

NEWS RELEASE

## Ontario Working for Workers by Moving Towards Expanding Health and Wellness Benefits

Province seeking advice on designing benefits plan tied to workers, not employers

February 03, 2022

[Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#)

QUEEN'S PARK — The Ontario government is seeking advice on designing a plan that provides workers with benefits such as health, dental and vision care, even if they change jobs. Currently, millions of people, including those working in retail, the gig economy and hospitality have limited-to-no benefits coverage. To start, the government intends to create and appoint an [advisory panel](#) to recommend a system—making Ontario the first province in Canada to pursue such a comprehensive benefits program.

“Whether you’re bussing tables, working the cash, or giving rides, we are making sure necessities like dental care and affordable medication is within reach for more families,” said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. “The future of work is here, and our government is working for workers to make sure no one is left behind.”

Most workers in Ontario with full-time, permanent jobs have medical insurance and dental coverage. In comparison, less than a quarter of those who work part-time or in precarious jobs have similar benefits, which means these workers, and their families, often have to make difficult choices between their health and other necessities like food and shelter. Independent contractors, low-wage workers, newcomers, younger workers, and racialized people are also less likely to have workplace benefits.

The proposed advisory panel will look at how benefits could reside with the worker and will provide recommendations on how best to administer the new program. This could be especially beneficial for digital platform and gig workers, and others in the service industry, who switch jobs more frequently.

Establishing this panel was a key recommendation in the Ontario Workforce Recovery Advisory Committee’s [final report](#). The Committee was responsible for several items in the government’s recent [Working for Workers](#) legislation, including being the first province in Canada to [introduce the “Right to Disconnect”, as well as the banning of non-compete clauses](#).

As we build back a better Ontario, our government is working for workers by taking steps now to ensure our province remains the best place to work, live and raise a family.

## Quick Facts

- Once approved and appointed by spring 2022, the up to five advisory panel members will conduct research and consultations on how to create a portable benefits strategy for Ontario, including providing a final recommendation to the government.
- Panel members would have sectoral and technical expertise including the structure and administration of benefit plans, financial issues and workplace issues.
- Two-thirds of people in Ontario agree that “it is important that we have government benefits available based on where they live not who they work for”, according to a 2021 survey by Ipsos for the Ontario Workforce Recovery Advisory Committee.

## Additional Resources

- [Ontario's Workforce Recovery Advisory Committee: Leading the future of work in Ontario](#)
- [Portable Benefits Advisory Panel](#)
- [The Future of Work in Ontario](#)

## Media Contacts

**Harry Godfrey**  
Minister's Office  
[harry.godfrey@ontario.ca](mailto:harry.godfrey@ontario.ca)

**Kalem McSween**  
Communications Branch  
[mltsdmedialine@ontario.ca](mailto:mltsdmedialine@ontario.ca)  
[416-326-7405](tel:416-326-7405)

We have recently updated Ontario Newsroom Subscription. You may receive additional emails. If you would like to update your subscription preferences or unsubscribe, click the 'manage your subscriptions' or 'unsubscribe' links down below.