**February 3 2018**

**CHANGES COMING TO CANADA IMMIGRATION - 2018**

As Canada continues to increase immigration targets, 2018 will be a busy year with many new changes and updates!

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has already implemented some changes for Canadian immigration in 2018. Additional changes are still under consideration. We expect that these changes will come into effect in 2018. It is possible that their implementation will be delayed, or that the details will be changed. Expected changes have not been implemented yet.

* CHANGES ALREADY MADE

These changes have already been made and may affect both current applicants and applicants throughout 2018.

1. INCREASES TARGETS TO 310,000

Canada has announced an increase in immigration targets from 300,000 to 310,000 for 2018. Between 2018 and 2020, the country will accept nearly 1 million new immigrants!

2. COMPREHENSIVE RANKING SYSTEM (CRS) SCORE TENDS TO GET LOWER

With increased immigration quotas and the prioritization of Express Entry as the main pathway to Canadian permanent residence, the minimum CRS score requirement dropped to a record low of 413 points in 2017. This downward trend seems likely to continue through 2018.

3. LIVE-IN CAREGIVER PERMANENT RESIDENT APPLICATIONS TO BE PROCESSED BY END OF 2018

IRCC has announced that by the end of 2018 they will process 80% of backlogged permanent resident applications submitted by people who came to Canada through the former Live-in Caregiver Program.

4. PARENT AND GRANDPARENT SPONSORSHIP CONTINUES LOTTERY INTAKE SYSTEM

10,000 applications will be accepted under this program in 2018. The randomized lottery system implemented for this program last year will remain in place, despite criticisms.

5. LAUNCH OF THE GLOBAL SKILLS STRATEGY EXPEDITES WORK PERMIT PROCESSING TIMES!

Canada has launched a two-year pilot program, the Global Skills Strategy, to enable eligible high-skilled workers to obtain Canadian work permits in as little as two weeks.

* EXPECTED CHANGES

These changes have not yet been implemented, or are ongoing.

1. UPDATES TO PROVINCIAL NOMINEE PROGRAMS (PNPS)

PNPs are operated independently by each province. Some provinces have announced, or have already implemented, changes to both the intake system and eligibility criteria of their PNPs. Manitoba, Alberta, and Prince Edward Island (PEI), are all implementing changes to their PNPs throughout 2018.

2. CANADIAN JOB MARKET AT STRONGEST LEVEL IN A DECADE!

Under the government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, there are more jobs available in Canada than in the previous decade and not enough Canadians to fill them. Employers are turning towards foreign workers to fill their labour needs, which is excellent news for workers wishing to immigrate.

3. ATLANTIC IMMIGRATION PILOT PROGRAM (AIPP) TO CONTINUE STREAMLINING WORKERS TO ATLANTIC CANADA

Following a successful first year of operation, the AIPP has released steadily increasing target quotas for the next three years. The program pairs skilled workers with Canadian employers to expedite the permanent residency process.

**January 29 2018**

**ONTARIO MASTERS AND PHD GRADUATES STREAMS ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS**

The Canadian province of Ontario reopened its Masters Graduate Stream and PhD Graduate Stream on January 29.These streams operate on a first-come, first served model, and open to new applications periodically throughout the year. This was the first intake for these programs in 2018.

The Masters Graduate and PhD Graduate streams are two of the most sought-after immigration programs offered under the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP). No job offer is required to apply to these streams, which are designed to retain international graduates who studied in the province.

Intake limits through these two first-come, first-served streams are often reached quickly, and the Masters Graduate Stream closed around an hour after it opened. Ontario did not disclose how many applications it was accepting for the current application intake period. The PhD Graduate Stream remains open to applications.

Neither of the streams require candidates to be in the federal Express Entry pool to be eligible to apply. Instead, applicants who have graduated from a Masters or PhD program from a university in Ontario are eligible to apply for a provincial nomination directly from the OINP. If their application is approved, they can then apply to IRCC for Canadian permanent residence.

* **INTERNATIONAL MASTER’S GRADUATES CRITERIA**

In addition to graduating from a Master’s degree program at an eligible university in Ontario, candidates must have a minimum language proficiency of Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) 7, have lived in Ontario for at least one year of the last two years, and demonstrate sufficient funds to support themselves and their family members.

* **INTERNATIONAL PHD GRADUATES CRITERIA**

Candidates must have graduated from a PhD program at an eligible university in Ontario, have lived in Ontario for at least one year of the last two years, and demonstrate sufficient funds to support themselves and their family members. Unlike the OINP Masters Graduates stream, there is no minimum language proficiency requirement for the PhD stream.

The PhD Graduates stream also does not require that applicants have a minimum amount of work experience, nor that they have an active profile in the federal Express Entry pool.

If you meet the criteria for the above programs, you must wait for one of the program’s periodic intakes to submit your complete application. Intake periods for the PhD Graduates stream tend to be longer than those for the Masters Graduates stream, but not by much. The stream usually meets its intake quota and closes within days. It’s therefore important to prepare your application well in advance, so that you’re ready to submit as soon as the program opens.

**January 29 2018**

**Canada ranked first for quality of life in 2018.**

A new international survey is ranking Canada the second best country in the world to live in, and the first in terms of quality of life.

Conducted by the U.S. News & World Report, the poll ranked 80 countries based on attributes in nine broad categories. More than 21,000 people from around the world completed the survey.

Canada was ranked first in the quality of life category, ahead of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Australia. Overall, Canada was ranked second behind Switzerland, scoring 9.9 out of a possible 10.

Quality of life attributes were listed as a good job market, affordable, economically stable, family friendly, income equality, politically stable, safe, well-developed public education system, and well-developed public health system.

Canada scored 10 in terms of job market, political stability and safety, 9.9 in terms of well-developed public health and education systems.

This is the third consecutive year that Canada placed first in the quality of life category.

Canada also ranked fourth in citizenship, scoring 9.0 or above on the attributes trustworthy, progressive, gender equality, religious freedom, cares for human rights and respects property rights.

In other rankings that were part of the survey, Canada was named the second most transparent country in the world and third best in terms of education.

This is the second year in a row that Canada placed second in the U.S. News & World Report’s Best Countries list.

**January 24 2018**

**Express Entry Draw - 82 invited 2750 candidates and the minimum cut-off score was 444!**

The Government of Canada has invited 2,750 Express Entry candidates to apply for permanent residence in a draw that took place on January 24.

The Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) cut-off score for this draw was 444, a reduction of two points from the previous Express Entry draw on January 10, which had a CRS cut-off score of 446.

As with the five previous draws, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) employed a tie-break rule.

Both the first and second draws of 2018 already have CRS scores well below the first two draws of 2017, which went on to set a number of Express Entry records.

**January 23 2018**

**Canada.ai provides the latest on Artificial Intelligence-related news and research around Canada**

Candidates for Canadian immigration with Information and Communications Technology experience can take a look at Canada.ai, a new information hub showcasing developments and research in Canada’s Artificial Intelligence industry.

The platform was recently unveiled in Toronto, Ontario, at TechTO, one of the largest gatherings of Canada’s technology sector.

Canada.ai was built primarily by the Toronto-based NEXT Canada in collaboration with the Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute, Borealis AI, Canadian Institute for Advanced Research, the Montreal Institute for Learning Algorithms, and the Vector Institute and others.

The hub aggregates news on the latest AI research and development in Canada and serves as a directory of AI-focused companies, organizations and research institutes. It also provides information on AI events happening around the country.

Canada.ai will be especially useful to immigration candidates with AI and tech expertise who are considering their options in provinces like Ontario, which is a focal point of Canada’s AI sector.

In 2017, the majority of immigrants nominated by Ontario for permanent residency were employed in Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) occupations. Software engineers and designers led the Ontario Immigrant Nominee Program (OINP)’s top five nominee occupation categories in 2017, followed by computer programmers and interactive media developers.

One of the OINP’s most popular immigration streams, the Human Capital Priorities Stream, opened exclusively to candidates in the federal government’s Express Entry pool with experience in 15 ICT-related occupations on one occasion in June 2017. The stream, which normally only nominates candidates with at least 400 Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) points, waived that requirement in this instance.

Last year, Canada also introduced the Global Talent Stream to accelerate work permits for highly skilled foreign workers and, in August 2017, the province of British Columbia introduced the BC Tech Pilot program to address shortages in 32 tech-related occupations.

**January 11 2018**

**Saskatchewan’s Express Entry sub-category opens for 400 new applications**

The province of Saskatchewan’s International Skilled Worker – Express Entry sub-category has opened to 400 new applications.

The Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) made the announcement on the morning of January 10 and said the first come, first-served sub-category will remain open until the application threshold of 400 is met.

The International Skilled Worker – Express Entry sub-category does not require a job offer or a connection to Saskatchewan. Instead, it enables the SINP to nominate individuals who are already in Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)’s Express Entry pool with the necessary education, skilled work experience, language ability, and other factors to help them settle successfully in Saskatchewan.

Applicants who receive a provincial nomination under this Express Entry sub-category receive an additional 600 Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) points.

Over the course of 2017, this sub-category opened five times to a total of 3,200 applicants.

Since this sub-category opens without advanced notice, it is important that interested Express Entry candidates be prepared and have their documents in order so they can quickly apply when it does.

In order to be eligible for the SINP’s International Skilled Worker – Saskatchewan Express Entry sub-category, candidates must:

• Have proof of legal status, only if he or she is currently residing in Canada; (It is important to note, however, that candidates do not need to be residing in Canada to be eligible for this sub-category)

• Have an Express Entry Profile Number and Job Seeker Validation Code;

• Score a minimum of 60 points out of 100 on the SINP point assessment grid.

• Provide language test results from a designated testing agency that match the language level declared in the Express Entry profile;

• Have completed at least one year of post-secondary education or training which is comparable to the Canadian education system and which has resulted in a degree, diploma, or certificate;

• Have a minimum level of work experience related to their field of education or training in a highly skilled occupation (NOC 0, A, or B);

• Have at least one of the following in the field of education or training occupation:

1 One year work experience in the past 10 years in a skilled profession (non-trades),

2 Two years work experience in a skilled trade in the past five years; or

3 Twelve months work experience in Canada in the past three years (trades and non-trades).

• Obtain proof of eligibility for Saskatchewan licensure if their profession is regulated in Saskatchewan and requires mandatory (compulsory) certification or licensing; and

• Have proof of sufficient settlement funds and a settlement plan.

**January 10 2018**

**The first Express Entry draw for 2018 has taken place. Canada has invited 2,750 candidates to apply for Canadian permanent residence in the draw that took place in January 10, 2018. The cut-off Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) score for this draw was 446.**

As in recent draws, a tie-break is being applied. As multiple candidates have 446 CRS points, those who have had a profile in the pool longer are prioritized.

Today’s score of 446 is the same cut-off CRS score as the previous draw that took place on December 20. It represents the lowest CRS cut-off for a first draw of the year since the Express Entry system came into effect in January 2015.

More invitations are expected to be issued over the coming weeks, months, and years, benefiting individuals and families around the world wishing to make Canada their new permanent home.

With IRCC’s higher ITA targets for 2018, we can expect larger or more frequent draws from Express Entry pool in the coming year.

The previous year started with a CRS cut-off score of 468 and went down to a record low of 413 at one point. This year is starting nearly 22 points lower than first draw of 2017, which could mean even lower CRS records in 2018.

**January 4 2017**

**News Release**

**Free Prescription Medications for Everyone Under 25**

Ontario Becomes First Province to Cover Prescriptions for Children and Youth

January 2, 2018 10:25 A.M. Office of the Premier

Prescription medications are now free for everyone under the age of 25 in Ontario. As of January 1, the province has made the biggest expansion to Medicare in Ontario in a generation, providing drug coverage to over four million children and youth across the province. The launch of OHIP+: Children and Youth pharma care is a national milestone as Ontario becomes the first province to provide prescription drug coverage to children and youth.

Premier Kathleen Wynne was in downtown Toronto to celebrate this national milestone with some of the young people and parents who now have access to over 4,400 medicines, completely free of charge. Some of the now publicly funded prescriptions include depression and anxiety medications, insulin and diabetic test strips, antibiotics, asthma inhalers and birth control pills.

This expansion of Medicare marks a turning point for Ontario families, who now have access to life-saving drugs without having to worry about affordability. Coverage will be automatic for children and youth with an OHIP card and a valid prescription. There will be no upfront costs, no co-pays and no strings attached.

The launch of OHIP+ is just one of the historic ways Ontario has changed with the New Year. The government's plan to build a fairer, better province also includes a raise to the minimum wage to $14 an hour, effective January 1. The minimum wage will further increase to $15 per hour as of January 1, 2019.

Ontario's plan is creating fairness and opportunity during this period of rapid economic change. The plan includes a higher minimum wage and better working conditions, free tuition for hundreds of thousands of students, easier access to affordable child care, and free prescription drugs for everyone under 25 through the biggest expansion of Medicare in a generation.

* Quick Facts

Ontario is the first province to provide prescription medication coverage at no cost for all children and youth under 25 who are OHIP-insured.

An estimated 1.2 million people in Ontario without drug coverage will benefit from OHIP+. This is according to a recent report by the Conference Board of Canada that estimates a drop from 13.2 per cent to four per cent in the number of people not currently eligible for drug coverage under a public or private insurance plan in Ontario.

OHIP+ covers prescription medications listed on the Ontario Drug Benefit Formulary and additional medications eligible for funding through the Exceptional Access Program and prescribed by a doctor or nurse practitioner.

Ontario’s public drug programs already help to pay for needed prescription medications for seniors, people with high drug costs and other vulnerable populations. It marks one of the many ways the Ontario government is leading a national discussion on the future shape of pharma care in Canada.

Increasing the minimum wage is part of the Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017, which responds to the final report of the Changing Workplaces Review. The report estimated that more than 30 per cent of Ontario workers were in precarious work in 2014. Today part-time work represents nearly 20 per cent of total employment.

Since the global recession, more than 800,000 net new jobs have been created in Ontario. By 2020, Ontario is expected to create over 200,000 more net new jobs. The unemployment rate in Ontario is currently at a 17-year low.

**January 4 2018**

**News Release**

**Ontario's Minimum Wage is now $14 an Hour**

Increased Paid Vacations and New Personal Emergency Days Also in Effect

January 1, 2018 10:00 A.M. Ministry of Labour

Starting today, people across Ontario will see their wages rise to $14 an hour as the new general minimum wage takes effect. This change will help workers and their families who are struggling to get ahead in a changing economy.

As part of Ontario's Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017, the minimum wage will increase again to $15 an hour on January 1, 2019, to be followed by annual increases at the rate of inflation.

Other provisions of the new provincial legislation that come into effect on January 1, 2018, include:

Ensuring workers are entitled to at least three weeks' vacation after five years with the same employer, bringing Ontario's vacation time in line with the national average.

Expanding the 10 days per calendar year for personal emergency leave to employees in workplaces with fewer than 50 employees, with at least two paid days per year for employees who have been employed for at least a week

A new domestic or sexual violence leave of up to 10 individual days and up to 15 weeks of job protected leave; the first five days of leave in every calendar year would be paid

Increased family medical leave from 8 to 28 weeks per year

A new child death leave from any cause up to 104 weeks, and increased crime-related disappearance of a child leave from 52 to 104 weeks, and

Changes to make forming a union and reaching a first collective agreement easier

Supporting workers and their families is part of Ontario's plan to create fairness and opportunity during this period of rapid economic change. The plan includes a higher minimum wage and better working conditions, free tuition for hundreds of thousands of students, easier access to affordable child care, and free prescription drugs for everyone under 25 through the biggest expansion of Medicare in a generation.

* Quick Facts

The Fair Workplaces, Better Jobs Act, 2017 responds to the final report of the Changing Workplaces Review. It was the first-ever independent review of both the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and Labour Relations Act, 1995.

The report estimated that more than 30 per cent of Ontario workers were in precarious work in 2014. In 2016, the median hourly wage was $13.00 for part-time workers and $24.73 for full-time workers. Over the past 30 years, part-time work has grown to represent nearly 20 per cent of total employment.

Studies show that a higher minimum wage results in less employee turnover, which increases business productivity.

**January 2 2018**

**Parents and grandparents sponsorship program reopened to new applications**

Families could soon be reunited in Canada, thanks to the reopening of the Parents and Grandparents Program.

As of Jan. 2, Canadian citizens and permanent residents wishing to sponsor their parents or grandparents can notify the Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) that they would like to be potential sponsors.

"Family reunification is a priority for the Government of Canada,” said Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship in a news release.

Submitting the Interest to Sponsor form is the first step in applying to the Parents and Grandparents Program, which allows selected Canadian citizens and permanent residents to sponsor their parents and grandparents to immigrate to Canada as Canadian permanent residents.

The deadline for the form submission is at noon EST on Feb. 1.

IRCC selects potential sponsors at random from the Interest to Sponsor submissions that it receives and invites those selected to apply to sponsor their parents and grandparents. All individuals who submitted an online form will be notified whether they have been invited or not.

Those invited to apply will have 90 days to submit a completed application, including all supporting documents.

**December 22 2017**

**News Release**

**From Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada**

Potential sponsors will soon have the opportunity to express their interest to sponsor

December 22, 2017 – Ottawa, ON – Canadian citizens and permanent residents will soon be able to take the first step in applying to bring their parents and grandparents to Canada, when the Parents and Grandparents Program reopens in 2018.

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) introduced a new process in 2017 for application intake for sponsoring parents and grandparents to make it fairer and more transparent for applicants. Now, potential sponsors must first notify IRCC that they are interested in sponsoring their parents and grandparents by submitting an “Interest to Sponsor” form. Using a random selection process, IRCC will then invite potential sponsors to apply to sponsor their parents and grandparents.

Today, the Honorable Ahmed Hussen, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, announced that the “Interest to Sponsor” form will be available at noon EST on January 2, 2018. Those who wish to apply to sponsor their parents and grandparents in 2018 must first fill out this online form. It will be available until noon February 1, 2018.

To help ensure the efficiency of the system and to allow as many eligible sponsors as possible to bring their parents and grandparents to Canada, it is important that only those who meet the sponsorship eligibility requirements submit an “Interest to Sponsor” form. Additional questions have been added to the 2018 version of the “Interest to Sponsor” form to help potential sponsors self-assess whether they are eligible to sponsor.

**December 9 2017**

**The Alberta Immigrant Nominee Program, one of Canada’s Provincial Nominee Programs, has reached its maximum allotment of 5,500 nomination certificates for 2017.**

All applications that have already been submitted will be processed, the AINP said, but no further certificates will be issued until 2018. As of Dec. 4, the AINP reported that more than 3,050 applications were in the queue for assessing and processing.

It’s possible that Alberta will benefit from a slightly higher allotment in 2018 as a result of the federal government’s multi-year immigration plan, which was announced Nov. 1. The federal plan includes an increased Provincial Nominee Program target of 55,000 for 2018, up eight per cent over 2017’s target of 51,000.

Through the AINP, Alberta can nominate prospective immigrants with skills and experience that match labour market demands in the province, which is the largest producer of oil and gas products in Canada.

**December 6 2017**

**The Government of Canada has invited 2,750 candidates in the federal Express Entry pool to apply for Canadian permanent residence in a draw that took place Dec. 6. The cut-off CRS score for this draw was 452.**

The draw once again made use of the tie-break procedure that IRCC introduced in June. In this case, the time and date was November 16, 2017 at 04:20:20 UTC.

The cut-off score of 452 is up 13 points over the previous draw, which took place on Nov. 15. This is likely due to the time that elapsed between the two draws, which allowed more candidates to enter the Express Entry pool, and the size of the draw.

A cut-off CRS score of 452 is exceptional given the range of CRS scores in 2017, with CRS cut-off scores in the 430s occurring most often. On a very few occasions, scores ranged into the low 400s and high 450s.

Government of Canada’s increased ITA targets in the three Express Entry economic immigration classes for 2018, it is hoped the CRS scores will continue to drop. IRCC will have to perform either larger or more frequent draws from Express Entry pool in the New Year, or both. Each of those scenarios could have the effect of lowering the cut-off CRS score.

This latest draw was the 29th to take place in 2017 and brings the total number of ITAs issued so far in 2017 by IRCC to 83,273, representing just over 56 per cent of the 148,118 invitations issued since January 2015, when the Express Entry system came into effect.

Wednesday’s draw follows a busy November that saw four draws over its first three weeks.

Those weekly draws followed the Nov. 1 announcement by IRCC of a multi-year immigration plan that are expected to see the number of candidates granted permanent residence through the federal Express Entry system’s economic programs increase by nearly 20 per cent between 2018 and 2020.

Since the announcement, five draws have seen a total of 8,295 ITAs issued.

**December 3 2017**

**Changes coming to Canada’s medical inadmissibility rules**

Canada’s Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen says current medical inadmissibility rules for newcomers are out of touch with Canadian values and need to be reformed.

Hussen appeared before Parliament’s Standing Committee as part of a broader review of ‘medical inadmissibility rules for immigrants’, which he said was necessary and long overdue. Canada’s current policy of refusing immigrants deemed likely to cause excessive demand on health and social services is more than 40 years old and needs to be brought into the 21st century.

“From a principled perspective, the current excessive demand provision simply does not align with our country’s values and the inclusion of persons with disabilities in Canadian society,” Hussen said.

Section 38-1C of Canada’s Immigration and Refugee Protection Act defines excessive demand as one “for which the anticipated costs would likely exceed average Canadian per capita health services and social services” over a period of five consecutive years immediately following the most recent medical assessment. In some cases, that period can be extended to 10 consecutive years. The anticipated impact on existing wait times for health and social services in Canada is also considered.

In 2017, the cost threshold for a demand to be considered excessive was $6,655 per year, or $33,275 over five years.

There are a number of exemptions to the excessive demand policy in cases of Family Sponsorship for a sponsor’s spouse, common-law partner or conjugal partner and dependent child.

Decisions based on the excessive demand rules result in estimated annual savings of about $135 million, Hussen said. In 2015, that amount represented 0.1 per cent of all health spending in Canada.

Hussen noted that his department, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), launched its own review of the policy in 2016 that consulted with Canada’s provincial and territorial governments and disability advocates, and took into consideration the current legal landscape.

When asked if IRCC would consider scrapping the excessive demand rule altogether, Hussen said “all options are on the table.”

However, that the medical examination now required of every applicant for a Canada Immigration Visa and some applicants for temporary status in Canada will remain in place.

The goal of the review, is to uphold the federal and provincial governments’ commitment to ensuring both the protection of Canada’s health and social services and the fair treatment of immigrants.

**November 16 2017**

**Ontario Implementing Plan to Create Fairness and Opportunity**

Province Releases 2017 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review

Ontario is moving forward with its plan to create fairness and opportunity for people across the province with the release of the 2017 Ontario Economic Outlook and Fiscal Review.

Charles Sousa, Minister of Finance, delivered the 2017 Review today in the legislature, outlining new measures to grow the economy and help people thrive in an uncertain global environment.

The government will balance the budget this year, as well as the next two years. A balanced budget means more funding for the programs and services people rely on most, such as health care and education.

While Ontario’s economy has grown faster than Canada’s and those of all other G7 nations for the past three years, the government recognizes that the numbers do not tell the whole story. Many people are facing uncertainty and challenges. The measures in the 2017 Review respond to this uncertainty and will help create greater fairness and opportunity for all by supporting the right conditions for families and businesses to succeed.

* Strengthening Health Care

Ontario is set to launch the most significant expansion of Medicare in a generation with OHIP+: Children and Youth Pharma care. Starting January 1, OHIP+ will provide free prescription medications for everyone under 25, ensuring parents never have to choose between paying for their children's prescription drugs and providing other essentials.

In addition, Ontario is boosting supports for seniors to ensure they are able to access the services they need at every stage of their lives. Aging with Confidence: Ontario’s Action Plan for seniors includes a $155-million investment over three years. Working with sector partners, the plan also commits to creating 5,000 new long-term care beds by 2022 — and more than 30,000 beds over the next decade. These new beds are in addition to the 30,000 existing beds in Ontario that are being redeveloped. The government will also increase the provincial average to four hours of direct care per long-term care resident per day when fully phased in.

The province is also investing to improve care for all patients, with an additional $618 million for hospitals this year to provide faster access to procedures, new programs and digital technology. And, to support a smooth transition for patients discharged from hospital, the government is investing an additional $40 million to help patients receive care at home.

* Investing in Education, Skills and Training

Starting this school year, more than 210,000 college and university students are receiving free tuition thanks to the new Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). As a next step, the province will implement net tuition billing to ensure that college and university students receive a reduced up-front bill with OSAP already factored in. Ontario is also proposing to recognize Indigenous Institutes as a third pillar of the postsecondary system alongside colleges and universities.

To continue supporting young people as they begin their careers and transition to the workforce, Ontario is providing new incentives for businesses to employ youth. Beginning in 2018, the province will provide $124 million over three years in supports for youth aged 15 to 29 to support employer hiring and retention. A small business with fewer than 100 employees would receive a $1,000 incentive for hiring a young worker and a $1,000 incentive for retaining that worker for six months.

The government is launching a new grant that encourages employers to help apprentices complete their training programs, and is expanding support to five additional trades. The province is also modernizing its apprenticeship system to improve completion rates — creating clearer pathways to jobs — and increasing opportunities for underrepresented groups.

* Creating Fairness and Opportunity

Ontario’s Fair Housing Plan has helped to stabilize the real estate market and make housing more affordable. As part of the plan, the expansion of rent control to all private market units in the province is ensuring that people are not subject to large, unfair spikes in rent. To continue helping families buy or rent a home they can afford, the province established a roundtable on housing development approvals. It has issued recommendations that will help address housing affordability challenges, increase supply, and support mixed-use communities that make more efficient use of land and infrastructure.

One-third of all workers in Ontario are employed by small businesses. The province is helping to build a dynamic and competitive business environment by providing more than $500 million over three years in new initiatives to lower costs for small businesses and promote growth. This includes the proposed

22 per cent cut to the Corporate Income Tax rate for small businesses. Along with recent measures, such as lowering Workplace Safety and Insurance Board average premium rates and other business-focused initiatives, this would result in $1.9 billion in provincial support for small businesses over three years.

Ontario’s plan to create fairness and opportunity during this period of rapid economic change includes a higher minimum wage and better working conditions, free tuition for hundreds of thousands of students, easier access to affordable childcare, and free prescription drugs for everyone under 25 through the most significant expansion of Medicare in a generation.

**November 15 2017**

**Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada has invited 2,750 candidates in the Express Entry pool to apply for Canadian permanent residence in a draw that took place on Nov. 15.**

The Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) score of the lowest-ranked candidate issued an Invitation to Apply (ITA) was 439.

All candidates with a score above 439 were invited to apply. While some candidates with a score of 439 received ITAs, IRCC said a tie-break procedure was necessary, meaning only those candidates with a CRS score of 439 who entered their profiles in the Express Entry pool prior to a specified date and time were invited to apply. In this case, that time and date was October 19, 2017, at 12:02:28 UTC.

Today’s cut-off CRS score of 439 is 19 points lower than last week’s draw, which had a cut-off score of 458.

It is interesting to note that this latest draw was the fourth in three weeks, which has only happened once before since Express Entry was introduced. Canada announced new three-year immigration targets on Nov. 1 and more frequent draws could have the effect of increasing the number of ITAs issued and lowering the CRS cut-off score as candidates with higher scores are removed from the pool.

Under its recently announced Immigration Levels Plan, Canada is planning to welcome nearly one million new permanent residents between 2018 and 2020. Nearly 250,000 of those newcomers to be admitted through programs managed under the Express Entry system, namely: the Federal Skilled Worker Class (FSWC), the Federal Skilled Trades Class (FSTC), and the Canadian Experience Class (CEC). The number admitted through these programs is set to increase year-on-year.

This latest draw was the 78th draw to take place since the Express Entry system was introduced on Jan. 1, 2015, and the 28th since the start of 2017. So far this year, 80,523 ITAs have been issued.

**October 4 2017**

**2,801 Express Entry in October 4 Draw with over 438 CRS.**

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) has invited 2,801 more candidates to apply for Canadian permanent residence, in an Express Entry draw that took place on October 4. Candidates in the pool with 438 or more Comprehensive Ranking System (CRS) points were issued an Invitation to Apply (ITA) on this occasion.

Candidates who receive an ITA have 90 days to submit a complete application for permanent residence, including supporting documentation. Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) aims to complete the processing of applications within six months. Since Express Entry was first introduced in January, 2015, the vast majority of applications have been processed within this six-month timeframe.

The latest draw brings the total number of ITAs issued so far this year to 72221, more than double the 33,782 that were issued in the whole of last year.