

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Wound Care Alliance 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?

Solution: Wound Care Alliance Canada (WCA Canada) recommends continued and accelerated government investment in health innovation as a way to mitigate health system costs. (See Note 1)
Rational: The Institute for Research on Public Policy-Nanos Research survey of 1,333 adult Canadians (online survey conducted between July 5-9, 2012) found the number 1 issue, ranked by 'importance to Canada's future' is "Keeping our health care system strong". Innovation is key to Canada's prosperity and healthcare innovation is critical to system sustainability, quality improvement and value-for-money. In 2011 WCA Canada was formed (1) as a collaboration between the Canadian Association for Enterostomal Therapy (CAET); the Canadian Association for Wound Care (CAWC); the Ontario Woundcare Interest Group (OntWIG) and MEDEC representing the wound care industry to pursue a national evidence-based wound innovation agenda for achieving efficiencies that will transform service delivery and provide value for money. Our solutions encompass (1) accelerating the development and uptake of best practice through coordinated research activity; (2) measuring wound prevention and care outcomes; (3) building knowledge capacity within the provider workforce and (4) adoption of innovation in programs, products and processes. Note 1 - 2010 "Ideas and Opportunities for Bending the Health Care Cost Curve Report" sponsored by the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA), the Ontario Association of Community Care Access Centres (OACCAC) and the Ontario Federation of Community Mental Health and Addiction Programs (OFCMHAP), p15, estimated a 10% reduction of wound care expenditures in the community, acute and long-term care sectors as a very conservative estimate of potential savings with the adoption of best practices. With an estimated \$3.9 billion annual cost for wound care in Canada, there is a reasonable potential for an annual saving of \$390 million.

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?

Solution: WCA Canada recommends government open a new Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) competition in 2013 for projects that are aligned with those areas where Canada can make a greater contribution to global health such as a Canadian Wound Management Innovation Centre of Excellence that will attract high-value jobs and global investment. (See Note 2)
Rational: With a natural alignment between government's interest in innovation as an economic driver of jobs and investment and the wound care industry's strength in bringing innovative products and services to market, WCA Canada believes that Canada is well-positioned to bring leadership to the global wound care community and attract jobs/investment. Currently Canada lags other nations in promoting and adopting innovation in new technology and this is particularly evident in the wound care sector. Federal government investment in a Canadian Wound Management Innovation Centre of Excellence that, for example, develops pan-Canadian solutions for the strategic use of procurement to drive innovation would make

Canada a more attractive business environment for wound technology companies, attract investment in R&D and produce high-value wound care sector jobs in Canada. Note 2 - The Australia government established a Wound Management Innovation Collaborative Research Centre (equivalent to a Canadian Centre of Excellence) in 2010/11 with a \$28 million grant that will be home to sixty equivalent fulltime researchers with a total budget (cash and in-kind) of just over \$100 million of which \$72 million is from a variety of commercial, clinical and academic partners. The number of additional “spin off” jobs is unknown.

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?

Solution: WCA Canada recommends the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) add non-healing wounds to their list of major public health challenges (list currently includes pandemic influenza and emerging infections, HIV/AIDS, Obesity, Mental health) and that Health Canada and PHAC invest in partnering with WCA Canada on developing a Triple Aim Framework for wounds that simultaneously pursues better health, better health care, and lower per capita costs. (See Note 3) Rational: As Canada’s population ages there is a rising threat of diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Patients with non-healing wounds, chronic wounds most often suffer from these high priority diseases that overshadow wounds as a major health problem in and of itself. With an increased risk of non-healing wounds and a consequential and unsustainable demand for wound care treatment, efforts need to be made today to allow for more effective prevention and advanced diagnostic and treatment options to support fundamental healthcare system remodelling. Note 3 - Human Skin Wounds: A Major and Snowballing Threat to Public Health and the Economy, Chandan K. Sen, PhD, Gayle M. Gordillo, MD, Sashwati Roy, PhD, Robert Kirsner, MD, Lynn Lambert, CHT, Thomas K. Hunt, MD, Finn Gottrup, MD, Geoffrey C Gurtner, MD, and Michael T. Longaker, MD

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?

Solutions: WCA Canada recommends the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) invest in expanding their Health System Performance - Integration and Continuity of Care Program to focus on wound care analysis (similar to their Stroke Analysis project) and build a pan-Canadian view of wound care across sectors that will follow the movement of wound care patients through the health care system to reveal the extent to which their needs are handled by various aspects of the system. Further it is recommended that Canada Health Infoway partner with WCA Canada to explore the development of a pan-Canadian wound registry and the potential for Canada to join global wound registry initiatives already under way. Rational: Little data is available on how effectively wound care patients are managed in Canada. People with wounds often suffer severe pain and hardship that is disabling which further results in lost wages and productivity. A wound can significantly affect a person’s life including preventing them from performing everyday activities like walking and bathing. Wounds can have an odor and may require excessive drainage that requires frequent attention further impeding regular day-to-day interaction. Performance measurement and reporting are important in driving change, innovation and improvement. Besides measuring system performance, consideration should be given to incorporating quality-of-life (QOL) indicators for wound care patients. More effective and efficient wound care delivery will allow individuals to remain healthy, heal faster and return to fully-productive status sooner.

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?

Wound care is the “unknown” epidemic. Today Canada spends \$3.9Billion annually on wound care and estimates suggest those costs could grow by 30% by 2020. Wounds do not discriminate. They affect everyone (from babies to seniors) across every sector of the health system (acute, community and long-term care). Wound care clinicians face the challenge of providing evidence-based care within a siloed system with systemic barriers that make it difficult for them to achieve optimal outcomes for their patients. A focus on health outcomes and rewarding the prevention or most-efficient treatment of a wound would foster a paradigm shift that allows clinicians to direct scarce resources to provide value-for-money. The wound care industry is challenged by delays in uptake of new technology, antiquated procurement models and silo-based budgeting. Solution: WCA Canada recommends the federal government invest in supporting WCA Canada to develop an innovative wound collaborative to drive partnerships for providing pan-Canadian leadership on wound prevention and management involving national health organizations, academia, clinicians and industry (medical devices, pharmaceuticals, nutraceuticals, biotechnologies and IT).