



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

November 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

COMMUNITY

The province contracted an educational consulting company to customize eight courses specific to the work and needs of the volunteer and non-profit sector. Courses will be delivered free of charge through the SmartForce NL platform, an initiative launched in 2011 among the Department of Advanced Education and Skills, Newfoundland and Labrador Association of Technology Industries and Bluedrop Performance Learning. Since 2011, the Provincial Government has invested more than \$2.7 million in training resources as part of SmartForce NL.

<http://www.releases.gov.nl.ca/releases/2013/exec/1115n03.htm>

New Brunswick

EMPLOYMENT

Announcement of four new apprenticeship incentive programs:

- New Brunswick employers who hire apprentices registered under the *Apprenticeship and Occupational Certification Act* may be eligible for a \$1,000 taxable cash grant. It is available to the employer once an apprentice successfully completes a block of training. Employers of females and/or aboriginal apprentices may be eligible for an increased grant of \$1,500 per block
- a tuition rebate of \$85 per week (an average of \$600 per block) will be available to registered apprentices once they have completed a level of block training
- the Out-of-province Apprenticeship Strategy is designed to help apprentices working outside of New Brunswick by enabling them to (a) register in a NB apprenticeship program and work out-of-province for an out-of-province employer, (b) accumulate working hours while out-of-province, which will be credited towards the required hours for completion, and (c) attend technical training in NB
- the Provincial Government Hiring Apprenticeship Initiative is aimed at increasing opportunities for apprentices to work in provincial government departments and agencies.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.11.1214.html

THRONE SPEECH

Social policy-related highlights include:

Health

- a prescription drug plan, expected to be in place by summer 2014
- a renewed wellness strategy will be introduced in 2014

Seniors

- acting on the Premier's Panel on Seniors, Living Healthy, Aging Well, the province will implement initiatives to create supportive environments for healthy aging



- a comprehensive Home First Strategy will serve as a cornerstone of an integrated provincial system of health care and long-term care
- the province will release an evaluation of the 3.5 Hours of Care in Nursing Homes pilot project

Income security

- public pension reform, adopting the shared risk model announced last year
- by April 2014, eligible social assistance clients will receive a seven percent increase in their monthly financial assistance

Children

- anti-bullying standards in schools will be strengthened
- legislation will be introduced to provide early prevention as well as intervention services and supports for children and youth with multiple needs, and the Community-based Services for Children with Special Needs Program will be modernized
- amendments to the Early Childhood Services Act will be proclaimed, making New Brunswick the first province to streamline authority on all aspects of early childhood into one act

Aboriginal peoples

- collaboration with First Nations to improve economic, educational, training and social improvement opportunities for aboriginal peoples

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.11.1123.html

SENIORS

Senior wellness clinics will be held in 12 regions through a partnership between the provincial government and Go Ahead Seniors Inc. Kiosks set up by health and wellness professionals will offer blood pressure monitoring, glucose and cholesterol testing; information on health-related topics and aging; and resources that help protect seniors from abuse and fraud.

http://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/news/news_release.2013.11.1151.html

Nova Scotia

THRONE SPEECH

Social policy-related elements include:

Education

- a comprehensive curriculum review, the first in 25 years, will see the restoration of funding and investment in areas that will benefit the greatest number of children

Health care

- community-based care will be improved by streamlining administration and investing in front-line health care. A physician recruitment and retention action team will be appointed to competitively recruit new

doctors and retain those in place

Community

- a review of the province's Continuing Care Strategy to ensure it meets the long-term needs of seniors, at home and in facilities
- a multi-year strategy focusing on prevention and services to sexual assault victims
- the province will work with Nova Scotians to develop the province's first culture strategy

<http://novascotia.ca/news/release/?id=20131128004>

Prince Edward Island

THRONE SPEECH

Social policy-related highlights include:

- plans to introduce a new Prince Edward Island Home Renovation Program
- social assistance clients will receive a three percent increase in shelter rates, and food rates for single persons will rise by five percent
- a commitment to achieve greater representation by women on all provincial boards and commissions, reaching parity within five years
- plans to introduce amendments the Workers Compensation Act, the Drug Cost Assistance Act, the Mental Health Act and public pensions legislation.

Full speech text: http://www.gov.pe.ca/photos/original/SFT_E_2_13.pdf
<http://www.gov.pe.ca/newsroom/index.php?number=news&newsnumber=9303&dept=&lang=E>

Québec

GOVERNANCE

Introduction of Bill 60: *Charter affirming the values of secularism and religious neutrality of the state and equality between women and men and the governing accommodation requests.* The bill creates a duty of confidentiality and duty of religious neutrality for state personnel and forbids the wearing of conspicuous religious signs during working hours. Existing employees will have one year to comply with the prohibition but employees hired after passing of the legislations will not be permitted to wear conspicuous religious symbols. The bill also makes it mandatory that faces be uncovered when giving or receiving State services.

http://www.cdpcj.qc.ca/Publications/memoire-resume_PL_60_charte_val-eurs_EN.pdf

Ontario

GOVERNANCE

The province introduced a three-part plan aimed at strengthening public services and encouraging economic growth and job creation. In addition



to previously announced social policy-related measures (e.g., an Ontario-led drive to encourage the federal government to increase CPP rates; investment in the Youth Jobs Strategy), the government announced a grant program solely dedicated to seniors, which will help older Ontarians remain active, healthy and connected to the community.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2013/11/ontario-introduces-new-plan-to-spur-growth-create-jobs-and-strengthen-public-services.html>

HEALTH

Introduction of new legislation and proposed new regulations that would strengthen the *Smoke-Free Ontario Act* by increasing penalties for selling cigarettes to children and broaden restrictions on smoking in public areas.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mohltc/en/2013/11/government-introduces-legislation-to-protect-youth-from-harmful-effects-of-tobacco.html>

INCOME SECURITY

At the November 1 meeting of meeting among Provincial-Territorial Ministers of Finance, members discussed the retirement income system, federal changes to programs affecting provinces and territories, ongoing fiscal imbalances between governments, and the modernization of federal-provincial fiscal arrangements. All provinces and territories agreed that any CPP enhancement should:

- be responsible and fully funded and focus on today's workers
- moderate the short-term effects on businesses, families and the economy
- improve the future retirement incomes of middle-income earners
- protect lower-income workers.

Following this agreement on principles, Ontario will continue to press the federal government on enhancing the CPP for the people of Ontario.

<http://news.ontario.ca/mof/en/2013/11/statement-by-minister-of-finance-on-meeting-of-provincial-territorial-ministers-of-finance.html>

SENIORS

Announcement of a new Seniors Community Grant Program that will give seniors more opportunities to participate in their communities. The program will provide funding to not-for-profit groups for projects that encourage greater social inclusion, volunteerism and community engagement for seniors across the province. This will be the first grant program in Ontario dedicated solely to supporting seniors.

<http://news.ontario.ca/opo/en/2013/11/new-grant-program-to-help-seniors.html>

WOMEN

The Employment Training for Abused/At-Risk Women program is enabling community organizations to empower more than 640 women with critical skills training to help them find work. Women are trained in a variety of industries including hospitality, health care, skilled trades and

transportation and is offered by 10 organizations across the province, with five serving the Greater Toronto Area. Women enrolled in the program also receive support to address the impact of abuse, such as safety planning, counseling and referrals to other provincial programs and supports.

<http://news.ontario.ca/owd/en/2013/11/helping-abused-and-at-risk-women-find-jobs.html>

Manitoba

CHILDREN

The Government of Manitoba and the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation are working together to establish a million-dollar Early Childhood Development Innovation Fund, the first of its kind in Canada. In a partnership with United Way of Winnipeg, the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Council and the business community, the fund is being seeded by a \$500,000 investment from McConnell with matching funds from the province.

Initial funds are earmarked for the Winnipeg Boldness Project, which will focus on opportunities for low-income children and families in the Point Douglas community.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=19632>

COMMUNITY

Government is partnering with community groups to launch new tools and strengthen prevention strategies to help youth and families develop stronger, healthier relationships and reduce domestic violence. \$450,000 in new funding will be made available for domestic violence prevention strategies.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=19412>

Launch of "Block by Block," a community safety initiative aimed at improving neighbourhood safety by offering intensive, coordinated, community-based services to help prevent individuals and families from falling into crises and involvement with the law. Service providers in the community will assist and support individuals or families who are at acutely elevated risk of harming themselves or others and require supports beyond what one agency can provide. The province has committed \$600,000 over three years to the project which will run in a 21-block Winnipeg neighbourhood.

<http://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?archive=month&item=19457>

Saskatchewan

CHILDREN

Release of Saskatchewan's *Action Plan to Address Bullying and Cyberbullying*. Government actions will include:

- updating policies and procedures in the education sector to ensure consistency in prevention, rapid response and intervention in bullying incidents
- developing an anonymous online reporting tool for the reporting of



bullying incidents

- assessing the implications for Saskatchewan of upcoming federal cyberbullying legislation
- supporting students to develop appropriate and responsible online behaviour
- providing a stand-alone website for anti-bullying tools and resources for students, families and educators
- engaging youth in building solutions to address bullying.

<http://www.gov.sk.ca/adx/asp/adxGetMedia.aspx?mediald=584fe2-c769-4c12-a91a-fa3e49353b11&PN=Shared>

SENIORS

The *Personal Care Homes Amendment Act* received first reading in the Saskatchewan Legislature. The intent of the legislation is to improve accountability and better inform residents and families about personal care home inspection results.

<http://docs.legassembly.sk.ca/legdocs/Bills/27L3S/Bill27-111.pdf>

Amendments introduced to three Acts governing the care of vulnerable adults: *The Health Care Directives and Substitute Health Care Decision Makers Amendment Act, 2013*, *The Powers of Attorney Amendment Act, 2013* and *The Public Guardian and Trustee Amendment Act, 2013*.

<http://www.justice.gov.sk.ca/justice-annual-report-2013-14>

The province is investing \$2 million in a new Home First/Quick Response Home Care pilot project in Saskatoon, following a similar project and \$2 million investment in Regina. The Saskatoon pilot's objective is to improve access for seniors to supports in the community that will allow them to safely age in their own homes and progress with other care options as their needs change. Over the next two years, the pilot will:

- enhance and improve Home Care's response to crisis and intensive short-term service needs
- encourage early discharge from acute care to community options
- prevent unnecessary admissions to emergency departments
- engage additional service providers in the system to support seniors in their homes.

A third Home First/Quick Response pilot will be launched in Prince Albert in the coming months.

[Link](#)

Alberta

ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

A new publication will help Albertans gain basic knowledge about First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in Alberta. *Aboriginal Peoples of Alberta: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow* can be found at: <http://www.aboriginal.alberta.ca/documents/AboriginalPeoples.pdf>
<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=354049EFE094E-F095-EAD3-F059C-D5E9AB6FF35>

CHILDREN

Launch of *Healthy Parents, Healthy Children*, which offers new and expecting parents with two new books and a website with tips, tools and supports to help their children stay healthy through the early years: a period of development key to long-term health.

Program link: <http://www.healthyparentshealthychildren.ca/>

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=35315CEBB1B8F-A539-4894-48B8D33CBDFFOCA5>

DISABILITY

Introduction of Bill 41, the *Premier's Council on the Status of Persons with Disabilities Amendment Act*, will broaden the scope of the Council to give it a role in working more closely with the community and advising government on policies and issues that affect people with disabilities. Changes will include greater influence over policy and program development as well as government business planning, and a larger role in supporting the relationship between government and community service providers. Council can advise on opportunities for innovation, and focus on aligning Alberta policies and programs with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

<http://alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=35309A7215A15-B46A-06AB-9480E1EAEB759A58>

FAMILY

Release of "Family Violence Hurts Everyone: A Framework to End Family Violence in Alberta."

<http://humanservices.alberta.ca/documents/family-violence-hurts-every-one.pdf>

British Columbia

DISABILITY

Beginning January 1, 2014, patients diagnosed with rare genetic disorders, such as phenylketonuria (PKU), will receive a monthly food subsidy of up to \$250 to pay for low-protein foods. With about 209 patients being treated for metabolic disorders in BC, the total cost of this support is expected to be \$700,000 per year. With this announcement, the province joins eight other provinces in providing people with PKU financial assistance for low-protein foods.

<http://www.newsroom.gov.bc.ca/2013/11/bc-offers-food-subsidy-for-metabolic-disorder-patients.html>



Yukon Territory

INCOME SECURITY

The Territory has introduced new legislation that will institute a recalculation service to child support payments when the income of a parent changes. This service will save parents the time and cost of a court process and means that, in many cases, parents will not have to apply to court in order to update child support payments.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-277.html#.UnuhvfmgmfU>

DISABILITY

Reopening of Teegatha'Oh Zheh (TOZ), a facility that offers day programming and residential programming for adults with cognitive disabilities. Founded in 1989 by a group of parents and other interested citizens, TOZ was originally established to provide necessary supports and services for residents with intellectual challenges who were being repatriated from programs in BC and elsewhere. Health and Social Services provides \$1.6 million per year to support individuals in both day and residential programs.

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/news/13-275.html#.UnuiHvmgmfU>

Northwest Territories

YOUTH

Youth in the Northwest Territories have a new weekly 30-minute radio show to celebrate their healthy choices about drugs and alcohol.

<http://news.exec.gov.nt.ca/talking-about-addictions-another-healthy-choice/>

Nunavut

No updates this month.