

Federal budget 2018 – NHCC analysis

NHCC is pleased that **two issues for which we have been advocating were part of the federal government’s commitments in the 2018 budget tabled February 27.** The first is a major investment in science and research. The second is a step toward establishing a national pharmacare program. The budget also included funding for more support for people affected by dementia and autism spectrum disorder. See details below.

Increased funding for science and research

The government has followed up in the budget on many of the recommendations in the review led by Dr. David Naylor of Canada’s fundamental science funding, In our position paper and our advocacy meetings last fall, NHCC urged the government to implement the Naylor report recommendations. Leaders in the research community have praised the new funding.

Dr. Robert McMaster, chair of Research Canada and vice-president of research of Vancouver Coastal Health, said: “This is an unprecedented investment in Canadian research and innovation. The investment of \$925 million over five years to Canada’s granting councils including \$354.7 million over five years (\$90.1 million per year ongoing) to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) provides the single largest investment in fundamental research in Canadian history!”

Dr. Michael Salter, chief of Research at the Hospital for Sick Children, Toronto, tweeted: “SickKids’ scientific community welcomes and is thankful for #Budget2018’s much needed investment in fundamental research. This historic investment by the federal government is a huge victory for Canada’s scientific community and indeed all Canadians.”

In total, the budget promises \$3.8 billion more funding over the next five years for science. Overall, it is an approximate 25 percent increase in funding to fundamental science; the largest increase ever made in Canada. Of the total, \$354.7 million over five years is earmarked to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). There is also increased funding to the Canada Research Chairs Program, harnessing big data, increasing diversity among scientists and paying for scientific equipment. A new Tri-Council Fund will be used to fund fast-breaking, higher risk research. (The Tri-Councils are the CIHR, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.)

The budget says the government will consider a new approach to determine how to allocate federal funding to third-party research organizations, as advocated by the Naylor report. In the meantime, funding will continue to fund the Rick Hansen Institute for spinal cord research (from the Western Economic Diversification Program), the Centre for Drug Research and Development and the Institute for Quantum Computing.

In addition, the government proposes to contribute \$10 million in 2018–19 to the Institute for Research on Public Policy to endow a Centre of Excellence on the Canadian Federation, a **permanent research body to promote shared understanding of the Canadian federal community.** The Centre will undertake research on issues such as the impact of emerging

economic and social trends on Canada's federal arrangements. This may be related to another recommendation in the Naylor report about the need for more collaboration and sharing of research and research outcomes.

Budget Plan Chapter 2— Progress <i>(Numbers are in millions of dollars)</i>	2017– 2018	2018– 2019	2019– 2020	2020– 2021	2021– 2022	2022– 2023	Total
2.1 Investing in Canadian Scientists and Researchers							
Granting Councils	0	115	155	185	235	235	925
Granting Councils: New Tri- Council Fund	0	35	45	65	65	65	275
Granting Councils: Increasing Diversity in Science	0	5	6	4	4	4	21
Granting Councils: Canada Research Chairs	0	25	35	50	50	50	210
Research Support Fund	0	29	39	46	59	59	231
Investing in the Equipment Researchers Need—Canada Foundation for Innovation	0	32	62	120	183	366	763
Harnessing Big Data	0	64	64	166	145	133	572
College and Community Innovation Program	0	20	30	30	30	30	140
Institute for Quantum Computing	0	0	5	5	5	0	15
Centre for Drug Research and Development	0	0	16	16	16	0	48
Rick Hansen Institute	0	6	6	6	6	0	24
Centre of Excellence on the Canadian Federation	0	10	0	0	0	0	10
2.1 Investing in Canadian Scientists and Researchers Total	0	340	463	692	798	942	3,234

Advisory Council on the Implementation of National Pharmacare

The budget also included a step toward the possible implementation of a national pharmacare program with the establishment of an Advisory Council, headed by Dr. Eric Hoskins, former Ontario Minister of Health and Long-Term Care. While this is an issue that has been talked about by many for years and studied by various Parliamentary Committees, including a study still underway by the House of Commons Health Committee. Dr. Hoskins' high profile and the deadline of a federal election in 2019 have led some to conclude that this is an "inkling of the possibility of action." Dr. Hoskins is to report back in 2019.

NHCC's position paper supports the development of a flexible and accessible national pharmacare program as soon as possible.

Other funding commitments

Dementia supports – “Budget 2018 proposes to provide \$20 million over five years, starting in 2018–19, and \$4 million per year ongoing, to the Public Health Agency of Canada to support community-based projects that address the challenges of dementia. Projects could include programs that provide mental health supports and information about self-care for family caregivers, or initiatives that help Canadians locate resources in their communities quickly, including information about best practices for providing care for people living with dementia.”

Autism spectrum disorder – “Through Budget 2018, the Government proposes to provide \$20 million over five years for two new initiatives to better support the needs of Canadians experiencing autism spectrum disorder and their families. This will include the creation an Autism-Intellectual-Developmental Disabilities National Resource and Exchange Network (AIDE) to develop online resources, an inventory of services, employment opportunities and local programming for families across the country, based on their specific needs. The Network would be led by the Pacific Autism Family Network and the Miriam Foundation. Funding of \$9.1 million will also be provided to the Public Health Agency of Canada to support community-based projects that will support innovative program models, help reduce stigma, and support the integration of health, social and educational programs to better serve the complex needs of families.”

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