



Primary Health Care Transition Fund



Primary Health Care

Primary health care is the foundation of the health care system. When Canadians need health care, most often they turn to primary health care services. They visit a family physician or nurse practitioner, call a telephone health information line, see a mental health worker, or seek advice from a pharmacist.

As the first step in the continuum of care, primary health care emphasizes health promotion and disease prevention, and integrates other health care services when specialized care is needed.

Primary health care needs vary from community to community. The purpose of primary health care renewal is to improve the quality, accessibility, and sustainability of front-line, health care services to ensure that Canadians receive the most appropriate care, from the most appropriate provider, when and where they need it. Primary health care renewal is also the key to efficient, timely, and quality health care overall.

Regardless of where they live, Canadians will benefit from a number of common primary health care renewal features, including:

- **Multi-disciplinary approaches** to care, with health care professionals working together in the delivery of primary health care services.
- **Increased access** to primary health care organizations which address the unique health care needs of the populations in which they serve.
- **Emphasized health promotion**, prevention of illness and injury, and chronic disease management.
- **Better service integration** with health services available elsewhere, like hospitals and health care specialists.
- Greater access to **essential services 24/7**.

In the 2003 Accord on Health Care Renewal, Canada's First Ministers agreed that primary health care renewal will mean that Canadians routinely receive needed care from multi-disciplinary primary health care organizations or teams. The goal is to ensure that at least 50 per cent of Canadians in all jurisdictions have access to an appropriate health care provider, 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week, as soon as possible, and that this target be fully met within eight years. The Primary Health Care Transition Fund lays the groundwork for this change.

Primary Health Care Transition Fund

Established in September 2000, the \$800-million Primary Health Care Transition Fund (PHCTF) supports the efforts of provinces and territories—and other stakeholders—to develop and implement transitional primary health care renewal initiatives. It also enables recipients to address primary health care issues that are common nationally or across two or more jurisdictions in Canada.

The PHCTF has five main objectives which are consistent with the benefits of primary health care: multi-disciplinary approaches; increased access; health promotion and prevention of illness and disease; integrated services; and access to essential services 24/7. Initiatives must meet one or more of these objectives to receive funding. They must also be transitional in nature to ensure that long-term, sustainable change is achieved over the fund's lifespan. Funding for PHCTF initiatives will continue until the end of March 2006.

Five Funding Envelopes

The PHCTF has five funding envelopes. The majority of the fund is allocated to provinces and territories to address their individual renewal initiatives. Activities funded through the four other envelopes support and complement these jurisdictional initiatives.

Provincial–Territorial Envelope (\$576 million)

Across Canada, provinces and territories are working to accelerate and broaden health care renewal activities that will lead to sustainable primary health care. Using funds from the Provincial–Territorial Envelope, innovative models of renewed primary health care are being implemented to achieve results for Canadians: better health; improved access; and more satisfied providers. They are also making efforts to relieve pressures found elsewhere in the health system, such as emergency rooms.

National Envelope (Up to \$79 million)

Some primary health care issues have national significance, and thereby benefit from national approaches. The National Envelope supports renewal activities that use a collaborative approach to address common issues and share best practices. The envelope also funds activities that focus on five renewal elements common across the country: collaborative care; evaluation; health promotion and the prevention of disease and injury; chronic disease management; and public and stakeholder awareness. Furthermore, the envelope contributes to venues used by primary health care providers, planners, and administrators to share information and experiences as renewal initiatives are being implemented, and provides cost-sharing funds for workshops and other networking activities with secured, principal funding.

Multi-Jurisdictional Envelope (Up to \$35 million)

Two or more provinces and territories can share strengths and experiences to overcome a common, regional barrier to the renewal of primary health care. By working together to address a mutual issue, jurisdictions can realize economies of scale and increase efficiency by avoiding duplication of effort. The Multi-Jurisdictional Envelope is funding several such initiatives to ensure results beyond what any single province, territory, or stakeholder could achieve on its own.

Aboriginal Envelope (Up to \$35 million)

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples have unique primary health care needs, and many Aboriginal communities require better access to integrated primary health care. The Aboriginal Envelope supports primary health care renewal initiatives that encourage multi-disciplinary and culturally-appropriate approaches to health services in Aboriginal communities. The funding also provides an opportunity for federal, provincial, and territorial governments and Aboriginal stakeholders to integrate primary health care services by establishing and enhancing partnerships, where appropriate.

Official Languages Minority Communities Envelope (Up to \$30 million)

The Official Languages Minority Communities Envelope supports activities that improve access to primary health care services for English- and French-speaking minority communities across Canada, such as the development of tools and training materials. The envelope also supports initiatives which share information and forge links among health care providers and other partners to improve primary health care service availability in the official language of choice for linguistic minority communities.

For More Information

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