



How we work to make cancer care better

Highlights of our advocacy work in 2023

Changing public policy is one of the most effective tools for preventing cancer and helping those living with or beyond cancer. That's why the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) 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. Thanks to your support, 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.

Success in numbers

In 2023, we:

- Championed **29 policy changes** to help prevent cancer and improve lives
- Engaged over **739 elected officials and policy makers** in discussions to help enact change that prioritizes health
- Engaged over **5,000 advocates** through Voices for Change – our volunteer advocacy network

Our top 10 successes

Setting a world precedent with new cigarette warnings

CCS advanced tobacco control initiatives that set a world precedent and held tobacco manufacturers accountable. Thanks to federal regulations announced on May 31, 2023, Canada became the first country in the world to require a health warning directly on every individual cigarette. The regulations also required a new set of warnings for tobacco packages.

Calling on provinces to improve palliative care

In 2023, CCS launched a groundbreaking [report](#) on palliative care, which Health Canada referenced in their progress report on the Framework on Palliative Care in Canada. Our palliative care report sets the benchmark for improving quality of care for people who are experiencing serious illnesses like cancer and identified, for the first time, a comprehensive look at the number of hospice beds per province and territory.



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Going beyond partisan politics to make cancer care better

CCS led advocacy efforts that united government partners who are looking to improve the state of cancer care in Canada. Through the cross-party leadership (led by co-chairs and MPs Dan Albas and Peter Schiefke), Canada's first all-party [cancer caucus](#) in the House of Commons was established in June 2023. These efforts go beyond partisan politics and reflect the work that must be done at the federal level to address Canada's cancer burden. CCS hopes the cancer caucus will bring together representation from all political parties to learn more about cancer, enable Parliamentarians to better engage their constituents on cancer and help them advocate for governments to take steps to prevent cancer and support those living with the disease.

Influencing policy change on Parliament Hill

The CCS Advocacy team has been recognized as one of Canada's [top health lobbyists](#) in 2023 by *The Hill Times* newspaper, as well as one of the [top influencers](#) working to change health policy. We achieved significant milestones last year and we ensured that cancer care was a key priority in the agenda on Parliament Hill as decision-makers advanced important public policies.

Holding the tobacco industry accountable

CCS successfully advocated for a tobacco manufacturer [cost recovery fee](#), included in the 2023 federal Fall Economic Statement. Legislation introduced will require that the tobacco industry reimburse government the cost of the federal tobacco control strategy (Bill C-59), effectively holding them accountable for the tobacco epidemic they caused.

Representing public health interests at the Supreme Court of Canada

The Supreme Court of Canada, in a unanimous judgment, upheld [provincial public health legislative measures](#) that were more restrictive than federal legislation in the same area, providing a helpful precedent in other areas such as tobacco and e-cigarettes. CCS acted as an intervener before the Court in this decision.

Strengthening e-cigarette taxes across Canada

Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, Yukon and Northwest Territories all took steps to participate in the federal e-cigarette tax, a measure to reduce youth vaping. There are now **12 of 13 provinces/territories** that have their own provincial e-cigarette tax, or that have indicated they will participate in federal e-cigarette tax. Moreover, Quebec banned flavours (other than tobacco flavour) in e-cigarettes, and increased tobacco taxes.

Strengthening screening programs across Canada

We welcomed the announcement of an investment of \$500,000 from the Government of Canada to expedite the review of the [breast screening guidelines](#) by the Canadian Task Force on Preventative Health Care (Task Force). The guidelines were last updated in 2018 and since then, evidence and understanding of breast cancer early detection has continued



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to evolve, applying pressure on the guidelines to keep pace. We also saw an important advance when the Government of British Columbia announced that it will be transitioning to HPV screening as the primary form of screening for cervical cancer as well as offering cervix self-screening options to better reach under-screened populations. We have long advocated for the implementation of HPV testing as the primary test.

Showing how palliative care is About Life through our campaign

In January, we launched the About Life advertising campaign, to show people the positive impacts from receiving palliative care and how it can improve someone's quality of life. The videos were viewed more than **10 million** times, drove more than **16,000 people** to our [website](#) and encouraged people in Canada to contact more than **240 elected officials** about palliative care.

Bringing your voices to Parliament Hill

On April 17 and 18, CCS held an Advocacy Summit & Hill Day. Over **25 advocacy leadership volunteers** with lived experience from across Canada united with the advocacy team to share breakfast with **25 MPs/Senators**, hear from members of the new all-party cancer caucus created in partnership with CCS, and hold **44 one-on-one meetings** throughout the day. We also hand-delivered over **1,300 Get Better cards** collected from people across the country. Get Better cards invited those affected by cancer in Canada to share their stories and the challenges faced while accessing cancer care with elected officials. At our reception on Parliament Hill, speeches were made by MPs from all major political parties.

Calling on government to Stop Big Tobacco

Over **1,400 people** sent letters to their provincially elected officials calling for public health measures to be included in the tobacco settlement negotiations through our e-advocacy platform, www.StopBigTobacco.ca. Jointly with health partners, CCS also called on provincial Premiers to ensure that measures to reduce tobacco use are the priority in these historic negotiations.

Be a voice for change

Are you interested in being involved in future advocacy activities? Sign up for [CCS Voices for Change](#) and use your voice to make a difference.
