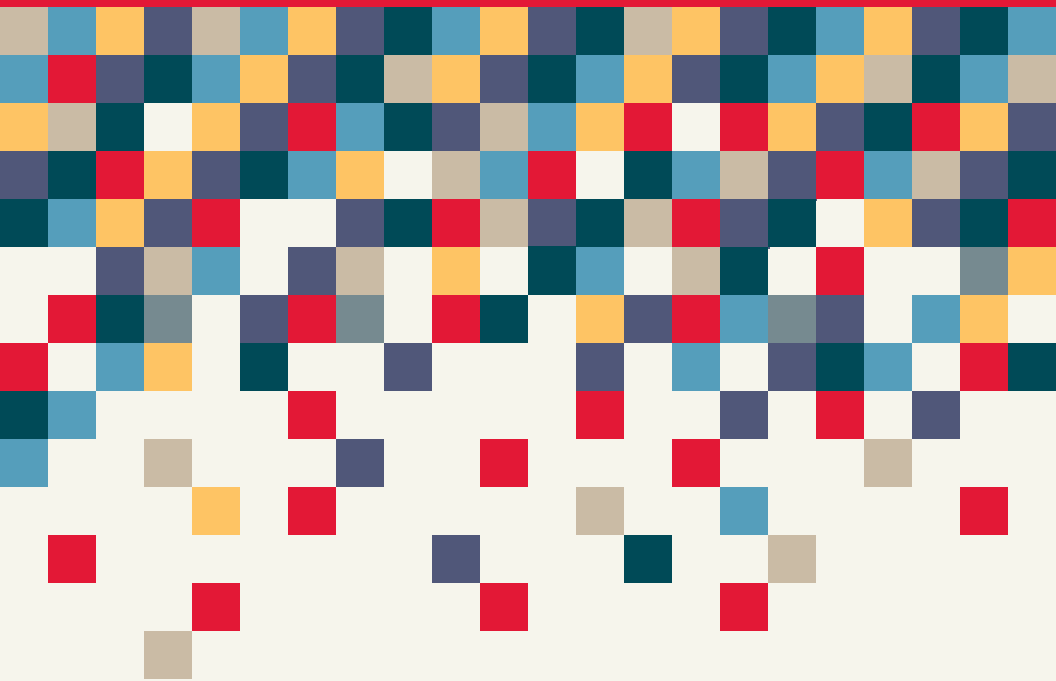


HEALTH COUNCIL
OF CANADA

STRATEGIC PLAN
2008/2009-
2012/2013

TAKING THE PULSE
TOWARD IMPROVED
HEALTH AND
HEALTH CARE IN
CANADA



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INTRODUCTION

Canadians care passionately about their health care system and “have reached a mature, settled public judgment, based on decades of experience, that the Canadian health care model is a good one that should be preserved.”¹ Overall ratings of the health care system have improved slightly in recent years, yet Canadians are also concerned about the future. A large majority still believe that the system is unsustainable and urgently in need of substantive change.² People are ready for new models of service delivery to improve or sustain the level of care already provided³ and “are far more open to change in the delivery of health care services than most politicians imagine.”⁴

As the nation entered the new millennium, federal, provincial, and territorial governments acknowledged that Canadians were increasingly unsatisfied with access to and quality of health care. At the time and until recently, there was overwhelming support for increased spending on health care from both levels of government,² along with calls for enhanced accountability and transparency.⁵ It was assumed that more money would enable Canadian governments to alter the structure and function of the health care system where appropriate, to improve its performance in promoting and protecting health.

In response, the First Ministers created the 2003 *Accord on Health Care Renewal* in which they resolved to “work together to strengthen the health care system and ensure its long-term sustainability.” They also established the Health Council of Canada to report to Canadians on the progress of health care renewal. Building on that agenda, in 2004 the First Ministers created a *10-Year Plan to Strengthen Health Care* tied to investments to “ensure that Canadians have access to the care they need, when they need it.” The Health Council’s mandate was extended to include reporting on the health of Canadians and on the results, or outcomes, of the services, programs, and policies that influence our health and well-being.

In 2007, the Health Council of Canada looked back at our activities and accomplishments and consulted with people who contribute to or are affected by our work. We looked forward to determine where to focus our attention over the next five years, given the evolving priorities of Canadians and governments, as well as the changing nature of health care and the mandates of other organizations. In this strategic plan, we share the result of those deliberations.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

All Canadians share responsibility for health. All governments influence the factors that contribute to health and well-being; all schools and employers influence the environments in which we play, learn, and work; all Canadians make decisions that put them at more or less risk of ill health. When we acknowledge this shared responsibility, together we can work to improve health and to ensure the health care system helps to promote the health of Canadians.

Canadians are, by international standards, quite healthy. So, why focus the vision and mission of the Health Council of Canada on health, on the progress of health care renewal, and on the outcomes of the services, programs, and policies that influence health and well-being?

- › Inequities in health persist. Too many Canadians are unfairly and unequally burdened with ill health, and some risk factors for preventable health problems are reaching epidemic proportions.^{6,7}
- › The quality of our health care system is one of many factors that contribute to the health of Canadians.⁷
- › Canadians make substantive investments in their health care system; they expect the system to be sustainable and not only to treat illness but also to promote health.⁴

In its early years, the Health Council of Canada was charged with the responsibility of monitoring and reporting on the progress of health care renewal across elements of the 2003 and 2004 accords. We have taken a variety of approaches to reporting to all of our audiences in ways that complement the work of other organizations. We have placed particular emphasis on presenting stories or case studies that shine a light on how innovation can improve health and health care.⁸

The Health Council of Canada has also raised awareness among Canadians and the health care community (policy makers, managers, and providers) that the country focuses too much of its attention on caring for people after they get sick rather than preventing avoidable illness, that there are continuing gaps in the accessibility and quality of routine and ongoing care, and that closing those gaps will reap health and economic benefits. We have drawn attention to the relative value of different strategies for improving health and health care delivery.^{6,7}

Over the next five years, the Health Council of Canada will continue to take the pulse of health and health care in Canada and shine a light on progress, as envisioned in the First Ministers' accords. In particular, we will work with partners to support the pursuit of a sustainable and high-performing health care system that recognizes its role in improving the health of Canadians.

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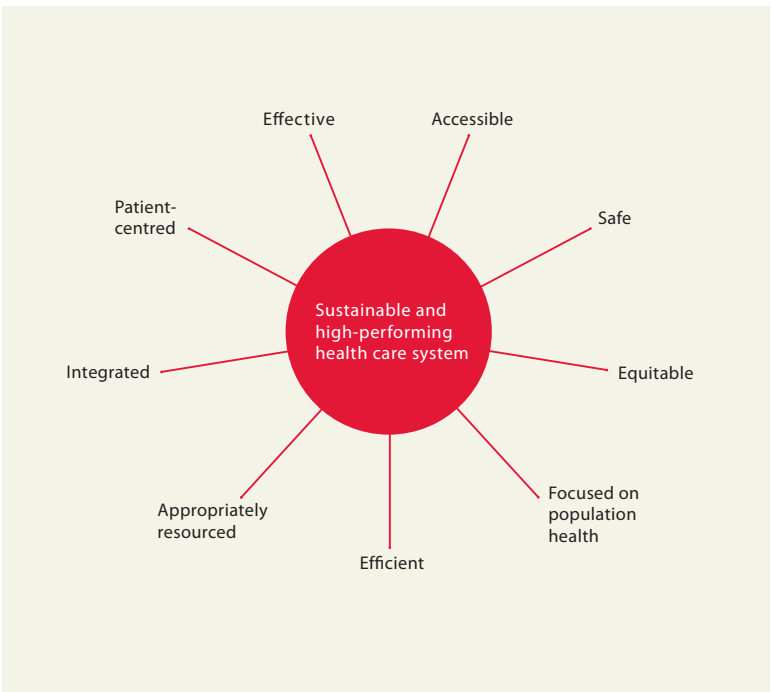


In developing this strategic plan for 2008/2009 – 2012/2013, the Health Council of Canada was guided by a framework that describes key features of a high-performing health care system⁹ and by a set of criteria for determining priorities for action across that framework. We will use these tools to define the issues in health care that will be our focus year by year. In selecting our annual priorities, the Health Council will emphasize the interdependence of the attributes of a sustainable and high-performing health care system.

Criteria for determining priorities for action:

- > The opportunity has high potential to improve the health of Canadians.
- > The opportunity has high potential to contribute to a sustainable and high-performing health care system.
- > The Health Council of Canada is the organization best positioned to address the issue.

ATTRIBUTES OF A HIGH-PERFORMING HEALTH CARE SYSTEM
Adapted from the Ontario Health Quality Council⁹



THE HEALTH COUNCIL
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OUR MANDATE ON BEHALF
OF ALL CANADIANS.



In the coming years, the Health Council of Canada will work with our partners to pursue three strategic directions. These directions, in tandem with ongoing consultations with stakeholders, will inform the development of annual work plans. They will also form the basis of a framework to evaluate the Health Council of Canada to ensure the outcomes of our work are measured, monitored, and reported.

Strategic Direction 1

Deepen public understanding of the features of a sustainable and high-performing health care system

Goal 1: Canadians and those responsible for health care renewal will understand what is required to maintain a sustainable and high-performing health care system.

OBJECTIVES

- › Increase understanding of the features of a high-performing health care system.
- › Increase understanding of the determinants of a sustainable health care system.
- › Increase awareness that the key to a sustainable health care system is a healthier population.

Strategic Direction 2

Support the health care community in its pursuit of high-potential opportunities to achieve a sustainable and high-performing health care system

Goal 2: Those responsible for and engaged in health care renewal will focus their attention and actions on high-potential opportunities to achieve a sustainable and high-performing health care system.

OBJECTIVES

- › Increase knowledge of the relative value of different strategies to improve health care delivery.
- › Increase knowledge about the strategies or factors that help or hinder renewal, including change-management strategies that show evidence of high likelihood of success.
- › Stimulate action to accelerate renewal through widespread dissemination of information about the impact of strategies that improve the sustainability of a high-performing health care system.

Strategic Direction 3

Monitor and report on successes and challenges in achieving a sustainable and high-performing health care system

Goal 3: Canadians and those in the health care community will have a nationwide perspective on health care renewal accomplishments as well as on the opportunities to improve health and health care.

OBJECTIVES

- › Increase awareness of successful jurisdictional initiatives that merit consideration for broader implementation across the country.
- › Provide a pan-Canadian perspective about the progress of health care renewal.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

For some time, Canadians have named health care as one of the most important issues facing the country.¹⁰ Promoting and protecting the vitality of the Canadian health care system was the key driver behind the First Ministers' accords in 2003 and 2004 and the investments that have followed. The vision of the First Ministers to renew health care in Canada and promote healthy living is the right one.

The collective desire for greater accountability and transparency in moving toward improved health and health care delivery led to the creation and expansion of the Health Council of Canada's mandate. Over the next five years, the Health Council of Canada will deepen public understanding of the features of a sustainable and high-performing health care system, support the health care community in its pursuit of high-potential opportunities for improvement, and monitor and report on successes and challenges in achieving improvements in health and health care delivery as envisioned by the First Ministers.

We are committed to fulfilling our mandate on behalf of all Canadians.

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ABOUT THE HEALTH COUNCIL OF CANADA

The Health Council of Canada reports on the progress of health care renewal, on the health status of Canadians, and on the health outcomes of our system. Our goal is to provide a system-wide perspective on health care reform for the Canadian public, with particular attention to accountability and transparency.

The participating jurisdictions have named Councillors representing each of their governments and also Councillors with expertise and broad experience in areas such as community care, Aboriginal health, nursing, health education and administration, finance, medicine and pharmacy.

The Council's vision

An informed and healthy Canadian public, confident in the effectiveness, sustainability and capacity of the Canadian health care system to promote their health and meet their health care needs.

The Council's mission

The Health Council of Canada fosters accountability and transparency by assessing progress in improving the quality, effectiveness and sustainability of the health care system. Through insightful monitoring, public reporting and facilitating informed discussion, the Council shines a light on what helps or hinders health care renewal and the well-being of Canadians.

The Council's core values

We will report to Canadians in a manner that is transparent, open, and truthful; the information we provide will be explicit, accurate, and based on the best available sources of evidence.

We will operate on the basis of mutual respect and inclusiveness to foster cooperation and collaboration.

Councillors*

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Dr. Alex Gillis – Nova Scotia
Mr. John Greschner – Yukon
Mr. Michel C. Leger – New Brunswick
Ms. Lyn McLeod – Ontario
Mr. David Richardson – Nunavut
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Mr. Steven Lewis
Dr. Danielle Martin
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* as of February 2008

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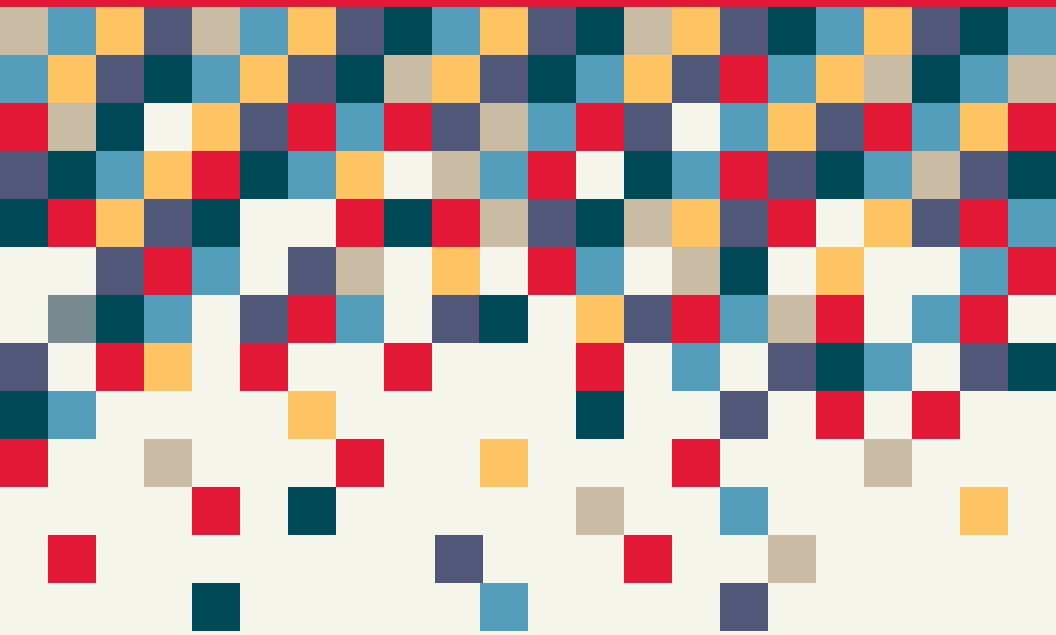
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Conseil canadien de la santé

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