**Subject:** **Budget 2023 must take action to protect Canadians’ health and ensure a resilient and prepared health research and innovation ecosystem**

Dear Click or tap here to enter text.,

*For recipients in the Government of Canada (i.e., Liberal Members of Parliament, Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries, department/Ministerial staff):*

On behalf of Click or tap here to enter text., I would like to thank you and your colleagues in government for your ongoing efforts to protect the health and wellbeing of Canadians and facilitate Canada’s health and economic recovery from the challenges of the past three years.

*For recipients from Opposition Parties (i.e., Conservative MPs, NDP MPs, Bloc Québécois MPs) or the Senate):*

On behalf of Click or tap here to enter text., I would like to ask you and your party to urge the Government of Canada to protect the health and wellbeing of Canadians and facilitate Canada’s health and economic recovery from the challenges of the past three years.

As we approach a spring tabling of the 2023 federal budget, we are calling on the Government of Canada to take action to protect the health of our citizens and ensure that our health research and innovation ecosystem is resilient and prepared to take on the health challenges of today and tomorrow.

**Canada’s health care system is in crisis and needs the best available science to facilitate highly effective responses *now***. Across the country, we are seeing the impact of a health system on the verge of collapse: staff burnout, emergency room closures, lengthy emergency room wait times, the cancellation of “non-urgent” pediatric surgeries, and patients presenting with more advanced stages of illness after delayed medical care. This also has dire consequences for the critical health research that happens in Canada’s hospitals and academic health sciences centres. Clinical research is a necessary step in every innovative health solution’s journey from lab to patient, but when the health system is in crisis, this clinical research cannot happen. As a result, we are delaying—if not outright losing—the adoption of potentially life-changing innovations into our health system. But health research is also part of the solution to this crisis and is vital to protecting our health system against future crises. Fundamental science, clinical research, and population and health services research are all necessary to drive life-saving discoveries, reduce costs, and ensure an effective, accessible and equitable health system. To solve this crisis, all levels of government need to **put politics aside and work collaboratively with both health care experts and the scientific community**.

If resolving our health crisis and protecting the health security of Canadians requires research, then **underinvestment in health research is not an option**. The best available science must be incorporated into policy and operational decisions within our health care system to facilitate highly effective responses to future health crises. Moreover, investment in fundamental research is an important driver of economic and productivity growth, global competitiveness and a healthier population. Inventions and innovations that will save lives in the future will draw on the basic scientific knowledge we derive through fundamental research *today*. Despite this, Canada is not sufficiently funding our health research and innovation ecosystem to protect this future; Canada is the only nation in the G7 whose R&D spending as a percentage of GDP shrank over the past two decades, and the gap continues to widen. To combat this, the Government of Canada needs to **double research funding to the Tri-Agency and commit to an annual increase that will keep pace with inflation and global benchmarks**.

Increasing research funding will only have the desired impact if we are also supporting the people who actually *do* the research. **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 Canada is 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 and flourishing and diversified talent base in Canada at all stages of their careers, with a focus on Indigenous researchers, Black and people of colour researchers, and other underrepresented and equity-deserving groups**. This includes enhancing supports for a diverse research workforce to ensure that our research and innovation ecosystem and the health outcomes it produces are equitable, inclusive and accessible and reflect a commitment to decolonizing research institutions and systems and encourage and uplift Indigenous research priorities and ways of knowing. This also must include increasing stipends and salary supports for early-career researchers and increased funding for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to ensure that Canada is a globally competitive environment for research talent.

**Realizing the full health, social and economic potential of Canada’s health research and innovation ecosystem and ensuring a more prepared, resilient and sustainable ecosystem in the future requires a strong, active and engaged life sciences industry**. The life sciences industry plays a unique and irreplaceable role in a functional health research and innovation ecosystem, but persistent weaknesses in our partnership with industry are handicapping Canada’s competitiveness and ability to capitalize on the full life-changing potential of home-grown health research and innovation. The recent decision by the Patented Medicine Prices Review Board (PMPRB) to pause implementation of new Guidelines after numerous stakeholder communities, including patient groups, raised alarm bells is a step in the right direction, but we need to do more to grow Canada’s innovation economy. If we are to position our health research and innovation ecosystem for a powerful post-pandemic future and Canada for sustainability, growth and leadership, we need to cultivate an ambitious, futureproofed policy and investment environment that supports all stakeholder communities, including our life sciences industry, within the ecosystem as a whole.

Health research and health innovation have been a guiding light throughout the pandemic, but we must act now to ensure that they are able to continue to do so in the years and decades to come.

Sincerely,

Click or tap here to enter text.