



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

March 2012



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

DISABILITY

The province introduced an *Act to Amend the Enduring Powers of Attorney Act* which will enable adults with intellectual disabilities to designate representatives to deal with financial institutions in creating and managing Registered Disability Savings Plans. Previously, even if an adult with intellectual disabilities was independent, he or had to have a legal guardian to administer the program, a process that can be time consuming and involves applying to the courts. The amendment streamlines the process of designating a representative to manage an RDSP.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2012/just/0320n06.htm>

HEALTH

Amendments to the *Pharmaceutical Services Act* will allow residents to purchase less expensive generic drugs. A portion of the savings realized will permit reinvestment in pharmacies operating in underserved areas of the province, provide support to pharmacists and ensure that seniors who qualify for the 65Plus Plan of the NF/LA Prescription Drug Program will not pay more for their prescriptions.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2012/health/0330n06.htm>

THRONE SPEECH

The Speech outlined three principal objectives:

- refocus the delivery of services
- provide added support that will enable residents to take advantage of employment opportunities
- assist businesses and communities to grow.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2012/exec/0305n03.htm>

Nova Scotia

GOVERNANCE

The province is supporting workshops designed to help more African Nova Scotians be better informed and active in the Fall 2012 municipal elections. Four of the province's 402 municipal councillors are of African descent. The workshops are designed to encourage more people to participate on volunteer boards and to run for office.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20120314002>

THRONE SPEECH

The province will encourage job creation, improve health care, further streamline public service delivery and make life more affordable for families (e.g., continuing its Poverty Reduction Credit and the Affordable Living Tax Credit programs). New initiatives include:

- improving apprenticeship programs that teach young people the skills and trades
- developing a physician resource plan to help ensure an adequate



supply of family doctors. After extensive consultation, government will soon release the first strategy to improve mental health and addictions care

- investing more money per student and keeping average class sizes the lowest they have been in a decade
- making SchoolsPlus (a program that brings services for families and children into schools) available in every county. A new grants program will encourage community use of schools for physical activity, and educational and cultural programs
- introduction of Status of the Artist legislation to reflect the importance of arts and culture
- introduction of legislation to establish a new regulatory framework for mortgage brokers and lenders, remove barriers to social enterprise and update Nova Scotia's body of family law.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20120329002>

YOUTH

\$614,000 from four departments (Community Services, Education, Health and Wellness, and Justice) will provide youth with more support to stay in school, find jobs, get involved in the community and get help with family problems.

<http://www.gov.ns.ca/news/details.asp?id=20120314001>

New Brunswick

BUDGET

The province's deficit will be reduced to \$183 million compared to the \$448 million deficit projected for 2011-12. Spending is projected at \$8.196 billion. Efficiencies from corporate, departmental and other program initiatives identified through the government renewal process are expected to reduce projected spending by about \$226 million in 2012-13. Efficiencies in the public service include a two-year wage freeze, extended Christmas break and hiring freeze. Program delivery savings (e.g., reduced operational nursing home expenditures, health care cost alignments, reduced municipal grant funding) were identified. Small increases to the Real Property Transfer Tax and the Financial Corporation Capital Tax and a four-year property tax reform program were also announced.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.03.0257.html

EDUCATION

A new web-based portal will help students transfer their academic credits between universities and colleges based in New Brunswick. The portal was developed through the NB Council on Articulations and Transfer, an advisory group composed of government officials and academic institu-

tions that help ease the transition between institutions.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.03.0197.html

HEALTH

Announcement of a generic drug pricing policy that will set maximum prices for generic drugs. To offset the impact of lower drug prices on pharmacies, the province will reinvest a portion of the savings achieved through the reduction in generic drug prices back into pharmacy services.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.03.0226.html

SENIORS

Based on a review of a December 2009 plan for nursing home re-placement and renovation, 704 specialized care beds will be created by the private sector over the next five years. (The province does not own nursing homes; it funds 80 percent of their operations at an approximate annual cost of \$288 million.) The 704 beds will be specifically designed to care for persons with Alzheimer's disease and dementia. The province also announced that it will proceed with nursing home renovation and replacement work at an estimated cost of \$329 million.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.03.0198.html

Prince Edward Island

HEALTH

Chief Public Health Officer releases its first Health Officer's Report – *Promote, Prevent, Protect* – a snapshot of residents' health that will guide government policy decisions.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=8281&dept=&lang=E>

Québec

BUDGET

No new taxes announced for 2012-13. Total spending for the year will be \$70.9 billion, 2 percent higher than the \$68.8 billion spent last year. Total revenues, including federal transfers: \$69.4 billion, from \$65.5 billion in 2011-12. Budgetary deficit: \$1.5 billion, from \$3.3 billion. Total debt: \$183.8 billion, or 55 percent of GDP, up from \$173.4 billion last year. Interest on debt: \$8.2 billion, from \$7.5 billion. Announcement of a new office at the Secretariat du Conseil du trésor that will monitor government projects.

Social policy-related items:
health

- \$30.1 billion for health and social services, an increase of 3.4 percent from last year (health accounts for 48.1 percent of the Budget)



- an estimated \$1 billion contribution from the Fund to Finance Health and Social Services Institutions will go towards the aging population, troubled youth, cardiology, neonatology and cancer
- \$16 billion for the Education, Leisure and Sport portfolio, an increase of 2.2 percent (education accounts for 25.5 percent of the Budget); tuition hikes remain in place (\$325 per year increase announced)

seniors

- \$2.3 billion over five years for health services for the elderly, including home support
- \$76 million over five years to keep seniors active in their communities through knowledge transfer programs and the construction of 12 Maisons des grands-parents, where generations will gather for educational activities
- \$86 million to improve housing conditions for seniors
- \$172 million in tax breaks for seniors using home care services, for caregiving spouses and for the purchase of equipment, such as walk-in showers
- Companies that employ workers 65 and over will be entitled to a payroll tax deduction as of 2013. Deductions will reach \$1,000 per worker by 2016.

Summary: <http://www.budget.finances.gouv.qc.ca/Budget/2012-2013/fr/documents/CoupOeil.pdf>

Budget plan: <http://www.budget.finances.gouv.qc.ca/Budget/2012-2013/fr/documents/Planbudgetaire.pdf>

SENIORS

\$5.8 million for 73 new projects to help ensure the independence and security of seniors in their communities. These include projects to break social isolation, stop abuse and ageism, prevent situations of vulnerability, and promote citizen participation, intergenerational contact and healthy lifestyles.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

The province describes its overall plan for seniors for the next five-year period. Following the 2011 release of Living at home and subsequent improvements, the government forecasts that by 2016-17, financial support for seniors will have increased by 26 percent from current levels. An additional \$2.7 billion will have been allocated as follows:

- \$76 million will support seniors through projects from the community
- \$2.3 billion will be spent on health services
- \$86 million will be allocated toward affordable, safe and appropriate housing
- \$172 million will be awarded in the form of additional tax assistance.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

Ontario

BUDGET

The provincial government proposes to balance the Budget by 2017-18. Social policy-related measures include:

- delaying a planned \$200 increase to the Ontario Child Benefit for one year. Instead, there will be an increase from \$1,100 to \$1,210 in July 2013 and to \$1,310 in July 2014
- freezing the general Corporate Income Tax rate and Business Education Tax rate reductions until the budget is balanced
- changing the Ontario Drug Benefit program so that about five percent of seniors – those with the highest incomes – pay a larger share of their prescription drug costs
- ensuring Ontario user fees recover more of the cost of providing programs and services
- extending the pay freeze for executives at hospitals, universities, colleges, school boards and agencies for another two years.

The deficit for 2011-12 is projected to be \$15.3 billion – \$1 billion lower than forecast a year ago and an improvement of more than 38 percent from the 2009-10 deficit forecast in the fall of 2009.

Business innovation, productivity and competition will be supported through:

- the consolidation of business support programs into a Jobs and Prosperity Fund that will focus on productivity growth and job creation, while generating overall savings of \$250 million in 2014-15
- the establishment of a multistakeholder Jobs and Prosperity Council to advise the government on a plan to boost Ontario's productivity, and lead a research agenda on Ontario's productivity and innovation.

Announced health care changes include:

- transforming health care to reduce the rate of growth of spending to an average of 2.1 percent annually over the next three years
- enhancing community-based care to treat patients in alternative settings such as non-profit clinics and at home instead of in hospital, where appropriate
- moving to patient-centred funding models to improve the value and quality of care.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2012/03/strong-action-for-ontario.html>



HEALTH

In April 2012, the province's hospitals and Community Care Access Centres will begin a three-year move from global funding to Patient-Based Funding. Under PBF, health care organizations will be compensated based on how many patients they look after, the services they deliver, the evidence-based quality of those services, and the specific needs of the broader population.

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ms/ecfa/pro/initiatives/funding.aspx>

EDUCATION

The government is extending for one year a cap of five percent on overall tuition fee increases at colleges and universities. No changes are being contemplated that would require all universities to set standard tuition fees for arts and science programs. The province will continue to provide a 30 percent rebate on tuition for college and university students for many families.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2012/03/ministers-statement.html>

Manitoba

HEALTH

Ten public consultations will be held to discuss how to improve prevention efforts and services for those affected by domestic violence. Consultation will focus on five themes:

- services and support for victims of domestic violence and their families
- interventions for abusers
- increased co-ordination of services and support
- awareness and prevention
- training for service providers.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/03/2012-03-01-134800-13249.html>

YOUTH

The University of Winnipeg announces its Youth In Care Tuition Waiver program. The first of its kind in Manitoba, the program will support 10 students per year in its initial pilot stage, which begins September 2012. The Province of Manitoba Authorities will cover additional living expenses for youth on extensions of care, including housing, textbooks and meal plans, up to age 21 and while they are attending the University of Winnipeg. There are more than 9,500 children and youth in care in Manitoba; the majority are First Nations and Métis. Fewer than 5 percent pursue postsecondary education.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/03/2012-03-15-104500-13356.html>

Saskatchewan

BUDGET

Budget 2012-13 focuses on improving access to health care and making life more affordable, while ensuring spending on government services remains affordable and sustainable. The Budget posts a pre-transfer surplus of \$95 million in the General Revenue Fund and a surplus of \$15 million in the Summary Financial Statements. Revenue for 2012-13 is forecast at \$11.29 billion, while expense is expected to be \$11.2 billion, up 4.7 percent from 2011-12.

Social policy-related items:

- \$3.5 million for the Senior Personal Care Home benefit, estimated to be \$278 a month, rising to \$369 per month by 2015-16
- \$24.2 million, a \$3.3 million increase to provide Seniors Income Plan benefit increases of up to \$50 per month starting July 2012, an increase of up to \$10 per month in each of the next three years
- \$113 million, a \$17.8 million increase to provide expanded Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability eligibility. The benefit will rise and the number of clients will expand from 3,000 to 10,000
- \$42.7 million to begin construction of seven previously announced Long Term Care (LTC) facilities under a new co-ownership model with health regions. Construction will continue on six LTCs already begun
- \$88.7 million for 21 approved major school projects
- Charges under the Seniors' and Children's Drug Plan go up by \$5 per prescription, which will save \$10 million. These charges have not been changed since 2007.

<http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2012-13>

COMMUNITY

The Victims Services branch of the Ministry of Justice and Attorney General currently funds 18 police-based victim services programs, which are available to approximately 87 percent of residents. An announced expansion will extend those services to the remaining 34 police jurisdictions, ensuring every community and person has access to programs and services for victims.

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

<http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/JusticeAnnualReport2011-2012-Final.pdf>

DISABILITY

Announcement of a new Day Program Funding Standard and expansion of the residential funding standard for individuals with complex needs. To be implemented in April 2012, the Standard will be based on the assessed need of each individual. It will also provide more resources to support people with more complex needs. Implementation will cost \$6.3 million in 2012-13 and include \$4.6 million for regular day programs and \$1.7 million for day programs with clients that have complex needs.



The total annualized cost of the new standard will be up to \$7 million when all complex needs designations are complete in 2013-14. Also in April 2012, expanded funding standards in current and new residential programs that support individuals with complex needs will come into effect. In 2012-13, \$560,000 will be allocated for this expansion, and total support will increase to \$2 million by 2013-14.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

The province's Approved Private-Service Homes (APSH), serving people with intellectual disabilities, and Mental Health Approved Homes will receive an 11.6 percent funding increase effective May 1, 2012. This investment builds on the government's four-year commitment to eliminate by 2012-13 the wait list of 440 Saskatchewan people with intellectual disabilities who require programs and services.

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

http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/Publications_Centre/SocialServices/From-Dependence-to-Independence-2012.pdf

Alberta

CHILDREN

Alberta foster parents and kinship caregivers will receive increased financial support from the Alberta government to help them continue providing high-quality care to children and youth. Funding for foster care support is increasing \$11.4 million to a total of \$184 million in Budget 2012.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3214331446A58-932B-F5F4-BB1D-3F59CA65FE93>

COMMUNITY

The province is expanding its restorative justice investment, providing \$351,000 in grants to assist 11 organizations. The funding will enable nonprofit, charitable and community-based restorative justice organizations recruit and train new volunteers, pay staff wages, offer conferencing facilities and/or work with schools, the Crown and courts to raise awareness of the program.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=321251C79CF8C-E18E-945C-C37BE94C364E0091>

HEALTH

Further to its Budget 2012 announcement, the Alberta government is expanding support for people with complex mental health and addiction needs in the community, including:

- investing in outreach and wrap-around services in support of affordable housing initiatives
- providing more support for programs and services at Alberta Hospital Edmonton
- increasing access to psychology and other counselling services in primary health care settings

- expanding the Mental Health Capacity Building in Schools Initiative to more schools and enhancing other school-based supports for children and youth.

In addition to the \$25 million from Budget 2012, government will support an estimated \$15 million renovation at Alberta Hospital Edmonton to create four specialized mental health inpatient units with 80 beds.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=32056E3915097-C677-5FCA-61A44438CFEEDA9>

POVERTY REDUCTION

The province amended its Energy Marketing and Residential Heat Sub-metering Regulation to allow Albertans with poor or no credit history to have access to fixed rate contracts. The amendment enables them to access such contracts by negotiating a deposit with energy marketers according to rules set out by the regulation.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=321623B-F909C1-05CE-BOCE-7CB12B2F21C15719>

SENIORS

Proposed legislation, Bill 5, the *Seniors' Property Tax Deferral Act*, would help seniors who own their homes pay their property tax through a home equity loan. The program would be available for the 2013 tax year, helping seniors free up funds by deferring all or part of their property tax until they sell their home. Under the proposed legislation, eligible seniors would enter into a loan agreement with the province, and the government would pay the property tax on behalf of the senior. The loan would be repaid when the home is sold. More than 170,000 senior households in Alberta are eligible for the program.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=32060E4976FDF-EC2D-5303-30107701ED6DD21C>

\$25 million for one new and two enhanced home care initiatives that will help more seniors remain as independent as possible in their communities. Under Budget 2012, the government is:

- adding new adult day program spaces for medical, rehabilitation, recreational, social and related services for up to 440 new home care clients
- enhancing province-wide access to 24-hour on-call registered nurses for home care clients
- introducing a new program called Destination Home to help individuals return home as quickly as possible after a hospital stay and avoid unnecessary hospital visits.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=32086F8586BC1-A6BD-0430-ODE-004C5A6C80A11>



British Columbia

EMPLOYMENT

Leaders from BC, California, Oregon and Washington endorsed an action agenda to grow the clean economy along the West Coast. The Pacific Coast Collaborative Leaders group commissioned an economic analysis, which estimates that the \$47-billion clean economy sector could triple in size by 2020, given the right policies and partnerships. The group's 2012 Action Plan on Jobs outlines a series of measurable commitments by each jurisdiction for retrofitting state-owned buildings, fleet purchasing of advanced technology vehicles and creating world-class energy standards to provide incentives for private sector leadership and advanced manufacturing.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/03/west-coast-leaders-launch-plan-to-create-a-million-new-jobs.html>

SENIORS

Consultations with regional stakeholders are now under way to develop a strategy to prevent, identify and respond to elder abuse and neglect. The province has provided \$1.4 million to the BC Association of Community Response Networks for prevention and education activities.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/03/bc-developing-elder-abuse-prevention-strategy.html>

Seniors and clients with complex care needs and their families will benefit from increased staffing levels at residential care facilities as a result of \$55 million from BC's revised residential care rate structure revenues and one-time funding for infrastructure.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/03/55m-reinvested-into-residential-care-clients-benefit.html>

On April 1, 2012, a Seniors' Home Renovation Tax Credit will help fund permanent home renovations for residents aged 65 and over. The refundable credit will be worth up to \$1,000 each year, and it will be available to seniors or family members sharing their home, regardless of whether they own or rent.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/03/renovation-tax-credit-helps-bc-seniors.html>

SOCIAL ECONOMY

Changes to the *Business Corporations Act* will allow for a new hybrid type of company. The community contribution company (social enterprise) combines socially beneficial purposes with a restricted ability to distribute profits to shareholders.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/03/bc-introduces-act-allowing-social-enterprise-companies.html>

Yukon Territory

BUDGET

Tabling of the Territory's 2012-13 Capital and Operations and Maintenance Budget, totalling \$1.16 billion. It includes investments in land development and affordable housing, transportation infrastructure, education and research, health care, justice, protection of the environment and improvements to community infrastructure. Social policy-related highlights include:

- \$4.5 million for a second stage housing facility in Whitehorse
- \$4.05 million to deal with the increase in costs and volumes of hospital claims
- \$65,000 to support the Challenge program for people with mental disabilities to learn life and job skills
- \$457,000 to add six full time employees to meet the significant growth in the Home Care client numbers and the complexity of care needs.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/12-044.html>

HEALTH

Subject to legislative approval, the Government has committed \$4.5 million for the construction of a second stage housing facility in Whitehorse. It will provide 10 transitional units of supportive, secure and affordable housing for 12 to 18 months to women and their children who are fleeing abuse. The program will make available support and advocacy to women establishing an individual plan, which may include navigating legal matters, safety and health concerns, and referrals to other supports in the community.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/12-035.html>

The Territorial Women's Directorate launched a campaign designed to change social attitudes and behaviour toward violence against women and girls. *Am I the Solution?* is designed to encourage residents to think about the effects of violence in their communities and to consider what residents themselves can do to address it.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/12-055.html>

Nunavut

No updates this month.

Northwest Territories

No updates this month.