



2016 Annual Report of the Auditor General of Ontario

The Auditor General will be releasing the Office's 2016 Annual Report on November 30, 2016. Below are brief descriptions of the value-for-money audits conducted by the Auditor General's Office this year.

Child and Youth Mental Health: About one in five Ontarians will experience a mental-health problem in their lifetime, and most such problems begin in childhood or adolescence. The audit assessed whether the Ministry of Children and Youth Services and the agencies provide community-based mental health services cost-effectively and on a timely basis to those in need, and whether funding to agencies is commensurate with the services provided.

Climate Change: The Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change has identified climate change as a global environmental issue, and has multi-year plans to reduce Ontario's greenhouse-gas emissions and support Ontarians in adapting to climate change. These plans include defining emission-reduction targets and introducing policies and programs, one of the most significant of which is a cap-and-trade system set to commence in 2017. The audit assessed the status of the Ministry's mitigation and adaptation plans.

Electronic Health Records' Implementation Status: An Electronic Health Record (EHR) is a digital lifetime record of an individual's health and health-care history. The government had previously committed to providing an EHR every Ontarian by 2015. The audit reviewed the progress made on EHR projects undertaken by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and eHealth Ontario.

Employment Ontario: The Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Development through Employment Ontario funds over \$1 billion in programs to help Ontarians develop skills and find sustainable employment. The audit assessed whether these programs and services are effective.

Environmental Assessments: Environmental assessments evaluate the potential environmental impacts of a project or plan before it can proceed. The audit assessed the effectiveness of the environmental assessment processes put in place by the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change.

Environmental Approvals: Those engaged in activities in Ontario that release contaminants into the air, land or water—or transport, store or dispose of waste—must obtain an environmental approval. The audit assessed whether the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change has effective systems and processes in place to ensure that projects that can have a negative impact on the environment and human health are appropriately approved and carried out in compliance with relevant legislation, regulations and policies, such that negative polluting impacts are prevented or minimized.

Housing and Supportive Services for People with Mental Health Issues: The right housing and supports allow people recovering from or living with mental illness to better reintegrate into the community. The audit assessed whether the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Local Health Integration Networks were delivering housing and supportive services economically and effectively.

Hospital Operations: Ontario's 57 large community hospitals treat high numbers of patients and account for almost half of Ontario's 31,000 hospital beds. The audit assessed the effectiveness of these hospitals and of the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care in providing timely, high-quality, safe, reliable, and equitable health care to patients.

Metrolinx—Public Transit Construction Contract Awarding and Oversight: Metrolinx is an agency of the Ministry of Transportation responsible for operating a network of train and bus routes across more than 11,000 square kilometres in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. The audit assessed whether Metrolinx had effective procedures in place to ensure that contractors were fairly and competitively selected, contracts were awarded with due regard for economy, there was sufficient oversight of contractors during construction, and that final construction resulted in value for money for Ontarians.

Ministry of Transportation—Road Infrastructure Construction Contract Awarding and Oversight: The Ministry of Transportation is responsible for the construction and maintenance of the province's road infrastructure, which is currently valued at \$82 billion. The audit assessed whether the Ministry had effective procedures in place to

ensure that contractors were fairly and competitively selected, there was sufficient oversight of contractors during construction, and that the resulting construction was of high quality and meets the needs of Ontarians.

Physician Billing: Payments to Ontario's 30,200 physicians in 2015/16 were \$11.6 billion, accounting for 23% of Ontario's total health-care spending. Physicians operate as independent service providers and bill their services to the province under the Ontario Health Insurance Plan. The audit assessed whether the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's payment models effectively meet the needs of Ontarians, fairly compensate physicians, and ensure that taxpayer funds are spent cost-effectively.

Specialty Psychiatric Hospital Services: Ontario has four specialty psychiatric hospitals providing mental-health care services to patients with severe or complex forms of mental illness. The audit assessed whether the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Local Health Integration Networks and these hospitals were able to provide services that meet the needs of patients and the community in accordance with their legislative responsibilities.

Supply Chain Ontario and Procurement Practices: The process of procuring goods and services by the Government of Ontario is intended to be open, fair and transparent. The government spends an average of \$3.5 billion annually on goods and services (excluding construction of capital assets, such as highways and buildings.) The audit assessed whether the government's procurement process is open, fair and transparent.

The 2016 Annual Report also includes:

- follow-up reports on our 2014 audits;
- follow-up reports on three special reports issued in 2012 to 2015;
- follow-up reports on recommendations in reports issued by the Standing Committee on Public Accounts;
- a chapter on the Public Accounts of the province;
- a chapter discussing broader issues of accountability, including the Public Appointments Process, government IT systems and the accounting treatment of pensions;
- the Nursing Retention Fund; and
- our review of government advertising under the *Government Advertising Act, 2004*.