

Physiotherapists Call For Quicker Movement on Health Issues

Ottawa: February 24: The Federal budget is a move in the in the right direction however the Canadian Physiotherapy Association (CPA) says accelerated change is critical to meeting essential long term health goals for Canadians.

“The budget does not reflect the urgency outlined in the recent report of the Health Council of Canada,” says Pamela Fralick, CEO of the Canadian Physiotherapy Association. That report stressed the need for quick and immediate reform to correct key issues including accountability, access to needed services, shortages in health personnel and technology.

The budget promises \$75 million over five years to facilitate the evaluation and integration of internationally educated health care professionals with the view to ensuring “improved and more timely access to care” for Canadians. CPA commends the Government’s recognition of the need for health human resources funding, but is concerned that the amount allocated will not be sufficient to address a comprehensive and integrated national health human resources strategy with the urgency required to ensure that Canadians have access to required health services.

While the allocation of \$15 million directed towards additional research and benchmarks in support of “jurisdiction specific initiatives” for addressing wait times is welcome, implementing specific measures aimed at improving the situation more rapidly would effect needed changes sooner.

CPA applauds the provision of \$300 million over five years for an integrated strategy on Healthy Living and Chronic Disease and welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with other health system partners and governments in support of health promotion and disease prevention initiatives. Physiotherapists play an important role in the effective and efficient delivery of primary health care. Recent studies indicate that early intervention and/or direct access to physiotherapy services results in earlier recovery, increased mobility and function and a reduction in visits to family physicians and referrals to medical specialists. The Canadian Physiotherapy Association also encourages provincial governments to consider physiotherapy’s role in the health and independence of Canadians, and to ensure these essential services are available to all – not just those who can afford to pay for them.

CPA also commends the government’s addition of physiotherapists to the list of health professionals who can certify eligibility for the Disability Tax Credit (DTC). As primary health care practitioners involved in the ongoing care and treatment of those with disabilities, physiotherapists are uniquely suited to assess levels and indicators of disability.

The Canadian Physiotherapy Association is the voluntary organization representing more than 9,500 members and students across the country. CPA's mission is to provide leadership and direction to the physiotherapy profession, foster excellence in practice, education and research and promote high standards of health in Canada.

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