House of Commons
Chambre des communes
Canada

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – Pre-budget Consultations 2013

This brief is submitted by:

(•) **an organization** **Organization name:** Canadian Medical Association

or

( ) **an individual** **Name:** _____

Topic: Health

*Recommendation 1: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

The CMA recommends that the federal government invest in a pan-Canadian strategy for continuing care focused on seniors. The federal government is best positioned to bring together all levels of government to develop and execute this pan-Canadian strategy that would integrate:

- Home care
- Long-term care
- End-of-life care and palliative care
- A national dementia strategy
- A national injury prevention strategy

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$1 billion or more

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

The health care needs of seniors, who will account for roughly one-quarter of the population by 2031, need to be addressed. The federal government should look at a mix of new funding (e.g. for a dementia strategy) and allocation from existing programs (e.g. federal infrastructure funding which could be used to build modernized assisted housing and long-term care facilities). This would ensure seniors have the care they need, when and where they need it. It would also ensure better, more affordable care for seniors and contribute to health care sustainability.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

The intended beneficiaries would include:

• Older Canadians, their families and home caregivers

• Hospitals, residential care homes and other health facilities and their employees

• Federal, provincial and territorial governments through more efficient performance of the health care system

• The benefits would accrue in every part of Canada

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

• New jobs would be created in the construction industry and home care services

• Investment in assisted living and long-term care services will reduce health costs by allowing more appropriate accommodation of patients now using expensive acute care beds. Wait times would then improve

• Injury prevention programs would reduce the high cost of hospital care and disability - 62% of injury-related hospitalizations for seniors are the result of falls. (CIHI Report 2005)

• A national dementia strategy would improve our knowledge of the condition and possible treatments

Topic: Health

Recommendation 2: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

The CMA recommends that the federal government include health as a required consideration in the cabinet decision-making process.

Evidence suggests that 50% of health is determined by the socio-economic conditions of people's lives. The federal government has responsibility for setting policies for many of these social determinants including pensions and income support, taxation, housing, etc.

The fed. gov. needs to make the health of Canadians a priority and focus on policies that improve pop. health. Actions must be taken to provide Canadians with the ability to make healthy choices.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$1 billion or more

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

The CMA believes requirements to shift governments processes would be needed to develop and implement a good and concise health consideration methodology at the Cabinet level.

Funding would come from general tax revenue to allow departmental and PCO Officials to review the health implications of various policies and programs taken under consideration by government. A minimal investment for one full time employee would be needed.

Potential costs could also be added because of research and/or data collection for health related analysis.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

- Canadians in all 13 jurisdictions
- Governments at all levels
- Community-based organizations
- Health care providers will be dealing less with the downstream consequences of policies and programs that undermine the health of the population and limit healthy life choices
- Employers: Health promoting policies and programs will contribute to a healthier and therefore more productive work force

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

- Considering the potential health implications of policies and programs in advance will reduce costs related to the social determinants of health
- Considering health up front will allow governments to strengthen the health-promotions functions of policies and programs for the benefit of population health
- A healthier population will lead to reduced costs related to health care, disability, unemployment etc.
- A healthier population will be more productive and therefore contribute to a healthier economy

Topic: Health

Recommendation 3: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

The CMA recommends that the federal government engage the provinces/territories through the Council of the Federation in a consultative process to identify pan-Canadian metrics and measurements that link health expenditures to nationally comparable health outcomes and system performance, the purpose of which is to demonstrate accountability to Canadians.

The health care sector is of vital importance to Canada's economic competitiveness and quality of life. However, Canada's health care system is losing grounds relative to those in other countries.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$100 million -$499.9 million

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

- While the provinces/territories have initiated steps to collaborate on the sharing of best practices in health care, federal leadership is necessary to address the overall performance of the health care system in Canada
- Staffing can be re-allocated within Health Canada to oversee the initiative and CIHI could provide assistance
- New funding would be required for the IT/EMR systems needed to support data captured at provincial and federal levels

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

- Federal, provincial and territorial governments through improved performance of their health care systems
- Patients in all 14 jurisdictions (13 provinces and territories and those who fall under the federal jurisdiction (Military, First Nations, Veterans, etc.)
- Health care providers supporting population health: this would help improve the identification of health care needs and would help target areas for enhanced actions and strategies.
- Employers: A more effective health care system would provide them with an economic advantage over other countries

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

- Better value for the considerable amount of money invested in health care
- Improved health outcomes for patients and the population at large
- More sustainable spending patterns as a result of a greater focus on cost-effective care delivery

Please use this page if you wish to provide more explanation about your recommendation(s).

Please note that a full fledge pre-budget brief will be submitted to committee members and all parliamentarians when the House of Commons resumes this fall.

Please find below a copy of a letter that was sent to the Health Minister with regard to the Finance Committee's pre-budget consultation process.

COPY OF LETTER SENT ON
July 25, 2013

The Honourable Rona Ambrose, P.C., M.P.
Minister of Health

Dear Minister Ambrose,

On behalf of the Canadian Medical Association and its more than 78,000 members, I wish to alert you to our serious concerns with the process in which Canadians have been invited to participate in the consultation put forward by the House of Commons Finance Committee for the 2014 budget.

First, we think the process put forward last year, and repeated again this year, is overly restrictive as Canadians and organizations can submit only three recommendations and explain them in just 500 words. The changes to the consultation process are the most significant alterations to the federal pre-budget consultation process since Confederation. Yet far from bringing an improvement, these changes obstruct and stifle the opportunity for Canadians to provide important insight and counsel into the budget preparation process.

If the desired outcome of these changes is to streamline the workload of committee members, the government should have consulted with stakeholders before proceeding unilaterally. It is the right of all Canadians to give their views on issues and policies that matter to them. It is also their right to fully participate in the democratic processes and to express their views and opinions freely and without reasonable restrictions. The new restrictions imposed on Canadians at the Finance Committee are tantamount to a breach of the rights of Canadians.

I would also like to bring to your attention a serious error in the material that has been communicated from the House of Commons Committee on Finance pertaining to the role of the federal government in health care. The table in appendix “A” highlighting the various federal and provincial constitutional responsibilities currently implies that health care is of the sole jurisdiction of the provinces and territories. As you well know, this is very misleading given that your department is responsible (legislatively and financially) for client groups such as our First Nations, our veterans and our military.

Given that your duty as federal Minister of Health is, in part, to make sure that all your colleagues in caucus are aware and understand the role your government plays with regard to health and health care in Canada, I strongly urge you to contact your colleague, the Chair of the House of Commons Finance Committee, and ask him to correct this serious oversight.

Yours sincerely,
Anna Reid, MD, CCFP(EM)
President
c.c.: Hon. Jim Flaherty
Hon. Jason Kenney
Hon. Peter Van Loan
Mr. James Rajotte
Hon. Thomas Mulcair
Mr. Justin Trudeau
Ms. Libby Davies
Hon. Hedy Fry

*Please note that at least one recommendation must be provided