



Key Messages

Key messages to drive the
health research and
innovation ecosystem
community's advocacy, in
advance of the 2023 federal
budget

October 5, 2022

Context

Research Canada, in collaboration with stakeholders and partners across the health research and innovation ecosystem, will be leading an advocacy campaign aimed at ensuring the federal government commits to increasing funding to health research and undertakes measures that are targeted at improving the federal research ecosystem more broadly. Specifically, the measures that Research Canada will advocate for are:

1. **Double research funding** to the Tri-Agency and commit to an annual increase that will keep pace with inflation and global benchmarks
 - a. This increase in funding must maintain a balance with investments in infrastructure and people
2. **Better support and enable a flourishing and diversified talent base in Canada**, with a focus on Indigenous researchers, Black and people of colour researchers, early-career researchers, and other underrepresented and equity-deserving groups (e.g. gender diverse)

For targeted advocacy to be as effective as possible, it is highly beneficial that all sectors be echoing the ask, and 'speaking with one voice.' The federal government is far more likely to move on issues when they are hearing the same ask and messaging from all impacted communities. As such, the following are key messages that can be adopted by Research Canada's Alliance of Members, Supporters and Partners as we advocate for change.

Health Research

The term, *health research* captures the four pillars of research (biomedical, health services, clinical, population health), the continuum from basic to applied, and the contributions of diverse disciplines in medicine, engineering, natural sciences, social sciences and humanities.

Key Messages

An efficient health research and innovation ecosystem that benefits patients and effectively supports and attracts diverse talent is necessarily one with strong connections among and between different sectors. For these advocacy 'asks' to have the impact that we want and need, all of our work—from the collaborative efforts of advocates to develop and impress upon government these key messages, to the funding decisions and policy changes that we hope will come from these efforts—must be done through a **whole-of-ecosystem, whole-of-government lens**.

While there are signs that the government is working towards a re-alignment of Canada's federal research funding and policy, we must all keep in mind and remind government and other decision makers of the importance of a whole-of-ecosystem, whole-of-government approach as we move forward with our advocacy efforts this Fall.

Underinvestment in health research is not an option.

- Underinvestment in health research will impede Canada's ability to implement the federal Life Sciences Strategy and achieve a vibrant biosciences and biomanufacturing sector
- Underinvestment in health research will compromise Canada's capacity to respond to the next public health crisis, to protect and enhance health care, and to attract and retain globally leading talent, among other national priorities
- Increasing federal funding for health research is necessary for Canada to remain competitive among its global peers
- Increasing the current level of federal funding for health research will improve health outcomes for Canadians and the global population, and improve Canada's ability to effectively respond to the next public health crisis
- New investments in health research are necessary for creating a globally-leading talent pipeline for all research sectors
- New investments in project grants through the Tri-Agency must be balanced with investments in infrastructure and people; without all three, Canada's health research enterprise will not have the impact that patients deserve

A well-supported research workforce that reflects the fullness of humanity and human potential is the foundation of a vibrant, innovative and sustainable research system. If we are to correct historical and contemporary injustices, maximize our innovative potential and create a globally competitive environment for research talent, we must better support and enable diverse researchers at all stages of their training and careers.

- A diverse and flourishing research ecosystem that reflects the fullness and diversity of humanity is key to strengthening Canada as a society, generating novel discoveries, supporting research programs that deliver impact to a wide range of communities, retaining diverse research talent and making the greatest economic impact
- Lack of diversity in health research results in health outcomes that are unacceptable or below acceptable norms and may cause harm to underrepresented groups—outcomes that are antithetical to the ultimate goal of our health research enterprise to help and benefit all humans
- A diverse, inclusive and innovative research ecosystem, along with targeted supports and policies that encourage and facilitate Indigenization are essential to advancing decolonization, reconciliation and health research benefiting Indigenous Peoples
- A diverse, inclusive and innovative research ecosystem, along with making targeted supports available are essential to tackling racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination and to achieving meaningful justice and dignity for Black and people of colour researchers and other underrepresented and equity-deserving groups
- To ensure that our diverse research workforce can flourish, and to attract new diverse talent into the fold, Canada must provide enhanced and fulsome support that ensures liveable and competitive wages for researchers across the career spectrum, and in particular, for early-career researchers