

The Canadian Cancer Survivor Network welcomes the release of the Alberta 2024/2025 budget. While the budget only mentioned cancer once, we remain hopeful that the government will prioritize investments in cancer care.

CCSN applauds the Government of Alberta and Alberta Health Services for their commitment to cancer patients, as exemplified by the preparation of the \$1.4 billion Arthur J.E. Child Comprehensive Cancer Centre (known as the Calgary Cancer Centre), set to open in Fall 2024. This state-of-the-art facility is a significant step forward in improving access to cancer care for Albertans, and will include:

- 160 inpatient beds to accommodate a higher volume of patients comfortably;
- 100 patient exam rooms for efficient and timely medical evaluations;
- 12 radiation vaults, dedicated to reducing wait times for essential exams; and,
- 100 chemotherapy chairs, designed to improve both patient and nurse comfort.

CCSN recommends that the Alberta government continue its investment in cancer care by allocating funds in the budget to support the following:

- This vital facility will require a significant number of healthcare professionals to ensure it can operate at full capacity. The budget should allocate funds for recruiting and retaining oncologists, nurses, radiation therapists, and other healthcare professionals.
- The Arthur J.E. Child Comprehensive Cancer Centre is designed to be a hub for cancer research. The budget should allocate funds to support clinical trials so that Albertans have access to the latest cancer treatments.
- In addition to medical treatment, cancer patients also require support services such as social work, counselling, and nutrition advice. The budget should allocate funds to ensure these vital programs are available to all cancer patients in Alberta.

While the budget allocates \$2 billion annually for drug and supplemental health (DSH) benefits programs, including \$883 million for seniors, it falls short.

- Seniors, with an average annual drug cost of \$1,800, receive only \$1,200 under this plan, leaving a substantial out-of-pocket burden of \$600. This impacts a significant portion of the population, with over **725,000 residents in the province being over the age of 65**.
- The situation for the 18-64 population is even more concerning. With an average need of \$1,260 per year, the allocated \$390 leaves most Albertans responsible for an out-of-pocket cost of \$870. This affects the larger portion of the population, with Alberta having over **3 million residents aged 18-64**.

The Canadian Cancer Survivor Network calls upon the Alberta government to translate its investment in the Calgary Cancer Centre into a comprehensive cancer care strategy for the province. While the Centre is a positive step, Albertans need ongoing investment in staffing, research, and support services to ensure all Albertans living with cancer have access to quality care. Additionally, CCSN urges the government to address the shortcomings of the DSH

benefits program to ensure Albertans can afford the medications they need to fight this disease. By prioritizing these critical areas, the Alberta government can demonstrate its true commitment to the health and well-being of all Albertans.

