



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Budget 2018 fails to address health inequities faced by Canadian heart patients

OTTAWA, March 2, 2018 – The Canadian Cardiovascular Society (CCS) is encouraged by investments made into some areas of health in this week’s 2018 budget, but is disappointed in the federal government’s failure to address the critical inequities in care faced by Canadian heart patients.

Across the country, quality of cardiac care can vary substantially, depending on what province, city or town in which patients receive treatment. In Canada, unlike many other countries, we do not have a national, transparent reporting system that measures and compares patient outcomes. Such a system would allow health professionals to identify gaps in patient outcomes and improve care in an evidence-based way.

To help remedy these inequities, the CCS asked for funding in this year’s federal budget for its cardiovascular health system improvement initiative.

Our initiative would assess the quality of care for all Canadian heart patients and demonstrate accountability for the billions of dollars of Canadian taxpayer money spent to care for those with cardiovascular disease.

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance recognized the economic and social value of the CCS initiative, and made it its number two budget recommendation. Despite this and the fact that cardiovascular disease is the second leading cause of death in Canada, an investment into heart health was missing from Budget 2018.

“Failure to invest into an initiative that would ensure high quality care for the 2.4 million Canadian adults affected by heart disease is a huge missed opportunity by the federal government,” said Dr. Catherine Kells, President of the Canadian Cardiovascular Society.

“It’s extremely problematic that as a physician in Nova Scotia, I can’t reassure my patients by telling them my own success rate or their long-term risk of death or recurrence – because I simply don’t know. I don’t know if my patients here in Halifax are receiving the same quality of care or experiencing the same outcomes as patients in a larger centre in Toronto”

In addition to the regional inequities in care that may persist, lack of federal support for heart health also puts the outcomes of particularly vulnerable groups such as women and Indigenous

people (who are known to have a high risk of heart disease) at particular risk. Without a transparent, pan-Canadian system to measure outcomes in these high-risk groups, we cannot begin to assess what gaps in care exist, or know how to best improve the heart health of women and Indigenous people.

"Heart disease and stroke is a major cause of death and disability in Canadian women. Evidence clearly demonstrates that women are under-diagnosed and under-treated, resulting in worse outcomes among women compared to men," said Dr. Karin Humphries, Co-Chair of the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada's Women's Heart and Brain Health Research Steering Committee.

"There is an urgent need to systematically and continuously evaluate the care that women with heart disease receive in Canada. Funding for the CCS' heart health initiative is critically important in ensuring that both women and men receive the best care possible."

About the Canadian Cardiovascular Society

The Canadian Cardiovascular Society is a federally-incorporated, not-for-profit organization that represents more than 2,200 cardiovascular clinicians and scientists across Canada. Established in 1947, the CCS works to promote cardiovascular health and care excellence through knowledge translation, professional development and health policy.

Related links:

- [House Pre-budget Report of the Standing Committee on Finance](#)
- [The Canadian Cardiovascular Society 2018 Pre-Budget Submission](#)

For more information please contact:

MJ Deschamps
Health Policy Coordinator
613-669-3407 ext.417
Deschamps@ccs.ca