

Backgrounder: Canada–Saskatchewan bilateral agreement to improve health care services

May 2018

Today, the governments of Canada and Saskatchewan signed a bilateral agreement outlining how the province plans to invest approximately \$158 million in targeted funding over five years as part of a ten-year federal financial commitment of close to \$350 million to improve access to home and community care, and mental health and addiction services. This agreement will be reviewed and renewed after five years.

Saskatchewan's Action Plan aligns with the objectives and pan-Canadian priorities set out in the Common Statement of Principles on Shared Health Priorities and will be implemented through a multi-pronged approach.

Home Care and Community Care

Through its Connected Care Strategy, Saskatchewan will use federal funds to improve access to services and supports in home care and community care. Priorities for investment include:

- improved delivery of team-based home and primary health care, tailored to meet the needs of communities through the establishment of Community Health Centres or community health teams; and
- better access to palliative and end-of-life care to provide care at the right place, by the right providers, at the right time.

Mental Health and Addiction Services

Federal funding for mental health and addiction services is being directed towards investments in innovative, evidence-based and cost-effective approaches to service delivery. Priorities for investment include:

- improving access to community mental health supports, such as the establishment of community recovery teams and expansion of addiction medicine services and police and crisis teams;
- enhancing the delivery of evidence-based services by expanding internet-delivered cognitive behavioural therapy; and
- improving mental health and addiction services for youth and young adults through a number of initiatives, including introducing a targeted training program aimed at strengthening skills and knowledge of children and youth mental health conditions among physicians and primary care providers, and enhancing mental health supports in schools.

Federal Provincial and Territorial Collaboration to Strengthen Health Care

Budget 2017 committed \$11 billion over 10 years in new federal investments to improve access to mental health and addiction services as well as to home and community care across Canada. Provinces* and territories already received the first year of this funding through a legislated transfer following their endorsement of the Common Statement of Principles on Shared Health

Priorities. Funding for the remaining years will flow to provinces and territories through a series of bilateral agreements.

The Common Statement of Principles sets out the objectives and pan-Canadian priorities for federal investments in home care and mental health. It commits governments to addressing specific health system gaps and to focusing efforts in areas that will have the greatest impact. Bilateral agreements will set out the details of how federal funding will be used, in alignment with the Common Statement of Principles. As of August 2017, provinces and territories accepted their share of the \$11 billion in federal health funding.

Provinces and territories have also committed to working collectively and with the Canadian Institute for Health Information to develop a focused set of common indicators to measure progress and report to Canadians.

Federal, provincial and territorial governments have also committed to engaging with regional and national Indigenous leaders on their priorities for improving the health outcomes of Indigenous peoples.

* The federal government has agreed to an asymmetrical arrangement with Quebec, distinct from the Common Statement of Principles.