

# CNA Recommendations for Budget 2021

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed many health-care issues in Canada and drawn national attention to tackling them. In addition, the economic fallout of the pandemic is having an impact on employment, housing, and access to education — especially for vulnerable groups. Action is needed to improve the health-care system and address these other challenges. Doing so will ensure Canada can chart a path toward an equitable economic recovery.

The Canadian Nurses Association (CNA) urges parliamentarians to consider the critical issues presented below for the upcoming federal budget. These priorities will improve the health and well-being of people in Canada and address the tremendous shortfalls in long-term care.



## National standards and funding for long-term care

Develop national standards for equal access, consistent quality, and necessary staffing, training and protocols. Additionally, new federal funding should be tied to these standards.

- COVID-19 cases in long-term care settings have accounted for 80% of deaths — the worst outcome globally.
- With no national standards for long-term care, there are many variations across Canada in the availability and quality of service.
- Residents are entering long-term care facilities with much more complex needs than decades ago, but funding, models of care and the workforce have not evolved to align with the care they require.
- 9 in 10 Canadians are concerned about the challenges being faced by the long-term care system and 81% agree these challenges were evident even before the pandemic.<sup>1</sup>
- 92% of Canadians support or somewhat support setting national standards for long-term care.<sup>2</sup>



## Introduce a demographic top-up to the Canada Health Transfer

Invest \$21.1 billion over 10 years to meet the needs of Canada's aging population.

- Population aging will drive 20% of increases in health-care spending over the next 10 years, which amounts to an additional \$93 billion.<sup>3</sup>
- Over the next 10 years, 5.1 million Canadians will reach age 65 and the proportion of seniors in the population will rise from 16.9% to 21%.
- The health cost for older adults is about \$12,000 per year compared with \$2,700 for younger adults.
- 88% of Canadians believe new federal funding measures are necessary for the health system.<sup>4</sup>



## Expand virtual care in Canada

Invest \$200 million over five years to help jurisdictions accelerate the deployment of technology and ensure the availability of health human resources with appropriate training in culturally competent virtual care.

- Virtual care can lower costs and improve access to health care, particularly for Indigenous Peoples, people living in rural and remote areas, and marginalized populations.
- During the pandemic, 91% of Canadians who accessed virtual care were satisfied with their experience. Also, 46% of Canadians would prefer that their first point of medical contact be virtual.<sup>5</sup>
- Two out of three people would use virtual care options if available.<sup>6</sup>
- 87.4% of Canadians have access to high-speed internet, but of those living in rural areas, only 45.6% do.<sup>7</sup>

---

CNA is the national and global professional voice of Canadian nursing. We represent registered nurses, nurse practitioners, licensed and registered practical nurses, registered psychiatric nurses and retired nurses across all 13 provinces and territories.

### Contact Information

Lucas Veiga  
Lead, Government Relations,  
lveiga@cna-aiic.ca,  
613-237-2159 (ext. 525)

- 1 <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/safer-at-home-eight-in-ten-canadians-vow-to-do-all-they-can-to-avoid-going-into-long-term-care>
- 2 Nanos Research, December 27th to 30th, 2020
- 3 Conference Board of Canada. (2018). Meeting the Care needs of Canada's Aging Population. <https://www.cma.ca/sites/default/files/pdf/Media-Releases/Conference%20Board%20of%20Canada%20-%20Meeting%20the%20Care%20Needs%20of%20Canada's%20Aging%20Population.PDF>
- 4 Ipsos. (2018). Just Half of Canadians Confident the Healthcare System Can Meet the Needs of Seniors. <https://www.ipsos.com/en-ca/news-polls/Canadian-Medical-Association-Seniors-July-17-2018>
- 5 <https://www.cma.ca/virtual-care>
- 6 Medisys Health Group, Vivien Brown. (2019). How Virtual Care is Reshaping the Future of Canadian Benefits Programs. <https://blog.medisys.ca/virtual-care-canadian-healthcare>
- 7 <https://crtc.gc.ca/eng/internet/internet.htm>