

**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget  
Consultations in Advance of the 2019 Budget**

**By the Canadian Men's Health Foundation**

August 2, 2018

Hon. Wayne Easter, P.C., M.P.  
Chair, House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

**Written Submission for Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2019 Budget**

Dear Mr. Easter,

The Canadian Men's Health Foundation (CMHF) is a national, non-profit organization focused on inspiring men to live longer, healthier lives and is one of the only organizations of its kind to develop a research and evidence-based approach to communicating the importance of male health in a way that men can relate to.

CMHF is focused on promoting the most important lifestyle factors in preventing the onset of health problems and bringing increased awareness and long-term cost savings to health budgets and society at large.

As an established national organization with a long track record of achievement and success, we look forward to working with the Government of Canada to ensure that the imperative of promoting men's health continues to resonate with all Canadian men, their families and their communities. CMHF is asking the federal government for \$2 million per year for 5 years which will allow our organization continued success of our 'Don't Change Much' campaign, DUDES Club supporting Indigenous men, Youcheck.ca online health tool, and our Men's Health Week awareness campaign. Federal funding will also allow our organization to successfully leverage additional major funds from private donors, alliances and other partners. With a new investment in CMHF and its important activities, we are confident we will be able to accomplish even more for Canadian men and their families.

On behalf of the Foundation, I am pleased to provide our recommendations on 2019 budget priorities to the Government of Canada.

Sincerely,

Wayne Hartrick  
President  
Canadian Men's Health Foundation

- **Recommendation:** That the Government of Canada provide \$2 million per year for 5 years (for a total of \$10 million in funding) to the Canadian Men’s Health Foundation. This funding will support the following initiatives;
  - CMHF’s *‘Don’t Change Much’* campaign.
  - Reducing the health inequities between Indigenous peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians by supporting *DUDES Club*.
  - Enhanced data collection mechanisms to help better develop health policy pertaining to men in Canada through an investment in CMHF’s *YouCheck.ca* health awareness tool.
  - Improvement of men’s health through investing Men’s Health Week awareness campaign.

## **Recommendation regarding an investment of \$2 million per year for five years towards CMHF initiatives**

### **‘Don’t Change Much’**

‘*Don’t Change Much*’ is a comprehensive men's health program that promotes awareness and education, engagement, and action regarding healthy lifestyle behaviours in men. This CMHF signature initiative uses an easily accessible website to illustrate how small behavioural changes can have a big impact on men’s overall health.

‘*Don’t Change Much*’ received \$519,400 (over 3 years) in July 2015 from the federal government to launch the initiative and received an additional \$4 million in federal funding in Budget 2016 from the Minister of Health to “help reach and encourage more men to make and sustain healthier lifestyle choices, and enable the CMHF to test innovative ways to engage men and provide incentives to achieve lifestyle goals.” ‘*Don’t Change Much*’ is built around the concept that small steps become habit, and habit becomes a healthier lifestyle.

To build on the campaign’s success, CMHF is requesting additional federal funding to grow this strategic partnership into a long-term engagement opportunity that will see an increase in participation rates by men across Canada. A financial commitment will also ensure that CMHF is able to proactively engage men in a culture of good health, emphasize the importance of health in families and make Canada a leader in health promotion. Ultimately, this partnership is an essential component of running a successful, longstanding campaign that achieves positive and long-lasting outcomes.

As background, two years of market-research provided the basis for ‘*Don’t Change Much*’ programming and CMHF has been executing men’s health awareness initiatives through both traditional and digital campaigns. CMHF produces new evidence-based health promotion content year-round, targeting men through a variety of social channels and through a weekly health program to a subscriber email database. This initiative is supporting men to start a societal conversation about male issues that affect families and communities; inspire men to live healthier lives; and, to fill critical gaps in the medical knowledge of, and care for, men.

Specifically, additional federal funding would be used to expand the reach of the ‘*Don’t Change Much*’ campaign in Canada, through digital and traditional advertising. It would also assist in developing new and innovative content for the campaign.

Since its launch, the *Don’tChangeMuch.ca* campaign found that 72% of men reported improvements in nutrition or activity. Through self-reporting, program participants noted that, through our information and tips, they made behavioural changes that resulted in better health choices. There has also been a rise in online subscribers. Over 12,000 people have subscribed to our *Don’tChangeMuch.ca* website, and are all receiving weekly health newsletters, updates, tips, recipes, and other relevant content.

## **DUDES Club**

The Minister of Health's work with the Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations and the Minister of Indigenous Services focuses on systemic change in the government's provision of health care services to Indigenous peoples and to reduce the health inequities between Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians. In this vein, Budget 2018 committed to focusing on closing the gaps in health outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. CMHF strongly believes that *DUDES Club* is an existing vehicle that can help close that gap.

*DUDES Club* provides spaces that facilitate a participant-led community for men's wellness, which prioritize supportive relationships, engagement in health care, and Indigenous world views. Each club responds to their communities differently, as a general rule clubs provide access to an Elder, a health practitioner, share a meal, meet regularly and host regular activities. Information can be found at <http://www.dudesclub.ca/>.

*DUDES Club* partners and peer groups include;

- Canada Men's Health Foundation
- First Nations Health Authority
- Vancouver Native Health Society
- University of British Columbia: Men's Health Research
- St. Paul's Foundation
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- Ending Violence Association
- City of Vancouver
- Moosehide Campaign
- #HeforShe
- CDC's Cheemamuk

## **YouCheck.ca**

*YouCheck* is a health awareness tool built specifically for men using an online questionnaire that helps men assess how they're doing health wise and what they can do better. It gives each man a report of their likelihood to develop the seven most common health problems. By completing *YouCheck.ca* men provide much needed data on improving the health of all Canadian men. The data compiled may inform future health policy for men in Canada. Youcheck.ca partners include SunLife Financial, the University of British Columbia and the Province of British Columbia.

CMHF believes that funds are an integral part of running a successful, long-term campaign that has a direct link to acquiring robust metrics. The quicker a large-scale campaign is launched and a preliminary data pool is collected, the sooner CMHF and the Government of Canada can begin to track and monitor men's health outcomes. CMHF believes that this will not only provide Canadians with a snapshot of the status of men's health at a national level, but also has the potential to shed light on where men rank in comparison to other nations.

Since its launch, the *YouCheck* tool achieved a 30% completion rate and has received kudos from experts in public health for its impressively high completion rate – something rarely seen among health risk assessment tools.

CMHF believes that *Youcheck.ca* will continue to see an increase in participant rates and retention across the country and any federal investments would increase this success.

### **Men's Health Week**

Those affected by men's health issues aren't just men themselves; Canadian families and communities are affected by men's poor health. As an example, 45% of Canadian women aged 65 or over are widows. By supporting Men's Health Week, the Government of Canada can engage both men and women in creating healthy families.

The impact of poor men's health on society is significant: CMHF conducted a national Economic Impact Burden report on men's poor lifestyle choices, which was completed in 2015. The study showed that these poor choices cost \$36.9 billion a year in Canada – an estimated \$13.9 billion (or \$2,081 per man) in Ontario alone.

CMHF believes that solving men's health is the "missing piece" to the family health puzzle. Too often, our fathers, husbands and sons disappear from our lives much earlier than necessary. Women play a large part in encouraging men to do more to address their health and wellness, and this initiative is just as much about women as it is about men. Tackling men's health issues as a component of family health will lessen the burden on the spouses and siblings of men and serve as cumulative health benefit for all Canadians.

CMHF asks for continued public support from the Minister of Health similar to the statement made on June 11, 2018 whereby Minister Petitpas Taylor kicked off Men's Health Week 2018 which highlighted the importance of building awareness and providing men with the tools and resources needed to make lifestyle changes that can improve their health. This type of support shows the federal government's commitment to men's health and is significant to the work CMHF is doing.

CMHF would also like to build on this year's successful Men's Health Week campaign and broaden our reach. This year CMHF's campaign had 44 unique news articles and broadcast stories in 132 different media outlets which includes reprints in multiple outlets. A total of 174 articles were published or broadcast between the week of June 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup>, reaching over 40 million people.