

Recommendations for Canada's long-term recovery plan - open letter

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VIA EMAIL

August 27, 2020

The Rt. Hon. Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Office of the Prime Minister
39 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0A6

Re: Recommendations for Canada's long-term recovery plan

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

We would like first to thank and commend you for your leadership throughout the pandemic. Your government's efforts have helped many people in Canada during this unprecedented time and have prevented Canada from facing outcomes similar to those seen in other countries experiencing significant pandemic-related hardship and suffering.

We are writing to you with recommendations as you develop a plan for Canada's long-term recovery and the upcoming Spring from the Economic Action Plan 2.0.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exposed and amplified many healthcare shortfalls in Canada such as care for older adults and mental healthcare. Added to that, the economic fallout is impacting employment, housing, and access to education. These social determinants of health contribute to and perpetuate inequality, which for our the pandemic has already exacerbated for vulnerable groups. Action is needed now to address these dual legacies and improve the healthcare system to ensure Canada can chart a path toward an equitable economic recovery.

To establish a foundation for a stronger middle class, Canada must invest in a healthier and fairer society by addressing health care system gaps that were exacerbated by COVID-19. We kindly believe that the measures we are recommending below are critical and should be part of your government's long-term recovery plan:

1. Enhance pandemic emergency preparedness
2. Invest in virtual care to support vulnerable groups
3. Improve supports for Canada's aging population
4. Strengthen Canada's National Anti-Racism Strategy
5. Improve access to primary care
6. Implement a universal single-payer pharmacare program
7. Increase mental health funding for healthcare professionals

We know the months ahead will be challenging and that COVID-19 is far from over. As a nation, we have an opportunity now, with the lessons from COVID-19 still unfolding, to bring about essential transformations to our health care system and create a safer and more equitable society.

1. Enhance pandemic emergency preparedness

We commend you for your work with the provinces and territories to deliver the \$19 billion Safe Restart Agreement as it will help in the next six to eight months to increase resources to protect front-line health-care workers and increase testing and contact tracing to protect Canadians against future outbreaks. Moving forward as you develop a plan for Canada's long-term recovery, we strongly recommend the focus remains on fighting the pandemic. Beyond the six to eight months outlined in the Safe Restart Agreement, it is critical that a long-term recovery plan includes

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