



## RCCAO commends release of Ontario government's COVID-19 action plan

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Vaughan, March 25, 2020 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Finance Minister Rod Phillips tabled the Province's 2020 Economic and Fiscal Update, entitled Ontario's Action Plan 2020: Responding to COVID-19. The update represents an important step by the Government of Ontario in its ongoing response to COVID-19. The document includes \$7 billion in additional resources for the healthcare system and direct support for Ontarians. This action plan also makes available \$10 billion in support for people and businesses through tax and other deferrals. Due to the Province's response to COVID-19, the government is planning for a deficit of \$20.5 billion in 2020-21.

In reaction to the release of the action plan, **Andy Manahan, executive director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO)** said: "During this uncertain period, our labour-management alliance welcomes the efforts of the Ontario government to provide support and clarity to the construction sector and all our partners, including municipalities. We also value the fine work that healthcare organizations are doing during difficult circumstances."

The update included significant financial resources for the healthcare sector at \$3.3 billion. As part of that expenditure, there is a focus on enhancing community capacity for patients in retirement homes and assisted living facilities, so hospitals can focus on providing focused care for complex COVID-19 patients.

"With Ontario hospitals experiencing even more overcrowding during the COVID-19 crisis, we have to think ahead about how to address hallway medicine for our aging population. There is an urgent need for alternative care for outpatients," Manahan said.

The Province has expressed that existing hotels and similar facilities could take pressure off the healthcare system during the crisis. A recent RCCAO research report has recommended that seniors' housing be built to treat chronic disease in the home and community.

In addition, beginning April 1, 2020, penalties and interest will not apply to Ontario's businesses that miss any filing or remittance deadlines under select provincially administered taxes. This will continue for a period of five months, up until Aug. 31, 2020, under several provincially administered tax programs, including the fuel tax.

"Given that tax revenues will be diminished as a result of the pandemic, RCCAO has encouraged Queen's Park to work with Ottawa to explore different revenue sources to maintain investments in infrastructure and other important services," Manahan said.

As for infrastructure spending, based on figures in this economic update, the Ontario government will be spending approximately \$1 billion less in the 2020-2021 fiscal year compared to the interim figure of \$14.5 billion.

"It is important to remember that infrastructure investments are an essential driver of the economy and are critical for Ontario to remain competitive in a global economy. As the government addresses the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge that the Province places a high priority on making strategic infrastructure investments," Manahan said.

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