

## Federal Budget 2017 fails Canada's seniors, who need action now

**Ottawa, March 22, 2017** – The Canadian Medical Association (CMA) is disappointed that the federal budget tabled today in the House of Commons by Finance Minister Bill Morneau has missed an important chance to begin building a much-needed national seniors strategy.

“Today’s budget was an ideal opportunity for the federal government to step up and act to strengthen seniors care,” said CMA President Dr. Granger Avery. “Sadly, Canadians have been left wanting and waiting for leadership from their federal government on this important issue.”

The CMA continues to urge the federal government to act now to strengthen our health care system by ensuring it better meets the needs of Canada’s aging population. To support that effort, last fall the CMA released [a vision for health](#) with clear and concrete recommendations to improve the system such as:

- Developing a coordinated home plan so seniors can live and get the support they need to stay in their homes longer;
- Creating a national strategy for palliative and end-of-life care;
- Boosting key infrastructure investments to improve and provide more residential care options for seniors;
- Enhancing financial support for family caregivers by making tax credits refundable.

“By providing better access to more efficiently delivered high-quality care for seniors, we will help improve access to care for all Canadians,” added Dr. Avery. “We did not see that action to make that happen in today’s budget, but it is not too late. The CMA will continue to push for strategic action, backed by our 50,000 [Demand a Plan](#) supporters.”

While the CMA lamented the lost opportunity to act in support of Canada’s seniors, it was pleased to note health-related measures that did receive federal support today, including:

- \$300 million over 5 years for Canada Health Infoway to further expand e-prescribing and virtual care initiatives and supporting the continued adoption and use of EMRs, helping patients to access their own health records electronically, and better linking HER systems to improve access by all providers;
- \$53 million over five years for the Canadian Institute for Health Information address health system gaps, supporting improved decision-making and strengthening the reporting on health system performance;
- \$51.0 million over 3 years for the Canadian Foundation for Health Improvements to accelerate innovations in all provinces and territories;
- \$140.3 million over 5 years to improve access to pharmaceuticals, lowering drug prices and supporting appropriate prescribing;
- \$100 million over 5 years to address the opioid crisis.

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While Finance Minister Morneau did herald the recently signed federal-provincial-territorial financing agreements on health care in the budget, the CMA warns these deals do not provide the strategic pan-Canadian action needed right now.

“The financing deals struck between the federal government and most of the provinces and territories do provide funds for health care, although much of that funding will only come years down the road,” said Dr. Avery. “Canadians need strategic collaboration to create real improvements for health right now.”

For 150 years, only the Canadian Medical Association (CMA) has united the broad expertise of the medical community for the benefit and well-being of all Canadians. The CMA currently represents over 85,000 physicians, comprises 12 provincial and territorial medical associations and is affiliated with over 60 national and international medical organizations.

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**To schedule an interview or for further information, please contact:**

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