



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

February 2013



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

CHILDREN

The Department of Child, Youth and Family Services released a 10-year child care strategy: "Caring For Our Future: Provincial Strategy for Quality, Sufficient and Affordable Child Care in Newfoundland and Labrador."

http://www.gov.nl.ca/cyfs/publications/childcare/caring_for_our_future.pdf

EDUCATION

\$75,000 to help expand Roots of Empathy programming into more schools. By engaging children in positive social behaviours like sharing, taking turns, and respecting others the program has been shown to reduce incidents of bullying and aggression when introduced at an early age. As well as school-based efforts, Roots of Empathy resources are also being placed in parent resource kits, which will be delivered to new parents throughout the province this spring as part of the province's early childhood learning strategy, Learning from the Start.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2013/edu/0218n04.htm>

SENIORS

Researchers from Memorial University and the Newfoundland and Labrador Centre for Health Information are receiving a total of \$175,000 in grants to conduct focused research on aging and seniors. The province's Healthy Aging Research Program provides funding for student awards, faculty awards, and research grants to support research on issues of relevance to the Provincial Healthy Aging Policy Framework.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2013/health/0218n09.htm>

Nova Scotia

EDUCATION

\$1 billion in funding in 2013-14 for 170 new teachers, caps on primary class sizes and more staff to work with students with special needs.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130214004>

FAMILIES

Parents as Career Coaches workshops are taking place in 25 schools across the province in the coming months. The course is now available to parents of junior-high students as well as high-school students.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130207005>

The province is investing \$450,000 towards a new Community Sector Council to help build stronger non-profit organizations. The sector council will bring non-profits together to learn from each other and share human resource and financial expertise, training practices, and research.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130205002>

HEALTH

\$190,000 to expand the province's Mental Health Crisis Line to all parts of the province. The line is staffed by licensed clinicians, with a background in social work, nursing or occupational therapy.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130226002>

INCOME SECURITY

Announcement of pension funding rule changes. The 2008-09 recession cut return on investments, leaving many plans underfunded. The indicators that are used to determine whether a plan is solvent have dropped significantly since 2011. When a plan was underfunded, the



employer had five years to make the plan solvent. Some employers said it would take so much money to make their plans solvent, the company might need to close. Today's changes give those employers up to 15 years to get their plans back to full funding.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130213003>

SENIORS

The province is expanding two continuing care programs – Supportive Care and Personal Alert Assistance – to give more seniors the support they need to stay in their homes and communities longer. The Supportive Care Program helps people who have difficulty remembering and concentrating. Eligible recipients receive \$500 per month for home support services such as respite and personal care and meal preparation. People with low incomes can also be reimbursed up to \$495 per year for snow removal. The Personal Alert Program provides up to \$480 a year to low-income seniors who live alone and have a history of falls to buy a personal alert system.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130206003>

New Brunswick

CHILDREN

The Office of the Child and Youth Advocate received 497 requests for advocacy in 2011-12, an increase of 163 from 2010-11. The increase is attributable to both a stronger focus on children's rights education and greater outreach. An annual report identifies five recommendations that have yet to be implemented:

- the establishment of a provincial centre of excellence for youth with complex needs
- the establishment of a child-centered integrated service delivery model for children and youth in need
- the formalization of the application of Jordan's Principle in New Brunswick
- the roll-out of New Brunswick Families information-management system to all child and family services agencies operated on First Nations
- the appointment of a child and youth advocate on a permanent basis and the adoption of amendments to the Child and Youth Advocate Act that would limit the term of acting or interim appointments under it.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.02.0151.html

HEALTH

A panel has been appointed to provide support and strategic advice about the implementation of the new prescription drug plan for uninsured New Brunswickers.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.02.0160.html

Prince Edward Island

WOMEN

Release of a new guide, *Information for Women and Men in an Abusive Relationship: A guide to finding services that can help you*. The publication was the result of a partnership between the Interministerial Women's Secretariat with Justice Options for Women and PEI Family Violence Prevention Services. It is a compilation of all of the Island's services available to both victims and abusers.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=8832&dept=&lang=E>

Québec

DISABILITY

The Office of Disability Quebec launched a third edition of its Guide to tax measures for persons with disabilities and their families.

[Link](#)

The Office of Disability Quebec launched a new website service available for staff of ministries, public and private organizations and municipalities. It contains information on how to adapt practices to accommodate, serve and communicate effectively with people with disabilities.

[Link](#)

EMPLOYMENT

Launch of a new employment strategy – All for employment: A new impetus, with partners and \$43 million per year in funding.

The strategy is meant to:

- break the cycle of poverty
- refocus the work of the Ministry of Employment and Social Solidarity to under-represented groups in terms of employment
- increase the skills of the workforce in all businesses.

Measures will target young people, experienced workers, immigrants and people with disabilities.

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

http://www.mess.gouv.qc.ca/publications/pdf/GD_brochure_emploi_tous.pdf

FAMILIES

\$560,000 for 27 projects aimed at helping families achieve a work-life balance (part of the province's 2011-15 work to achieve greater male-female parity in working conditions). Successful projects are designed to promote a better balance between family and professional responsibilities of parents of school-age children. With a budget of \$1.3 million over three years, this program will increase the supply of care during the summer and the long school holidays, such as Christmas and the holidays Spring Break.

[Link](#)



GOVERNANCE

The Ministry of Health and Social Services will spend \$492 million to support community organizations working in health and social services in 2013-14, an increase of 2.5 percent over the previous year.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

Release of Evaluation of the implementation of the *Action Plan 2005-2010 Mental Health - The strength of the relationship*. The authors concluded that the provision of mental health service has improved since the launch of the Action Plan in 2005. The implementation of ATM-type access in health and social services centers has facilitated the transfer of medical and psychosocial services to mental health services. In addition, information campaigns have helped reduce the stigma and prejudice against people with mental health problems.

[Link](#)

SENIORS

New regulations published for the certification of some 2,000 private residences for seniors. "Private residence for seniors" will now be a name reserved for certified private residences. In addition, two categories of private residences are defined – those serving independent seniors and semi-autonomous seniors. Criteria and operational standards were developed for both categories. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Services, Emploi-Québec will provide \$ 6.5 million to implement a training plan designed to enhance the skills of staff working in homes for the elderly.

[Link](#)

Ontario

HEALTH

Release of *Maintaining the Gains, Moving the Yardstick: Ontario Health Status Report, 2011* by the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health. The report identifies 12 priority indicators currently used to measure health status:

- smoking and alcohol use during pregnancy
- low birth weight
- healthy child development at school entry
- immunization coverage of school pupils
- smoking prevalence
- overweight and obesity
- preventable mortality
- compliance with low risk drinking guidelines
- self-reported positive mental health

- the burden of infectious diseases
- hospitalizations for falls in seniors
- life expectancy at birth.

Despite gains in key areas, disparities remain that place certain groups at much greater risk of poorer health, disease and premature death. The report author says this situation must be acknowledged and addressed more directly in health policy and health service planning and delivery. http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/ministry/publications/reports/cmoh_13/cmoh_13.pdf

The province will help to support the At Home/Chez Soi project in order to maintain 216 supportive housing units and support services for 240 people living with mental illness. The four-year research project, led by the Mental Health Commission of Canada, is focused on reducing the growing number of homeless people affected by a mental illness. At Home/Chez Soi provide formerly homeless Ontarians with mental illness with access to independent housing through rent subsidies and mental health supports.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2013/02/ontario-supporting-people-living-with-mental-illness.html>

The province is working with First Nations communities to increase access to care and community supports for those addicted to prescription narcotics. The province will support five new Community Wellness Development Teams and increase the use of telemedicine equipment in First Nations treatment centres across Ontario. Community Wellness Development Teams provide mental health and addictions expertise and support to First Nations communities seeking help in addressing prescription narcotic addiction by blending tradition and cultural practices. Using new telemedicine equipment will allow providers to conference with patients in remote communities to enhance addictions treatments.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2013/02/improving-access-to-addictions-services-for-first-nations.html>

THRONE SPEECH

Focusing on working effectively across party lines, the speech highlighted:

- eliminating the deficit by 2017-18
- introducing an even-handed approach to balancing the budget, allowing all parties to work together to find savings
- establishing better accountability in the legislature
- focusing on employment opportunities for Ontario's youth, in partnership with education, labour and private sector partners
- ensuring municipalities and families have input on the location of energy infrastructure in their communities, while continuing to protect the environment and encourage conservation



- ensuring a respectful partnership with labour leaders by building a sustainable process for wage negotiation through collective bargaining
- continuing to build the best education and health care systems in the world.

<http://news.ontario.ca/medt/en/2013/02/speech-from-the-throne-charts-the-way-forward.html>

Manitoba

EMPLOYMENT, ENVIRONMENT

In support of TomorrowNow – Manitoba’s Green Plan, the government is partnering with 21 student, business and municipality groups that are making a positive impact on the environment and gaining a competitive economic advantage through leading-edge technologies for recycling and pollution reduction. \$360,000 will go to the groups through grants from the Waste Reduction and Pollution Prevention (WRAPP) Fund.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=16552>

HEALTH

The role of nurse practitioners in the delivery of health care to Manitobans has been expanded to allow them to independently authorize magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) diagnostic tests for their patients. More than 100 nurse practitioners work in various health-care facilities across the province including hospitals, QuickCare Clinics, primary-care clinics and personal-care homes.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=16716>

POVERTY REDUCTION

The government is asking residents to provide feedback on ALL Aboard, its poverty reduction and social inclusion strategy. Measures used to track progress report that in 2010, Manitoba’s low-income rate was 8.7 percent, a decrease of more than 19 percent from 2000 (i.e., 16,000 fewer Manitobans were living in low income in 2010 than in 2000). In 2010, the low-income rate for children was 10.9 percent, compared with 15.1 percent in 2000, a decrease of 28 percent. Residents are being asked offer suggestions that will help the province develop initiatives in the areas of:

- building blocks for employment
- targeted supports for those most in need
- food security
- housing
- closing the gap for Aboriginal Manitobans
- creating opportunities for youth
- early childhood development and parenting supports.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=16756>

Saskatchewan

No updates this month.

Alberta

GOVERNANCE

Adoption of the *Alberta Social Policy Framework*. It identifies four key goals: reduce inequality; protect vulnerable people; enable collaboration and partnerships; create a person-centred system of high quality services. Input from more than 31,000 Albertans highlighted safety, inclusion, health, education, training, recreation and cultural opportunities as the most important outcomes for their families and communities. They also recommended a number of policy shifts, including a focus on prevention and awareness, treating people with dignity, and creating a system of supports that puts people first.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3373421703E69-E310-8B91-0D86BF0497F467DF>

HOMELESSNESS

Release of the final progress report from the Alberta Secretariat for Action on Homelessness. Highlights noted: Since 2009, more than 6,600 homeless people have been provided with housing and supports, and more than 1,600 people have graduated from Housing First Programs and are living independently. Of those who received support to help them break the cycle of poverty, approximately 80 percent remain housed.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=33643B565CE62-DA05-98DE-3A898831D9F65D94>

The Alberta Interagency Council on Homelessness has been appointed. The community-focused partnership will help guide the next phase of *A Plan for Alberta: Ending Homelessness in 10 Years*. The focus is now shifting to making long-term changes that will prevent homelessness and strategies requiring coordinated action between government and local communities.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=33643B565CE62-DA05-98DE-3A898831D9F65D94>

British Columbia

BUDGET

Savings from spending controls have achieved an improved deficit forecast of \$1.2 billion in 2012-13. Beginning in 2013-14, continued spending discipline, targeted tax increases, net economic growth and the sale of surplus government properties and assets are expected to eliminate the deficit and deliver progressively larger surpluses all three years of the fiscal plan (\$197 million in 2013-14, \$211 million in 2014-15 and \$460 million in 2015-16). Family- and youth-focused measures include:



- the BC Training and Education Savings Grant, a one-time \$1,200 grant toward a resident child's Registered Education Savings Plan after the child turns six. Payments are made from the Children's Education Fund, established in 2007
- a new BC Early Childhood Tax Benefit will provide \$146 million to approximately 180,000 families with children under six years old, effective April 1, 2015. Families with young children can receive up to \$55 per child, per month. Most will receive the full amount, while those with family incomes between \$100,000 and \$150,000 a year will receive a partial benefit. About 90 percent of families with young children are expected to be eligible
- BC's new Early Years Strategy will invest \$76 million over three years to support the creation of new child care spaces and improve the quality of child care and early years services. Included within this, \$32 million will support the creation of new child care spaces and \$37 million will improve the quality of services available
- \$60 million in new and reallocated funding to continue the Sports and Arts Legacy Fund first introduced in Budget 2010
- an additional \$18 million for the recently announced BC Creative Futures, to fund programming aimed at increasing youth participation in the arts.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/02/balanced-budget-2013-invests-in-families.html>

COMMUNITIES

Establishment of a new British Columbia Prosperity Fund to ensure communities, First Nations and all residents benefit from the development of a new liquefied natural gas industry. Billions in new revenue will be dedicated to the BC Prosperity Fund. A key fund priority will be to eliminate the provincial debt, reduce the cost burden on families through further tax reductions, and make long-term investments in services such as health care, education, employment and infrastructure.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/02/new-british-columbia-prosperity-fund-will-ensure-lasting-benefits.html>

HEALTH

The province and the British Columbia Lottery Corporation (BCLC) are providing \$11 million this year for responsible gambling programs and services: \$6 million for the provincial responsible gambling program, \$3.6 million for BCLC's responsible gambling program and an initial \$1 million for the Centre for Gambling Research. According to research, 4.6 percent of British Columbians experience problems related to excessive gambling.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/02/responsible-gambling-in-bc.html>

INCOME SECURITY

Introduction of the *Pooled Registered Pension Plans Act*, part of a national effort to make well-regulated, low-cost pension plans available to Cana-

dians who do not have occupational pension plans. Pooled Registered Pension Plans (PRPPs) will be managed by licensed financial institutions, reducing administrative burdens for employers and providing tax advantages to employers that are not available under alternative models such as group RRSPs. BC has elected to make employer enrolment in these plans optional. If an employer chooses to offer a PRPP to its employees, they will be automatically enrolled and have the right to opt out. Employers will not be obligated to make matching contributions. Workers whose employers do not set up a PRPP will be able to deal directly with a PRPP administrator to open an account, similar to opening an RRSP.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/02/bc-unveils-new-pension-option.html>

SENIORS

The province will be implementing 12 of the 14 recommendations made by the ombudsperson's report, *No Longer Your Decision: British Columbia's Process for Appointing the Public Guardian and Trustee to Manage the Financial Affairs of Incapable Adults*. Most of the changes will be implemented by July 1, 2014, by bringing into force parts of the *Adult Guardianship and Planning Statutes Amendment Act* and by introducing legislative amendments during the fall 2013 legislative session. The final two recommendations will be reviewed and reported on within 18 months. The new legislation will ensure that during the process of determining whether or not an adult is incapable, prescribed standards will be followed that protect the rights of the individual by requiring:

- a current in-person medical assessment conducted by a physician
- both a medical and a functional assessment before making a finding of incapability
- advance notice of a potential finding of incapability is given to the adult and their family along with time to respond if they have concerns.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/02/ministry-commits-to-enhanced-rights-for-vulnerable-adults.html>

Legislation was introduced to create the *Seniors' Advocate Act* to build a more accessible, transparent and accountable approach to seniors' care. The advocate will monitor seniors' services, promote awareness, work collaboratively with seniors, families, policymakers, service providers and others to identify solutions to systemic issues, and make recommendations to government to improve the welfare of seniors.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/02/bc-introduces-legislation-for-a-seniors-advocate.html>

THRONE SPEECH

In addition to committing the government to a path of economic growth, the Throne Speech also outlined the government's plan to establish the British Columbia Prosperity Fund from revenues generated by exporting natural gas to Asian markets. The revenues generated would be directed to eliminate provincial debt and to support additional measures



to improve social services and make life more affordable for families. The speech also outlined social policy-related initiatives:

- measures to support families:
 - improving access to quality early childhood services
 - improving access and affordability of child care
 - measures to help families of young children save for post-secondary education
- legislation to establish a seniors' advocate and a plan to address elder abuse
- improvements for patients in rural and urban areas as well as improvements to primary health care
- the development of a school of traditional Chinese medicine at a post-secondary institution in BC.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/02/throne-speech-focuses-on-securing-jobs-and-opportunities.html>

Yukon Territory

HEALTH

A \$250,000 annual investment into active living programs will boost physical activity levels, help combat rising rates of childhood obesity, promote active living and support a variety of programs for individuals, schools, and workplaces. Renewed Yukon Active Living Strategy (RYALS) is one of the government's healthy living initiatives. Along with the Social Inclusion and Poverty Reduction Strategy and the Pathways to Wellness initiative, these three programs share resources to increase access to sport and recreation, healthy living, healthy eating and a higher quality of life.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-033.html>

A February 26 Auditor General's report concluded that the Yukon Hospital Corporation did not fully assess the health care needs in Dawson City and Watson Lake before undertaking work to replace the existing health facilities in those two communities. In response, the Health and Social Services department will work with the Yukon Hospital Corporation and other stakeholders to develop an integrated health facility program and services model. This model will enable the design of health and social programs and services to creatively and effectively meet community-specific needs.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-039.html>

Northwest Territories

BUDGET

The 2013-14 Budget describes a four-year plan focused on fiscal discipline in managing the growth in operating expenditures to build cash reserves for an enhanced infrastructure budget.

The 2013-14 Budget proposes to invest \$22 million in priority initiatives. Social policy-related expenditures include \$3.3 million for strategic initiatives that support prevention and well-being of individuals, families and communities:

- \$1.15 million for mental health and addictions prevention and awareness initiatives, focusing on youth, on-the-land programs, and improvements in case management and services for people dealing with mental health issues
- \$449,000 to begin expansion of the Midwifery Program
- \$1.13 million to increase staffing levels at long-term care facilities
- \$247,000 for additional RCMP resources and victim services programming in Tulita to help frontline staff respond to additional demands.

More Budget details can be found at:

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013-14-Budget-Highlights.pdf>

FAMILIES

Announcement of We'eahkaa (A New Day), a voluntary healing program in Yellowknife for men who use violence against their intimate partners.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/weeahkaa-a-new-day-mens-healing-program/>

GOVERNANCE

Municipal and Community Affairs developed an Accountability Framework that supports the goal of a strong North built on partnerships. Based on five core areas of community government – good governance, financial management, sound administration, planning, and safe communities – it sets expectations for the monitoring, engagement and support the territorial government will provide to community governments.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/accountability-framework-for-community-governments/>

SENIORS

NWT Housing Corporation will build four seniors facilities in four communities and renovate a fifth. The new facilities will contain eight independent housing units, space for the delivery of home care and other services, and a place for residents and other seniors in the community to gather and to undertake additional programming.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/supported-housing-for-seniors/>

Nunavut

No updates this month.