

The Honourable Peter Bethlenfalvy, MPP Pickering-Uxbridge
Minister of Finance
c/o Budget Secretariat

Submitted via: submissions@ontario.ca

RE: Submission for Ontario Budget 2022

Supporting a Caring Economy

The COVID pandemic continues to impact our society and affect the fundamental needs in a **care-based economy**, with respect to education, childcare, home care and long-term care.

The social, not just the physical, infrastructure is the basic, and often ignored, part of our economy. Without the necessary supports for families, those individuals who are doing the caring are left struggling, and in many cases forced to leave work.

We are asking the Government of Ontario to consider the following in the budget preparations:

1. Education

Currently reports¹ point to learning losses from pandemic closures, especially affecting vulnerable students. While hard to quantify, some feel that it is at least 3 months of learning. Added to this are chronic absenteeism, mental health issues plus other issues affecting the child's well-being.

Our ask: a strategy, fully funded and staffed, for an education recovery program that also addresses all the multiple barriers for equal access to education.

2. Child Care

For many years CFUW Ontario Council has supported a high quality early years and child care system (ELCC) with well trained, well paid, compassionate and caring staff.²

¹Science Table https://covid19-sciencetable.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Science-Brief_Education_20210604_published2.pdf; People For Education <https://peopleforeducation.ca/our-work/education-recovery-and-renewal-plans-missing-across-canada-2/>; Fraser Institute <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/article/ontario-government-continues-to-ignore-parents-worried-about-learning-loss>

² Child Care – Position Paper (1987) <https://cfuwontcouncil.org/advocacy/ontario-council-policy/cfuw-oc-policy/>

Our ask: that the federal-provincial ELCC agreement be signed by Ontario immediately; that educators and staff be adequately compensated with benefits; that the commitment to lower fees and create ELCC spaces includes a specific rural strategy as well as one for the flexible care needed for shift work.

3. Elder Care

Respecting our elders should be fundamental to our society. Logically, as we age we require additional care, and our first choice is to receive that care at home.³

Home Care

Covid and the long term care crisis has made home care more important. Yet the home care system continues to lose nurses⁴, therapists and personal support workers as they move to higher paying positions in long term care and hospitals or leave the profession entirely. This has meant unfulfilled requests (44%), limited services, patients left in hospitals clogging beds⁵.

Long Term Care

Bill 37 Providing More Care, Protecting Seniors and Building More Beds Act, 2021, adopted last fall, among others, will reinstate comprehensive inspections with enforcement commencing in fall 2022⁶. Due to the growing number of seniors in Ontario, long-term care situation will continue to be dire – loss of staff, poor care, an old model of care.

Our ask: an integrated continuum of services with qualified staff, both paid at commensurate levels to hospital staff, with benefits; that home care be fully supported as warranted by the public's request⁷; that long care be funded to allow it to transition to different models of care, such as emotion-focused⁸; that gender pay gaps be eliminated; and care for the carers.

³ Home Care Ontario <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/97-per-cent-of-ontario-seniors-want-increased-home-care-funding-poll-805034645.html>

⁴ Home Care Ontario <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/worker-shortage-overwhelming-ontario-s-home-care-system-881881632.html>

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ontario Ministry of Long-Term Care <https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/1001041/ontario-launching-new-and-improved-inspections-program-for-long-term-care>

⁷ Home Care Ontario <https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/97-per-cent-of-ontario-seniors-want-increased-home-care-funding-poll-805034645.html>

⁸ AdvantAge Ontario http://www.advantageontario.ca/AAO/Content/Resources/Advantage_Ontario/AdvantAge-Ontario-2022-23-Provincial-Budget-Submission.aspx

Properly compensated, safe, respectful working conditions are essential for all caregivers or we will have no formal care and will again have to depend on the unpaid care of working family members who are now both burnt out and with financial hardships exacerbated⁹.

What's not discussed here, due to space limitations, are two major issues: the support so desperately needed by the medical community, especially proper compensation of nurses; and the 'shadow pandemic': gender-based violence and the increasing and desperate need for affordable housing for women and their families as they attempt to flee their abusers.

CFUW ONTARIO COUNCIL: Ontario Council of the Canadian Federation of University Women (CFUW) is a voluntary, self-funded, non-profit organization with 48 clubs across the province. Part of our mandate is to encourage the participation of members in their communities, to advocate for the economic security of women as well as the wellbeing of society.



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⁹ Ontario Caregiver Organization <https://ontariocaregiver.ca/news-release-new-covid-19-impact-report-from-the-ontario-caregiver-organization-shows-majority-of-family-or-friend-caregivers-are-burnt-out-and-rates-of-financial-hardship-have-doubled/>