

**For Immediate release**

**Canada's new normal demands a stronger health system**

Sept. 15, 2020 (Ottawa) – HealthCareCAN, the national voice of Canada's healthcare and health research organizations, is calling on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and his government to ensure the Speech from the Throne includes a plan toward strengthening Canada's health system to steel it against health crises.

By including a commitment in the Speech from the Throne to implement the recommendations in HealthCareCAN's 2021 prebudget submission, [The First Wealth is Health](#) — which include urgent investments in infrastructure, long-term care, digital health and cybersecurity — the federal government can build a sustainable future for Canada's renowned health care system. A review of the Canada Health Act as well as Ottawa's relationship with the provinces and territories is necessary to send a clear message to Canadians that their health and wellbeing matters. That renewed federal-provincial commitment to the health of Canadians should begin — as the premiers of Ontario and Quebec jointly underscored on Sept. 9 — with an increase in health transfers to the provinces and territories.

"Coming out of the Cabinet retreat ending today, a First Ministers Conference on health to discuss the Canada Health Act and review Health Transfer agreements will be an excellent start," said Paul-Émile Cloutier, President and CEO of HealthCareCAN. "A strengthened health system supported by long-term federal investments in health and health research is not just necessary but overdue."

HealthCareCAN recommends the federal government recognize research hospitals, health research institutes and health organizations as independent, stand-alone entities and drivers of economic growth:

- Increase investments to the equivalent to 2 percent of public spending on health (\$3.7 billion) comprising \$1.85 billion for health research and \$1.85 billion for knowledge translation for health innovation
- Invest \$3 billion to renew Canada's healthcare facilities, including hospitals, research facilities, long-term care organizations
- Provide specific funding of \$750 million over five years to establish increased cybersecurity resiliency for healthcare across the country
- Provide an initial \$150 million investment for digital health infrastructure
- Allow research hospitals, health research institutes and health organizations to compete directly and on equal footing with other sectors for federal funding.

"Canada's new reality demands a federal government that can work with health system leaders, its advocates and the provinces to develop a solid plan of action," said Mr. Cloutier. "Our recommendations chart a path toward strengthening our fragile health system, and ensure it remains innovative and functioning as it was meant to — keeping Canadians safe, healthy, and at home."

HealthCareCAN urges the federal government to seize the moment, build from the lessons learned during the COVID-19 crisis and implement these recommendations at the earliest opportunity.

*HealthCareCAN is the national voice of healthcare organizations and hospitals across Canada. We foster informed and continuous, results-oriented discovery and innovation across the continuum of healthcare.*

– 30 –

**Media contact:** Alexandria Rowe, HealthCareCAN Communications and Member Services

[ARowe@healthcarecan.ca](mailto:ARowe@healthcarecan.ca)

855-236-0213/613-241-8005 ext. 221 | Cell: 613-220-1023