




Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

March 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

BUDGET

Social policy-related highlights:

Seniors

\$92.3 million for long-term care and community support services to help seniors and persons with disabilities achieve optimal independence and quality of life in their home and communities. (Paid Family Caregiver Option, Home Support Program, Community Rapid Response Teams, Enhanced Care in Personal Care Homes Pilot Project, Personal Care Home program and others.)

Details: <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2013/health/0326n16.htm>

Health care

- \$227 million investment over the next three years to advance construction of a new regional acute care health facility in Corner Brook
- reorganization of cancer screening programs
- funding to increase access to health services and treatments, and to undertake clinical efficiency and management reviews

Poverty reduction

\$149 million for continuing initiatives including:

- \$6.5 million for board and lodging supplements for adults with disabilities who live with family
- \$4.8 million for Newfoundland and Labrador Housing's Supportive Living Program to advance the work of community partners and stakeholders
- \$1.2 million to enhance health benefits for income support recipients
- \$1.1 million for the Kids Eat Smart Foundation.

Support for women

Violence and sexual assault prevention initiatives,

Details: <http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2013/ma/0326n18.htm>

Education

- \$840.6 million for early childhood learning and K-12 education, focusing on early learning opportunities, supporting students in the classroom, and ensuring a low pupil-teacher ratio
- \$466 million to enhance skills and training at the postsecondary level
- \$5.2 million to support apprenticeship and trades

Children and youth in care

\$185.3 million for the Department of Child, Youth and Family Services. Key investments include: child care through the 10-Year Child Care Strategy; child protection through the continuum of care strategy; youth services with the expansion of the Supporting Youth with Transitions pilot program; staffing with the hiring of four new frontline positions; and continued support to place social worker students with the department.



Budget highlight document: http://www.budget.gov.nl.ca/budget2013/highlights/five_things_budget2013.pdf

THRONE SPEECH

The 2013 Speech from the Throne was prefaced with two cautions: while the province's primary source of new revenue is oil, this nonrenewable resource is subject to large and unpredictable price fluctuations on the world market and the province's public sector costs are greater than the economy can sustain. The speech reviewed the government's priority areas, including families, education and crime reduction. Actions include an investment in a new regional acute care health facility in Corner Brook and a new task force of the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary and RCMP to investigate organized and serious crimes, such as illegal drug activity and child exploitation.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2013/exec/0325n04.htm>

New Brunswick

BUDGET

For 2013-14, the province is projecting a total deficit of \$478.7 million. Excluding an unusual one-time pension expense of \$110 million, an operational deficit of \$368.7 million is projected. Even with the new measures in this budget, revenues are expected to increase by only 1.8 percent in 2013-14 over 2012-13 third-quarter estimates to \$7.994 billion. At the same time, expense pressures continued to increase over the past year. The province will address the shortfall through \$230 million in spending efficiencies in the Departments of Health, Education and Early Childhood Development, Social Development, and Transportation and Infrastructure.

Effective July 1, 2013, personal income tax rates will be returned to the rates that applied in 2006. While these rates are higher than those that are currently in place, the 2006 personal income tax rates are significantly lower than the rates that were in effect for 2007 and 2008. Reverting to the 2006 rates will mean the largest percentage increases for people in the top two income brackets making \$77,900 to \$126,662 and over. Effective July 1, 2013, the general corporate income tax rate will also be increased from 10 to 12 percent to ensure businesses also contribute to addressing the province's fiscal challenges.

New investments totalling \$70 million will be made. Social policy related investments include:

- increases for a number of poverty reduction initiatives including social assistance rate increases and improvements
- additional funding for special care homes, specialized care beds, and community residences and funding for the nursing home renovation and replacement plan
- the continued roll-out of the diabetes and mental health strategies

- increased funding for early childhood development.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.03.0255.html

CHILDREN

Introduction of a Healthy Toddler Assessment for 18-month-old children by public health nurses. It will allow earlier detection of health concerns and will eventually replace the 3.5-Year-Old Health Clinic. The Assessment includes questions related to children's teeth, vision, hearing, safety, child development, growth, nutrition and immunizations. Public health nurses will also address literacy and depression with parents. Parents will receive the fourth Loving Care book, entitled 1-3 years. The first three books are provided to parents in the hospital following the birth of their child. The Loving Care books capture infant developmental stages and provide parents with information to support them in their parenting. http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.03.0206.html

Nova Scotia

COMMUNITY

Grants totalling \$918,655 for 28 community groups across Nova Scotia for Nova Scotia Moves Sustainable Transportation Program projects. Funding will support projects ranging from new bike paths and walking trails to collective approaches to public transit for more rural communities.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130326003>

FAMILIES

The province is expanding its SchoolsPlus services and after-school programs to more schools. The province has also committed to hiring mental health clinicians to work alongside guidance counsellors in SchoolsPlus schools. A part-time clinician is now available to students at Pomquet and Beau-Port. SchoolsPlus is delivered in 95 schools across the province and will expand further in 2013-14.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130304003>

HEALTH

As part of Speak Up, the government's action plan to address bullying and cyberbullying behaviour, the province is providing a training program for educators to learn how to recognize mental health issues. Dr. Stan Kutcher, Sun Life Financial Chair in Adolescent Mental Health, Dalhousie University and the IWK Health Centre in Halifax, and director World Health Organization Collaborating Centre, Dalhousie University has developed a "Go To" training module for educators. About 65 guidance counsellors, school psychologists, mental health clinicians, SchoolsPlus staff, and social workers will be trained with the Go To method. Using a train-the-trainer model, participants will teach others in schools across



the province. The goal is to have five trainers in each school board and two Go-To educators in every school.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130306001>

The province continues its efforts to educate Nova Scotians about the effects of cyberbullying by introducing a new information sheet about responsible cellphone use (“Unlike Cyberbullying: Be A Responsible Digital Citizen”), part of Speak Up, An Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying Behaviour. See www.ednet.ns.ca or www.unlikecyberbullying.ca

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130327003>

\$1 million from the community grant portion of the province’s mental health and addictions strategy were distributed among 23 organizations.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130314001>

INCOME SECURITY

Changes introduced to the Labour Standards Code to protect jobs for parents and guardians, who are now entitled to Employment Insurance benefits or unpaid leave when their child is in crisis.

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130327010>

THRONE SPEECH

The province is facing economic opportunities with shipbuilding contracts, Muskrat Falls and the Maritime Link, new high-tech jobs, renewed offshore exploration and a revitalized forest industry. jobsHere, the province’s plan to create good jobs and grow the economy focuses on innovation, competitiveness and learning. Social policy-related themes:

- a renewed focus on children and youth, including the creation of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
- first ever housing and sustainable transportation strategies
- improved awareness of the health benefits of buying locally-produced foods (Buy Local)

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20130326008>

Prince Edward Island

BUDGET

The province will continue its plan to modernize health care services, build a more effective education system, and grow its economy. Social policy-related Budget highlights include:

- improved access to timely health care through the introduction of an 8-1-1 service. The Budget includes \$200,000 to cover operating costs this year
- \$1.5 million investment to expand home and long-term care services
- an additional \$60,000 for the Best Start Program to expand service to include children up to 36 months of age, an improvement over the

current 24 months

- \$250,000 increase in funding to Early Years Centres.

http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/fema_budget13.pdf

HEALTH

The roles of community hospitals will be refocused, increases will be made to the Island’s emergency vehicle fleet, the first Collaborative Emergency Centre will be established at Western Hospital and a new 811-Telehealth system will be implemented province wide.

<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=8885&dept=&lang=E>

Québec

COMMUNITY

Introduction of a bill aimed at optimizing the contribution of social economy sector. The law will provide a place for ongoing dialogue between the government and the social economy sector in order to continue the implementation of new policies. There are 7,000 social economy enterprises in Quebec. They employ more than 125,000 people and generate a collective benefit that exceeds \$17 billion.

[Link](#)

EDUCATION

The government introduced legislation to begin the gradual establishment of a voluntary 4-year-old kindergarten program for families in underprivileged areas. Beginning in 2013-14, all school boards serving disadvantaged areas will offer placement to a group of 18 children. The first year of the program will serve and estimated 1,200 children at a cost of \$8.1 million. In future, the government anticipates enrolling 8,000 children and will ensure that more teachers are trained to meet the demand.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

Federal, provincial and City of Montreal community partners will provide troubled teens ages 12 to 17 access to a 6-bedroom shelter and five affordable housing units. En Marge 12-17 required an investment of \$2.3 million.

[Link](#)

Two projects announced through the ongoing partnership between the Ministry of Health and Social Services and Pfizer Canada. Of the \$5 million total project fund, \$624,972 over two years will go to V1SAGES, a project aimed at implementing and evaluating a primary-care case-management and self-management intervention for vulnerable chronic disease patients. \$621,250 will go to an integrated, primary care chronic pain prevention and management network.

[Link](#)



Ontario

CAREGIVING

Introduction of *Employment Standards Amendment Act (Leaves to Help Families)*, 2013. If passed, it will build on existing Family Medical Leave legislation and create three new job-protected leaves:

- Family Caregiver Leave: up to 8 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for employees to provide care and support to a family member with a serious medical condition
- Critically Ill Child Care Leave: up to 37 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to provide care to a critically ill child
- Crime-Related Child Death and Disappearance Leave: up to 52 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for parents of a missing child and up to 104 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for parents of a child that has died as a result of a crime.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2013/03/helping-families-care-for-sick-loved-ones-1.html>

HEALTH

The province is investing \$100 million over five years to support patient-focused neuroscience research. The funding will help the Ontario Brain Institute expand its research into the areas of neurodegeneration, such as Alzheimer's disease and depression, and continue its research on cerebral palsy, autism and epilepsy. It will also allow the institute to leverage additional investments from various partners including industry, philanthropic, federal and international sources.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2013/03/ontario-leading-brain-research.html>

As part of the Ontario Mental Health and Addictions Strategy, ten projects for postsecondary students have been launched through the first round of the Mental Health Innovation Fund. Included is a province-wide, 24-hour-a-day, 365 days-a-year helpline. Kids Help Phone is working with postsecondary institutions on the service, which is expected to be in place within the next year. The ministry will begin accepting proposals from colleges and universities for the second round of the fund later in 2013.

The province is investing \$27 million over three years to provide improved mental health services for postsecondary students.

<http://news.ontario.ca/tcu/en/2013/03/more-mental-health-support-for-college-and-university-students-1.html>

YOUTH

The government has created the first-ever Premier's Council on Youth Opportunities. The advisory council will engage with youth, young professionals and community partners to ensure that young people across the province have the tools they need to help them succeed. Twenty-five young people from a variety of cultures, communities and backgrounds

will be part of the council. They will provide advice on how to improve the delivery and design of government programs and services for youth, report on specific challenges and share ideas on how to best support youth.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2013/03/first-ever-premiers-council-on-youth-opportunities.html>

Manitoba

COMMUNITY

Building Communities Initiative II (BCI II) will fund 34 new community improvement projects. The goal of BCI II is to support community revitalization through improvements to local community infrastructure in targeted older neighbourhoods and contribute to the vitality, safety and health of communities throughout the City of Winnipeg. The province and city will contribute a total of \$7.6 million in funding toward BCI II Phase Two. Additional projects will be approved in the coming months to bring the funding total for this second phase to \$10 million.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=16994>

Official launch of the province's After School Network – 49 organizations that offer after-school programming to the province's children and young people. The government has invested \$12 million to help network organizations deliver programming and is funding a coordinator to establish, coordinate and provide ongoing support for the network.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=17014>

EDUCATION

\$116,000 in 2013-14 for Safe Schools Manitoba, a partnership initiative that works to enhance the safety of Manitoba's school communities. Safe Schools Manitoba partners with the Manitoba Association of Parent Councils to support parents and communities in accessing resources, solving problems or getting help for their children. The province has produced new parent-friendly brochures and fact sheets, and an online website at www.manitoba.ca/stopbullying.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=16995>

RECREATION

Striving to make communities safer, the government is providing young people with more sports and recreation opportunities through the Sport Opportunities Program. Community-based sport and recreation organizations can apply for two levels of grants:

- up to \$10,000 for permanent equipment such as volleyball standards, goal frames and athletic field line painters
- up to \$2,500 for equipment with a shorter life span such as volleyballs, pucks and uniforms.

More than \$500,000 will be awarded.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=17108>



Saskatchewan

BUDGET HIGHLIGHTS

Revenue is projected at \$11.61 billion; expense is estimated to be \$11.54 billion. The province's capital budget includes key investments in schools, health care facilities including hospitals and long-term care facilities, postsecondary institutions, roads, highways and municipal infrastructure.

Social policy-related highlights include:

- increasing support benefits for low-income seniors under the Seniors Income Plan and for persons with disabilities under the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program
- doubling capital funding for paratransit buses and increasing transit assistance for persons with disabilities
- addressing domestic violence by increasing funding for women's shelters, expanding facilities in Regina and Prince Albert and opening a new transition house in Melfort
- \$29.0 million to address health care demographic volume pressures from population growth
- \$4.3 million to establish Collaborative Emergency Centres and improvements to primary health care
- \$2.0 million for an innovative home care services pilot for seniors in Regina
- \$9.2 million for the third year of the federal/provincial Affordable Housing Agreement, to be used for new affordable housing, home renovations, home adaptations, and rental and housing supplements
- \$17.0 million increase to support forecasted school enrolment increases
- \$20.2 million supporting 15 new PreK programs, for a total of 301 programs
- \$184.8 million (an increase of \$10.8 million) in targeted funding for initiatives that will benefit First Nations and Métis people, including \$3.0 million directed specifically to address future recommendations of the Joint Task Force on Improving Education and Employment outcomes.

<http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2013-14/2013-14BudgetSummary.pdf>

Alberta

BUDGET

The Budget names vulnerable Albertans, including children-at-risk, adults with disabilities and the homeless, as its principal focus.

Human Services highlights:

Operational funding for the Ministry of Human Services will be nearly \$4.3 billion in 2013-14.

- AISH (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped) benefits are maintained, with a 4.4 percent increase in program funding to address caseload growth
- the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program will receive a \$5.5 million increase as part of a transition to a new service delivery system. Work will continue with families and community partners on a funding model based on assessed needs that achieves positive outcomes.
- Child Intervention will see an increase of nearly \$16 million, including a \$7 million increase for foster care support that will fund more than 5,400 foster child placements
- child care subsidies for lower-income families will be maintained with a \$6.7 million increase, as will family support for children with disabilities with a \$6 million increase reflecting caseload growth
- funding for homelessness support is \$111 million, an increase of \$1.2 million, which will help house about 1,800 homeless Albertans this year, and fund more than 3,200 spaces in emergency and transition shelters
- initiatives for early intervention and fetal alcohol spectrum disorder will receive \$89 million
- Budget 2013 provides an additional \$67.7 million in ongoing funding to contracted agencies to attract and retain qualified staff. As part of this strategy, funding will be provided to support salary increases for contracted agency workers. Human Services also anticipates savings through the use of generic drugs related to the health benefits portion of income supports and the AISH program.

The combined budget for employment training, income supports and health benefits for unemployed and underemployed Albertans will drop to \$883 million from \$981 million, reflecting Alberta's track record in economic growth, job creation and employment. Access to support for long-term career counseling to help meet future labour market needs will continue to be offered. The Student Temporary Employment Program, which received approximately \$7 million in Budget 2012, has been suspended.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=-3378146C3AE83-AAC1-3C9B-AE8EC91C1D382CBA>

Health highlights:

\$17.1 billion budget in 2013-14, an increase of three percent (but lower than the health spending growth rate of nine percent annually over the last 10 years). The Health budget will rise to 45 percent of Government of Alberta operational spending in 2013-14.



- Alberta Health Services will receive \$10.5 billion in base operating funding for front-line health services, a \$307 million or three percent increase, plus \$393 million for operating costs of new health facilities
- improved access to primary health care will be achieved through a \$262 million investment in Primary Care Networks, Family Care Clinics, and addiction and mental health services
- a PharmaCare program will be implemented on January 1, 2014. Currently 20 percent of Albertans have no drug coverage.
- diabetes care will be enhanced through a new Insulin Pump Therapy program starting in late spring for Albertans with Type 1 diabetes
- an early childhood development investment of \$8 million will include a new Universal Newborn Hearing Screening program aimed at reducing rates of low birth weight infants, improving maternal mental health and encouraging breastfeeding
- a new Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program will be implemented for all eligible seniors who own homes, including those most in need, so they can defer taxes until they sell their homes. Income testing for the current Seniors School Property Tax Assistance program will take place in 2013 to ensure seniors most in need will continue receiving assistance before the program ends in 2014. With the establishment of the Seniors Property Tax Deferral Program, the Seniors School Property Tax Assistance Program will be eliminated.

<http://alberta.ca/acn/201303/3377946A8CD70-C069-7894-1D9786D5EBBD7C8E.html>

Community highlight:

Over the next three years, the province will encourage municipal collaboration and make better use of existing resources and P3 opportunities to invest in affordable housing.

<http://www.finance.alberta.ca/publications/Budget/budget2013/index.html>

Education highlight:

Increased support to postsecondary students through a 21 percent increase in money available for student loans, \$250,000 to the provincial scholarship program and a new grant for low-income students.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=3378046B3A890-A09D-D222-DB9B59897D97B1AF>

COMMUNITY

The province's eight Métis communities will have the resources to build stronger and self-sustaining communities, through long-term arrangements signed between the Alberta government and the Métis Settlements General Council. The Long-Term Arrangements provide an \$85 million commitment over ten years to strengthen the settlements' local governments and accountability; increase education, employment

and economic opportunities; and improve infrastructure and essential services.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=338045F-656B2E-F3C3-D688-1843BE7053AE4D82>

DISABILITY

The province is transitioning 125 adults with developmental disabilities into community homes from the Michener Centre, an institutional facility for people with developmental disabilities located in Red Deer. The closure follows the transition of people with developmental disabilities into community settings from Youngstown Home in 2011, and Edmonton's Eric Cormack Centre in late 2012.

<http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/PDD/pdd-central-business-plan-update-2012-15-q4.pdf>

GOVERNANCE

Passage of Bill 12, *The Fiscal Management Act*, which renews the province's fiscal framework and creates the requirement for an operational plan, a savings plan and a capital plan. It legislates a balanced operational budget and retains legislated limits on in-year spending increases. Bill 12 also sets limits on borrowing for infrastructure.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=337774697B3F2-C122-077C-1B10DED443BF0F35>

SENIORS

Continuing care residents will receive a minimum of two baths a week, as part of a new standard.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=337703BEB8856-E304-BA0B-ED549DB1A5D5405C>

British Columbia

COMMUNITY

\$200,000 will be distributed by the BC Healthy Communities Society to encourage health community development. Eligible local governments can apply up to a total maximum of \$5,000 to host or participate in forums, workshops, dialogues and other learning events. Planning can take place in such areas as physical activity, healthy eating, tobacco reduction, healthy-built environments and local priority populations.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/200000-to-help-local-governments-develop-healthy-communities.html>

DISABILITY

The province is simplifying the Persons with Disabilities (PWD) designation process for youth with developmental disabilities who are eligible for disability assistance and Community Living BC supports. Effective July 2013, youth with developmental disabilities who are eligible for disability assistance, along with their family, will be able to use an existing psychologist assessment by a registered psychologist or certified school psychologist instead of filling out the PWD form to apply for designation.



About 600 youth require access to disability assistance each year and will benefit from these changes.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/youth-transition-to-disability-assistance-simplified.html>

The province announced several funding and program initiatives to celebrate the third anniversary of Canada's ratification of the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*:

- \$2 million in new funding has been approved for the Vancouver Foundation's Giving in Action Society. This funding will provide one-time grants to families who have children or adults with developmental disabilities to help pay for home renovations, vehicle modifications and other accommodations to address accessibility issues.
- to support people with developmental disabilities who want to work in their communities, Community Living British Columbia is launching a three-year Community Action Employment Plan. In conjunction with the Employment Program of BC, this plan will work with employers to increase job opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities. This work also supports the 12-point plan for improving services to people with developmental disabilities.
- to ensure a one-government approach to providing services and supports, the province's Cross-Ministry Disability Strategy Reference Group, composed of 18 assistant deputy ministers, explores ways that the many ministries and government agencies can better collaborate in supporting accessible, inclusive communities for people with disabilities.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/bc-is-embracing-ability-en-couraging-inclusion.html>

On September 1, 2013, families with children ages 12 to 18 who are eligible for, or are receiving, autism funding will be able to choose to receive funds through either invoice payment or direct payment. This will give families greater ability to purchase eligible services – such as those focusing on community-based inclusion and recreational skills – to meet the needs of older children and youth, and promote successful transitions to adulthood. Families that choose this option will receive a maximum of \$6,000 at the start of their funding period. They will then be responsible for obtaining eligible autism intervention services and directly paying providers for those services.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/new-funding-option-supports-transitions-to-adulthood.html>

Effective 2014 several provisions of the *Adult Guardianship and Planning Statutes Amendment Act, 2007*, will be brought into force as part of a phased approach to reforming adult guardianship. The Act will strengthen the rights of vulnerable adults by enshrining in law the process for

how incapability is determined and how the public guardian and trustee is appointed to manage an incapable adult's property.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/new-rules-enhance-rights-of-vulnerable-adults.html>

As of September 2013, youth with developmental disabilities will have increased support and advocacy during their transition to Community Living BC's (CLBC) adult services, as the government moves to broaden the Representative for Children and Youth mandate. Up until their 24th birthday, young adults with developmental disabilities who are seeking CLBC services or programs will benefit from the advocacy efforts of the Representative as they make the change from child services to adult services.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/changes-support-vulnerable-youth-transition-to-clbc.html>

EDUCATION

\$1 million to Decoda Literacy Solutions to support the organization's literacy outreach programs in communities throughout BC. The \$1 million brings total grant funding to Decoda to \$2.5 million from the Ministry of Education in 2012-13. This includes \$500,000 provided in September for the Raise-A-Reader campaign.

The funds will be used to further support 102 community literacy task groups in BC, many of which provide employment readiness programs and essential job skills training.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/government-provides-1-million-for-literacy-outreach.html>

HEALTH

Ministry of Children and Family Development Services (MCFD) is developing a two-year action plan to strengthen its Children and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) services. This includes collaborating with stakeholders in Aboriginal communities to improve Aboriginal CYMH services. Key priorities of the action plan over the next six months include:

- improving access to community-based child and youth mental health services and managing waitlists
- increasing support for families navigating the system
- ensuring MCFD and the Ministry of Health have a consistent approach as children move between community mental health services and hospitals, and youth who transition to adult mental health services.

MCFD spends approximately \$94 million annually to address child and youth mental health and substance use challenges in B.C.

- Three-quarters of that funding (\$70 million) is spent on community-based mental health services; the remainder is spent on specialized services, including the Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre, mental



health services for youth involved in the justice system, either in the community or in custody, and substance abuse treatment in the youth justice system.

- Currently, more than 20,000 children and youth receive community mental health services annually – more than double the number that received services in 2003.
- These services are provided by about 500 mental health practitioners employed by the ministry and through contracts with approximately 130 agencies.
- Children and youth with mental health challenges can be referred to CYMH services by their parent or a professional involved with the family, such as a physician or social worker. A list of offices where child and youth mental health services are offered can be found at: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/pdf/offices_services.pdf

http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/

Regional health authorities will receive up to \$50 million annually over the next three years for targeted primary and community care programs to better support patients and their families. The community-based programs will be tailored to local needs, with a focus on enhancing supports available for patients with complex chronic conditions, those with mental health and substance use challenges, and seniors with complex care needs. One example is the Home is Best program, which aims to help seniors who otherwise would need residential care, live safely at home and avoid future hospital emergency admissions.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/bc-continues-to-expand-primary-and-community-care.html>

The Shopping Sense tool – found at www.shoppingensebc.ca – is a new addition to the Healthy Families BC website. The site provides an experience that mirrors an in-store, dietitian-led tour, helping families plan meals, prepare budgets and develop safe food handling practices.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/new-virtual-grocery-store-helps-families-make-healthier-choices.html>

A partnership has created a local mental health supported employment program that is helping people who are recovering from mental illness to gain the support and confidence needed to work again. The supported employment program at the Willow Bean Café in Vancouver General Hospital is a partnership between Vancouver Coastal Health, the Canadian Mental Health Association, Vancouver – Burnaby Branch and Sodexo Canada, a food and facilities management company. This program allows employees to learn valuable social and employment skills, while continuing to be able to access mental health supports and receive a regular paycheque.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/new-caf-aims-to-brew-up-awareness-about-mental-health.html>

HOUSING

The province announced \$400,000 in annual funding to the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness to help people who are homeless find and maintain stable, affordable housing. The funding will be used to provide rent supplements for up to 103 individuals each year through the Streets to Homes (S2H) Program. Using a “housing first” approach, S2H works with people who have barriers such as poverty, mental health, and/or substance use challenges, secure private market housing obtained through a comprehensive landlord support system. S2H provides the rent subsidy as well as case planning and supports to help participants remain housed and become self-sufficient. The expanded support will be in place until April 1, 2015.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/province-expands-support-to-streets-to-homes.html>

SENIORS

Investing close to \$1 million, the province launched a strategy outlining short- and long-term measures to prevent, recognize and respond to elder abuse. Actions include:

- expanding the Seniors Abuse and Information Line
- providing information kits to citizens, service providers and community groups
- establishing and supporting a multi-sector Council to Reduce Elder Abuse
- reviewing process and staff training for informed consent to care
- supporting training and awareness-building initiatives for health professionals and others.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/bc-launches-elder-abuse-prevention-strategy.html>

\$2 million to continue to support and expand the First Link program operated by the Alzheimer Society of BC that provides services to individuals and families affected by Alzheimer’s disease or related dementia.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/bc-provides-2-million-to-support-people-with-dementia.html>

Release of The Provincial End-of-Life Care Action Plan for British Columbia to improve access to end-of-life care so people can remain at home and in their community longer. Actions can be summarized in three areas:

- Health care services redesigned to deliver timely coordinated end-of-life care. Actions include expanding telehealth and telemonitoring and improving the capacity to provide end-of-life care in residential care facilities and other housing and care settings.
- Individuals, caregivers and health-care providers given palliative care



information, education, tools and resources. Actions include increasing public awareness of palliative care as an approach to care at any stage of a serious illness, translating advance care planning materials into Punjabi and Chinese and supporting end-of-life care education for family doctors, specialists and other health care professionals.

- Health system accountability and efficiency strengthened. Actions include implementing provincial end-of-life care clinical guidelines, protocols and standards as well as providing equitable access to the BC palliative care benefits program.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/action-plan-centre-for-excellence-hospice-funding-to-support-end-of-life-care.html>

Better at Home, a key component of BC's Seniors Action Plan commits to ensuring improved access to non-medical supports to help seniors remain in their own homes. The program is funded through a \$15-million investment from the government of and is managed by United Way of the Lower Mainland. Services and service providers are selected through a community engagement process that includes seniors. Services include, friendly visits, light yard work, minor home repair, transportation to appointments, snow shoveling, light housekeeping and grocery shopping. <http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/03/program-helping-more-seniors-to-be-better-at-home.html>

Yukon Territory

EDUCATION

Tabling of an *Act to Amend the Education Act*. The amendments will increase the number of hours students are in class and the number of professional development hours for teachers, as well as enable school council elections to be held in the spring. The proposed increase of 15 hours of instructional time per year would result in students receiving 950 hours of instructional time annually.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-069.html>

HOUSING

Introduction of a new Down Payment Assistance Program to make it easier for residents to buy their first home and create more movement in the rental market. The program is intended to assist households that may be eligible for bank financing but have not accumulated a sufficient down payment for a home, condominium or townhouse. Assistance is provided in the form of a deferred loan and registered on title as a second mortgage.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-045.html>

INCOME SECURITY

Amendments to the *Employment Standards Act* will help parents caring for a critically ill child, or whose child is missing or has died due to a crime.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-073.html>

WOMEN

Yukon Aboriginal women's organizations will receive \$450,000 over three years in support of furthering equality.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-061.html>

YOUTH

\$100,000 from the Youth Investment Fund in 2013-14 for short-term, community-driven initiatives that address the needs and interests of youth under 19. Community groups can apply for up to \$5,000 twice a year.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-055.html>

Northwest Territories

GOVERNANCE

The Territory announced the conclusion of devolution negotiations between its governments – the Government of the Northwest Territories, the Northwest Territory Métis Nation, the Inuvialuit Regional Corporation, the Sahtu Secretariat Incorporated, the Gwich'in Tribal Council, the Tlicho Government – and the Government of Canada.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/announcement-of-devolution-agreement/>

HOUSING

In 2013, the Small Communities Homelessness Fund and the Homelessness Assistance Fund were transferred to the NWT Housing Corporation from Health and Social Services. The transfer included \$325,000 in funding.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/homelessness-and-transitional-housing/>

INCOME SECURITY

In anticipation of an Auditor General's report, the Department of Education, Culture and Employment has initiated changes to several income security programs. The Child Care User Subsidy program will be included as an enhanced benefit under the Income Assistance program. The Department has increased child care rates, introduced shorter payment wait times and is supporting part-time day care. It has also made the program more flexible for clients who work more than the standard work week.

In December 2012, the Department set up a new exemption for clients who receive Impact Benefit Agreement, Treaty and Land Claims payments, up to \$500 per household, over and above the annual \$1,200 exemption. Neither of these exemptions affects clients' benefit levels. The change recognizes that these monies should benefit clients affected by development and not penalize those at a lower income level. A partnership with the Department of Justice will allow fully eligible clients to pay for criminal record suspensions as an Income Assistance Benefit. It is anticipated that this partnership will assist clients in attaining employment.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/income-assistance-program-updates/>



Nunavut

GOVERNANCE

As part of a nine-month government services restructuring, effective April 1, 2013, the new Department of Family Services will commence operations.

<http://www.news.gov.nu.ca/2013/march/2013-03%20NR20%20-%20Department%20of%20Family%20Services%20Created%20-ENG.pdf>