontario pharmacy professionals do not have the authority to assess or treat any minor ailment.

### **Do other health care providers support increased scope of practice for pharmacists?**

Pharmacy professionals currently work in close partnership with nurses, physicians, family health teams and other health care providers and want to ensure patients come first while alleviating pressures from other health care professionals within the system. Ontario pharmacy professionals support all health care professionals practicing within their full scope.

# OUTREACH

## **When should I reach out to MPP candidates for my region?**

As soon as candidates are confirmed for a party in a region, they are usually available for stakeholder meetings. The earlier you can engage with a candidate, the more likely the issues you are advocating for will be included for consideration in the party platform.

## **How do I find my local MPP candidates and request a meeting?**

Most local candidates will start promoting right away and you should start seeing their promotional materials online and in your region.

A quick search should bring you to their campaign website where you can find their contact information.

You can also find listings of party candidates on party websites:



To request a meeting, send the email below to the email address provided on your local candidate's website:

## FAQ OUTREACH

*Dear [insert candidate's name],*

*Thank you for your interest in representing the community of [insert riding]. I am a proud constituent and [insert your role i.e pharmacist, pharmacy technician, pharmacy student] at the [insert your pharmacy name].*

*I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you and share information with you on the important role pharmacy professionals play in our health care system and how further support for our priorities in Ontario is critical for patient care. I would value the opportunity to discuss how our priorities are in alignment with your party's mandate.*

*Thank you for considering my request and I look forward to hearing from you.*

*Sincerely,*

*[insert your name]*

*[insert your email address and phone number]*

### **My local MPP candidates are not willing to meet with me – what do I do?**

Sometimes candidates have too many requests for meetings and prioritize public appearances and door-knocking. Although an in-person meeting is preferred, if you are unable to meet with the candidate, send them another email with the key messages included in this toolkit and

## FAQ OUTREACH

attach the one-pager document we have provided. Another option is to draft a letter with key messages and print it, and the one-pager, and bring them to the campaign headquarters.

A member of their team will likely meet with you and accept the materials.

If your candidate is not willing to meet with you, send the email below to the email address provided on your local candidate's website:

*Dear [insert candidate's name],*

*I am reaching out to you today on behalf of [insert your pharmacy name] and the Ontario Pharmacists Association.*

*Thank you for considering our request to meet. Since you are unavailable to meet in person, I wanted to take the opportunity to provide additional information regarding the importance of investing in Ontario pharmacists. As the most accessible health care provider, pharmacists can and should be leveraged as key members of the primary care team in all healthcare settings, whether it's helping to keep our kids safe in schools through routine vaccinations, or utilizing our skills and expertise to treat common, minor ailments.*

## FAQ OUTREACH

*Please see the attached background document with further information regarding the need for pharmacy professionals to play a larger role within the health care system in Ontario.*

*You can reach me at [insert your contact information] and I and my team would welcome an opportunity to meet with you and your team to answer any questions.*

*Thank you very much for your consideration. I hope to speak to you in person about this important opportunity to strengthen our health care system for today and tomorrow.*

*Sincerely,*  
[SIGNATURE]

**I have met with my local MPP candidates and used the key messages, now what?**

After you meet with the local candidate, email them thanking them for their time and reiterate the key messages and takeaways from your meeting. Attach the one-pager to the email as well. After meeting with your candidate, send the email below to the email address provided on your local candidate's website:

## FAQ OUTREACH

*Dear [insert candidate's name],*

*I am reaching out to you today on behalf of [place of work] and the Ontario Pharmacists Association to thank you for meeting with us to discuss the importance of investing in pharmacy professionals in Ontario- not only for patients, but also the health system as a whole.*

*As mentioned in our meeting, pharmacy professionals are equipped with the skills and expertise to deliver high-quality care across various settings. Pharmacy professionals are ready and eager to help ensure patients have appropriate access to health care by playing a larger role in helping reduce pressures elsewhere in the health care system.*

*An investment in pharmacy professionals is an investment in optimized care for patients and a more sustainable and efficient health care system. I attached the information sheet developed by the Ontario Pharmacists Association for your reference.*

*Thank you.*

*Sincerely,*  
[SIGNATURE]

Email OPA at [info@opatoday.com](mailto:info@opatoday.com) to let them know you have completed the engagement.

## FAQ OUTREACH

### **What is OPA leadership doing?**

OPA leadership is engaging key decision makers within the government to advocate for its members. We are also engaging election platform leads as well, reiterating the messages you will be sharing with party candidates to ensure they are well versed in our priorities. Though OPA leadership is advocating on your behalf, it is beneficial for party candidates and MPPs to hear from personal experiences of how our priorities will help patients in your communities.

### **If I have a question about the campaign, who do I contact?**

[info@opatoday.com](mailto:info@opatoday.com)

### **What do we consider a successful advocacy campaign?**

The election in June is important for the health care system as a whole. Our advocacy campaign will be deemed a success when we see mention of pharmacy professionals being critical health care providers across party platforms through increased the scope of practice and investing in pharmacy to administer publicly funded vaccines.

## ONE-PAGER

After every meeting, make sure to leave behind a document summarizing the ask so that your MPP can revisit it. Download the one-page document we have prepared for you to use [here](#).



ONTARIO  
PHARMACISTS  
ASSOCIATION

# 2022 ONTARIO ELECTION Pharmacy Professionals Policy Platform

Every day, in all communities across Ontario, pharmacy professionals are building strong, lasting relationships with Ontarians. Whether it's a question about a medication, recommending a treatment or getting a vaccine, we are here for you.

When COVID-19 hit, we rolled up our sleeves and rose to the challenge by keeping our doors open to provide crucial frontline care throughout the pandemic. And we delivered – to date we've administered more than:



7.5+ million  
vaccine doses



800,000+  
COVID-19 PCR tests

The OPA advocates on behalf of more than 25,000 pharmacy professionals in Ontario and are pleased to provide our policy priorities in advance of the 2022 Ontario election. We are calling on all parties to commit to partnering with Ontario's pharmacy professionals to help improve access to care to keep Ontarians safe and healthy.

We're proud of the work we've done. And we're ready for what's next.

# SOCIAL MEDIA

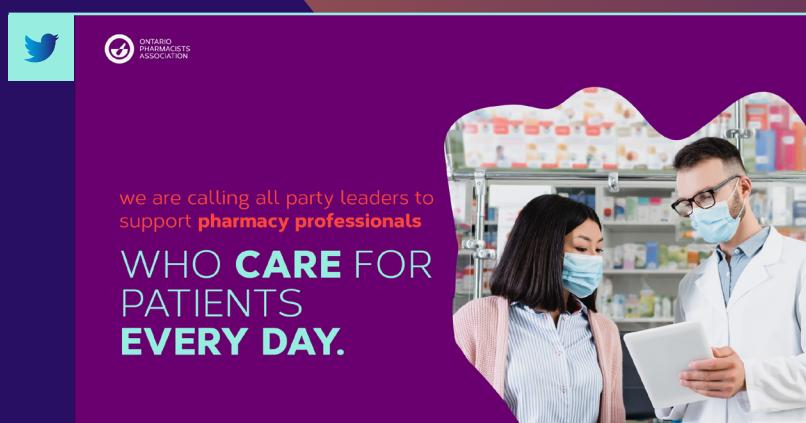
As you engaged with your local MPPs, make sure you are also activating your community. Check out all the Twitter graphics we have prepared for you to use [here](#).



#Pharmacists are the most accessible health care provider in Ontario. #onpoli



#Pharmacists proved to meet your needs during the pandemic 🩺 #onpoli



Calling all party leaders! 📣  
#onpoli  
@FordNation  
@StevenDelDuca  
@AndreaHorwath

**READYFORWHATSNEXT.CA**



ONTARIO  
PHARMACISTS  
ASSOCIATION