

# HEAL



Organizations for Health Action

## Written Submission for the Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2020 Budget

By Organizations for Health Action (HEAL)

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## **HEAL's Pre-Budget Recommendations**

To promote Canadians' health and well-being, as well as sustained national action on climate change, HEAL recommends that the federal government continue focusing on **Seniors Care** by:

- 1. increasing investments in home-care initiatives for seniors**, by supporting the acceleration and scale of best practices, and by leveraging and enhancing current pan-Canadian resources that are building capacity and improving performance in the home-care sector.
- 2. implementing a Demographic Top-Up Transfer** that would be allocated based on the combined weight of the age-sex composition of a province's population.

## **ABOUT HEAL**

HEAL, Organizations for Health Action, is a coalition of 41 national health organizations dedicated to improving the health of Canadians and the quality of care they receive.

Our members are professional associations of regulated health care providers and organizations of health charities that provide a range of health care services across Canada.

Created in 1991, HEAL now represents more than 800,000 providers (and consumers) of health care, in over twenty different health care professions.

HEAL as an organization is uniquely placed to represent and champion issues and innovations that shape and reshape health care at the national level.

A key focus for HEAL is the promotion of sustainable solutions and health system transformations for lasting impact on the health and well-being of all Canadians.

## **HEAL Member Organizations**

- Alzheimer Society of Canada
- Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada
- Canadian Association of Community Health Centres
- Canadian Association of Medical Radiation Technologists
- Canadian Association of Midwives
- Canadian Association of Nuclear Medicine
- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists
- Canadian Association of Optometrists
- Canadian Association of Physician Assistants
- Canadian Association of Radiologists
- Canadian Association of Social Workers
- Canadian Cardiovascular Society
- Canadian Chiropractic Association
- Canadian College of Health Leaders
- Canadian Counselling and Psychotherapy Association
- Canadian Dental Association
- Canadian Dental Hygienists Association
- Canadian Dermatology Association
- Canadian Interventional Radiology Association
- Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance
- Canadian Medical Association
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Canadian Nurses Association
- Canadian Ophthalmological Society
- Canadian Orthopaedic Association
- Canadian Pharmacists Association
- Canadian Physiotherapy Association
- Canadian Podiatric Medical Association
- Canadian Psychiatric Association
- Canadian Psychological Association
- Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science
- Canadian Society of Nutrition Management
- Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists
- Catholic Health Alliance of Canada
- College of Family Physicians of Canada
- Dietitians of Canada
- HealthCareCAN
- Paramedic Association of Canada
- Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada
- Speech-Language & Audiology Canada

## **THE INTERCONNECTNESS OF HEALTHCARE, CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE ECONOMY**

HEAL believes that there is a strong link between responsible environmental practices, economic prosperity, and the health and wellness of Canadians. Personal attributes, including health, economic, and social characteristics, interact with a range of contextual factors to influence the elderly population's vulnerability to current and predicted climate stressors (heat, flooding, storms and air pollution).

During its recent spring visit to Parliament Hill where HEAL members met with parliamentarians from all stripes, the interconnectedness of these issues was often discussed. HEAL's recommendations aim at enhancing the resilience of seniors, which in turn will help them mitigate the impacts of these climate stressors.

**It is therefore in this vein that HEAL continues to advocate for those who are amongst the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change: seniors.**

In 2016, HEAL released its first consensus statement, [\*The Canadian Way –Accelerating Innovation and Improving Health Systems Performance\*](#), following more than two years of research, review and reflection.

HEAL's *The Canadian Way 2.0* statement moved the conversation forward, adding additional recommendations on the two areas of priority identified by our members in 2018: Seniors' Care, and Mental Health Services.

The following pre-budget recommendations focus on ushering in greater investments for Seniors Care, which are based on *The Canadian Way 2.0*.

It should be noted, however, that HEAL will continue its broader advocacy activities to address increasing and improving Mental Health Services across Canada, and in particular, it will advocate for a "mental health parity" approach.

### **A CALL FOR FOCUSED INVESTMENTS IN SENIORS CARE**

HEAL commends the federal government for its recent investments in Seniors' Care which were contained in Budget 2019 - namely its June release of a national dementia strategy, along with \$50 million in funding for its implementation. This was an important step in responding to the growing incidence of dementia in our country.

However, Canada continues to grapple with the impact of an aging population and an increase in chronic disease across the lifespan.

According to Statistics Canada, over 15% of the Canadian population was over the age of 65 at the time of the last census (double from the 7.6% of the population over 65 from the time- period during which the healthcare system was founded).<sup>1,2</sup>

**By 2036, the over 65 age group is expected to make up more than 25% of the population.** And because healthcare costs increase with age, the demands of this demographic shift on the Canadian health care system will compound.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, 30% of Canadian seniors live with two or more chronic conditions<sup>4</sup>, the incidence of which increase with age. Some of these are specific to older adults. In particular, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada, more than 402,000 seniors were living with dementia in Canada in 2013.

By 2031, it is projected that the total annual health care costs for Canadians with dementia will have doubled from two decades earlier, from \$8.3 billion to \$16.6 billion.<sup>5</sup>

As Canada's population ages, it will be critical for the federal government to lead with a proactive approach which maximizes its health care spending on seniors, reduces its dependency on acute care delivery, and leverages innovation and community services.

## **HEAL RECOMMENDATION #1**

HEAL commends the federal government for its commitment of \$35 million towards the Assisted Living Program in Indigenous communities, as contained in Budget 2019. More of these types of investments are needed within communities across Canada.

In 2016, the Canadian Home Care Association (CHCA), Canadian Nurses Association (CNA), and the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) issued a report entitled *Better Home Care in Canada: A National Action Plan*.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Canadian Medical Association. *The State of Seniors Health Care in Canada* (2016): Statistics Canada. Canada's population estimates: Age and sex. The Daily. Ottawa: Statistics Canada; 2015 Jul 1.

<sup>2</sup> Canadian Medical Association. *The State of Seniors Health Care in Canada* (2016): Statistics Canada. The Chief Public Health Officer's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada, 2014: Public Health in the Future. Ottawa: Statistics Canada; 2015.

<sup>3</sup> Canadian Institute for Health Information. *Health Care Cost Drivers: The Facts*. Ottawa: CIHI; 2011.

<sup>4</sup> Centre for Chronic Disease Prevention, Public Health Agency of Canada. *Chronic Disease and Injury Indicator Framework: 2016 Edition*. Ottawa (ON): Public Health Agency of Canada; 2016 (cited 2017 June 1).

<sup>5</sup> Public Health Agency of Canada, Neurological Health Charities Canada. *Mapping connections: An understanding of neurological conditions in Canada*. Ottawa (ON): Public Health Agency of Canada; 2014. Report no.: HP35-45/2014E-PDF:

<sup>6</sup> Canadian Nurses Association, College of Family Physicians of Canada, Canadian Home Care Association. *Better home care in Canada: A national action plan*. Toronto: CNA, CFPC, CHCA; 2016.

The report was based on pan-Canadian consultations that took place with government representatives, health care administrators, family doctors, nurses and other health care professionals (e.g., physiotherapists, occupational therapists, chiropractors, speech-language pathologists, dietitians, social workers), and home care service providers from across Canada.

As the report noted, the federal government can “accelerate the identification, adoption, and adaption of integrated, community-based practices that address the needs of individuals with chronic complex needs, including end-of-life care.”<sup>7</sup>

Moreover, it is important to highlight the widespread public support for home-base care. Last fall, HEAL released findings of an Abacus Data survey related to healthcare. The poll, which surveyed 1,650 adults from across Canada, found that 7 out of 10 Canadians felt that the federal government should make investing in and optimizing Canada’s health care system to respond to its aging population a top or very high priority.

When asked if they would support the **expansion of community and home-based health and active aging programs across the country**, 82 % said yes.

- By region, support ranged from a high of 85% in British Columbia to 78% in the Atlantic provinces.
- By age range, 95% of those in the 60 and over group answered they were in favour, and support from those in the 18 to 29 age group was also surprisingly high at 73%.

**HEAL therefore encourages the federal government to help accelerate the spread and scale of best practices (e.g., virtual care, tele-homecare, home care electronic records) by leveraging and enhancing current pan-Canadian resources that are building capacity and improving performance in the home care sector.**

## **HEAL RECOMMENDATION #2**

The Canadian Health Transfer (CHT) is the single largest federal transfer to the provinces and territories. This funding is critical in supporting provincial and territorial health programs in Canada.

However, as Canada’s population ages, provincial and territorial governments will continue to face increasing financial pressure to provide necessary levels of care.

The CHT is an equal per-capita based transfer to provinces and territories. As such, it

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid, p. 10.

does not currently account for population segments with increased health needs, specifically seniors.

The Conference Board of Canada calculated the amount for the top-up to the CHT using a needs-based projection. For the fiscal years 2017–20, this top-up would require \$1.66 to 1.88 billion annually in federal investment.<sup>8</sup>

**HEAL recommends that the federal government focus on Seniors Care by implementing a Demographic Top-Up Transfer that would be allocated based on the combined weight of the age-sex composition of a province or territory's population compared to the average age-sex specific health expenditure profile.**

Canada's premiers have previously called for the federal government to increase the CHT to 25% of provincial and territorial health care costs to address the needs of an aging population.

Rather than change the current CHT formula, HEAL recommends that an additional demographic top-up transfer be allocated to provinces and territories based on the projected increase in health care spending associated with an aging population.

## **INVESTMENTS IN SENIORS CARE MUST CONTINUE TO FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN CANADA'S FEDERAL BUDGETS, IN 2020 AND BEYOND.**

HEAL was encouraged to see Budget 2019 include many different types of investments related to seniors. However, as the proportion of Canadians aged 65 and older increases every day relative to the country's overall population, we feel strongly that all levels of governments need to continue significantly investing in initiatives that will address challenges related to ageing.

To ensure that we optimize our health care resources, **we urge members of the Standing Committee on Finance to highlight the importance of investments in Seniors Care in its next Pre-Budget Recommendation Report.**

Furthermore, to obtain a fuller picture of HEAL's healthcare recommendations, we encourage Committee members to consult *The Canadian Way 2.0* available at [www.healaction.ca](http://www.healaction.ca).

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<sup>8</sup> Canadian Medical Association. 2017 Pre-Budget Submission, 2016.