



**Written Submission for the Pre-Budget
Consultations in Advance of the 2026 Federal
Budget**

By: Canadian Cancer Survivor Network



Recommendations

Recommendation 1: *THAT the government invests in choices to encourage to improve and provide programs related to preventing cancer.*

Recommendation 2: *THAT the government continues the investment for a national pharmacare program.*

Recommendation 3: *THAT the government follows through with the improvement of interoperability for Canadian health data.*

Recommendation 4: *THAT the government views healthcare as an investment which leads to economic growth rather than a burden.*



Introduction

The Canadian Cancer Survivor Network (CCSN) is a national organization of patients, families, survivors, friends, and community partners. Our mission is to work together by taking action to promote the very best standard of care, support, follow-up, and quality of life for cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers. With a steadfast commitment to supporting the interests and welfare of those affected by cancer, CCSN recognizes the immense challenges faced by these individuals throughout their journey. By prioritizing these key areas, we can collectively foster a supportive environment that addresses the unique needs of those with lived experience of cancer while empowering them to lead fulfilling lives beyond their diagnosis.

Since 2007, cancer has been the leading cause of death in Canada. Since then, millions of Canadians have been diagnosed with it. Roughly 42% of Canadians can expect to be diagnosed with cancer¹. Approximately 255,000 Canadians will be diagnosed with the disease in 2026². Most of them will be elderly people who cannot afford life-saving treatment and whose condition will only be further exacerbated due to stress and anxiety. Canada's fragile healthcare system cannot afford to ignore the hardships that cancer patients endure. They deserve support through each stage to ensure they are empowered to overcome their health adversities.

Cancer impacts more than just the physical and emotional well-being of individuals and their families. Cancer has societal effects on Canada's economy as it affects the working class, job creation, and productivity. With an aging and growing population, affordable and high-quality healthcare is needed more than ever. Dealing with often long wait times, expensive take-home drugs, and ineffective screening tools negatively impacts their chances of survival. Canadians deserve accessible resources that can prevent cancer or reduce mortality rates including effective and equitable cancer screening programs, and affordable cancer treatment.

The Canadian Cancer Survivor Network has established a set of budget recommendations for the 2026 budget aimed at reducing the emotional, physical, and financial burden placed on cancer patients, survivors, and caregivers. These recommendations aim to address crucial advancements to cancer prevention and cancer care. This can be achieved by implementing newer technologies and measures that can help strengthen the quality of healthcare that cancer patients receive. CCSN recommends immediately addressing these barriers to cancer care.

¹ Canadian Cancer Society, "New Canadian Cancer Statistics report suggests Canada may fall short of its 2040 goal to eliminate cervical cancer," November 17, 2025, <https://cancer.ca/en/about-us/media-releases/2025/canadian-cancer-statistics-2025>.

² Canadian Cancer Society, "5 things to know about cancer in Canada in 2026," April 2026, <https://cancer.ca/en/about-us/stories/2026/5-things-to-know-about-cancer-in-canada-in-2026>.



Investing in Prevention and Proactive Measures

Canada is one of the highest healthcare spenders in the world. In 2025, Canada was projected to spend close to 400 billion dollars, which represents close to 13% of Canada's GDP³. Despite this, health care spending is unable to keep up with a growing and aging population, inflation, and life expectancy after the COVID-19 pandemic. Compared to other developed countries, Canada is underperforming in healthcare. Cancer is the leading cause of death in Canada. It accounts for roughly a quarter of deaths every year. It is more likely to affect the elderly, specifically those over the age of 50. Due to this, cancer deaths across the nation are expected to increase to an estimated 90,000 deaths in 2026⁴. Early detection of cancer using innovations such as liquid biopsy, volatile organic compounds (VOC), and artificial intelligence may improve survival outcomes. They can enhance the screening of multiple different cancers by non-invasively testing for cancer biomarkers using body fluids such as blood, saliva, and sweat⁵. The earlier cancer is detected the chances of curability and survival increase.

CCSN recommends that health spending be prioritized to provide improved cancer prevention initiatives. This can be done by implementing cancer prevention programs and awareness campaigns that will educate the public and influence the choices they make to reduce their risk of cancer. Approximately 40% of cancer cases are deemed as preventable with the help of nutrition, exercise, and the reduction of smoking and drinking⁶. Ensuring these programs are available to Canadians, including those in rural or remote locations, is necessary in preventing cancer.

Recommendation 1: THAT the government invests in choices to encourage to improve and provide programs related to preventing cancer.

³ Canadian Institute for Health Information, "Inflation driving Canada's health spending to nearly \$400 billion," November 27, 2025, <https://www.cihi.ca/en/news/inflation-driving-canadas-health-spending-to-nearly-400-billion>.

⁴ Brenner, D. R., Gillis, J., Demers, A. A., Ellison, L. F., Ng, C., Zhang, S. X., Finley, C., Fitzgerald, N., Saint-Jacques, N., Shack, L., Turner, D., Urquhart, R., & Woods, R. R. (2026). Projected estimates of cancer in Canada in 2026. *Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ)*, 198(14), E526–E534. <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.252152>

⁵ S. Madar et al., "Innovative Approaches to Early Detection of Cancer—Transforming Screening for Breast, Lung, and Hard-to-Screen Cancers," *Cancers* 17, no. 11 (2025): 1867, 5, <https://doi.org/10.3390/cancers17111867>.

⁶ Canadian Cancer Society. "Prevention statistics." Accessed May 21, 2026. <https://cancer.ca/en/research/cancer-statistics/prevention-statistics>.



Continue Investing in a National Pharmacare Model

When Bill C-64 was passed into law in 2024, progress was made to establish a universal, single-payer, pharmacare program that allowed for both lower prescription drug costs and out-of-pocket expenses⁷. The first phase of the plan covers medication and supplies related to diabetes and contraceptives.

CCSN recommends that take-home cancer drugs should be included to receive coverage. Cancer medication is essential in saving lives, delaying progression of disease, and improving quality of life for thousands of Canadians. In their lifetime, cancer patients are expected to pay approximately 33,000 dollars out-of-pocket for take-home cancer drugs⁸. This is expected to increase in the next several years. This barrier often results in cancer care being interrupted or inaccessible to people across the nation.

A national pharmacare program would also eliminate the disparities caused by the postal code lottery. This is when access to medication and healthcare services are dependent on where individuals live⁹. This causes disparities to the accessibility and affordability of cancer care because of the inconsistent cancer drug options and prices. Investing in this program is crucial in setting a national standard and providing equitable care for Canadians.

Recommendation 2: THAT the government continues the investment for a national pharmacare program.

⁷ Canadian Cancer Society. "Prevention statistics." Accessed May 21, 2026. <https://cancer.ca/en/research/cancer-statistics/prevention-statistics>.

⁸ Canadian Cancer Society, "This is what the financial burden of cancer can look like," 2025, <https://cancer.ca/en/about-us/stories/2025/the-financial-burden-of-cancer>.

⁹ Robin Roberts, "Canada's Lethal 'Postal Code Lottery': Why Won't Ontario and the Atlantic Provinces Fund Life-Saving Take-Home Cancer Drugs?," Healthing.ca, February 25, 2022, last modified September 23, 2025, accessed May 22, 2026,.



Strengthening the Interoperability of Health Data

Health data in Canada has the ability to be more accessible. Bill S-5 seeks to improve the accessibility of electronic medical records and prohibits data blocking¹⁰. Currently systems used to access health data are not compatible with each other and this results in a lack of safe healthcare. This is because physicians and patients cannot easily access their health information. This leads to miscommunication, inaccurate data sharing, and worsens medical errors. The interoperability of health data allows for patient health information to be shared more easily and securely¹¹. This strongly empowers both physicians and patients.

CCSN supports the passing of Bill S-5. This legislation will facilitate interoperability by setting in place mandatory universal standards that information technology companies will need to abide by and improve communication between systems. Canadians will be able to access accurate health information and be empowered to make shared health care decisions with their health team.

Recommendation 3: THAT the government follows through with the improvement of interoperability for Canadian health data.

¹⁰ Bill S-5, An Act respecting the interoperability of health information technology and to prohibit data blocking by health information technology vendors, 45th Parl., 1st sess., 2025, LEGISinfo, <https://www.parl.ca/legisinfo/en/bill/45-1/s-5>.

¹¹ Michael Wolfson, "Indicators for assessing the interoperability of health data in Canada," *Canadian Medical Association Journal (CMAJ)* 196, no. 42 (2024): E1389, <https://doi.org/10.1503/cmaj.241351>.



Viewing Healthcare as an Investment, Not a Budget Burden

Healthcare can be a driving force for economic growth. Healthy populations can result in a stronger workforce, increased job creation, improved productivity, and improve the well-being of individuals¹². It can also increase tax revenues and workforce productivity, relieve pressures on the budget and the burden on hospitalizations¹³. By addressing cancer, the top cause of mortality, Canada can reap the economic benefits of a healthier populace. Canada's economic growth is dependent on healthy workers who require affordable and excellent quality healthcare which will positively impact their physical and mental well-being. CCSN supports healthcare being an investment that seeks to reduce the amount of cancer patients and cancer-related mortalities, while also boosting the nation's GDP and driving economic returns.

Recommendation 4: THAT the government views healthcare as an investment which leads to economic growth rather than a burden.

¹² The World Bank, "Health, Economic Growth and Jobs," April 17, 2025, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/health/brief/health-economic-growth-and-jobs>.

¹³ Business at OECD, Health as an Economic Imperative: Synthesis Report, March 2025, 17, [https://www.businessatoecd.org/hubfs/Policy%20Groups/20.%20Health/FIN-2025-03%20Health%20as%20an%20Economic%20Imperative%20-%20Business%20at%20OECD%20\(BIAC\)%20Health%20Forum%202024%20Synthesis%20report.pdf](https://www.businessatoecd.org/hubfs/Policy%20Groups/20.%20Health/FIN-2025-03%20Health%20as%20an%20Economic%20Imperative%20-%20Business%20at%20OECD%20(BIAC)%20Health%20Forum%202024%20Synthesis%20report.pdf).