

October 26, 2021

AMO Policy Update – Community Paramedicine Expansion, Broadband Internet Expansion, and Launch of Long-Term Care Inspections Program

Community Paramedicine Long-Term Care Program Expansion

The Ontario government is investing \$82.5 million to expand the existing Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care program to an additional 22 communities, making it available to all eligible seniors across Ontario. This program, which is fully funded by the provincial government, provides additional care for seniors in their own homes before admission into long-term care. The program was piloted across five communities in October 2020 and is currently active in 33 communities. With this expansion, the program will be available to all eligible seniors across Ontario.

AMO is supportive of the Community Paramedicine for Long-Term Care program, and this needed expansion, as it provides for appropriate primary care by paramedics in peoples' homes across the province and is 100% funded by the province. There are no longer any geographical gaps in this LTC community paramedicine program.

AMO and the Ontario Association of Paramedic Chiefs (OAPC) released a [joint Community Paramedic Policy Framework](#) in July 2021. The paper sets out the immediate and future requirements to successfully develop a community paramedicine system in Ontario. We are looking forward to working with the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care as valued partners along with Ontario Health to make a community paramedicine system in Ontario a reality.

Funding for Broadband Internet Expansion

The Honourable Kinga Surma, Minister of Infrastructure, and the Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, [announced](#) \$1.5 million in funding for high-speed internet expansion. The projects supported by this funding will connect more than 900 homes and businesses in Rideau Lakes, Saugeen Shores, Kincardine, and Lucan Biddulph. The funding is from Ontario's [Improving Connectivity for Ontario](#)

[\(ICON\)](#) program and is in addition to the \$14.7 million announced in July.

In addition to ICON, Ontario's 2021 Budget announced an additional \$4 billion to expand high-speed internet to all unserved and underserved Ontario communities by 2025. Infrastructure Ontario is currently conducting a [Request for Qualification](#) process for firms to participate in the reverse auction process to connect defined geographic areas. The provincial government also passed the [Supporting Broadband and Infrastructure Expansion Act, 2021](#) in April. This legislation gives the province authority to set the terms of access to municipal rights of way to build high-speed internet expansion projects if required. It is anticipated that Ontario will release guidelines for municipalities and internet service providers to support these expansion projects.

New Long-Term Care Inspections Program

It was announced today that Ontario is investing \$20 million this year to hire 193 new inspections staff and launch a [new annual proactive inspections program](#) in long-term care homes. This is part of the government's commitment of \$72.3 million over three years to increase enforcement capacity, ensure every resident has a safe and best quality of life, and to hold homes accountable for the care they provide. This investment is to double the current number of long-term care inspectors by Fall 2022 with a ratio of one inspector for every two homes.

This proactive inspections program adds to the current risk-based program of responding to complaints and critical incidents and will assist the government and long-term care homes in identifying and resolving problems to improve the quality of care provided to residents. This program will take a resident-centred approach by allowing for direct discussion with residents, to focus on their care needs as well as the home's program and services. The results from these inspections will help the government determine where the sector can benefit from additional resources, including guidance material and best practices.

AMO's [COVID-19 Resources](#) page is being updated continually so you can find critical information in one place. Please send any of your municipally related pandemic questions to covid19@amo.on.ca.

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