

5 Things Friday



What your government did for you this week.

Ontario's Comprehensive Cannabis Plan

Ontario plans to introduce legislation this fall that would increase the consequences and costs for those who drive under the influence of drugs, including cannabis. The measures add to Ontario's Comprehensive cannabis plan, introduced in advance of the federal government's plans to legalize recreational cannabis by July 2018. The province has been working closely with public health and safety experts, police, and federal and municipal governments to develop the proposed measures, which will build on Ontario's recent action to align penalties for drug-impaired driving with those already in place for drunk drivers and will have zero tolerance for:

- Young drivers aged 21 and under
- Novice drivers - G1, G2, M1 and M2 license holders
- All commercial drivers.

For cannabis, the federal government will be approving a screening device and setting the thresholds for detectable presence in the coming months. Ontario's legislation would also increase monetary penalties for all drivers who fail, or refuse to perform, a sobriety test. Ontario plans to convene a summit in the fall of 2017 with policing partners, public health and other stakeholders to address illegal activity and ensure community safety.

Employment Standards Training and Education Program

Ontario is supporting employers to help raise awareness of worker rights and responsibilities through the new Employment Standards Training and Education Program. The program, a response to recommendations of the final report of Changing Workplaces Review, will provide grants to non-profit organizations that will help develop projects that education vulnerable workers or small - and mid-sized businesses on their rights and duties under the Employment Standards Act. Eligible non-profit organizations can apply for the grant online. The application deadline is 4 p.m. on October 16, 2017, and successful applicants will be announced in 2018.

Before and After School Programs

More than 80 per cent of schools across Ontario are now offering before-and after-school programs for 4-12 year olds. As of September 1, 2017, Ontario now requires school boards to provide before-and after-school programs for children up to age 12, in all publicly funded elementary schools serving students up to Grade 6, where there is sufficient demand. These programs provide additional opportunities for play-based programming, and are critical support for parents who rely on before-and after-school care to accommodate their work schedules.

Minister's Patient and Family Advisory Council

Ontario has selected Ms. Julie Drury as chair of the new Minister's Patient and Family Advisory Council. The council will provide feedback and insights directly to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to help the health care system become more responsive, transparent and accountable to patients, families and caregivers. Collaborating with multiple hospitals and community care organizations has provided Ms. Drury with the insight and expertise to provide advise on matters involving hospitals, home care, schooling, health support services, patient safety and complex care.



Protecting Cyclists and Pedestrians

Ontario is introducing legislation this fall that if passed, would help protect pedestrians and cyclists and reduce the number of people killed or injured by impaired, distracted and dangerous drivers. The measures include new offences for careless driving causing death or bodily harm, tougher penalties for distracted driving and increased penalties for drivers who fail to yield for pedestrians.