

December 8, 2020

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Block
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

On behalf of HealthCareCAN, the national voice of hospitals, healthcare organizations and health research institutes across Canada, I am writing to you regarding the upcoming First Ministers' Meeting being held on December 10, 2020.

As our country deals with a resurgence of COVID-19, Canada's healthcare system is once again overwhelmed. Our healthcare workers and institutions are fighting the virus while also delivering the everyday health services upon which Canadians depend. While cases and hospitalizations continue to rise, our healthcare institutions are operating over capacity and have been forced to postpone important surgeries and procedures to free up resources and keep up with demand – and it is not even winter yet.

The news of soon-to-be-delivered COVID-19 vaccines are a welcome light at the end of a long tunnel, but our journey back to our normal lives is far from over. Until we get there, our healthcare system will continue to work above capacity and will need additional funding to ensure that all Canadians have equitable access to quality healthcare.

Federal support is not only needed in the short-term but also as Canada moves toward a post-pandemic recovery. We will be dealing with the ramifications of the virus on our healthcare system for years to come.

Addressing the backlog of surgeries and procedures postponed during the pandemic, improving older adult care and transitions to care to ensure the tragedies we have seen in long-term care institutions during COVID-19 are never repeated, and supporting our healthcare workers who have laboured with such dedication in inconceivable circumstances are just a few of the challenges facing the healthcare system.

We will also need to support Canadians who continue to deal with the long-term effects of the virus and those that are dealing with new or worse health effects as a result of being unable to receive treatment during the pandemic.

Last, but certainly not least, we will need to resume important health research sidetracked by the pandemic while continuing COVID-19 research so we can improve our approach to the virus and future pandemics. Achieving this will require additional funding and resources. The federal government will need to step up to support the provinces and territories as they face massive deficits brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and its aftermath.

For years healthcare funding has failed to keep pace with the needs of a growing and aging population. A recent survey by Abacus Data found that 71 per cent of Canadians believe the pandemic has shown that our healthcare system is not properly resourced, is not the same in all parts of the country and needs major improvements now. COVID-19 has placed Canada in an even more precarious situation, adding to healthcare costs over the short-, medium- and long-term. Provinces and territories cannot shoulder these costs alone – that will devastate our healthcare system, putting it even further behind those of our global counterparts than it was before the pandemic began.

On behalf of Canada's healthcare organizations, I urge you to increase the federal share of health funding through the Canada Health Transfer and to, at minimum, maintain this share of funding over time. During the pandemic and beyond, this funding will be vital to delivering necessary healthcare services to Canadians and developing innovations in care. Nearly three in four Canadians agree that the federal government should play a bigger role in healthcare than it does today – and that includes providing more funding to support provincial and territorial health services.

We stand on the brink of a monumental moment in history, with victory over the worst pandemic the world has seen in more than 100 years very nearly in our grasp. As we deal with the crisis at hand, however, we must not fail to fund our future and ensure that Canadians from coast to coast to coast have equitable access to quality healthcare services when and where they need them.

I thank you for your kind consideration of my request.

Yours sincerely,



Paul-Emilie Cloutier
President and CEO

cc: The Honourable François Legault, Premier of Quebec
The Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba
The Honourable Andrew Furey, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador
The Honourable Dennis King, Premier of Prince Edward Island
The Honourable Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia
The Honourable Blaine Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick

The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario

The Honourable Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan

The Honourable Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta

The Honourable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia

The Honourable Sandy Silver, Premier of Yukon

The Honourable Caroline Cochrane, Premier of the Northwest Territories

The Honourable Joe Savikataaq, Premier of Nunavut

The Honourable Erin O'Toole, Leader of the Conservative Party of Canada and Leader of the Opposition

Yves-François Blanchet, Leader of the Bloc Québécois

Jagmeet Singh, Leader of the New Democratic Party

Annamie Paul, Leader of the Green Party of Canada

Rob Maclsaac, Chair, HealthCareCAN Board of Directors

Jonathan Mitchell, Vice-President, Research and Policy, HealthCareCAN

Bianca Carlone, Government Relations and Policy Analyst, HealthCareCAN