



The voice for Canadians who care about cancer

Highlights of our advocacy work in 2020

Changing public policy is one of the most effective tools for preventing cancer and helping those living with and beyond cancer. That's why the Canadian Cancer Society works with government to bring about healthy public policies that will help prevent cancer and improve the lives of people living with cancer and their caregivers. Our advocacy work is making a difference. Here are some recent advocacy achievements that demonstrate our dedication to preventing cancer and finding new and better ways to make life easier for Canadians with cancer.

Top 5 successes

Cancer & COVID-19: making the voices of Canadians affected by cancer heard

From the start of the pandemic, we have heard from people with cancer whose surgeries have been postponed, treatment plans changed and tests delayed, who are worried about becoming collateral damage of COVID-19. As the voice for Canadians who care about cancer, we brought forward these concerns to all levels of government to make sure their needs are reflected in the medium and long-term response to COVID-19.

Making important advancements in tobacco control

After sustained advocacy work, the federal government introduced new regulations that restrict the advertisement of e-cigarettes anywhere young people can be exposed to them. This will counter the e-cigarette marketing strategies of tobacco companies, reduce youth vaping and help protect young people from becoming addicted to nicotine. British Columbia introduced similar regulations this year as well.

Prince Edward Island became the first province in Canada to raise the minimum sales age for tobacco and e-cigarettes to 21. This comes after extensive advocacy from the Canadian Cancer Society. Most smokers begin smoking before the age of 19 and so increasing the sales age to 21 makes it more difficult to become addicted to tobacco at a young age.

CCS named a top health influencer

Once again, the Canadian Cancer Society was identified as one of the top 37 health influencers in Canada by The Hill Times Research. Rankings are based in part on the number of communications recorded by an organization, including meetings. Being one of the top health influencers means that CCS was hard at work all year making sure the needs of Canadians affected by cancer were heard by the federal government and elected officials. We will continue serving as a vocal advocate on behalf of all Canadians who care about cancer.



New report calls for improved benefits for Canadians with cancer and their caregivers

CCS, in partnership with several health organizations, [released a report](#) that outlines 10 key recommendations to improve the Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefit including an extension of the benefit from 15 to 26 weeks. CCS continues to advocate for an extension of the benefit to at least 26 weeks, something the federal government committed to in their election platform and mandate letters.

Increasing access to cancer care

CCS's advocacy in provinces across the country resulted in cancer care advancements including better support for caregivers, palliative care, testing for prostate cancer and long-term commitments to cancer care. The Quebec government passed Loi 56, which provides legal recognition of all caregivers, something CCS has long advocated for. In Ontario, the Compassionate Care Act became law, which ensures Ontarians have access to quality palliative care in the setting of their choice. CCS worked to ensure the Act included a broad definition of palliative care that goes beyond recognizing it as something valued only at end of life. The Ontario government also passed a motion in support of Prostate-Specific Antigen (PSA) testing coverage through OHIP following advocacy efforts from CCS and the legacy Prostate Cancer Canada. During a snap election in British Columbia, CCS advocated for a number of cancer priorities that continue to shape the newly elected NDP government's 10-year cancer care plan for the province.