

THE COLLEGE OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS  
OF CANADA



LE COLLÈGE DES  
MÉDECINS DE FAMILLE  
DU CANADA



# From Red to Green. From Stop to Go.

Recommended actions to improve  
home care and child and youth health.





# From Red to Green. From Stop to Go.

In 2013, the College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) released a report card examining federal government's actions in making or keeping our health care system the very best possible to serve the needs of Canadians through all stages of life. *"The Role of the Federal Government in Health Care,"* graded the federal government's involvement across five areas, including its support for care for the most vulnerable and in putting care front and centre.

In the 2013 report card, the government's leadership in the areas of **children and youth health** and a **national home care program** both received grades of **red**.

How can the federal government improve health in these important areas, and move these indicators from red to green? Here are the actions we recommend in these key areas.

## "Spotlights" grade the government's performance:

**GREEN**

Federal government is demonstrating strong leadership

**YELLOW**

Federal government is somewhat involved but could do more

**RED**

Federal government has shown no involvement



# Home Care

Home care is an array of services that encompasses:



Health promotion



End-of-life care



Support for family caregivers



Rehabilitation



Personal support services

Home care helps people maintain their health, well-being, and personal independence within their homes and communities. Seniors are especially likely to benefit from home care because it offers the comfort of remaining in familiar surroundings and maintains independence and a sense of dignity.

Increased demand for these services makes home care the **fastest growing sector of health care in Canada**.

Although the Federal government has taken small steps in supporting Canadians to receive care in their homes, it has yet to take the leadership role needed to realize significant transformation of the health system, ensuring a seamless transition from hospital to community care, support for an expanded range of services that can be safely provided in the home, particularly in acute exacerbations of chronic conditions. A long term, sustained approach is required.

The federal government must develop a strategy on home care and take the lead in transforming Canadian health care to **include** care in the home.

## Home Care, the Patient's Medical Home, and the Role of the CFPC

CFPC's comprehensive vision for family practice in Canada is embodied in the Patient's Medical Home (PMH) model.

The PMH model stresses the importance of centralized coordination of care through the family practice. It is built on the principles of multidisciplinary care, timely access, care across multiple settings (including in the community and at home), system supports, and collaboration with other specialists.

One of the pillars of the PMH is patient-centred care —including **appropriate home care for those who need it**.

The PMH model and CFPC's advocacy for home care address the recommendations of the "*The Role of the Family Physician in Home Care*" paper released in 2000. Fourteen years later, many of that paper's recommendations remain relevant and await action.

The federal government must take a leadership role to ensure that it is meeting the health care needs of Canadians. Like family doctors, governments can support the availability of continuing care that follows and changes with Canadians throughout their lives. Home care is an important part of this care.

## What Canadians Think



In July 2014, Ipsos conducted a poll on behalf of the CFPC. We asked approximately **2,000 Canadians** for their impressions on home care.



Their response was clear. Home care is important to Canadians. **Four in five** said that providing quality home care is an expression of Canadian health care values. But more than three-quarters of those polled said that **the federal government is not doing enough** with respect to home care.



**Just under half** of the respondents told us that "increased independence and dignity" of people who are able to stay at home while under care is the most important benefit of providing quality home care.

**65%**

Federal political parties should take note: **65% of respondents said that a political party's position on home care would influence their vote for that party.**

## The CFPC recommends that the federal government:



1. Set targets and implement strategies for measuring, monitoring, and reporting on progress with respect to home care.



2. Develop a national home care strategy in partnership with provinces and territories (see the Canadian Home Care Association's Harmonized Principles of Home Care).



3. Support the vital role of family caregivers by:
  - Safeguarding their health and wellness
  - Minimizing their financial burden
  - Providing information and resources.



4. Ensure programs provide adequate income support for seniors. For example, programs such as Old Age Security and the Canada Pension Plan are needed to help ensure seniors remain financially secure.



5. Support the Patient's Medical Home model and ensure that every person living in Canada has his or her own family doctor.



### Steps to Get from **Red** to **Green**

1. **Establish** a national Home Care Strategy by **2016**. This strategy should include a set of standards to provide provinces and territories with benchmarks they can use to implement and improve home care services.
2. **Develop** meaningful indicators and effective measurement systems to verify the performance, quality, and accountability of home care programs across Canada.
3. **Integrate** continuous preventative care, effective management of chronic disease, and home care within the health care system, to reduce hospital admissions and shorten length-of-stays.
4. **Prioritize** provision of home care to strive for greater independence, dignity, and well-being.



# Child And Youth Health

Canada is one of the most prosperous nations in the world. We boast a universally accessible health care system and many social programs. But when the health and wellness of our children and youth are rated against those in other developed nations, the results are shocking.

In 2013 a United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) **report** looked at several dimensions of child and youth health. Among 29 "rich nations" ranked by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Canada was 27th in overall health and safety — **the third lowest**. Canada was one of three nations with childhood obesity levels greater than 20%. Another OECD report ranked Canada among the lowest (37th of 39) among OECD nations in its public expenditures on childcare and early education services.

Across the country, provinces and territories vary significantly on a series of critical variables, such as funding per child, program standards, teacher certification, and school-readiness assessment. Rising inequality and the significant impact of poverty on early childhood development are other factors influencing child well-being.

In 2005, Canada's federal, provincial, and territorial governments created pan-Canadian health goals. The first of these goals stated that Canada be a country in which "our children reach their full potential, growing up happy, healthy, confident and secure."

The UNICEF report makes clear that we still have work to do. Currently, there is **no** federal strategy on child and youth health in Canada.

## Child and Youth Health, the Patient's Medical Home, and the Role of the CFPC

Family physicians play an important role in ensuring that children and youth throughout Canada grow up in healthy and safe environments. In 2007, the CFPC, along with the Canadian Medical Association and the Canadian Paediatric Society, launched the Child and Youth Health Initiative. Together, we developed "*Our Challenge: Canada's Child and Youth Health Charter*" to articulate the overarching goal of excellence in child and youth health in Canada.

The CFPC believes that to reach their full potential, children and youth need:

- ♦ A safe and secure environment
- ♦ Opportunities for physical and mental development
- ♦ Access to a full range of health resources, regardless of their socioeconomic status

In a Patient's Medical Home, individuals receive care through all the stages of their lives, from their earliest years. The CFPC believes that children and youth must grow up in a place where they can access high-quality health care whenever they need it.

The CFPC is committed to fostering healthy environments for children and youth.

## What Canadians Think



In July 2014, Ipsos conducted a poll on behalf of the CFPC. We asked approximately **2,000 Canadians** for their impressions on child and youth health.



The findings? The health of our children and youth is important to Canadians. Most, **86%**, agree that providing quality care for all of Canada's children and youth is an expression of Canadian health care values.



**More than half** of respondents said that a political party's position on child and youth health care would influence their vote for that party.

# 80%

Furthermore, Canadians have charted a clear policy path for Canada's political parties: **80% said that ending child poverty by 2020 should be a goal for any federal government.**

## The CFPC recommends that the federal government:



1. Ban junk food advertising to kids under the age of 12.



2. Improve clarity of food labeling and nutrition information, so parents can make better, more informed food choices.



3. Explore tax and subsidy strategies to increase the consumption of healthy foods and decrease the consumption of unhealthy foods.



4. Renew the 2006 federal/provincial/territorial commitment on child care.



5. Implement a federal strategy on child and youth health in Canada (to meet the recommendations of the 2007 **Child and Youth Health Charter**).



6. Ensure mental health care is accessible to all children and youth who require these services.
  - Make early identification and early help programs available for individuals as young as infants and toddlers.



7. Commit to ending child poverty in Canada by **2020**.



8. Encourage and support research to advance and maintain the health and wellness of children.



9. Support the Patient's Medical Home model of care and ensure that every person living in Canada has his or her own family doctor.



### Steps to Get from **Red** to **Green**

1. **Move** Canada into the top 10 of OECD nations on child health measures by **2017**.
2. **End** child poverty in Canada by **2020**.
3. **Enable** same-day appointment scheduling for children who are patients in Patient's Medical Home family practices, through support of the PMH model, by **2020**.



The College of Family Physicians of Canada (CFPC) represents over 30,000 members. The College is the voice of family medicine in Canada and advocates on behalf of its members to ensure high quality in the delivery of care. Education is a key element of our mandate, and the CFPC establishes standards for the training, certification and ongoing education of family physicians; it is responsible for accrediting postgraduate family medicine training in Canada's 17 medical schools.

Contact us:

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### How did we arrive at these conclusions:

2013 Report Card: [www.cfpc.ca/report-card-brief-2013](http://www.cfpc.ca/report-card-brief-2013)

2013 Report Card reference document: <http://www.cfpc.ca/report-card-2013>

2014 Red to Green reference document: [www.cfpc.ca/red-to-green-reference-2014](http://www.cfpc.ca/red-to-green-reference-2014)

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