The 2023 Ontario Budget was released on March 23rd, 2023. It is largely focused on balancing the budget after years of deficit spending, prioritizing spending on industry, particularly skilled trades and manufacturing, as well as the already announced priorities of infrastructure (e.g. transportation) and investments in health care (e.g. hospitals, health care human resources).

There are virtually no references to public health in this document, and where they are, three are in the context of the impact of public health measures and restrictions on the economy and the fourth is a pledge to consult with public health among others as the government considers modernizing Ontario’s tobacco tax administration (scroll up the page just a bit after clicking the link).

Please note that the practice of inviting alPHa to a full budget lockup, which traditionally gave interested parties access to the complete budget documents and four hours to analyze them has been replaced with 30-minute, high-level technical briefings since the outset of the pandemic. This year, the briefing occurred just prior to the public release. This summary is therefore a result of a less in-depth analysis, but if we identify anything else of interest, this will be communicated promptly.

Links to the official documents and an excerpt relevant to local public health are provided below.

- Landing page for the 2023 Ontario Budget is [here](#).
- The full Budget can be read online and downloaded [here](#).
- Budget highlights are [here](#).
- The News Release is [here](#).
- Technical Briefing slide deck (screen caps) [here](#).

**Excerpts from the Ontario Budget related to Public Health**

**COVID One-Time Funding**

Chapter 3, Page 6 of Section 2 of the Budget (Ontario’s Economic Outlook and Fiscal Outlook in Brief) includes a table entitled [Ontario’s Fiscal Plan](#), on which there is a line for COVID-19 Time-Limited Funding that clearly indicates that this will not continue past this year.

The presenter during the technical briefing framed this as not being reported separately rather than a full cessation, so alPHa will make further inquiries on this as part of its ongoing discussions with the Province on public health funding and resources.

**Paid Sick Days**

While this was not in the Budget itself, the Minister confirmed during interviews prior to its release that the temporary, COVID-related provision of up to 3 paid sick days will expire on Thursday March 31, 2023. Although this is seen by many as an employment standards issue, alPHa advocated for their
implementation during the acute phase of the pandemic as a public health measure, calling for the permanent inclusion of paid sick leave provisions under the Employment Standards Act, as a public health measure to prevent transmission of communicable diseases in general.

**Selected Media Coverage**

CBC (pre-release)
CBC (post-release)
Globe and Mail (pre-release)
Globe and Mail (post release)
Toronto Star (pre-release)
Toronto Star (post-release)

We hope you find this information useful.