The 2026 Ontario Budget, entitled *A Plan to Protect Ontario*, was tabled on March 26, 2026. Its focus is on responding to the current climate of economic uncertainty through investments in primary industries, manufacturing, and infrastructure; and a number of measures aimed at keeping costs down for consumers. The customary investments in health care and education are also included, along with the near-term overall fiscal outlook, which projects a balanced budget by 2027–28.

Organized into the themes of insulating and growing Ontario's economy, building and development, protecting public services, and enhancing community safety measures, the stated objective is to create the strongest economy in the G7.

There is only one explicit mention of public health, which is made in the chapter entitled *Protecting Ontario's Borders and Communities*, under the heading of *Strengthening Enforcement and Partnerships to Combat Contraband Tobacco* (p. 113)**.** This issue has made regular appearances in past budgets as well, and, as always, is framed as a strategy to address Ontario's public health goals, tackle organized crime, and protect tax revenues and legitimate businesses. Engagement with public health is proposed as part of this strategy.

Protecting Public Spaces outlines the Government of Ontario's HART Hubs strategy, including confirmation that funding for any remaining Consumption and Treatment Services sites will end following a 90-day wind-down period (p. 114). alPHa's leadership continues to keep a watching brief on this issue with regard to the revised Substance Use Prevention Standard and the Comprehensive Strategies and Systems to Address Substance Use Protocol, as these were not reflected in last year's draft 2026 Ontario Public Health Standards.

Links to the 2026 Budget documents:

- The landing page for the 2026 Ontario Budget is here.
- The Minister's statement can be read online here.
- The highlights of the Report are provided here.
- The News Release is here.

We hope you find this information useful.