

Vision 2025

Fulfilling the Promise of Collaborative Advocacy Leadership



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CANADA**

An Alliance for Health Discovery

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Une alliance pour les découvertes en santé

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Acknowledgements

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I extend our gratitude to Research Canada's Members, who shared their insights, knowledge and experience throughout the consultation process. As a member-driven organization, Research Canada's success is predicated on the meaningful and sustained engagement of our Members in all our strategic activities. We continue to be inspired by our Members' optimism, resilience and creativity in our collective efforts to strengthen our enterprise.

I thank our National Partners—the Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada, HealthCareCAN, the Health Charities Coalition of Canada, the National Alliance of Provincial Health Research Organizations and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada—for their enthusiastic participation in the consultation process. Research Canada is fortunate to have such dedicated and supportive Partners in advancing Canada's health research and innovation ecosystem.

I would also like to take the opportunity to thank Dr. Diana Royce of the Deerfield Group Inc., our governance consultant, who assisted with the development and writing of the Plan. We are grateful for her expertise and commitment to the organization.

I also wish to thank Ms. Morgan Myles, our graphic designer, who designed a stunning and modern document that truly captures the essence of Research Canada and our refreshed plan



I express my deep appreciation to Staff: Ms. Christie Tomkins, Manager of Policy and Public Affairs, Ms. Mariana Corroero, my Executive Assistant, and Ms. Rebecca Heath, Research Canada's Director of Operations.

Without the efficient, agile and highly capable support of this team, we simply would not have been able to deliver this Plan on time and within budget.

Last but certainly not least, I would like to acknowledge our President and CEO, Ms. Deborah Gordon-El-Bihbey, for her dedication and leadership throughout this process. We are grateful to her unwavering commitment to Research Canada and the aspirations of health researchers and innovators in Canada.

It has been an honour to work with such talented colleagues and stakeholders throughout this process. I am confident that, together, we have produced a refreshed plan that will assist us in strengthening political and public support to achieve meaningful policy impact for our health research and innovation ecosystem.

Dr. Tarik Möröy

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A Strategic “Refresh” En Route to Vision 2025

In 2022, Research Canada launched an interim review of the strategic priorities guiding its activities from 2020 to 2025. This review was timely, given the World Health Organization’s March 2020 confirmation of a global pandemic, and the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic’s wide-reaching social, economic, and health policy implications on Canada’s health research and innovation ecosystem. The review, which involved a survey of Research Canada’s Membership and consultations with its National Partners, generated a number of minor but important modifications to Strategy 2020 that are reflected in this “refreshed” Vision 2025 plan.

Who we are

Research Canada is a collaborative advocacy leader working to achieve policy impact by strengthening political and public support for a robust health research and innovation ecosystem in Canada.

As the national voice for Canada’s health research and innovation ecosystem, Research Canada has a unique responsibility to inspire Parliamentarians—and all Canadians—by shining a spotlight on the contribution and promise of our health research and innovation ecosystem to Canadians’ economic, social and physical well-being. As a member-driven organization, our voice has never been stronger. Membership growth convinces us that our message is urgent, relevant and being heard.

Our Members and National Partners tell us that they value Research Canada’s leadership in uniting ecosystem stakeholders around well-defended policy positions with high potential for impact. Our successful Parliamentary Health Research Caucus (PHRC), which has engaged hundreds of Parliamentarians and researchers across Canada since 2009, has become the signature program in Research Canada’s advocacy toolkit.

A Strategic “Refresh” En Route to Vision 2025

Research Canada has built capacity to respond to the needs of our health research and innovation ecosystem stakeholders, and we are a stronger organization today than at any point in our history. Our Members are more diverse and engaged; our efficient professional staff delivers exceptional advocacy and communications' expertise; our financial position is strong; and we have the organizational agility to respond to the needs of our community, which operates in a dynamic social, economic and policy context.

Collaborative advocacy in a dynamic context

Canada's health research and innovation ecosystem has reached a critical moment. Recent policy decisions point to renewed alignment with the interests of our sector—perhaps most notably expressed in the federal government's commitment to a vital scientific enterprise—but challenges remain. Investment in R&D continues to lag behind international peers. Due to a dearth of operating funds, Canadian doctoral and post-doctoral students lack access to salary support while training at Canadian universities.

Tri-Agency research and fellowship support levels are low relative to comparator jurisdictions. Compounding the challenges of attracting and retaining top research and clinical talent, Canadian organizations struggle to offer the globally competitive salaries necessary to attract and retain highly qualified research expertise in Canada.

Early-career researchers face uncertain career paths. Equity-deserving groups and scholars continue to be underrepresented across the health research and innovation ecosystem.

Homegrown life science companies struggle to achieve scale and global competitiveness.

Our health care system remains an inconsistent partner in both driving and procuring innovation.

This refreshed plan continues to position Research Canada for **collaborative advocacy leadership**—a theme that captures the essence of our unique role in convening Members, Partners and Supporters around positions that reinforce shared interests in response to the evolving social, economic and policy context of health research in Canada.

To this end, *Vision 2025* reconfirms and updates Research Canada's pledge to advance three commitments: to ***Amplify Our Influence*** by harnessing the Health Research Caucus and fulfilling a strategic role in building ecosystem-wide policy consensus; to ***Broaden Public Reach*** by becoming a trusted resource for media and helping our Members and messaging reach all Canadians; and to ***Diversify Our Alliance*** by engaging the full spectrum of stakeholders who shape and are impacted by Canada's health research and innovation ecosystem through an inclusive, diverse, equitable and accessible lens. Figure 1 on page 5 illustrates the core components of *Vision 2025*.

Implementation of this refreshed plan situates Research Canada as a collaborative health research and innovation advocacy leader, helping to inform and consolidate political and public support to achieve meaningful policy impact and to strengthen the Canadian health research and innovation ecosystem in a dynamic context. We are excited to continue to work with you in advancing this role.

Strategic Planning Task Force Membership



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Fulfilling The Promise of Collaborative Advocacy Leadership

Goals

Support Future Generations.

Engage and support early-career talent through focused advocacy efforts to build a scientific enterprise that is more inclusive, collaborative, open, interdisciplinary and reflective.

Engage Underrepresented Communities.

Advance a balanced advocacy agenda that considers the priorities and positions of diverse health research and health innovation organizations.

Connect with Canadians.

Identify organizations/coalitions/initiatives dedicated to strengthening Canadians' understanding of health research and/or science generally and engage in and lend support for selected initiatives that promote a robust health research and innovation ecosystem.

Strengthen Media Engagement.

Become a trusted resource for media to obtain information about the status of Canadian health research and health innovation.

Heighten Sector Prominence.

Embolden the PHRC and harness complementary strategies to profile Members and reinforce the importance of a vibrant health research and innovation ecosystem among decision makers.

Foster National and Global Collaborations.

Collaborate with national and international Partners to align policy agendas and advocacy efforts and cultivate a collective understanding of needs and priorities within the health research and innovation ecosystem.

Commitments

Foster inclusive advocacy leadership by supporting future generations and engaging diverse voices.

Engage media and the public to expand community awareness of, support for, and influence on health research and health innovation policy.



Influence the public policy and funding environment to reflect the needs and aspirations of an integrated health research and innovation ecosystem that is ready to address immediate and long-term challenges.

Aspirations

Research Canada is a collaborative advocacy leader working to achieve policy impact by strengthening political and public support for a robust health research and innovation ecosystem in Canada.

Engaged, diverse, committed Membership across the health research and innovation ecosystem.

Measurable influence with decision makers in realizing a globally competitive research and innovation policy agenda.

Engaged public that recognizes the benefits of Canadian health research and health innovation.

Engaged and mobilized communities of diverse health research organizations, researchers, including early-career talent, health care consumers and patients.



Commitments

Commitment 1: Amplify Our Influence

Influence the public policy and funding environment to reflect the needs and aspirations of an integrated health research and innovation ecosystem that is ready to address immediate and long-term challenges.

Research Canada will focus on policy matters that build towards an integrated health research and innovation ecosystem of the future, engaging Members in an ongoing, inclusive and bidirectional dialogue to understand their issues and challenges. In this way, Research Canada will ensure that its advocacy work represents Members' collective concerns, while also providing them with profile through publications, access to Parliamentarians through the Parliamentary Health Research Caucus (PHRC) and other important member benefits.

The development of collaborative policy positions, enabled by Research Canada's ongoing relationship-building with Partners and, where appropriate, with provincial and territorial leaders, will foster a deeper understanding of national research and innovation needs and priorities. As part of this relationship-building activity, Research Canada will continue to convene national partner tables, using that mechanism to address policy issues in areas where there is momentum and shared interest.

Research Canada will strengthen its capacity to influence in a number of ways. These include:

- Recruiting new Members, Partners and Supporters;
- Continuing to develop and deepen relationships with Members, Partners and Supporters, providing them with opportunities to engage and build profile through the PHRC, building their knowledge and support of the issues that are being moved forward, and leveraging their advocacy and communication capabilities;
- Building the advocacy skills of important stakeholders, including researchers and communities.

Commitments: Amplify Our Influence

The commitment to **Amplify Our Influence** is implemented through the pursuit of two goals:

Goal 1.1. Heighten Sector Prominence.

Embolden the PHRC and harness complementary strategies to profile Members and reinforce the importance of a vibrant health research and innovation ecosystem among decision makers.

In pursuit of this goal, Research Canada will engage with Members, Partners and Supporters to:

1. Strengthen and deepen the value of the PHRC among all stakeholders, including Parliamentarians.
 2. Work collaboratively with National Partners and coalitions to address policy issues that promote an integrated and vibrant health research and innovation ecosystem.
 3. Continue to use Research Canada publications to showcase Research Canada Members, Partners and Supporters and the impact they are having.
 4. Continuously improve Research Canada's educational offerings.
- Observing Research Canada's proposals acted upon by Ministers, a Minister's office, other MPs and/or policy officials following a Research Canada meeting
 - Increase in the number of media stories about the sector, and an increase in Research Canada's and sector policy campaigns' social, earned news and media impressions and activity (e.g., increase in number of Research Canada LinkedIn and Twitter followers)
 - Overall increase in number of Members, Partners and Supporters
 - Increased level of satisfaction of Members, Partners and Supporters with the profile provided through Research Canada's publications
 - Increase in number and level of Members, Partners, Supporters and stakeholder engagement in policy activities.

Success will be measured by:

- Member of Parliament (MP) and Senator attendance at PHRC events and demonstrated engagement of Caucus members (e.g., through articles in *Research Canada Update*, based on event topics)
- Number of Research Canada policy statements that appear in Parliamentary Standing Committee reports, bulletins, and party election platforms



Commitments: Amplify Our Influence

The commitment to **Amplify Our Influence** is implemented through the pursuit of two goals:

Goal 1.2 Foster National and Global Collaborations.

Collaborate with national and international Partners to align policy agendas and advocacy efforts and cultivate a collective understanding of needs and priorities within the health research and innovation ecosystem.

In pursuit of this goal, Research Canada will engage with Members, Partners and Supporters to:

1. Increase evidence of collaborative cross-sectoral initiatives across Research Canada's Members, Partners and Supporters.
2. Meet with National Partners quarterly to develop aligned messaging around important events, such as parliamentary pre-budget preparations and consultation.
3. Meet with and facilitate networking opportunities among organizations representing other health research and innovation system stakeholders to foster understanding of the full range of ecosystem stakeholders' needs, Partners' positions, respective roles and synergistic opportunities.
4. Identify opportunities to launch collaborative initiatives with other stakeholders at national, provincial, and international levels, including developing vehicles to build message consensus.

5. Identify strategies and implement mechanisms that support opportunities for knowledge exchange, including best practices in health research and innovation advocacy with international "counterpart" organizations.

Success will be measured by:

- Number of collaborative initiatives with diverse stakeholder groups each year – national, provincial and international.
- Number of National Partners involved in federal pre-budget preparations and policy initiatives.
- Number of new collaborations, e.g., with colleges and institutes, and by their engagement in current policy matters.





Commitments: Broaden Public Reach

Commitment 2: Broaden Public Reach

Engage media and the public to expand community awareness of, support for, and influence on health research and health innovation policy.

Research Canada recognizes the important role played by Canadian voters in influencing policy choices, as well as the role of media in reaching and influencing the public. Research Canada also recognizes the challenge in creating new relationships in a world of information overload. Hence, current outreach mechanisms to the media, the public and other stakeholders about the value of health research and innovation, such as the Health Research and Innovation (HRI) Portal, opinion polls, social media and the website, will be broadened in alignment with communication and outreach initiatives of Members, Partners and Supporters. A media strategy will be developed to clarify the approach, and respective roles and responsibilities. Given the associated challenge of measuring shifts in public attitude, benchmarking activities will be used to determine best practices.

Research Canada will continue to develop narratives and case studies that describe current collaborations, as well as the kinds of successes that are being achieved. These, together with other tools identified by Members, will be shared with all Members across the country. All Members will also have ongoing access to expertise and support from Research Canada.

While Research Canada encourages the use of these branded materials and tools whenever possible in order to build brand recognition, getting the message out to supporters, their networks and members of the public is what really matters. For example, rather than develop its own patient advisory group, Research Canada will work closely with Members where such infrastructure already exists, to share stories, learn together and increase the level of knowledge about the value of the health research and innovation ecosystem to Canada and Canadians.

Working in conjunction with Members, Partners and Supporters, Research Canada seeks to deepen relationships with influential members of the anglophone and francophone media at the national and provincial levels, using the HRI Portal to provide materials and information; as well as to make spokespersons available so that the media identifies Research Canada as a credible source for an informed, accurate and reliable ecosystem-wide viewpoint.

Commitments: Broaden Public Reach

The commitment to **Broaden Public Reach** is implemented through the pursuit of two inter-related goals:

Goal 2.1. Connect with Canadians.

Identify organizations/coalitions/initiatives dedicated to strengthening Canadians' understanding of health research and/or science generally and engage in and lend support for selected initiatives that promote a robust health research and innovation ecosystem.

Goal 2.2. Strengthen Media Engagement.

Become a trusted resource for media to obtain information about the status of Canadian health research and health innovation.

In pursuit of this goal, Research Canada will engage with Members, Partners, and Supporters to:

1. Develop and implement media (including social media) strategies.
2. Continue to track and report on public opinion.
3. Leverage member infrastructure to engage more effectively with the public.
4. Continue to develop the HRI Portal (media portal) as a media hub for French and English health and science journalists.
5. Deepen relationships with key French and English health and science journalists.
6. Leverage activities undertaken with partner organizations to profile Research Canada with key media, e.g., health and science journalists, to develop the HRI Portal (media portal) as a media hub for French and English health and science journalists.

Success will be measured by:

- Research Canada lending its expertise, profiling through its networks, social media and/or media to an existing campaign or initiative dedicated to raising awareness about health research and/or science generally.
- The number of Research Canada-developed case studies, human interest and patient stories of successful collaboration across the health innovation continuum, reflected in the external messaging of MPs to their constituents.
- An increase in key activity measures such as:
 - a. Followers and engagement on social media
 - b. Number of case studies used in media reports
 - c. Number of HRI Portal views
 - d. Number of requests for spokespersons/interviews
 - e. Number of op-eds and videos created.
- The number of instances that Members, Partners and Supporters actively engaged in strengthening public knowledge and media engagement, including social media, in alignment with Research Canada's initiatives and messaging.
- An expanded audience of French as well as English journalists who engage in Research Canada's HRI Portal hub and respond to media releases published through the HRI Portal.



Commitments: Diversify Our Alliance

Commitment 3: Diversify Our Alliance

Foster inclusive advocacy leadership by supporting future generations and engaging diverse voices.

One group of disenfranchised stakeholders to which Research Canada is particularly committed is early-career researchers—the future of health research. Many early-career researchers find themselves at risk, given the current constraints on research funding and the lack of clarity with respect to a career path. Research Canada will continue to include the voice of these early-career researchers in setting advocacy priorities and developing messages.

Research Canada acknowledges that for health research and innovation to be valued by Canadians, its focus and priorities must be informed by all Canadians, including those who are not always seen or heard from such as Indigenous, Black and women researchers and scientists; health care consumers; and patients. Research Canada is committed to increasing the involvement of these and other previously marginalized or disenfranchised groups in the determination of policy priorities and advocacy approaches.

Research Canada is also dedicated to engaging underrepresented communities within our health research and innovation ecosystem. To this end, the organization has undertaken a number of initiatives over the past several years including the development of an Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Board policy, an organizational statement on EDI and the creation of a Task Force on Indigenous and Racial Justice in Health Research and its Related Innovation. Currently, Research Canada is conducting an inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility (IDEA) audit of both its PHRC and its governance model.



Commitments: Diversify Our Alliance

The commitment to **Diversify Our Alliance** is implemented through the pursuit of two goals:

Goal 3.1. Support Future Generations.

Engage and support early-career talent through focused advocacy efforts to build a scientific enterprise that is more inclusive, collaborative, open, interdisciplinary and reflective.

In pursuit of this goal, Research Canada, its Members and Partners will engage with a diverse group of early-career researchers, inclusive of individuals from equity-deserving communities, to:

1. Develop a better understanding of the needs and priorities of early-career talent as representatives of the future of health research.
2. Recruit the voices of early-career researchers to advance the position that investment in a diverse career talent pool is crucial within an integrated health research and innovation ecosystem.
3. Amplify the voices of early-career researchers by working collaboratively with other organizations, including those representing equity-deserving groups pursuing similar outcomes.

Success will be measured by:

- Number and diversity of early-career researchers included in Research Canada's governance structure (Board, committees, task forces, think tank meetings) and the degree to which IDEA criteria are a core component of Research Canada's search and appointment processes.
- Number and diversity of early-career researchers and disciplines included in PHRC meetings and profiled in PHRC materials.
- Engagement of Research Canada with provincial funding institutes.
- Enrolment of a diverse and inclusive register of Members, Partners and Supporters serving as mentors and supporters for this community.
- Number of social media and advocacy campaigns delivered in alignment with organizations committed to supporting early-career talent in STEM, such as Science & Policy Exchange.



Commitments: Diversify Our Alliance

The commitment to **Diversify Our Alliance** is implemented through the pursuit of two goals:

Goal 3.2 Engage Underrepresented Communities.

Advance a balanced advocacy agenda that considers the priorities and positions of diverse health research and health innovation organizations.

In pursuit of this goal, Research Canada will:

1. Expand the number of diverse communities actively engaged in Research Canada activities.
2. Continue to grow a diverse and inclusive membership base across the health research and innovation ecosystem, paying particular attention to the inclusion of sector, geographic, and community diversity in alignment with inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility considerations.
3. Develop corporate communication and social media strategies that strengthen relationships within the health research and innovation ecosystem.
4. Continue to implement the Leadership in Advocacy Award Program and attract media to the HRI Portal.
5. Incorporate IDEA goals, target outcomes and success measures arising from the recommendations of the IDEA audit (to be completed in 2023) into the 2025-2030 Strategic Plan.

Success will be measured by:

- Number, diversity and inclusion of new organizations and sectors involved in Research Canada's governance structures and organizing committees.
- Number of topics related to marginalized and/or disempowered communities that are advanced through inclusion on the PHRC agenda; and hosting of round tables or symposia dedicated to the topic (e.g., women in science).
- Number, engagement and diversity of health research and innovation ecosystem followers on social media.
- Engagement of a diversity of organizations with the Leadership in Advocacy Award Program and the number of equity-deserving groups that generate nominations.
- Increase in number of HRI Portal press releases, Guest Blogs and social media posts that highlight health research and/or innovations related to IDEA.



A photograph of three people, two men and one woman, standing together at what appears to be a conference or event. They are all wearing red lanyards. The man on the left has grey hair and glasses, the woman in the middle has blonde hair, and the man on the right has a grey beard and glasses. They are all smiling. In the background, there are blurred signs, one of which mentions 'Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning'.

Conclusion

By 2025, Research Canada's increasing number of Members, Partners and Supporters will be actively collaborating and playing leadership roles to promote our collective interests based on a greater understanding of the challenges and critical imperatives of all parts of the health research and innovation ecosystem. Respect for the role and contribution of each sector within the ecosystem will enable a broader dialogue among all interested parties, leading to the development of sector-supported proposals to government on a range of topics related to fostering the vibrancy and potential of an integrated and accountable health research and innovation ecosystem.

Members' recognition of the value of research within the ecosystem, from basic to applied, together with different research approaches, will be critical to this success. Colleges and institutes will stand alongside universities and join academic health sciences centres and health charities to lead the way, together with scientific societies and centres of excellence, and engage and build support among the public at the grassroots level. Industry partners will be recognized for commercializing the technologies and solutions that are creating the future of health care and for their partnership in the evolution and sustainability of a modern and resilient health care system, creating the jobs and opportunities that are driving Canada into the future.

In Ottawa, parliamentary turnout for Parliamentary Health Research Caucus (PHRC) events will have expanded and the extended range of topics, as well as the presence of a diversity of early- and mid-career researchers, will be well-received. The HRI Portal, thanks to continued staff development, will be a strong and highly-valued resource, frequently accessed by the public and media. Regular meetings and events conducted by Members and individual researchers, reflective of the research community's broad diversity, will have taken place with Parliamentarians and other influencers in Ottawa and elsewhere throughout the country, to convey consistent messages about the benefits of an integrated health research and innovation ecosystem to all Canadians.

The promise of collaborative advocacy leadership will be met through the strengthened perception of the health research and innovation ecosystem, enabled by Research Canada's recognized influence and capability in convening, facilitating and, ultimately, fostering greater understanding and brokering agreement amongst an increasingly diverse set of stakeholders.



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