

Statement on Nova Scotia's 2024/2025 Budget

April 2024 – The Canadian Cancer Survivor Network (CCSN) applauds the Nova Scotia government's commitment to improving cancer care for residents, as reflected in the 2024-2025 budget. We are particularly encouraged by the following key investments:

\$19.6 million for Cancer Care and Precision Medicine Improvements

This allocation signifies a significant step forward in personalized and innovative cancer treatment. The introduction of an "at home" cancer care program has the potential to greatly improve the quality of life for patients. CCSN is eager to learn more about the specifics of this program, such as the range of services offered, eligibility criteria, and the level of support provided to patients in their home environment. Additionally, advancements in Spinal Muscular Atrophy (SMA) screening hold promise for early detection and improved management of this debilitating condition. CCSN looks forward to understanding how this initiative will be implemented and integrated into existing cancer care pathways.

\$41.5 million for Improved Treatment Technology and a New Varian Office

This investment signifies a significant step forward in equipping healthcare professionals with the latest tools. A portion of this funding will be used to establish a new provincial office of Varian, a leading provider in cancer treatment technology. This new office has the potential to improve access to advanced technologies and expertise for Nova Scotia's healthcare system.

The introduction of new digital imaging technology, for example, will undoubtedly improve diagnostic accuracy and treatment planning. CCSN is particularly interested in learning more about the specific technologies being implemented and how they will be used to enhance patient care. The collaborative development of innovative solutions is another promising aspect of this investment. The new office will create opportunities for knowledge exchange and potentially lead to the development of new cancer care solutions tailored to the specific needs of Nova Scotia patients.

While the Nova Scotia budget allocates resources for cancer care, the Canadian Cancer Survivor Network (CCSN) believes there's room for further investment and improvement. Here are some key areas:

1. **Expanding the Nova Scotia Lung Screening Program:** The program is a positive step, but CCSN suggests broadening eligibility criteria to include individuals with risk factors beyond smoking history. Additionally, expediting the program's rollout, particularly in rural areas, is crucial for maximizing accessibility.
2. **Proactive Measures Against Radon:** Radon gas is a significant health risk. CCSN recommends a government initiative for widespread distribution of free radon test kits to at-risk homes.
3. **Optimizing HPV Vaccination Programs:** While Nova Scotia has a school-based HPV vaccination program, CCSN urges further efforts to improve uptake rates. This could

involve targeted educational campaigns, streamlined access to vaccination services, and stronger community outreach initiatives.

4. **Emergency Preparedness for Cancer Care:** The pandemic highlighted the need for robust emergency plans to ensure continued cancer care during crises. CCSN recommends incorporating provisions for uninterrupted screening and treatment services into future preparedness strategies.
5. **Addressing Long-Term COVID Impacts:** CCSN urges the government and the healthcare system to recognize and address the long-term symptoms experienced by COVID-19 survivors, including cancer patients. Providing appropriate medical care, support, and resources for those impacted is crucial.

By prioritizing these areas, the Nova Scotia government can make significant strides in strengthening cancer care services, improving patient experiences, and ultimately saving lives.

CCSN applauds the Nova Scotia government's focus on improving access to advanced cancer care technologies. We look forward to learning more about the specific details of these initiatives and their potential impact on Nova Scotia's cancer care landscape. We look forward to continued collaboration with the government to achieve these goals.