

**Tax reform and the innovation agenda:
Maintaining the ability for businesses to drive innovation in Canada**

***Canadian Club of Ottawa — Opening remarks
Dr. Gigi Osler, president-elect of the Canadian Medical Association***

- Good afternoon. My name is Gigi Osler and I'm a surgeon and educator from Manitoba. I'm also the president-elect of the Canadian Medical Association. Thank you very much for having me here today.
- The focus of today's panel is on innovation and how policy-making, such as a tax or the federal budget, can impact innovation in Canada.
- I'm thrilled that the CMA is included on this panel about tax policy and innovation. I must admit however, that — like all physicians I know — it comes more naturally to me to discuss issues like physician health, patient-centered care, or even finding new and innovative ways to improve our health care system.
- When you say the word "innovation", most people wouldn't immediately think about the medical profession. Because our health system is publicly funded, physicians are often viewed as salaried public servants, and hardly the people you'd expect to shake things up.
- In fact, Canada's doctors are some of this country's most fascinating and productive innovators. Through their work, they're looking not only to improve the health of Canadians but to make our entire health care system better.
- Here are a few examples:
 - Dr. Breanne Everett is a resident in Alberta. She took a leave from her residency to establish a company that's now a world leader in developing pressure-sensitive insole technology for diabetics. These insoles provide patients with real-time information that can prevent foot wounds that can often lead to amputations.
 - Dr. Yanick Beaulieu is a practicing cardiologist-echocardiographer and critical care physician in Montreal. He wanted to improve communication within the health system so he developed technology that enables secure audio-visual communication and interaction amongst health care professionals and their patients. His platform could be a game changer for delivering care in remote areas and to indigenous populations, for example.
 - UBC medical student, Philip Edgcumbe, is working on a multi-million dollar incentive prize to catalyze a major breakthrough in Alzheimer's research.

- Ok – let me stop here – you get the point.
- The truth is: Physicians are natural-born problem solvers. It's in our very DNA. We're trained to conduct research, use the evidence, share knowledge and solve problems.
- So on Tuesday the announcement that record funding would go to science and research was welcomed by the medical community. And we look forward to better understand how we can leverage this opportunity to further enhance Canada's economy.
- Innovation runs through Canada's medical profession. It needs to be recognized and nurtured, and leveraged alongside targeted funding for new science and applied science. The growing participation of female physicians also needs to be sustained so they can make their mark in every health and research discipline.
- So, why are we here today?
- Through its policies, funding and fiscal arrangements, the Government of Canada is seeking to boost innovation and productivity, and support achievement and invention. The government wants to remove barriers and create opportunities just like we do.
- As I pointed out, there are numerous possibilities and we look forward to working with the government to further policies that enable the many physicians who run their community-based medical and are taking the time to think outside the box to solve patient or system problems and contribute to the innovation ecosystem.
- We at the CMA believe that for Canada to truly succeed – economically, socially, and medically – we need to unleash, not restrain, the power of innovation.
- Thank you.