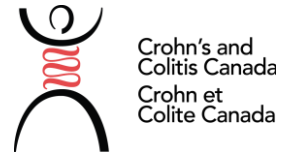


August 7, 2020



**Crohn's and Colitis Canada: Submission to the House of Commons of Canada's
Standing Committee on Finance
Recommendations for Health Charities during and post-COVID-19 in Canada**

PRIORITIES FOR THE 2021 FEDERAL BUDGET

Crohn's and Colitis Canada is faced with dire financial repercussions as a result of COVID-19. This situation is shared by other health charities across Canada. We anticipate and have already realized a significant decline in our fundraising with most of our events across the country cancelled or postponed. We also expect that donors currently in pledges may cancel or re-schedule payments. Face-to-face fundraising activities are being curtailed as Canadians limit direct contact with other individuals. Without these activities, our revenue is not keeping up with the critical need to fund our many supportive and research-driven programs. Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis do not take a break, even during a pandemic – in fact these needs are accelerating. We need financial assistance from government to support us through this difficult time and into the future and ask that you to prioritize funding in the 2021 Federal Budget.

Canadians face a potentially tragic situation if the health charities on which they rely are not able to provide programs and services. We need support not just to get through the pandemic, but support to allow patients to access the necessary care they need. While we appreciate the federal government's Emergency Communities Support Fund (ECSF), this alone will not be enough to sustain health charities like Crohn's and Colitis Canada and the process has proved to be extremely cumbersome (with little return) during a time of very limited capacity. Demand for our services has actually increased as a result of the pandemic, while simultaneously experiencing a catastrophic decrease in funding (over 80%). Should these massive funding deficits not be addressed, some charities will be forced to close their doors or drastically curtail services and programs for vulnerable patients, particularly affecting children. These circumstances will leave significant gaps in Canada's health care system, with frightening consequences for patients and caregivers.

There are more than 2.7 million people affected by Crohn's disease or ulcerative colitis in Canada. Like many Canadians, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit our community hard. Crohn's and Colitis Canada, in spite of tremendous fiscal challenges, is leading the effort to deliver timely information and tools that will help our community navigate through this crisis,

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recognizing that these same individuals under normal circumstances feel isolated, but today are even more alone and fearful due to their increased risk associated with COVID-19.

Our priority is the health and wellness of our community and we are working extremely hard to provide supportive tools and resources to Canadians living with Crohn's or colitis as they navigate through this crisis and turn to us for help. Our initiatives in collaboration with medical experts support patients directly and decrease pressure on the acute and other health care systems. This work also alleviates pressure on government to support these vulnerable patient populations. Our COVID-19 response initiatives include:

- Establishing a cross-functional *COVID-19 IBD Task Force* that meets weekly to discuss policies and recommendations necessary for the safety and wellness of the IBD community. The task force includes voices from across Canada including adult and pediatric GIs, IBD nurses, infectious diseases experts, public health officials, communications and government relations experts, representatives from infusion clinics, as well as patients.
- Thousands are attending our weekly COVID-19 & IBD webinars to hear the latest recommendations by our IBD experts. Topics have included: managing levels of IBD risk and recommendations for protecting yourself or a loved one, infusion centres coming together to help patients, ways of managing anxiety and stress, COVID-19 considerations for pregnant women and newborns. New topics are being determined and will include returning to school as we are receiving many questions about this.
- Replays of webinars are available online in English and subtitled for our French audiences
- Online wellness events like live yoga and mindfulness sessions are helping individuals cope and bring pause to people's daily lives
- Continued advocacy to ensure patients are able to access treatments such as subcutaneous options that may become necessary during this crisis
- Check-in calls with our volunteers – many of which are affected by Crohn's or colitis
- Meeting with infusion clinic leaders to discuss patient needs and provide communications that highlight initiatives that protect the wellness and safety of patients
- Addressing ongoing questions from patients and caregivers
- Development of health care practitioner webinars for real-time question and answers with experts for all front-line health care workers who are managing the health of patients with IBD.
- Supporting data analysis of the risk of COVID-19 on IBD population in Canada and internationally.
- New content and FAQs in English and French on our website at crohnsandcolitis.ca/covid19 and crohnetcolite.ca/lecovid19
- Regular updates by email and through our @getgutsycanada social media accounts

We believe deeply in the importance of our mission: to cure Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis, and to improve the quality of life of children and adults affected by these chronic diseases. The critical information, support and services we provide are even more important to continue during these tough times.

Recommendation 1

Health charities in Canada collectively invest \$155 million annually into health research in Canada, supporting over 1300 investigators each year. Due to COVID-19, research funding and projects are at-risk without immediate support from the federal government. Supporting the Health Charities Coalition of Canada request, we are seeking direct investments of up to 28 million dollars per month (representing revenue decline among health charities). This investment would allow our staff to focus efforts on patient support, re-starting fundraising efforts, and protecting our gains in research.

Recommendation 2

We also request that the Government of Canada through the Minister of Revenue and the Commissioner of the Canada Revenue Agency review existing tax measures available to both individual and corporate donors in order to encourage giving and support recovery in the charitable sector.

We need government support over the next one to two years to avoid the very real risk of having the services we offer to patients now fall onto our over-loaded health care system should the health charity sector collapse.

We are fundamental to Canadian society, with many hundreds of thousands of Canadians counting on us.

Sincerely,

Mina Mawani



President and CEO
Crohn's and Colitis Canada

ABOUT CROHN'S AND COLITIS CANADA Crohn's and Colitis Canada is the only national, volunteer-based charity focused on finding the cures for Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis and improving the lives of children and adults affected by these diseases. We are one of the top two health charity funders of Crohn's and colitis research in the world and the largest nongovernmental funder in Canada. We are transforming the lives of people affected by Crohn's and colitis (the two main forms of inflammatory bowel disease) through research, patient programs, advocacy, and awareness.