



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

December 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

No releases this month.

Nova Scotia

DISABILITY

The Institute for Research and Development on Inclusion in Society has been engaged to help the province consult with persons with disabilities, their families and community partners in order to improve programs and services. The goal is to arrive at a person-centred, home- and community-based model that is sustainable and easier to navigate.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20121203007>

Schools in the province will be provided with a copy of The Developing and Implementing Programming for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder guide – a practical tool for teachers, school staff and support teams to help them meet the needs of students on the autism spectrum.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20121203001>

New Brunswick

DISABILITY

The province is investing \$400,000 in collaboration with the Rick Hansen Institute to continue research for persons with disabilities. The investment will support:

- increasing spinal cord injury research at the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation in Fredericton
- participating in the spinal cord injury registry
- linking researchers and health care professionals nationally and internationally
- implementing best practices and community-based services for persons with disabilities.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.12.1137.html

SENIORS

The province has received the final report from the Premier's Panel on Seniors...Living Healthy, Aging Well. Its main recommendations challenge residents to begin a dialogue directed at creating an environment that supports healthy aging through:

- life-long learning
- age-friendly cities and communities, including an appropriate mix of housing options and transportation solutions
- a caregiver strategy to support individuals at risk of requiring formal services
- a minimum standard of care and training for formal caregivers



- a consistent approach to end-of-life care.

The provincial government will take time to review the recommendations, coordinate government and community initiatives, and integrate a number of socially-oriented policies, programs and services all targeted toward healthy aging.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2012.12.1203.html

Prince Edward Island

CHILDREN

A new Guide to Early Years Autism Services will provide parents with more information on the services and supports available for young children with autism. The guide is now available online at www.gov.pe.ca/eecd/autismservices.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=8733&dept=&lang=E>

Québec

INCOME SECURITY

As a result of personal income tax indexation for 2013, the nearly 869,000 Québec families that receive Child Assistance will see their payments increase 2.5 percent on January 1. Child Assistance is financial assistance paid by the *Régie des rentes du Québec* to all families that have at least one dependent child under age 18. In 2012, more than \$2 billion was distributed to families under this measure. The supplement for children with a disability also increased January 1, reaching \$183 per month. In 2012, more than \$77 million was paid to 33,000 families for disability assistance.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

General minimum wage will rise to \$10.15 on May 1, 2013, an increase of \$0.25 per hour. The minimum wage payable to employees with tips will increase from \$8.55 to \$8.75, while the minimum wage for employees working in certain sectors of the clothing industry will rise by \$0.25 hour, from \$9.90 to \$10.15. The minimum wage paid to berry pickers will go up – from \$0.77 to \$0.79 per kg for strawberry pickers, and from \$2.91 to \$2.98 per kg for raspberry pickers.

<http://www.cnt.gouv.qc.ca/la-commission-vous-informe/actualites/actualites/comm/607/653/index.html>

Ontario

DISABILITY

Ontario is creating a new expert committee to help ensure that children and young people with Autism Spectrum Disorder get the right supports and treatment. The Autism Spectrum Disorder Clinical Expert Committee will be made up of eight representatives from a wide range of disciplines,

including psychiatry, clinical psychology and developmental pediatrics. <http://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2012/12/ontario-creating-expert-committee-on-autism.html>

HEALTH

19 early adopter communities have been selected to participate in Health Links – a system of coordinating care for high-needs patients (e.g., seniors and people with complex conditions). Each Health Link will measure results and develop plans to:

- improve access to family care for seniors and patients with complex conditions
- cut back on avoidable emergency room visits
- reduce unnecessary readmission to hospitals shortly after discharge
- reduce time for referral from primary care doctor to specialist appointment
- improve patients' experience during their journey through the health care system.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2012/12/improving-care-for-high-needs-patients.html>

POVERTY REDUCTION

Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy 2012 Annual Report highlights progress made over the last four years in helping children and families emerge from poverty and raise their quality of life. The report states that 40,000 children and their families have been helped to get out of poverty since 2008.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcys/en/2012/12/40000-children-and-their-families-lifted-out-of-poverty.html>

The province will help municipalities deliver housing and homelessness programs through an additional one-time investment of \$42 million in 2013-14. Funding will assist eligible municipalities as they develop and implement their Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative plans. Announced in the 2012 Budget, the prevention initiative combines five housing and homelessness programs into a single, municipally delivered program to better address local priorities.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mcss/en/2012/12/enhancing-housing-and-homelessness-supports.html>

Manitoba

DISABILITY

As part of its response to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Manitoba is introducing an amendment that would eliminate an exemption that allows employees with disabilities to be paid less than the minimum wage. Under the proposed amendment, the province would no longer issue permits to allow employees to be paid



below minimum wage, because of a physical or mental disability. There are fewer than 20 permits currently in place and those will be allowed to continue, based on consultations with individuals and their families. In the mid-1990s, there were more than 200 exemptions granted.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/press/top/2012/12/2012-12-03-140000-15776.html>

Saskatchewan

CAREGIVING

An additional \$17.34 million per year will be paid to front-line workers in Saskatchewan Association of Rehabilitation Centres' member agencies and other organizations providing critical services to vulnerable adults and children. The government will establish a consistent level of funding to organizations that deliver critical residential as well as direct daily care and in-home supports to adults with intellectual disabilities and/or mental health and addictions issues and to children in need of protection.

Funds will be directed to front-line employees in eligible agencies funded by the ministries of Social Services and Health. This includes organizations that support adults with mental health and addictions issues, groups that support children in need of protection and their families, and organizations that serve people with intellectual disabilities.

The actual increase each worker will see will vary depending on his or her current position and wage. The increase is expected to range from \$4,000 to \$6,000 per year, targeted to the lowest-paid front-line workers.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

The province will provide an additional \$3.3 million per year to Approved Private Service Homes and Mental Health Approved Homes that care for adults with intellectual disabilities and/or mental health issues. Approved Private Service Homes and Mental Health Approved Homes are licensed private homes for people with intellectual disabilities and/or mental health issues. These homes make it possible for residents to enjoy family living in the community, and give them a chance to develop social, recreational and living skills. Between November 2007 and December 2012, the province has raised Level of Care Rates in Approved Private Service Homes and Mental Health Approved Homes by 41.4 percent.

The internet link to this item is no longer operational.

DISABILITY

The province committed to developing a comprehensive disability strategy by working with representatives of the disability community and support workers. The strategy will focus on the goals identified in the Plan for Growth and the 2012 Speech from the Throne, including:

- reducing barriers to accessible housing
- making transportation more accessible

- increasing employment and education opportunities
- promoting community inclusion
- supporting caregivers.

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

http://www.qp.gov.sk.ca/Publications_Centre/SocialServices/Saskatchewan-Disability-Strategy.pdf

Alberta

POVERTY REDUCTION

In alignment with its 10-year Plan to End Homelessness, the province has committed \$60 million to community-based organizations in seven Alberta cities, an increase of \$12.3 million or 26 percent over last year. Funding will help provide homeless individuals with permanent supportive housing programs and other services that address the underlying causes of homelessness.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3343195621892-0E98-1D10-50BB-84298C0C9E95>

British Columbia

ABORIGINALS

The federal and provincial health ministers and the chair of the BC First Nations Health Council signed a Health Partnership Accord, reaffirming their long-term commitment and shared vision for a more responsive and integrated health system for First Nations in BC. The First Nations Health Authority will incorporate First Nations' cultural knowledge, beliefs, values and models of healing into the redesign and delivery of health programs to better meet the needs of First Nations communities with their guidance.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/12/moving-forward-together-in-wellness.html>

Five pilot communities will participate in the first phase of the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Action Plan (ORAAP). The pilot communities are: Vancouver, Surrey, Prince George, Kamloops and Duncan. The aim of ORAAP is to improve the lives of the increasing numbers of Aboriginal people who choose to live in urban/off-reserve areas and is being implemented through an initial partnership between the provincial Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada, local governments, the BC Association of Aboriginal Friendship Centres and Métis Nation British Columbia. In addition to working with these groups, the commitment also supports the involvement of groups such as the business sector, philanthropic organizations and academic partners to come up with ways to support social innovation, and more effectively deliver programs for off-reserve Aboriginal people at the community level.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/12/first-communities-announced-for-off-reserve-aboriginal-action-plan.html>



FAMILIES

The Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and the Ministry of Health are strengthening supports for families affected by mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence. Pilot projects are being launched in Vernon and Richmond to help front-line staff in a variety of health and community settings to better and more consistently identify and manage situations where the safety of children may be at risk. Extensive consultations with service providers in both communities will inform the development of new screening tools, risk assessments, information sharing and referral process.

The goals of the projects are to:

- identify parents with serious untreated mental illness, problematic substance abuse and risk of domestic violence at the point when families come in contact with health care and/or MCFD services
- determine when there is risk to children, connect affected families with appropriate supports and services, and monitor their progress over time.

As the projects progress, staff will receive training in enhanced family-sensitive practices that address the care and protection not only of parents in treatment but also of children and family members. Pilot projects in Vernon and Richmond are the first steps in what will be an eventual province-wide program to provide better support for families impacted by mental illness, substance abuse and domestic violence.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/12/vernon-richmond-lead-mental-health-pilot-projects.html>

HEALTH

Children and teenagers with mental health challenges in northern BC are receiving specialized support sooner through the use of Telehealth videoconferencing. Initially a pilot project in Prince Rupert, Smithers and Terrace last year, the Ministry of Children and Family Development, in partnership with BC Mental Health and Addiction Services, an agency of the Provincial Health Services Authority, is now using videoconferencing equipment to connect young people in several northern communities to psychiatrists at Children's and Women's Health Centre of BC in Vancouver. The success of the pilot project has resulted in the service being expanded to Hazelton, Houston, Telkwa and Kitwanga. Patients are referred through their family physicians.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2012/12/children-getting-quicker-mental-health-service.html>

Yukon Territory

POVERTY REDUCTION

Release of *A Better Yukon for All, the Government of Yukon's Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy*. It includes a number of concrete initiatives that will improve the lives of Yukon's vulnerable populations, including the expansion of the Dawson City women's shelter and the Downtown Outreach Clinic in Whitehorse, which provides home care services to homeless people. Its three goals are to improve access to services, reduce inequities and strengthen community vitality.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/12-245.html>

Northwest Territories

GOVERNANCE

The Department of Municipal and Community Affairs launched a new website, redesigned with a focus on user needs. With improved search features, online forms and applications and a design optimized for mobile devices and smartphones, the website will enable access to information on programs and services.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/departement-of-municipal-and-community-affairs-launches-new-and-improved-website/>

INCOME SECURITY

A new exemption for Income Assistance clients came into effect December 1, 2012. The change allows individuals receiving payments under Impact Benefits Agreements, treaties or land claim settlements to claim an exemption of up to \$500 per year for each household member when determining eligibility for Income Assistance.

<http://www.ece.gov.nt.ca/news/664>

Nunavut

No releases this month.