

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

March of Dimes Canada

Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

• Health and well-being: Improved access to healthcare services; improved diagnosis and treatment of secondary conditions and diseases; care coordination; health literacy; health promotion and wellness; prevention of age-related chronic conditions; prevention of abuse and neglect; reduction in pre-mature mortality and training of health professionals in aging and disability. • Inclusion, participation and community: Accessible societies, including age and disability friendly communities, removal of barriers of any kind: architectural, cultural, legislative. Impact and implications of aging and disability on civic and community engagement, and the role of technology and universal design in fostering inclusion, participation and knowledge management. • Long-term supports and services: Support for families and caregivers, training and education of direct support professionals; self-determination, access, availability, and affordability of supports and services; ethical issue related to non discrimination, such as in palliative care, end of life issues. • Income security: Employment, retirement security, asset development; accommodation and accessibility in the work setting; value of non-paid social and community contributions. • Science of bridging: Research on bridging aging and disability and on ways to transfer this knowledge locally, nationally, and internationally to policy development.

Recommendations: 1. An international agenda for bridging aging and disability be formally developed through the involvement of researchers, practice professionals, policy-makers, older adults, persons with disabilities and their families. 2. Public and private funders provide financial support for research and scholarship that advances the science of bridging aging and disability knowledge, practice and policies. 3. Health and social policy-makers incorporate bridging and knowledge transfer as key strategies in policy planning for building a society where all citizens can fully participate including persons with disabilities of all ages.

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?

• National and international bridging of aging and disability knowledge, policy and practice must be actively promoted. Aging with and aging into disability are global population trends. Cross-national and international collaborations can support effective and efficient knowledge development and transfer, implementation of best practices, and facilitate information exchange among and empowerment of persons with disabilities and their families. • Bridging is composed of several activities which must occur simultaneously, at multiple levels of knowledge development, policy and practice, and include disability and aging stakeholder groups. The scope of required bridging activities is broad, including the analysis of public policies, interdisciplinary research, the development of professional best practices, and coalition building across advocacy groups and among individual stakeholders. Older adults and people with disabilities and their families must be meaningfully included in bridging activities in recognition of their rights to self-determination and social inclusion. • Building effective bridges across aging and disability knowledge, policy and practice requires interdisciplinary collaboration and engagement with national and international decision-makers. Development of effective models of bridging and successful bridging practices requires engagement of professional and citizen stakeholders bringing together relevant knowledge and experience. Decision leaders must engage knowledge brokers to pursue program and policy changes that support bridging activities. • Connecting the field of aging and disability will require development of a clear model of bridging. Research at all levels will support the science of bridging as it develops. However, research must give immediate and persistent attention to the pace of bridging to assure that it aligns with the needs of the person aging with disability in order for them to negotiate and make life choices, navigate support and service systems, and engage in opportunities for full inclusion and participation in society. • Bridging requires developing a common terminology and knowledge base. Tasks include activities of dissemination, coordination, assessment, empowerment, service delivery, management, financing and policy. Technologies include various Information Technologies, assessment instruments and guidelines. Bridging practices should be catalogued and incorporated to open-access repositories for use by aging and disability networks.