



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

June 2011



CANADA SOCIAL REPORT



The [Caledon Institute of Social Policy](#) regularly scans provincial and territorial government websites in order to follow policy and program developments related to our core work and interests. A partial list includes: disability, education, health, housing, income security, poverty reduction, recreation, seniors and youth. This tracking is intended to inform our analysis of policy trends. Monitors can be searched on the Canada Social Report website by date, jurisdiction and category.

Newfoundland and Labrador

No updates this month.

Nova Scotia

HEALTH

If passed, a new *Fair Drug Pricing Act* will mean that seniors and others covered by Pharmacare will start paying less for most drugs. The province pays pharmacies to dispense drugs and other professional services to 200,000 residents covered by the program. Fees are set through the tariff agreement. In 2010, the programs cost \$300 million and included Seniors' and Family Pharmacare, a Diabetes Assistance Program, Drug Assistance for Cancer Patients, Pharmacare benefits through the Department of Community Services and Pharmacare benefits to residents of long-term care facilities younger than 65.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20110624002>

INCOME SECURITY

The Members of the Legislative Assembly Pension Review Panel is seeking public input and invites written submissions from interested persons or groups.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20110609009>

New Brunswick

HEALTH

A new, four-year comprehensive diabetes strategy focuses on prevention, detection and management, and builds capacity within the health care system.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2011.06.0620.html

Prince Edward Island

No updates this month.

Québec

DISABILITIES

New regulations regarding visual aids and related services come into effect. Improving access to new adaptive technologies, the improvement of administrative efficiency and the flexibility of the program's eligibility criteria are important advances for people with visual disabilities.

<http://www.ramq.gouv.qc.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/professionnels/info-lettres/2011/info063-1.pdf>

INCOME SECURITY

Announcement of an Advisory Committee on retiree services and pension indexing.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.



Beginning in July 2011, the Tax Credit for Solidarity will replace and expand three tax credits: the QST credit, the property tax refund and the credit for individuals living in northern villages. The replacement credit will be paid monthly and will allow Quebec households to receive on average \$174 more per year. By 2013, the government will spend \$1.4 billion per year on this new credit, \$510 million more than it now spends on the three existing ones.

The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.

http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/GD_plan_de_lutte_rapport_activites_2011-2012.pdf

POVERTY REDUCTION

The Consultative Committee of the fight against poverty and social exclusion recommends the introduction of a guaranteed minimum income for all citizens of Quebec. The Committee proposed the initial measure of establishing a minimum financial support of \$11,425 per year, which will ensure access to goods and basic services.

The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.

WOMEN

\$4 million for a four-year renewal of the Equal Access to Decision program which works to increase women's presence at the head of Quebec organizations.

The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.

SENIORS

Introduction of an *Act to amend the Civil Code* concerning certain cases terminating the lease of a dwelling. This measure will help seniors who are forced to leave their homes before the expiry of their lease because of their permanent admission to a nursing home and long-term care. A new measure that provides financial assistance to seniors who must leave their home for a nursing home will take effect July 1, 2011.

The original internet link to this item is no longer operational.

<http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-22-39-2.html>

Ontario

DISABILITIES

The province is putting into place three more of the five accessibility standards it announced in 2005. Standards in the areas of transportation, employment, and information and communications will build on the first standard for accessible customer service.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mcss/en/2011/06/creating-opportunities-for-people-with-disabilities.html>

EDUCATION

Details announced for the two-year final implementation phase of full-day kindergarten across Ontario. Every four- and five-year-old

child (250,000 children) will be able to go to full-day kindergarten by September 2014.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2011/06/final-roll-out-for-full-day-kindergarten.html>

Parents of junior kindergarten students will be encouraged to bring their child in for a free eye exam at participating eye doctor offices. The Ontario Health Insurance Plan will cover the cost of the eye exams. The province is working in partnership with the Ontario Association of Optometrists. Three eyewear companies will provide free glasses to junior kindergarten (JK) students who need them. This next step is part of a larger program to ensure more than 117,000 JK students get their eyes tested province-wide by 2015. About 14,000 children are expected to need glasses.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2011/06/helping-more-junior-kindergarten-students-succeed-in-school.html>

Provincial funding is being extended to Pathways to Education Canada to continue to provide active mentoring, tutoring, and financial support to students in Grades 9 through 12 from low-income communities in Ottawa, Kitchener, Hamilton, Kingston and Toronto. Ontario is providing \$28.5 million over three years to the program.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2011/06/helping-ontario-youth-succeed-in-school.html>

GOVERNANCE

Appointment of the Commission on the Reform of Public Services that will provide advice on how to deliver efficient and effective public services. It will look for programs that are no longer serving their intended purpose, areas of overlap or duplication and areas of value that could provide greater return on investment.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2011/06/moving-forward-on-commission-to-examine-broader-public-sector-reform.html>

HEALTH

Release of a Comprehensive Mental Health and Addiction Strategy which focuses in the first three years of its rollout on children and youth. Supports for children target three key areas: fast access to high-quality services, early identification and support, and helping vulnerable children with unique needs.

<http://www.news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2011/06/improving-mental-health-supports-for-ontario-kids-and-families.html>

Manitoba

BUDGET IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction of the *Budget Implementation and Tax Statutes Amendment Act* which would implement Budget 2011 and provide \$65 million in tax cuts for families and businesses this year.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11690>



CHILDREN

Launch of Canada's first province-wide online child care registry makes it easier for families to find licensed child care.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11800>

DISABILITIES

Province proposes legislation to create an Accessibility Advisory Council.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11633>

DISABILITIES, CAREGIVING

Increase announced to the Primary Caregiver Tax Credit. Budget 2011 will see the credit go to \$1,275 annually from \$1,020 annually starting this year. It is estimated this increase will benefit more than 5,000 primary caregivers each year.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11631>

EDUCATION

Launch of "Thrive!" a five-year strategy to assist those affected by autism spectrum disorders. It will be supported with an initial investment of \$1 million and will offer a range of services and supports that build on consultations between the province and community stakeholders.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11884>

\$165,000 for the new Manitoba Rural Learning Consortium that will help up to 24 rural school divisions share resources and knowledge to benefit students, parents, teachers and administrators. It will be structured as a member-owned and managed cooperative guided by an advisory board. This non-government, not-for-profit organization will undertake tasks such as brokering professional services and training divisional service providers to meet student needs.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11899>

500 Manitoba high school students will have an opportunity to explore career options and learn from experts in their prospective fields this year through the new Manitoba Mentors program. Students will be matched with employers and individuals who will provide group mentoring, speakers' panels, site visits to employers and businesses, small group discussions and one-to-one mentoring through job shadowing, internships and job placements. The program will be expanded after the pilot year to serve up to 1,500 students in year two and 2,500 students in year three. Manitoba Mentors is part of the Manitoba Youth Corps suite of programs, which enhance employment and training opportunities for young people.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11891>

EMPLOYMENT

Introduction of three new policies to expand the skills of the workforce and ensure compliance with safety requirements on publicly funded projects, including one aimed at increasing Aboriginal participation in trades and other construction related occupations.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11785>

\$732,400 in provincial and federal funds towards a new facility to train Aboriginal workers for skilled jobs in Manitoba's manufacturing and transportation industries.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11798>

HEALTH

The province has released a five-year mental health strategic plan and will invest more than \$400,000 to implement initiatives such as establishing a trauma resource centre to strengthen mental-health services. *Rising to the Challenge: A Strategic Plan for the Mental Health and Well-Being of Manitobans* includes a combination of actions to promote good mental health and strengthen the systems that provide support and services to those with mental-health problems, such as:

- identifying ways to strengthen service navigation across the mental-health system
- developing a provincial action plan for mental-health promotion and mental-illness prevention
- reducing barriers to mental-health services, with a focus on Aboriginals and newcomers to Canada
- strengthening service co-ordination within and between regional health authorities, government departments, other jurisdictions and organizations
- influencing policy and practices that support people in employment
- developing a provincial workforce strategy to assess and guide recruitment, training and retention of the mental-health services workforce
- developing a provincial program to reduce stigma and social prejudice with an initial focus on health-care providers, children and youth
- working with provincial partners to address the service needs of people with acquired brain injuries.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2011/06/2011-06-29-130800-11896.html>



Manitoba's first Child Advocacy Centre, opening in Fall 2011 in Winnipeg, will minimize the trauma of children and youth who have been victims of sexual or serious physical abuse that may result in prosecution.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11894>

INCOME SECURITY

Reduced administrative formalities now provide parents with a simple, one-step way to register the birth of their child and to apply for a Social Insurance Number and the Canada Child Tax Benefit.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11811>

POVERTY REDUCTION

To continue the work initiated through *ALL Aboard: Manitoba's Poverty Reduction and Social Inclusion Strategy*, the province announced *The Poverty Reduction Strategy Act*. It includes requirements for the government to take the poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy into account when preparing its annual Budget. The Act also requires that the government prepare a yearly statement, to be tabled with the Budget, which will explain how the strategy is implemented, the financial implications of the strategy, and the indicators (as prescribed in regulation) to be used to measure the progress of the strategy.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=&item=11702>

\$6.5 million for four large resource centres in Winnipeg's north end to help families and new Canadians build strong communities with 139 new child care spaces, early learning, job training and support services.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11784>

HOUSING

\$19 million in federal and provincial funding for renovations to social housing throughout Manitoba. The 7,623 renovated units will enhance housing quality and accessibility for low-income residents in 42 communities across the province.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11787>

RECREATION

More than 140 non-profit community sport and recreation organizations, community clubs, sport associations and community facilities serving young people will receive funding through the province's new First Sports Program. Grants of up to \$10,000 will be awarded; a total of \$1 million has been committed to the program.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11831>

SENIORS

The province will expand SafetyAid, a home safety and falls prevention program for seniors living independently in their own homes.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11663>

Seniors will see an increase to their maximum Education Property Tax Credit starting this year for three years, which will amount to a \$4.8 million savings when fully implemented in 2013.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11631>

Manitoba Securities Commission and Manitoba Healthy Living, Youth and Seniors have developed a series of three print brochures that focus on identifying and preventing financial abuse among older Manitobans.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11631>

YOUTH

The province is expanding its Lighthouses and Turnabout programs to offer positive alternatives for young people who might be lured into crime or joining gangs. Some 71 Lighthouses provide funding to schools, friendship centres and other community facilities to operate free, supervised recreational, educational or social after-hours activities organized by and for youth. The province will also provide \$125,000 to a community-based social service provider to pilot a mentorship program for Turnabout children. Trained mentors will spend time with a child and their family, connecting them with positive alternatives such as culturally-based supports and activities, school-based supports, free recreational activities offered by the City of Winnipeg and other community resources.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=2011-06-01&item=11829>

Saskatchewan

No updates this month.

Alberta

INCOME SECURITY

The general minimum wage will rise from \$8.80 per hour to \$9.40 per hour on September 1, 2011. A new minimum wage of \$9.05 per hour will be introduced for workers who serve alcohol as part of their regular job, recognizing that these employees also earn tips. The new minimum wage rates represent a 6.8 percent increase for general workers and a 2.8 percent increase for liquor servers, the first changes to minimum wage in Alberta since April 2009.

Also beginning September 1, the government will use a new formula as the basis for decisions about future increases to Alberta's minimum wage – a simple average of changes to Alberta's annual average weekly earnings and changes to the Consumer Price Index in Alberta. The pre-



vious formula for determining changes was based on Alberta's average weekly earnings only. Changes would occur September 1 of each year and would be announced with three months notice.

<http://calgary.ctvnews.ca/minimum-wage-on-the-rise-1.651371>

British Columbia

EDUCATION

In March 2010, the Ministry of Education and UBC teamed up to launch Growing Innovation. The province-wide program provides grants to selected districts so they can bring innovative ideas to life and enhance rural learning. This year the province is providing \$300,000 to 17 school districts (selected from 61 submissions from 36 rural districts). Projects include Aboriginal performing arts, full-day nature kindergarten, Doukhobor history, renewable energy, and healthy food choices for students.

http://www2.news.gov.bc.ca/news_releases_2009-2013/2011EDUC0056-000648.htm

SENIORS

Fraser Health announces the opening of its first model of care centre (The Rosewood at Harmony Court Care Centre) designed for medically stable, independently mobile seniors with dementia. The Alternative Care Model – Dementia fills a service gap between Assisted Living and Residential (Complex) Care. It provides a home for individuals who, because of their cognitive impairment, require more supports than can be offered in Assisted Living and yet do not require the full range of services offered in complex care settings. Fraser Health expects this new model to be the blueprint for the development of future sites to meet the housing and care needs of a growing population of seniors with dementia.

http://www.fraserhealth.ca/find_us/services/our_services?program_id=13692

\$3.5 million will support a partnership between CanAssist at the University of Victoria, Tyze Personal Networks and the PLAN Institute for Caring Citizenship. These partners will combine their expertise to create Connect for Care, a new online tool that will help connect clients with their families, caregivers and health care providers. The remaining \$500,000 will support CanFITT, a partnership between CanAssist and the Vancouver Island Health Authority to prototype the use of customized technologies to improve the quality of life for clients receiving services through the Choice in Supports for Independent Living program.

<http://communications.uvic.ca/releases/release.php?display=release&id=1235>

Yukon

No updates this month.

Northwest Territories

HOUSING

Citizens are participating in a Shelter Policy Review that will refocus the Northwest Territories' approach to providing housing programs and services. When completed, the review will outline a long-term vision for housing.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

Nunavut

EDUCATION

Launch of the *First Canadians, Canadians First: The National Strategy on Inuit Education*, which proposes new initiatives that will empower parents, expand early childhood education programs and gather detailed research data. The document sets out 10 core recommendations.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.