



Questionnaire: Ending the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in Ontario by 2026

The Ontario AIDS Network (OAN) is asking all parties and candidates in the June 2018 election to make a commitment to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ontario in eight years.

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. Almost 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.

Thirty years ago, a diagnosis was a catastrophe – a death sentence. Today, HIV is a manageable infection and AIDS is a rare medical condition.

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 yet 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.

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 end this epidemic in Ontario by 2026.

This plan shows how Ontario can achieve the 90-90-90 targets set by the [Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS \(UNAIDS\)](#):

- 90% of people infected with HIV diagnosed (Ontario now – 81%)
- 90% of those diagnosed will be on treatment (Ontario now – 81%)
- 90% of those on treatment will be virally suppressed, that is, have untransmittable levels of HIV (Ontario now – 94%).



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 timely care and the support required to ensure they stay on treatment.

Much about HIV/AIDS was a mystery 30 years ago at the start of the epidemic. Not so today.

Today our healthcare professionals use best practices developed here and around the world to achieve world-class treatment results.

Now Ontario needs to ensure that we support initiatives that are working across Ontario and adopt ideas from jurisdictions that are doing a better job than we are at early diagnosis, prevention and maintaining people in treatment.

We need to focus on success and on priority areas where the need is greatest to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ontario by 2026.

Questionnaire

We are seeking your commitment to ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ontario by 2026. We will share the results of this questionnaire with our members and the communities they serve before the June 7th election.

1. [*Focusing Our Efforts – HIV/AIDS Strategy to 2026*](#) sets out a comprehensive plan for ending the HIV/AIDS epidemic in Ontario, based on the UN's 90-90-90 targets. If you form the next government, will you adopt the UN targets and make ending HIV/AIDS in Ontario over the next eight years a priority in the mandate of your new health minister?
2. Ontario was once a world leader in early diagnosis of HIV but today 19% of people with HIV in Ontario are undiagnosed. Will you support enhanced early diagnosis initiatives to move our diagnosis record from 81% today to the UN target of 90% by 2026?
3. Ontarians who have been diagnosed with HIV face many challenges in maintaining their treatment programs. Only about 81% of Ontarians with diagnosed HIV remain on treatment – well short of the 90% UN target. Will you commit to meeting the UN target by 2026?
4. 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. What will Ontario do? Will you commit to enhancing 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?

5. A significant number of people with HIV are homeless or insecurely housed – a major challenge to both maintaining treatment and preventing new infections. Will you invest in supportive housing for people with HIV/AIDS?
6. ASOs are community-based, volunteer-driven organizations that fight the spread of HIV through prevention and harm reduction programs. 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. These community-based programs are providing a return on investment of \$5 savings for every dollar spent. Will you invest in proven prevention and harm reduction programs to end 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.