



RESEARCH CANADA | RECHERCHE CANADA

An Alliance for Health Discovery | Une alliance pour les découvertes en santé

Research Canada **STRATEGY** **2020**

FULFILLING THE PROMISE OF
COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP



TABLE OF CONTENTS



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	1
STRATEGIC PLANNING TASK FORCE MEMBERSHIP	2
SETTING THE STAGE	3
RESEARCH CANADA 2020	4
COMMITMENTS	5
Commitment 1: Amplify our Influence	5
Goals	6
Success Measures	6
Commitment 2: Broaden Public Reach	8
Goals	9
Success Measures	9
Commitment 3: Diversify Our Alliance	10
Goals	11
Success Measures	11
CONCLUSION	13



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I extend our gratitude to **Research Canada's Members**, who shared their insights, knowledge and experience throughout the consultation process. As a member-driven organization, Research Canada's success is predicated on meaningful and sustained engagement of our Members in all our strategic activities. We continue to be inspired by our Members' optimism, resilience and creativity in our collective efforts to strengthen our enterprise.

I thank our National Partners—the **Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, BIOTECana**, the **Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Colleges and Institutes Canada, HealthCareCAN, the Health Charities Coalition of Canada, Innovative Medicines Canada, MEDEC, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council** and the **U15**—for their enthusiastic participation in the consultation process. Research Canada is fortunate to have such dedicated and supportive Partners in advancing Canada's health research and health innovation ecosystem.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank **Dr. Jane Cooke-Lauder** of Bataleur Enterprises, our governance consultant, who assisted with the development and writing of the Plan. We are grateful for her expertise and commitment to the organization.

I express my deep appreciation to Staff: **Ms. Christie Tomkins**, Interim Executive Assistant to Research Canada's President and CEO, **Ms. Soo-Jin An**, my Executive Assistant, and **Ms. Brittany Faulkner**, Research Canada's Manager of Operations. Without the efficient, agile and highly capable support of this team, we simply would not have been able to deliver this Plan on time and within budget.

Last but certainly not least, I acknowledge the indefatigable dedication and generous leadership our President and CEO, **Ms. Deborah Gordon-El-Bihbey**. Beyond her pivotal contribution to the Strategic Planning Task Force, we are indebted to her unsurpassed commitment to Research Canada and the aspirations of health researchers and innovators across this country.

I have been honoured to work with such talented colleagues and stakeholders throughout this process. I am confident that, together, we have produced a plan that will assist us in strengthening political and public support to achieve meaningful policy impact.

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SETTING THE STAGE

“Through this plan, Research Canada will be a collaborative advocacy leader for the health research and health innovation ecosystem”



As the national voice for Canada’s health research and innovation ecosystem, Research Canada has a unique responsibility to inspire Parliamentarians—and all Canadians—by shining the spotlight on the contribution and promise of our sector to Canadians’ economic, social and physical wellbeing.

As a member-driven organization, our voice has never been stronger. Membership growth convinces us that our message is urgent, relevant and being heard. Our Members and National Partners tell us that they value our leadership in uniting our sector around well-defended policy positions with greater potential for impact. And our successful Parliamentary Health Research Caucus, which has engaged hundreds of Parliamentarians and dozens of researchers across Canada since 2009, has become the signature program in our advocacy toolkit.

Canada’s health research and innovation ecosystem has reached a critical moment. Recent policy decisions point to renewed alignment with the interests of our sector—perhaps most notably expressed in the federal government’s commitment to a vital scientific enterprise—but challenges remain. Investment in R&D continues to lag behind international peers. Early-career scientists face uncertain career paths. Homegrown life sciences companies struggle to achieve scale and global competitiveness. Our healthcare system remains an inconsistent partner in both driving and procuring innovation.

Over the last three years, Research Canada has built the capacity to respond to the needs of our sector, and we are a stronger organization today than at any point in our history. Our Members are more diverse and engaged; our efficient professional staff brings exceptional advocacy and communications expertise; our financial position is strong; and we have the organizational agility to meet the needs of a dynamic sector.

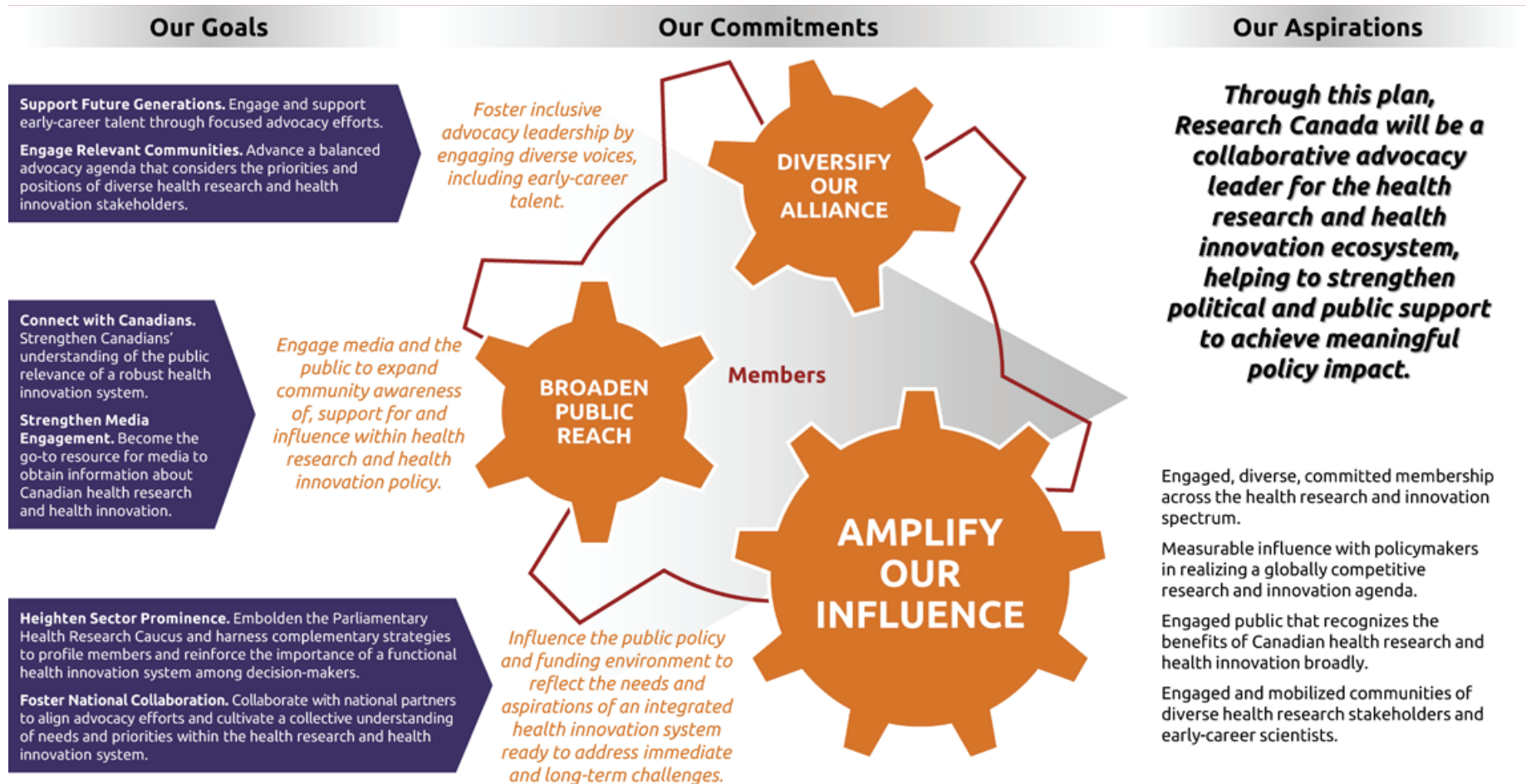
This plan aims to position Research Canada for **collaborative advocacy leadership**—a theme that captures the essence of our unique role in convening Members, Partners and Supporters around positions that reinforce shared interests. To this end, our plan calls on us to advance three commitments: **Amplify Our Influence** by harnessing the Parliamentary Health Research Caucus and fulfilling a strategic role in building sector-wide policy consensus; **Broaden Public Outreach** by becoming a go-to resource for media and helping our Members reach all Canadians; and **Diversify Our Alliance** by engaging the full spectrum of stakeholders who shape and are impacted by Canada’s health research and innovation ecosystem. The figure on the next page captures the spirit of our plan, and we elaborate on our goals, metrics and aspirations in the pages that follow.

Through this plan, Research Canada will be a collaborative advocacy leader for the health research and health innovation ecosystem, helping to strengthen political and public support to achieve meaningful policy impact. We are excited to work with you in achieving this ambition.



RESEARCH CANADA 2020:

Fulfilling the Promise of Collaborative Advocacy Leadership



COMMITMENTS

COMMITMENT 1: AMPLIFY OUR INFLUENCE

Influence the public policy and funding environment to reflect the needs and aspirations of an integrated health innovation system that is ready to address immediate and long-term challenges.



Research Canada will focus on policy matters that build towards the integrated health research and innovation system of the future, engaging Members in a two-way dialogue to understand their issues and challenges while also strengthening relationships with parliamentarians through the Parliamentary Health Research Caucus (PHRC).

The development of collaborative policy positions, enabled by Research Canada's ongoing relationship building with national and, where appropriate, with provincial and territorial leaders, will foster a deeper understanding of national research and innovation needs and priorities. As part of this relationship-building activity, Research Canada will continue to convene a National Partners' Table (R8), using that mechanism to address policy issues in areas where there is momentum and shared interest.

Research Canada will strengthen its capacity to influence in a number of ways. These include:

- recruiting new Members, Supporters and Partners;
- continuing to develop and deepen relationships with Members, Supporters and Partners, providing them with opportunities to engage and build profile through the PHRC, building their knowledge and support of the issues that are being moved forward, and leveraging their advocacy and communication capabilities;
- building the advocacy skills of important stakeholders, including scientists and communities involved in an issue.

Resources to support these activities will be provided by re-focusing on policy matters, rather than on member services.



COMMITMENT 1: GOALS

The commitment to **Amplify our Influence** is implemented through two three-year goals:

GOAL 1.1: HEIGHTEN SECTOR PROMINENCE

Embolden the PHRC and harness complementary strategies to profile Members and reinforce the importance of a functional health innovation system among decision-makers.

In pursuit of this goal, Research Canada will engage with Members, Supporters and Partners to:

1. Strengthen and deepen the value of the PHRC among all stakeholders
2. Work collaboratively to address policy issues that promote an integrated, functional health research and innovation system
3. Continue to use Research Canada publications to showcase Research Canada Members, Supporters and Partners and the impact they are having
4. Continuously improve the current educational offerings.



Success will be measured by:

- a. Member of Parliament (MP) attendance at PHRC caucus events and demonstrated engagement of Caucus members (e.g., through article in Research Canada Update, based on the event topic)
- b. Number of Research Canada policy statements that appear in Parliamentary Standing Committee reports, bulletins, and party election platforms (2019 Election)
- c. Increase in successful outcomes from meetings with Ministers, other MPs and policy officials, e.g., action being taken by a Minister's office following a Research Canada meeting
- d. Increase in number of media stories about sector, increase in social media presence and activity (e.g., increase in number of Facebook and Twitter followers)
- e. Overall increase in number of Members, Supporters and Partners
- f. Increased level of satisfaction of Members, Supporters and Partners with the profile provided through Research Canada's publications
- g. Increase in number and level of Member, Supporter, Partner and stakeholder engagement in policy activities.



COMMITMENT 1: GOALS

GOAL 1.2: FOSTER NATIONAL COLLABORATION

Collaborate with National Partners to align advocacy efforts and cultivate a collective understanding of needs and priorities within the health research and health innovation system.

In pursuit of this goal, RC will engage with Members and National Partners to:

1. Increase evidence of collaborative cross-sectoral initiatives across Research Canada's Members, Supporters and National Partners
2. Meet with the R8 quarterly to develop aligned messaging around important events, such as parliamentary pre-budget preparations and consultation.
3. Meet with organizations representing other health innovation system stakeholders to foster understanding of R8's positions, respective roles and synergistic opportunities
4. Identify opportunities to work collaboratively with other stakeholders at national and provincial levels, including developing vehicles to build message consensus.

Success will be measured by:

- a. Number of collaborative initiatives with diverse stakeholder groups each year
- b. Number of partners involved in policy initiatives
- c. Number of university connections
- d. Number of new collaborations, e.g., with colleges and institutes, and by their engagement in current policy matters.





COMMITMENT 2: BROADEN PUBLIC REACH

Engage media and the public to expand community awareness of, support for and influence within health research and health innovation policy.



Research Canada recognizes the important role played by voters in influencing policy choices, as well as the role of media in reaching and influencing the public. Research Canada also recognizes the challenge in creating new relationships in a world of information overload. Hence, current outreach mechanisms to the media, the public and other stakeholders about the value of health research and innovation, such as the HRI Portal, opinion polls, social media and the website, will be broadened in alignment with communication and outreach initiatives of Members, Supporters and Partners. A media strategy will be developed to clarify the approach, respective roles and responsibilities. Given the associated challenge of measuring shifts in public attitude, some initial benchmarking activities will be undertaken to determine best practices.

Research Canada will develop narratives and case studies that describe current collaborations, as well as the kinds of successes that are being achieved. These, together with other tools identified by Members, will be developed and shared with all Members across the country. All Members will also have ongoing access to expertise and support from the Ottawa office of Research Canada.

While Research Canada will encourage the use of these branded materials and tools whenever possible in order to build brand recognition, getting the message out to supporters, their networks and the public is what really matters. For example, rather than develop its own type of patient advisory group, Research Canada will work closely with Members where such (or other helpful) infrastructure already exists, to share stories, learn together and increase the level of knowledge about the value of the health research and innovation system to Canada and Canadians.

Working in conjunction with Members, Supporters and Partners, Research Canada will also seek to deepen relationships with influential members of the anglophone and francophone media at the national and provincial levels, using the HRI Portal to provide materials and information, as well as making spokespersons available so that the media identifies Research Canada as a primary source for an informed, accurate and reliable sector-wide viewpoint.



COMMITMENT 2: GOALS

The commitment to **Broaden Public Reach** is implemented through two inter-related three-year goals:

GOAL 2.1: CONNECT WITH CANADIANS

Strengthen Canadians' understanding of the public relevance of a robust health innovation system.

In pursuit of these interconnected goals, RC will engage with Members, Supporters and Partners to:

1. Develop and implement media (including social media) strategies
2. Continue to track and report on public opinion
3. Leverage Member infrastructure to engage more effectively with the public
4. Continue to develop the HRI Portal (media portal) as a media "hub for health and science journalists"
5. Deepen relationships with key health and science journalists.



GOAL 2.2: STRENGTHEN MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

Become the go-to resource for media to obtain information about Canadian health research and health innovation.

Success will be measured by:

- a. The number of Research Canada-developed case studies, human interest and patient stories of successful collaboration across the health innovation continuum, reflected in the external messaging of MPs to their constituents
- b. An increase in key activity measures such as:
 - i. Followers on social media
 - ii. Number of case studies used in media reports
 - iii. Number of HRI Portal downloads
 - iv. Number of requests for spokespersons/interviews
 - v. Number of op-eds and videos created
- c. Number of Members, Supporters and Partners actively engaged in strengthening public knowledge and media engagement, in alignment with Research Canada's initiatives
- d. Expanded audience of French as well as English journalists who engage in Research Canada's HRI Portal hub and respond to media releases published through the HRI Portal.





COMMITMENT 3: DIVERSIFY OUR ALLIANCE

Foster inclusive advocacy leadership by engaging diverse voices, including early-career talent.



Research Canada acknowledges that for health research and innovation to be valued by Canadians, its focus and priorities must be informed by all Canadians, including those who are not always seen or heard from, for a variety of reasons, such as Indigenous researchers and consumers, women in science, and, often, patients and healthcare consumers. Moving forward, Research Canada is committed to empowering the involvement of these and other groups in the determination of policy priorities and advocacy approaches.

One group of currently disenfranchised stakeholders is of particular interest to Research Canada. Research Canada is particularly committed to amplifying the voices of early-career scientists—the future of health research. While early-career scientists are very

visible on social media, they are not as engaged as they could be. Many junior researchers find themselves at risk, given the current constraints on research funding and the lack of clarity with respect to a career path. Canada has already invested significantly in the education of researchers, residents and fellows and can ill afford to lose them to other sectors and/or countries.

Research Canada will include the voice of these early career scientists in setting advocacy priorities and developing messages. It will also partner with the academic sector and others to develop the mechanisms to enable these early career scientists to strengthen their own leadership voice in support of creating a more integrated and robust health research and innovation sector.



COMMITMENT 3: GOALS

The commitment to **Diversify our Alliance** is implemented through two three-year goals:

GOAL 3.1: SUPPORT FUTURE GENERATIONS

Engage and support early-career talent through focused advocacy efforts.

In pursuit of this goal, RC, its Members and National Partners will engage with early career scientists to:

1. Develop a better understanding of their needs and priorities as the representatives of the future of research
2. Recruit their voices to advance the position that investment in early career talent, within an integrated health research and innovation system, is crucial
3. Amplify their voices by working collaboratively with other organizations pursuing similar outcomes.



Success will be measured by:

- a. Number of early career scientists included in Research Canada's governance structure (Board, committees, task forces, think tank meetings)
- b. Number of early career scientists included in PHRC meetings and profiled in PHRC materials
- c. Engagement of Research Canada with provincial funding institutes
- d. Enrolment of Members and Partners as mentors and supporters for this community
- e. Number of social media and advocacy campaigns delivered in alignment with related organizations such as The Science Policy Exchange.





COMMITMENT 3: GOALS

GOAL 3.2: ENGAGE RELEVANT COMMUNITIES

Advance a balanced advocacy agenda that considers the priorities and positions of diverse health research and health innovation stakeholders.

In pursuit of this goal, RC, its Members, Supporters and Partners will engage with diverse communities to:

1. Expand the number of diverse relevant communities actively engaged in Research Canada activities
2. Continue to grow the stakeholder base across the continuum, paying particular attention to sector and geographic considerations
3. Develop corporate communications and social media strategies that strengthen relationships with health innovation system stakeholders
4. Continue to implement the Leadership in Advocacy Award Program and attract media to the HRI Portal.

Success will be measured by:

- a. Number of new stakeholder organizations involved in Research Canada's governance structures and organizing committees
- b. Number of topics related to marginalized and/or disempowered communities that are advanced through, e.g., being included on the PHRC agenda; hosting of round tables or symposia dedicated to the topic (e.g., women in science)
- c. Number of stakeholder followers on social media
- d. Engagement of stakeholders with the Leadership in Advocacy Award Program
- e. Increase in number of HRI Portal stakeholder clients.





CONCLUSION

"The promise of collaborative advocacy leadership will be met through the strengthened perception of the health research and innovation sector"



By 2020, Research Canada's increasing number of Members, Supporters and National Partners will be actively collaborating, playing leadership roles to promote the collective interest, based on a greater understanding of the challenges and critical imperatives of all parts of the health research and innovation continuum. Respect for the role and contribution of each part of the sector will enable broader dialogue among all interested parties, leading to the development of sector-supported proposals to government on a range of topics related to fostering the vibrancy and potential of an integrated and accountable health research and innovation sector.

Members' recognition of the value of research across the continuum, from basic to applied, together with different research approaches, will be critical to our success. Colleges and institutes will stand alongside universities and will be leading the way, together with health charities, in engaging and building support among the public at the grassroots level. Industry partners will be recognized for their vital role in research and development and their critical contribution to economic competitiveness and the reinvention of healthcare.

In Ottawa, Parliamentary turnout for PHRC will have expanded and the extended range of topics, as well as the presence of early and mid-career researchers, will be well-received. The HRI Portal, thanks to continued staff development, will be a strong and highly-valued resource, frequently accessed by the public and media. Regular meetings and events conducted by Members and individual researchers, reflective of the research community's broad diversity, will have taken place with Parliamentarians and other influencers in Ottawa and elsewhere across the country, to convey consistent messages about the benefit of an integrated health research and innovation sector to all Canadians.

The promise of collaborative advocacy leadership will be met through the strengthened perception of the health research and innovation sector, enabled by Research Canada's recognized influence and capability in convening, facilitating and, ultimately, brokering agreement across an increasingly diverse set of stakeholders.





Research Canada
**STRATEGY
2020**

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