

PUBLIC HEALTH MATTERS

Basic Income Guarantee

Canada needs a federal government that is committed to sustained investment in public health across the country. The Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century – a national network of 24 non-profit organizations, professional associations, health charities and research organizations calls on the next federal government to invest in strategies and programs that support strong healthy people in Canada regardless of their economic and social status.

A higher standard for Canadian families

The World Health Organization has declared that poverty is the single largest determinant of health and yet one in seven Canadians lives in poverty. The United Nations has told the Government of Canada that its poverty levels are unacceptable in light of our country's wealth. It's time for Canada to do better.

Call to action

The Coalition is calling on the next federal government to take leadership in adopting a national strategy to provide all Canadians with a basic income guarantee. Every Canadian should be able to meet their fundamental needs for adequate housing and nutritious food two key factors that affect the health of Canadians.

Why it matters

There is overwhelming evidence of the impact of wealth on health. Household income underpins the fundamental social determinants of health that include adequate housing, nutritious food, education and proper early childhood development.

Even according to the lowest commonly accepted measure, 2.96 million people in Canada are poor.

One quarter of Aboriginal people live in poverty.

1 in 7 Canadian children live in poverty. This rate places Canada 15 out of 17 among similar developed countries.

Data from the Public Health Agency of Canada show that 20% of the over \$200 billion spent on health care annually can be attributed to socio-economic disparities in Canada.

Household income, housing, food, education and early childhood development, the key social determinants of health, constitute about 50% of what makes people sick.

The poorest fifth of Canada's population faces a staggering 358% higher rate of disability compared to the richest fifth. The poor experience major health inequality in other key areas including 128% more mental and behavioural disorders; 95% more ulcers; 63% more chronic conditions; and 33% more circulatory conditions.

Childhood poverty can be a greater predictor of cardiovascular disease and diabetes in adults than later life circumstances and behaviour.

A Higher Standard for all Canadians

One in seven users of homeless shelters across Canada is a child. Compared to children with permanent homes, homeless children suffer more from lack of educational opportunities, health issues and injuries.

According to the Wellesley Institute, an increase of \$1,000 annually to the income of the poorest 20% of Canadians would lead to 10,000 fewer chronic conditions and 6,600 fewer disability days every two weeks.

Canada could save \$7.6 billion per year on health expenditures by moving people from the lowest income bracket to the second lowest income bracket.

Questions for the candidates

1. Do you support a basic income guarantee for Canadians?
2. What will your party do to improve income supports for Canadians?
3. What specific steps will your party take to ensure that the social determinants of health are considered in all social and economic policies and programs?

About the Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century

The Canadian Coalition for Public Health in the 21st Century (CCPH21) a national network of 24 non-profit organizations, professional associations, health charities and research organizations that share the common goal to improve and sustain the health of Canadians. Formed in May 2003, it now includes 24 member organizations.

Mandate

CCPH21 advocates for public policy to ensure that adequate public health functions are in place and information is made available to protect and promote health, and prevent disease and injury.

CCPH21 aims to help all stakeholders work together for the future of public health by generating ideas and potential policy directions for discussion among both the public and decision-makers.

Principles

- Public health is a pan-Canadian responsibility requiring national leadership with a co-operative approach across sectors and jurisdictions.
- The public health system focuses on population health and complements the health care system.
- Communicable and non-communicable disease and injury are effectively addressed by public health approaches and must be considered together for a healthy population.
- Public health activities can reduce pressures on the health care system.
- Funding to public health is an essential and strategic investment for Canadians and the economy.
- Canada requires immediate and sustained action and investment in Public Health in order to protect, promote, and preserve the health of all people living in Canada.

A Higher Standard for all Canadians