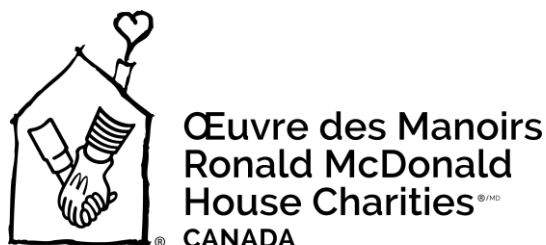


**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the Upcoming
Federal Budget**

**Ronald McDonald House
Charities Canada (RMHC)**

August 2020



Keeping Families Close[®]
Garder les familles ensemble^{MC}

List of Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** That the federal government provide capital funding of up to \$75 million to Ronald McDonald House Charities (RMHC) Canada to provide to the regional RMHC Houses across Canada to build shovel ready and shovel worthy expansions to existing houses and new-houses to serve the families of sick children while their child receives treatment at a nearby hospital. RMHC serves over 26,000 families with sick children across Canada from more than 3,400 communities, coast to coast, each year.

Introduction

About Ronald McDonald House Charities Canada

When a child becomes sick, the whole family hurts. We know that families heal better when they are together. This is where Ronald McDonald House Charities Canada (RMHC) and the regional RMHC Houses across Canada step in. Our goal is to keep the families of sick children close to each other and close to the health care their child requires.

Across Canada, 33 RMHC program sites serve over 26,000 families each year. 15 Ronald McDonald Houses collectively serve over 10,000 families each year. RMHC provides families with accommodation, meals, activities, peer support, support for siblings, respite, laundry, school and many other services to take care of the entire family, while their child is being treated in hospital.

Ronald McDonald House Charities Canada is seeking up to \$75 million in capital funding from the government to assist with shovel ready and shovel worthy expansion and new RMHC House plans across Canada to expand our capacity to meet the needs of families with sick children.

Today, RMHC has **442 families** with a sick child staying with us every night.

But sadly, last year alone we had to turn away over **3,326 families** due to lack of space and ability to accommodate. Every 20 minutes a family in need arrives on an RMHC doorstep.

And now, not only do families with a sick child need a place to stay close to the hospital, they also need a COVID-19 safe space to stay. A home with the standards, protocols, and structural ability to support them and keep them safe during a pandemic.

Pandemic Proofing RMHC Houses Across Canada

A capital funding partnership with the federal government will enable RMHC to make its Houses current and “pandemic proof” by modifying Houses to meet today’s needs brought on by COVID -19, ensuring things as basic as each bedroom having its own separate bathroom, separate entrances, multiple elevators, adequate space for social distancing, food preparation and so much more. Critically, this will enable RMHC to continue to function as an essential service to the families of sick children during the COVID-19 pandemic and all future pandemics.

Sadly, children continue to get sick during COVID and families must travel to get the health care their child needs. 65% of Canadians live outside a city or town with a children’s hospital – making travel for pediatric health care essential.

Building Back Better

RMHC takes the protection of our environment seriously and is fully aligned with the federal vision to “build back better.” Our 2020 system goals include:

- 20% increase in energy efficiency across RMHC network
- 20% reduction in water use per family per night
- Incorporating sustainable building and design principles in each renovation and new build.

RMHC is very proud that houses in Vancouver, Toronto, Winnipeg, Montreal, and St. John’s are all LEED certified, with Vancouver and Toronto houses obtaining LEED Gold recognition.

We believe these actions are important not only to protect and preserve the environment and support healthy communities but because they also enable operational cost savings and thus deepen the impact of our programs, stretch donor dollars further, and demonstrate our mutual support for Canada’s environmental goals.

Since 1981 RMHC has been a pioneer of family centered care in Canada, building environmentally responsible family wellness centres to meet the needs of families with a sick child.

The Challenge of Meeting Growing Demand

As we manage the present and look to the future, RMHC requires continued investment in our facilities to meet the growing demand from the families of sick children we are serving today, and those we are turning away and who still need our support.

With just 16 pediatric health care centres across Canada, families with a seriously ill child often must travel to get the specialized health care their child needs. In 2019, 3,326 families were turned away because RMHC was at capacity and unable to provide space.

And demand continues to rise. Thanks to medical advances more children are healing today than ever before. But that healing requires more medical treatments, far from home, over longer periods of time. RMHC will not stop until every family in need has a place to stay while their sick child is being treated in hospital.

Why Demand for RMHC Houses is Growing

As pediatric health care advances, paediatric care is often regionalized in centres of excellence, and the best experts for any given condition are often unavailable in a family's local community. The harsh reality is that 65% of Canadians live outside a city or town with a children's hospital, making travel to obtain the health care their child needs essential. As a result, families often travel hundreds of kilometres for treatment and are faced with financial demands and job insecurity, leaving their support systems, and often other children, for a healing journey that can take months, or even years.

The Importance of Family-Centred Care

In family-centred care, all aspects of care are oriented towards supporting and involving the family with the goal of improving quality, psychological well-being, clinical outcomes, and the overall patient and family experience.

RMHC supports Canada's healthcare partners in the delivery of family-centred care. Hospital administrators believe an affiliation with RMHC enhances their ability to provide family-centred care, enhances the quality of care provided, helps to reduce the stress of parents, and improves sleep quality for parents.¹

Parents believe their stay at Ronald McDonald House helped them to be more involved in their child's care, helped improve their child's recovery, and shortened their length of stay in hospital.²

Affordable Accommodation for Canadian Families

RMHC programs also help to alleviate the costs families face by providing affordable accommodation close to hospitals. Families pay just \$11.50 on average per night, if they can afford it, and no family is turned away for their inability to pay. The actual average cost is \$168 per night, per family. Collectively, an RBC research study estimated that RMHC programs save Canadian families \$49 million per year in unexpected costs related to their child's illness.³

¹ Ronald McDonald Houses Play a Significant Role in Family-centered Care. Lantz et al., 2015.

² Ronald McDonald Houses Lead to More Positive Hospital Experience for Parents. Franck et al., 2015.

³ RBC Economic Impact Study, 2018

How the Government of Canada can Help Meet the Needs of Families with Sick Children

As we strive to meet the needs of Canadian families who find themselves in the difficult and unexpected place of having a sick child, RMHC's funding support needs continue to grow. RMHC has become part of the Canadian landscape of paediatric care for families with a sick child.

Between 2020 and 2025, RMHC's estimated minimum capital growth investment across Canada will be over \$225 million. This will enable us to grow from 511 bedrooms to over 900 bedrooms, while incorporating sustainable building design into our Houses. Our continued growth would not be possible without the support of our partners, including founding and forever partner, McDonald's Restaurants of Canada Ltd., and a broad network of corporate and individual donors across Canada. However, the pace of increased demand for our services means we simply cannot do it alone.

Our request from the federal government is to provide 1/3 matching funds of up to \$75 million to enable RMHC to pandemic proof our current Houses, build new and better facilities, and grow our capacity to serve more Canadian families in need. We want to build back better.

There is precedent for the federal government to partner with RMHC on our capital investment. In 2011-12, the Government of Canada, through the Infrastructure Stimulus Fund, was a key partner in our expansion providing capital funding to help build and expand Ronald McDonald Houses in Toronto, Hamilton, and Southwestern (London) Ontario. Recently, the federal department of Industry, Science and Economic Development announced funding that will be key to building a new house in Halifax, Nova Scotia to serve families from across Atlantic Canada.

The Challenges of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit charities especially hard and RMHC is no different. Regional Chapter year over year revenue is in deep decline, so far pacing at 30-40%. Fundraising events, both direct and third party, are suspended or cancelled and these revenues are currently down by approximately 83%. Our individual and corporate donors are down by at least 50%.

At the same time, demand from families has not changed, and operational costs have increased by up to 40% due to the need for deeper, more frequent cleaning, increased use of PPE in all our programs, staffing and program changes, and new protocols.

Further, McHappy Day, an annual McDonald's event that is core to supporting RMHC, has been cancelled for 2020. The closure of restaurants and in-restaurant sales has led to a decline of up to 41% across all McDonald's giving programs.

The need for RMHC remains high, and the challenge is daunting, as we seek to keep our Houses open as an essential service for families with a sick child in need across the country. This is especially true at a time when some of our older Houses are based on a communal-living model and, as a result, are not "pandemic-proof." However, our resolve to continue to serve families across Canada remains unwavering. With federal funding support, we believe we can raise the matching funds required to meet the capital expenses required to ensure every family in need has a place to stay while their sick child is being treated in hospital.

Ronald McDonald Houses

15 Ronald McDonald Houses provide families with private bedrooms, professionally equipped kitchens, laundry facilities, and playrooms. Additional services, like accredited education programs, special suites for children with suppressed immune systems, recreational activities, non-clinical support services, and sibling support services are also available, depending on the House.

Our Ronald McDonald Houses are located as follows:

- RMHC British Columbia & Yukon (Vancouver)
- RMHC Alberta (Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer)
- RMHC Saskatchewan (Saskatoon)
- RMHC Manitoba (Winnipeg)
- RMHC Southwestern Ontario (London, Windsor)
- RMHC South Central Ontario (Hamilton)
- RMHC Toronto (Toronto)
- RMHC Ottawa (Ottawa)
- RMHC Montreal (Montreal)
- RMHC Quebec (Quebec City)
- RMHC Atlantic (Halifax)
- RMHC Newfoundland & Labrador (St. John's)

Ronald McDonald Family Rooms

17 Ronald McDonald Family Rooms give families a medical-free space in the hospital just steps away from their child's bedside, providing supportive respite, including kitchens, washrooms, shower facilities, laundry, sleep spaces, and lounges.

Ronald McDonald Care Mobile

The Ronald McDonald Care Mobile delivers healthcare to underserved communities in Alberta, providing prevention, treatment and referral services for pediatric health and dental concerns.

1 in 4 Canadians have either stayed at an RMHC or know someone who has.⁴

Over 414,885 Canadian families served since 1981.

⁴ 2019 Cause Marketing Report, Ipsos