



Canada Social Report
Provincial/Territorial
Policy Monitor

January 2017



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. 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 updates this month.

New Brunswick

FAMILIES

The Premier invited stakeholder groups to join a process that will support families and build a stronger, healthier province. The *New Brunswick Family Plan* will complement work already under way in the *New Brunswick Economic Growth Plan* and 10-year education plans. The government will be seeking input on the seven pillars of the *New Brunswick Family Plan*:

- improving access to primary and acute care
- promoting wellness
- supporting people with mental health challenges
- fostering healthy aging and support for seniors
- advancing women's equality
- reducing poverty
- supporting people with disabilities.

[Link](#)

MENTAL HEALTH

A \$1 million donation by Bell Let's Talk will be matched by provincial government funding in the four Atlantic provinces over a four-year period. With \$2 million in new funding, the Strongest Families Institute will expand its existing services in Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and launch its services in New Brunswick. This initiative will reach approximately 2,000 children, youth and families across the region.

[Link](#)

Nova Scotia

MINIMUM WAGE

Nova Scotia's minimum wage is increasing on April 1 by 15 cents, to \$10.85 an hour. The minimum wage for someone with less than three months' experience will also increase by 15 cents an hour, to \$10.35.

[Link](#)

Prince Edward Island

LABOUR MARKET

The province's Learning Partners Advisory Council is seeking input from residents on how to advance excellence for all learners from birth to their senior years. In 2016, council members reviewed global education and assembled a discussion paper titled *Ambition, Excellence and Prosperity*.

[Link](#)



PEI's employment assistance services are being integrated to make service more consistent, reduce duplication and improve assessment tools and access to training. The new model of service delivery was developed with 11 service providers across the province.

[Link](#)

Québec

FAMILIES

The government will allocate \$833,000 over two years to 86 municipalities and five county regional municipalities (RCMs) for the implementation of 91 projects approved under the Support for municipal family policies (PFM) program. The program assures municipalities and RCMs of financial and technical assistance in developing or updating a municipal family policy. Such policies address the needs of families in a wide variety of areas, including safety, transport, housing and culture.

To date, 804 municipalities and 35 RCMs have a municipal family policy or are in the process of developing one through this program, affecting more than 7.45 million residents, or 89.5 percent of the population.

[Link](#)

HOUSING

The federal and provincial governments announced investments of more than \$400 million over two years for affordable and social housing. These investments will fund the creation and renovation of housing for seniors and victims of family violence as well as repairs to existing social housing. Under the agreement, the federal government will contribute \$286 million and the province will commit \$121 million.

[Link](#)

MINIMUM WAGE

The Québec government announced an increase of \$0.50 for the general minimum wage rate, which will reach \$11.25 per hour as of May 1, 2017. Since 2002, the target for the minimum wage has been a ratio ranging from 0.45 to 0.47 of the average hourly wage. This ratio will gradually increase to 0.50 by 2020, resulting in a minimum wage of \$12.45 per hour.

[Link](#)

Ontario

INCOME SECURITY

Retroactive to October 1, 2016, Ontario is increasing the mileage rates for medical and business travel for people on social assistance. The new rates are:

- 41 cents per kilometre for those living in the North and Northeast Regions of Ontario
- 40 cents per kilometre for those living anywhere else in the province.

For medical travel, the new rates apply to social assistance recipients who either drive themselves to medical appointments using their own personal vehicles, or who use transportation services (to get to and from medical appointments) provided by agencies that don't set their own travel rates. This also applies to situations where family members or friends drive the recipient.

[Link](#)

POVERTY REDUCTION

The province is working with Indigenous partners across the province to support seven projects that will help people break the cycle of poverty, find good jobs and end homelessness while meeting the unique challenges and needs of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples.

[Link](#)

Manitoba

No updates this month.

Saskatchewan

HEALTH

Acting upon the recommendations of the Saskatchewan Advisory Panel on Health System Structure, the provincial government will consolidate the 12 existing Regional Health Authorities into one single Provincial Health Authority.

[Link](#)

Alberta

CHILDREN

The Ministerial Panel on Child Intervention will make recommendations to improve Alberta's child death review process, propose actions to strengthen the child intervention system and explore the systemic issues that lead to children coming into government care.

[Link](#)

SENIORS

The new Seniors Home Adaptation and Repair program helps seniors update their homes so they can maintain their independence and stay in their communities close to friends and family. The program provides low-interest home equity loans to a maximum of \$40,000 per household to seniors with a household income of \$75,000 or less. Homeowners must have at least 25 percent home equity. Low-income seniors who do not qualify under the loan program may be eligible for a grant to help pay for essential home repairs.

[Link](#)

British Columbia

CAREGIVING

The province has provided \$7.13 million to create new hospice beds in



communities around British Columbia, make improvements to current spaces and support good practice in palliative care.

[Link](#)

HEALTH

The province is investing more than \$16 million to increase addictions treatment services in the short term as part of the battle against the epidemic of illicit drug overdoses. This funding will include additional residential treatment beds, intensive outpatient services and the removal of financial barriers for opioid addiction treatment medication.

[Link](#)

LABOUR MARKET

UBC president Professor Santa Ono was appointed Chief Advisor of the Innovation Network, which is being designed to foster greater collaboration between public post-secondary institutions and innovation-driven industries. The creation of an Innovation Network will link post-secondary institutions to industry – helping to ensure graduates have the skills that industry and employers need in life sciences, digital media and clean energy.

[Link](#)

Yukon Territory

EDUCATION

The Department of Education will introduce the Yukon version of the revised BC curriculum starting September 2017. The new curriculum will be student-centred, focusing on multi-disciplinary skill development. It will provide opportunities to integrate local content and Yukon First Nations knowledge through all subjects and grade levels.

The redesigned Yukon curriculum will be phased in gradually over the next few years, beginning with Kindergarten to Grade 9 in September 2017 and continuing with Grades 10 to 12 in September 2018. New provincial exams that focus on applying literacy and numeracy skills across multiple disciplines are expected to be introduced by British Columbia in January 2018.

[Link](#)

HEALTH (ALL TERRITORIES)

Premiers from Yukon, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut have reached an agreement with the federal government on behalf of their governments, which will increase federal funding to improve health care for northern residents.

Under the agreement, the three territories will receive an estimated \$36.1 million in new funding over the next 10 years. The agreement is in addition to the annual increase to the Canada Health Transfer payments of three percent annually or the rate of national GDP growth, whichever is higher.

[Link](#)

Government of Yukon's home health monitoring trial took effect on January 16, 2017. It will allow 50 residents with stage 2 and 3 chronic obstructive pulmonary disease to monitor their condition from their homes and communities. Ten of these patients will be from two rural communities.

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Northwest Territories

No updates this month.

Nunavut

MENTAL HEALTH

The Government of Nunavut is committed to providing Nunavummiut with access to specialized addiction programming that integrates Inuit social values. As part of this commitment, the Department of Health is offering counselling at Mamisarvik Health Centre in Ottawa through referral.

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