

Canadian Cancer Society Request to Appear Before the Standing  
Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs: Study on Economic and  
Fiscal Update Act, 2020 and the Impacts of the COVID-19 Crisis on  
Certain Sectors of the Economy

August 2020

## Overview

More than 1 million Canadians are living with and beyond cancer. Those with cancer are among the most vulnerable in our communities right now and may be at greater risk of more serious outcomes from COVID-19. While the immediate impact of COVID-19 on cancer patients is easy to understand, the long-term effects will be equally devastating. As Ontario begins to resume services, there will be a significant backlog to our healthcare system with cancer patients who have gone untreated, hopeful their cancer hasn't spread. The Canadian Cancer Society's (CCS) highest priority is to support people with cancer and their caregivers through this pandemic and beyond.

As the only national charitable organization that supports Ontarians with all cancers in communities across the province, CCS has programs that can help support people with cancer and caregivers through this challenging time. Now more than ever, our online and phone support programs are critical to the people we serve, providing information, reducing anxiety, limiting feelings of isolation and making sure Ontarians in every corner of the province can still get to and from their cancer appointments with our transportation support programs.

Since the outbreak began, there has been significant need for CCS's live chat services, toll-free helpline and online peer support community, [cancerconnection.ca](https://cancerconnection.ca), which is moderated by CCS staff to ensure no question goes unanswered. These programs help people find community and connection from the comfort and safety of their own home. Consistently, almost 50% of clients receiving our services are seniors. Almost 60% of all new cancer diagnoses and 75% of all cancer deaths occur in seniors.

Unfortunately, just as our programs are needed more than ever, we are facing our greatest financial challenge in our over 80-year history. In a normal year, CCS raises almost \$180 million in total revenue. Overall, we estimate that the COVID-19 crisis will result in a decline in donations for CCS of between \$80M-\$100M over the next year nationwide, a loss of 44 per cent – 55 per cent from our annual budget. In April alone, we lost \$20.3 M in revenue. While federal and provincial initiatives to date have brought some relief, CCS falls through the cracks of several of these programs while others simply do not provide nearly enough to offset our historic loss of revenue.

## Request to Appear

As an organization providing practical supports to all Ontarians, we would like to appear before the Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs to discuss what is needed to support CCS and health charities more broadly to allow us to continue to support vulnerable populations through the pandemic and stabilize our operations. Below is a letter signed by over fifteen of the leading health charities in Ontario outlining what is required for us to survive as the need for our support services, education and resources continues while revenues dwindle due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Contact

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Canadian Cancer Society  
Société canadienne du cancer

BREATHE  
the lung association

RESPIREZ  
l'association pulmonaire



Heart & Stroke Foundation  
Fondation des maladies du cœur et de l'AVC

DIABETES  
CANADA

May 7, 2020

Hon. Christine Elliott  
Minister of Health  
5th floor, 777 Bay Street  
Toronto, Ontario

Dear Minister Elliott:

As representatives of Ontario's charitable health sector, we are writing to you with an urgent appeal for a stabilization fund for the province's nonprofit organizations. The COVID-19 pandemic has posed a fundamental threat to our continued ability to fundraise successfully and therefore, to deliver on our core missions to invest in research, provide supports and services to our constituents across the province and to engage in health promotion education to reduce the risks of the diseases and conditions we are committed to fight. The survival of our organizations is at stake.

This is at a time when the evidence is mounting that the individuals affected by many of these diseases and conditions are at increased risk of COVID-19 infection or of more severe outcomes if infected. The demand for our services is increasing and the education, resources, supports and services that we provide to these vulnerable Ontarians is more critical now than ever before.

Beyond the urgent need for our programs, our sector represents a significant part of Ontario's economy. One third of the country's nonprofit organizations are based in Ontario, with 1 million employees and an economic contribution of \$50 billion to the province's GDP. Those jobs and the economic contribution our organizations make to the province are already being lost.

Many of our organizations have already been forced to lay off significant numbers of employees – up to 70 percent in some cases. Even if we qualify, the federal government's emergency wage subsidy does not come close to making up for the shortfall in fundraising revenue. The recent announcement of the federal Emergency Community Support Fund will alleviate some of the pressure on organizations delivering frontline services, but it is a drop in the bucket in comparison to the immense revenue losses we have, and will continue to, experience.

What the charitable sector in Ontario requires is broad-based support that will ensure our survival and the ability to support Ontarians as we begin to recover from this pandemic. As health charities in Ontario, we recommend the following measures:

- A non-profit sector stabilization fund that is adequate to address the urgent needs of the non-profit sector as an employer of one million Ontarians

- Program funding for organizations, such as ours, which provide peer support, information services, and psychosocial support for people from vulnerable populations, such as those with chronic illness and conditions and their caregivers
- Ensure the Ontario-Canada Emergency Commercial Rent Assistance Program works for non-profits and charities renting properties in Ontario and provide additional assistance to offset overhead costs of transitioning staff to work from home
- Double the provincial portion of the Charitable Donation Tax Credit through to the end of 2021 and make the credit refundable so charitable contributions are treated the same as a contribution to a political party in Ontario
- Commit to matching donations from all Ontarians to provincial charities or national charities with provincial offices

We believe your government has an important role to play in supporting our organizations, particularly as the programs and services we deliver through donations help to reduce the burden placed on the health care system funded by the province. Support from the Government of Canada has been a start, but it has simply not gone far enough. Without help, Ontarians will feel the pain of the loss of our organizations for years to come, a scenario that has become all too likely over the last number of weeks.

This is an unprecedented crisis, and our organizations are responding in unprecedented ways. But we need your help. Representatives from our coalition will be following up with your office in the coming days to discuss how we may support your efforts to stabilize our sector.

Best regards,



Jeff Cornett  
Executive Director, Ontario  
Canadian Cancer Society



Terry Dean  
President and CEO  
Canadian Lung Association



Jake Reid  
National Director, Government Relations  
Diabetes Canada



Avril Goffredo  
Executive Vice President, Ontario and Nunavut  
Heart & Stroke

Endorsers:



c.c: Hon. Doug Ford, Premier  
Members, Ontario Jobs and Recovery Committee