Addressing the needs of our aging population in a new Health Accord

In 2015 for the first time in Canada’s history, persons aged 65 years and older outnumbered those under 15 years of age.¹

Our health care system must adapt to the changing needs of our aging population.

As the federal minister of health engages with the provinces and territories in the development of a new Health Accord, the CMA is highlighting areas in need of innovation.

Delivering new funding to support the provinces and territories in meeting seniors care needs

To support the delivery of health care, the federal government provides funding to the provinces and territories by means of the Canada Health Transfer (CHT). This funding helps ensure that comparable, high-quality health care is available to all Canadians.

The amount of CHT funding that each province or territory receives varies according to their population count.

Presently, the funding model does not account for segments of the population with increased health care needs, such as seniors.

Today, while seniors account for about one-sixth of the population, they consume approximately half of provincial and territorial health budgets. As a result, many provinces and territories simply cannot meet the health care needs of their senior residents with their current resources.

What is the CMA recommending?

The CMA is not recommending that the government modify the current transfer formula, which could delay the delivery of this much-needed health care support.

Instead, the CMA recommends that the federal government deliver additional funding on an annual basis, beginning in 2017–18, to the provinces and territories by means of a demographic-based top-up to the CHT.

This approach would respect the transfer arrangement already in place.

What would this recommendation cost?

For 2017–18, this demographic-based top-up would require $1.6 billion in federal investment.

Support for the CMA’s recommendation

- The provincial and territorial premiers issued a statement in July 2015 calling for the federal government to increase the CHT to 25% of provincial and territorial health care costs to address the needs of their aging populations.

- The prime minister acknowledged the importance of this issue in a letter to Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard in spring 2015.


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