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ADVOCACY UPDATE

Dear Dr. Optometrist,

Over the past several weeks, the momentum behind our advocacy efforts has continued to build. Members across the province are stepping forward to engage their local representatives and help strengthen the voice of optometry at Queen's Park.

We are in **Phase 2** of this work.

This stage focuses on expanding our reach, increasing pressure where needed, and ensuring optometry's message is heard clearly as the government prepares its upcoming budget.



Advocacy Network: Where We Stand

The Advocacy Network continues to grow, and engagement from members across Ontario has been strong. We recently held a **preparation session** on March 9 with **24 optometrists** to support members who are meeting with their local MPPs.

- Total Ridings: 124
- Ridings Covered: 57 (46%)
- ODs Volunteered to Advocate: 76

If your riding is on that list, we encourage you to step forward. Local voices remain the most effective way to influence elected officials.

Ontario MPPs are scheduled to return to Queen's Park for the spring session on March 23, 2026. The provincial budget is expected to be tabled on March 26, 2026, as part of the spring session.

Ridings Not Filled

Join Advocacy Network

Letter Writing Campaign

Over the next week, we are asking members to take part in a coordinated letter writing campaign to their local MPP. Ensure that optometry and vision care are part of the conversation as the government prepares the provincial budget.

Sign Up

Campaign Momentum

On March 10, Mark Donnison, OAO CEO, attended a pre-budget policy lunch hosted by **Finance Minister Peter Bethlenfalvy**.

Several Members of Provincial Parliament were present, including:

- Jill Dunlop
- Michelle Cooper
- Caroline Mulroney
- Peter Bethlenfalvy

The discussion focused on several themes shaping the upcoming provincial budget:

- Productivity and innovation
- Business security
- Infrastructure and housing
- Trade and competitiveness
- Workforce talent
- Reliable and affordable clean energy

On healthcare, the government emphasized:

- The strength and dedication of Ontario's healthcare workforce
- A 50% increase in healthcare spending over the past eight years
- The need for system solutions that improve primary care and home care access

These conversations reinforce the importance of continuing to position optometry as a **practical solution that can relieve pressure on the healthcare system**.



Campaign Momentum

Our advertising continues to perform strongly across government, the general public, and member audiences. The data is clear: the right message, delivered consistently, is cutting through. We've seen increases across all areas since our February 12 update.

- **Impressions:** 13,991,690 (+1,302,147)
- **Reach:** 3,601,509 (+317,297)
- **Clicks:** 73,411 (+13,146)
- **Sign-ups:** 191 (+4)

What's Next

Our upcoming Queen’s Park advocacy day is quickly approaching.
We currently have **12 meetings scheduled with MPPs** and their offices.

Over the coming weeks, our focus remains clear:

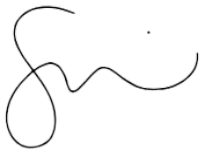
- Expanding the **Advocacy Network across all ridings**
- Driving participation in the **letter writing campaign**

- Preparing for **Queen's Park Day meetings**
- Continuing public awareness efforts through advertising and media

The work is far from finished, but the foundation being built right now is critical. When professions show up organized, informed, and persistent, governments take notice.

And that is exactly what we are doing.

Sincerely,



Dr. Shaina Nensi

President, Ontario Association of Optometrists

Questions?

For inquiries about OAO programs, events, or membership, please contact OAO at **oaoinfo@optom.on.ca**

Ontario Association of Optometrists
20 Adelaide St, East #801, Toronto, ON, M5C 2T6, Canada
(905) 826-3522

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