

May 19, 2020

The Honourable Catherine McKenna
Minister of Infrastructure and Communities
180 Kent Street
Suite 1100
Ottawa, Ontario
K1P 0B6

Dear Minister McKenna,

I am writing in response to your Canadian Press interview of May 12th. HealthCareCAN and its members welcome the news that healthcare facilities will now be eligible for funding under the new COVID stream for the provincial/territorial infrastructure component of the Investing in Canada program.

As you know, up until now, our country's community and research hospitals have not been able to access much-needed infrastructure funding through the federal government's infrastructure programs. As a result, the COVID-19 crisis has clearly exposed the gaps that exist in Canada's healthcare infrastructure. Our healthcare facilities, designed for another time and place, are among the oldest public infrastructure in use today with approximately 48 percent being over 50 years old. The picture is even bleaker in big cities, where 69 percent of health care institutions are over 50 years old. This is not where Canadians want to be when they are at their most vulnerable.

Budget constraints have forced Canadian hospitals to defer much-needed maintenance in order to delivery high quality, frontline care to patients. Estimates value the accumulated deferred maintenance in Canada's hospitals at \$15 billion. While minimal infrastructure investments have been made in selected facilities in recent years, old and outdated buildings, equipment and technologies are still very much in use when they need to be upgraded and repaired.

Canada's community and research hospitals are critical and strategic enterprises that support both the economic development and the health and well-being of Canadians. Investing in healthcare facilities infrastructure will allow government to achieve its post-pandemic objectives, including restarting the economy as it will: create jobs; stimulate the local and provincial economies; address deferred maintenance; build more efficient and cleaner, greener facilities; advance the way health care is delivered and the transition of patients from one point of care to the next; improve infection control; minimize patient errors and build surge capacity.

HealthCareCAN had a productive call with Paul Hershaw, a Policy Advisor in your office, on May 14 where it was communicated that Infrastructure Canada is currently working on the details of this infrastructure funding opportunity for healthcare facilities. We look forward to learning more about this program, including the types of projects that would qualify, how our members can submit projects, the funding envelop available to healthcare facilities and the timelines of this initiative.

HealthCareCAN and its members are delighted that the federal government is stepping up and playing a role in the renewal of our healthcare facilities. We wish to convey that we are here to assist you and your department in any way as you develop this vital infrastructure funding program.

Kindest regards,

Paul-Émile Cloutier
President and CEO

cc: Rob MacIsaac, Chair, HealthCareCAN Board of Directors
Dr. David Hill, Co-Chair, HealthCareCAN Vice-Presidents of Health Research Committee
Ellen Chesney, Co-Chair, HealthCareCAN Vice-Presidents of Health Research Committee