



Liberals to boost investments in health care for Canadians

Canada's publicly funded Medicare system is a cornerstone of economic opportunity and equality for all Canadians. Over the last four years, Liberals have made significant investments to strengthen it, having reached new agreements with every province and territory and made historic investments in mental health and home care. But this is only a beginning, and there is still much more to do so that Canadians get the care they need and deserve.

No Canadian should have to go without care because they don't have access to a family doctor or a primary care team. No family should have to choose between putting food on the table and paying for the medication or mental health support they need.

Yet nearly 5 million Canadians do not have regular access to a family physician^[1], more than three million Canadians report unmet mental health care needs^[2], and nearly one million Canadians give up food and heat so they can afford the medications they need to stay healthy.^[3] A re-elected Liberal government will help tackle these problems with an ambitious agenda focused on improving the social determinants of health.

Strengthening Canada's public health care system

A re-elected Liberal government will strengthen the public health care system so that every Canadian can count on access to a family doctor or primary health care team, mental health services when they need them, and affordable prescription drugs. We will work in partnership with the provinces and territories to strengthen Medicare, reduce wait times, and improve health outcomes for all.

In addition to new investments made in our first mandate, we will continue to ensure that public health care is well equipped to meet the expectations of Canadians and makes smart investments in areas that improve health outcomes long-term.

We will invest an additional down payment of \$6 billion over the next four years to support a stronger Medicare and public health system, tied to the clear outcomes announced today, negotiated in collaboration with provinces and territories that Canadians will see transparently reported and tracked.

Through these negotiations, we will:

- ensure that Canadians have the access they need to a family doctor or primary health care team;
- set clear national standards for access to mental health services so Canadians can get fast access to the support they need, when they need it;
- continue to improve access to homecare and palliative care; and
- implement national pharmacare, guided by the recommendations of the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare.

Improving access to mental health services

To ensure Canadians are getting the care they need, we will strengthen the Canada Health Act to make sure the full range of mental health services required by Canadians are available in every province and territory, introduce new accountability standards so that Canadians can know what to expect from the public health system when they need it, and continue to crack down on private delivery and extra billing.

Implementing National Pharmacare

One in five Canadians struggle to pay for their prescription medicines, and three million don't fill their prescriptions because they can't afford to. Canadians pay among the highest prices in the world for prescription drugs.

^[4] Brand-name medicines cost, on average, 20 per cent more in Canada compared to other advanced economies – making paying for prescription drugs difficult for some families.

Building on the historic changes we have already made to reduce drug prices for Canadians by more than \$1 billion a year,^[5] we will take the critical next steps to implement national pharmacare so that all Canadians have the drug coverage they need at an affordable price.

Guided by the Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare, we will:

- establish the Canada Drug Agency to make drug purchasing more effective and efficient
- implement a national formulary with provinces, territories and other stakeholders in order to further lower drug prices, and
- implement a rare disease drug strategy to help Canadian families save money on high-cost drugs.

As part of our negotiations with the provinces and territories on renewed health care priorities, we will seek a mandate to design and implement universal pharmacare, guided by the recommendations of the Advisory Council.

Building on four years of concerted action, these measures will help make sure all Canadians can access and afford the care they need.

Costing:

These measures represent a commitment of \$6 billion of additional health care investment on the part of the federal government over the next four years. This represents a cost of \$750 million in 2020-21, rising to \$1.75 billion in 2023-24. Further details related to costing will be released over the course of the campaign.

[1] <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-625-x/2017001/article/54863-eng.htm>

[2] <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-625-x/2016001/article/14310-eng.htm>

[3] <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/about-health-canada/public-engagement/external-advisory-bodies/implementation-national-pharmacare/final-report.html>

[4] <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/corporate/about-health-canada/public-engagement/external-advisory-bodies/implementation-national-pharmacare/final-report.html>

[5] <https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/news/2019/08/government-of-canada-announces-changes-to-lower-drug-prices-and-lay-the-foundation-for-national-pharmacare.html>