



Diabetes Canada
2019 Pre-Budget Consultation Submission
Ministry of Finance
Government of Ontario
February 8, 2019



An Ontario Diabetes Strategy to End an Epidemic

Every six minutes, another person in Ontario is diagnosed with diabetes. Approximately 4.4 million people in the province have diabetes or prediabetes, and this number is expected to grow by 29 per cent over the next ten years. Today, the annual cost of the disease to the health care system is a staggering \$1.5 billion.

Each year, there are tens of thousands of preventable diabetes-related hospitalizations. Diabetes contributes to strokes, heart attacks, kidney failure, lower limb amputations and vision loss. It increases the risk of developing major depressive disorder, and people with depression have an increased risk of developing type 2 diabetes.

To ease the pressure on hospitals, the Government of Ontario must look to prevention and the improved management of diabetes. To stop this epidemic, we need urgent action, combined with a comprehensive diabetes strategy with aggressive, measurable goals.

For the 2019 Ontario Budget, Diabetes Canada urges the Government of Ontario to:

1. Reduce thousands of unnecessary hospitalizations by introducing a comprehensive Ontario Diabetes Strategy that is complimentary to [Diabetes 360°](#). The strategy should set aggressive targets to stem the tide of the diabetes epidemic and improve health outcomes for people with diabetes.

As part of an Ontario Diabetes Strategy, we recommend that the Government:

2. Publicly fund devices that help people with specific types of diabetes optimally monitor and manage their blood glucose (sugar) levels, in line with Health Quality Ontario's recommendations:
 - **Continuous glucose monitoring:** Health Quality Ontario recommends publicly funding continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) for patients with type 1 diabetes who are willing to use CGM for the vast majority of the time and who meet one or more of the following criteria:
 - i. Severe hypoglycemia without an obvious precipitant, despite optimized use of insulin therapy and conventional blood glucose monitoring, and/or
 - ii. Inability to recognize, or communicate about, symptoms of hypoglycemia.
 - **Flash glucose monitoring:** Health Quality Ontario's draft report, released January 2019, recommends publicly funding flash glucose monitoring systems for:



- i. People with type 1 diabetes who experience recurrent hypoglycemia despite frequent self-monitoring of blood glucose and efforts to optimize insulin management, and
 - ii. People with type 2 diabetes requiring intensive insulin therapy (multiple daily injections or use of insulin pump) who experience recurrent hypoglycemia despite frequent self-monitoring for blood glucose and efforts to optimize insulin management.
3. Implement comprehensive foot care supports and education. Every four hours in Ontario, someone loses a lower limb due to a diabetic foot ulcer that did not heal properly. Up to 85 per cent of these amputations may be prevented, saving millions of dollars. In addition to improved public coverage and timely access to medical devices that can treat these ulcers, Ontarians with diabetes need improved screening, foot care, and access to multidisciplinary teams for treatment.
4. Address gaps in access to medications, devices and supplies required for effective diabetes management by reducing deductibles associated with publicly funded programs (e.g. Trillium Drug Program) and ensuring adequate coverage for supplies such as pen needles and syringes.

Word Count: 498