



## How we work to make cancer care better

### Highlights of our advocacy work in 2022

**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 2022, we:

- Championed **29 policy changes** to help prevent cancer and improve lives
- Engaged over **600 elected officials and policy makers** in discussions to help enact change that prioritizes health
- Engaged over **3,200 advocates** through Voices for Change – our volunteer advocacy network
- Were recognized as one of the **top 3** organizations that lobbied federally on health issues in the country
- Were honoured as one of the **top 30** health influencers according to the Hill Times

### Our top 10 successes

#### More paid time off work to focus on getting well

On December 18, 2022, the Employment Insurance (EI) sickness benefit was permanently extended from 15 to 26 weeks, marking the first time it has been increased since the 1970s. Minister Qualtrough [made the official announcement](#) alongside CCS CEO Andrea Seale at our Centre for Cancer Prevention and Support. This extension is the culmination of years of CCS advocacy and was made possible by our partners, volunteers, donors, and the patients and caregivers who shared their stories. Having 6 months of financial assistance means more time to focus on getting well and less time spent worrying about financial hardships.

#### Achieving a world-first in tobacco control

In June of 2022, in a world precedent, the Government of Canada announced [draft federal regulations to require a health warning directly on every cigarette](#). Requiring a health warning on each individual cigarette will reach every smoker with every puff and will be



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seen on the more than 20 billion cigarettes sold each year in Canada. CCS was instrumental in both pushing for picture warnings on cigarette packages, another world-first introduced in Canada in 2000, and now in securing these additional warnings on cigarettes themselves.

### **Calling on cancer care to Get Better**

In 2022, CCS launched a campaign called [Get Better](#), which calls on governments to get better at cancer care. Instead of sending a get better card to a loved one, the campaign featured get better cards for governments, calling on them to improve the cancer care system. The campaign saw great success and resulted in a 456% growth of our Voices for Change volunteer group – a network of individuals passionate about changing the future of cancer through advocacy. Since launching, we used the Get Better campaign to garner traction on issues across the country, including campaigns calling for palliative care to get better, early detection of cancer to get better and better support for caregivers.

### **Bringing the voices of people affected by cancer to decision makers**

Throughout the pandemic, we asked people affected by cancer how COVID-19 impacted their cancer experience. In 2022, we released a new report, titled [Living at the crossroads of COVID-19 and cancer](#), summarizing what we heard. The report highlights changes to the healthcare system that people with cancer, caregivers and healthcare providers want to see. CCS is using this report in meetings with elected officials and policy makers to highlight why we need to make cancer care better.

We also brought forward the voices of those whose cancer care was impacted during the COVID-19 pandemic on World Cancer Day. To mark the global day of cancer awareness, CCS launched [an online advocacy tool](#) for Canadians to raise their voice by sending a letter to their Member of Parliament, letting them know that cancer must not be forgotten during a pandemic. Over 750 letters were distributed to those with the power to enact change.

### **Influencing where dollars are spent through government budgets**

Every year, CCS provides recommendations to governments federally and provincially on what should be included in their budgets. In 2022, our recommendations were included in most federal, provincial and territorial budgets for 2022-2023. The federal budget included [a new tax on e-cigarette products](#) and a series of tax administration and contraband prevention measures to support the tax, in addition to an additional \$2B to address healthcare backlogs. Prince Edward Island, British Columbia, Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories announced increases to tobacco taxes. Northwest Territories introduced a ban on e-cigarette flavours, Ontario committed to creating an advisory table to review public coverage for take-home cancer drugs, and Quebec committed to enhancing screening capacity and invested an additional \$10M into palliative care hospices. All of these commitments will go a long way towards cancer prevention and support across the country.

### **Investing in our healthcare system**

Canada is at a pivotal moment where the decisions to invest in our health and well-being today will fundamentally shape the future of our healthcare system in the years to come. As governments make decisions on how healthcare funding will be distributed, CCS is making



sure cancer care gets the funding it needs. To that end, we held over 75 meetings with elected officials and senior-level policy makers at all levels to ensure cancer is a priority in national health funding negotiations. We also sent [an open letter to the Council of the Federation](#) – a collective of the country’s premiers responsible for discussing the future of Canada’s healthcare system – [calling on them to save and improve lives by increasing health funding immediately](#).

### **Raising awareness of palliative care**

We continued to raise awareness about the importance of palliative care and need for better access all year, following the creation of the [Don Green Palliative Care Advocacy Team](#) in 2021. Federally, CCS presented on palliative care at 3 standing committees over the year. Québec's Palliative Care Strategy 2020-2025, published in July, includes all of CCS's palliative care recommendations, including better governance, investments in homecare and improved data, indicators and measurements. In Alberta, the government announced \$11.3 million in increased funding for access to high-quality palliative and end-of-life care, which CCS long advocated for. CCS also deployed a toolkit for volunteers and self-advocates in Ontario and BC to support grassroots advocacy on palliative care during municipal elections in the provinces. The toolkit has since been expanded to encourage year-round self-advocacy on important palliative care issues.

### **Discussing the pandemic’s impact with the federal Health Minister**

It’s been more than 2 years now since the COVID-19 pandemic began, which means 2 years’ worth of stories of people across Canada who have had their cancer care disrupted. It also means that for 2 years, CCS has been hard at work advocating to government, bringing forward the needs and concerns of people affected by cancer during the pandemic. CCS sat down with the Honourable Minister Jean-Yves Duclos and two health advocates [during a Facebook Live](#) to discuss the impacts of the pandemic on cancer care and what is being done to address backlogs to cancer screening, diagnostics and surgeries.

### **Making cancer drugs available to those who need them**

At CCS, we are focused on bringing people together to ensure that new cancer drugs and innovative technologies are made available to those that need them. We collected detailed feedback about cancer drugs from people with cancer, their caregivers, and clinicians to inform 9 CCS-led submissions and 3 clinician submissions to [Pan-Canadian Drug Agencies](#). This feedback helps shape recommendations for which drugs are covered under provincial and territorial drug plans.

### **Holding leaders accountable at election time**

Elections are an opportunity to call on party leaders to make cancer-related commitments that we can hold them accountable for over their next 4 years in office. In 2022, Ontario and Quebec held provincial elections and CCS worked to ensure that cancer issues made it into all parties’ platforms. In Ontario, the newly elected government committed to ensuring coverage of take-home cancer drugs by committing to forming an advisory table, creating a surgical recovery strategy, new hospital developments and cancer treatment facilities, and



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investments in the Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario and the Lung Screening Program. In Quebec, the newly elected government committed to continuing the implementation of the Plan to Implement Necessary Health Changes that includes multiple measures to improve cancer care and services.

Leading up to both election periods, CCS engaged in extensive advocacy, empowered our supporters to amplify our asks, and engaged the media to help ensure cancer was a priority.

## **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.