



## Background

**We are close to being able to declare victory in this province against one of the worst epidemics of modern times.**

Ontario has a world-class HIV/AIDS treatment program. About 94% of Ontarians on treatment for HIV are virally suppressed and cannot transmit the disease. With proper support and care, they can maintain their health and lead active, productive lives.

**But complacency is a real danger. Two or three people are diagnosed with new cases of HIV in Ontario every day and about 19% of people in this province who have HIV have not been diagnosed.**

It is vital that Ontario – once a world leader in early diagnosis and directing patients to appropriate care – does more to close this gap, especially when success is in sight.

Ontario needs to ensure that we support initiatives that are working across the province to promote early diagnosis and prevention efforts and to keep people in treatment. But to end this epidemic, we need to make strategic investments:

- **in 100% coverage of drugs for treatment and prevention of HIV**
- **in expanded prevention and early diagnosis programs**
- **in continuation of proven harm reduction programs**
- **in supportive housing to improve maintenance of treatment among the significant numbers of Ontarians with HIV who are homeless or insecurely housed.**

**Access to drugs is vital** to both maintaining treatment and preventing new infections. Alberta, Saskatchewan and PEI all provide 100% coverage for antiretroviral drugs for treatment, and BC covers both treatment and prevention. We need to enhance Ontario's drug programs to make anti-HIV/AIDS drugs free for both treatment and prevention so we can end the epidemic in this province by 2026.

**Improving our prevention programs and performance in early diagnosis will prevent hundreds of new infections in Ontario every year.** So will ensuring that

people diagnosed with HIV get the timely care and the support required to ensure they stay on treatment.

**Community-based programs are providing a return on investment of \$5 savings for every dollar spent.** From 1987 to 2011, community-based programs helped avert more than 16,500 HIV infections – saving the provincial healthcare system about \$6.5 billion, roughly \$400,000 per case.

**Ontario must invest in supportive housing for people with HIV/AIDS.** A significant number of people with HIV are homeless or insecurely housed – a major challenge to both maintaining treatment and preventing new infections.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s Ontario Advisory Committee on HIV/AIDS (OACHA) has developed a [comprehensive strategy](#) that shows how we can combat this epidemic in Ontario called [Focusing Our Efforts – HIV/AIDS Strategy to 2026](#).

OAN wants to build on this strategy – based on UN targets – with the goal of ending the epidemic in this province. We need all of Ontario’s political parties to make a simple promise:

**“If elected, we will commit to ending HIV/AIDS in Ontario by 2026.”**

*The [Ontario AIDS Network](#) (OAN) is a member agency composed of all the AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) and affiliated organizations across the province. ASOs are community-based, volunteer-driven organizations that provide programs to fight the spread of HIV and provide crucial supports to HIV-positive Ontarians.*