



Ms. Suzie Cadieux, Clerk of the Committee  
Standing Committee on Finance  
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street  
House of Commons  
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

February 19, 2016

Dear Ms. Cadieux,

RE: Budget Consultation Submission

The Canadian Men's Health Foundation is a national, non-profit organization focused on inspiring men to live longer, healthier lives. The CMHF is one of the only organizations of its kind to develop a market-based research approach to communicating the importance of male health in a way that men can relate to. The CMHF is focused on promoting the most important lifestyle factors in preventing the onset of health problems.

On behalf of the Foundation, I am pleased to provide our recommendations on budget priorities to the Standing Committee on Finance.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wayne Hartrick", is written over a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp or watermark.

Wayne Hartrick  
Executive Director  
Canadian Men's Health Foundation

## Executive Summary

There's a male health problem in Canada. Men are 79% more likely to die of heart disease than women and 57% more likely to die from diabetes. 67% of Canadian men are obese, which can lead to many long term health problems. They're also more likely to die as a result of alcohol abuse or suicide. Simply put, men are living in poor health, at a significant cost to Canada's healthcare system - and most of it is avoidable.

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Your Government has promised real change in Canada. That means ensuring that Canadians are in good physical and mental health so they are able to contribute more fully to our economy while living healthier and happy lives. A big part of the equation is lifestyle choices including healthy eating, increased activity, better sleep, reducing alcohol consumption, and of course, not smoking.

Solving men's health is the "missing piece" to the family health puzzle. Too often, our fathers, husbands and sons disappear from our lives much earlier than necessary. Women play a large part in encouraging men to do more to address their health and wellness, and this initiative is just as much about women as it is about men. Tackling men's health issues as a component of family health will lessen the burden on the spouses and siblings of men and serve as cumulative health benefit for all Canadians.

Healthy men are better contributors to Canada's economy and society than men who are unhealthy, be it through a longer time spent in the workforce or less time spent at hospitals or the doctors office. Supporting the CMHF provides the Government of Canada with an opportunity to engage Canadian men in a new and unique way, and to take a leadership role in men's health without being cost-prohibitive.

## Who is the Canadian Men's Health Foundation?

The Canadian Men's Health Foundation is a national, non-profit organization focused on inspiring men to live longer, healthier lives. The CMHF is one of the only organizations of its kind to develop a market-based research approach to communicating the importance of male health in a way that men can relate to. The CMHF is focused on promoting the most important lifestyle factors in preventing the onset of health problems. The CMHF officially launched its "Don't Change Much" ([www.dontchangemuch.ca](http://www.dontchangemuch.ca)) awareness campaign in June of 2014, along with the inaugural Men's Health Week in Canada from June 9<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup>.

## What is our Budget 2016 recommendation?

We are asking the Government of Canada to support the expansion of the Canadian Men's Health Foundation awareness campaign through a contribution of \$1 million dollars per year, for five years (\$5M total financial commitment). Specifically, funds would be used expand the reach of the Don't Change Much campaign through events, digital and traditional advertising.

## Why focus on men's health in particular?

- **There's a male health problem in Canada.** Men are 79% more likely to die of heart disease than women and 57% more likely to die from diabetes. 67% of Canadian men are obese, which can lead to many long term health problems. They're also more likely to die as a result of alcohol abuse or suicide. Simply put, men are living in poor health, at a significant cost to Canada's healthcare system - and most of it is avoidable.
- **Canadians are in denial about the healthiness of Canadian men.** While the statistics above speak for themselves, a majority of Canadians (63%) believe that men in Canada are somewhat healthy. Perhaps most alarmingly, men aged 30-44 were more likely to describe themselves as healthy – despite statistics which indicate over half (58%) do not see their own diet as healthy, 43% have done no moderate to vigorous physical activity in the past day, and 44% did not get enough sleep last night. Men are quick to deprioritize their health for careers and families, and less likely to seek help if they think that something is wrong.
- **Solving men's health is the “missing piece” to the family health puzzle.** Too often, our fathers, husbands and sons disappear from our lives much earlier than necessary. Women play a large part in encouraging men to do more to address their health and wellness, and this initiative is just as much about women as it is about men. Tackling men's health issues as a component of family health will lessen the burden on the spouses and siblings of men and serve as cumulative health benefit for all Canadians.

## What has the CMHF been able to accomplish to date?

The CMHF formally launched in June 2014. The launch included a new website and public awareness campaign [www.dontchangemuch.ca](http://www.dontchangemuch.ca) as well as a health assessment tool which allows men to evaluate their personal health and wellness. The first month of operations prove that, with additional resources, the ability of CMHF to reach its target demographic and change minds is well within reach:

- 40,000 + people (75% men) visited [www.dontchangemuch.ca](http://www.dontchangemuch.ca) website
- 30,000 + YouTube views of Public Service Announcement
- 2,000 + users of the “YouCheck” health assessment tool, designed to provide insight to men about their health and wellness
- 1,500 active email users who have requested to receive ongoing health information.
- 680 news stories generated corresponding with the launch of the Foundation
- Celebrity champions including Trevor Linden, Brendan, Shanahan, Simon Whitfield, and Alain Vigneault
- 90 % of all feedback received is positive to very positive

The “Don't Change Much” campaign in particular has also had considerable success in the initial phases of its launch:

### *TV Campaign*

- 11% of Canadian men recalled seeing the television campaign (despite a industry-low media spend)
- 83% of Canadian men got at least one intended message from the TV campaign;
- The majority of Canadian men feel the TV campaign is likable (62%) and important (69%)

- The majority of men subsequently all thought about their health, diet and activity (55% +)
- There was a positive relationship between the TV campaign recall and recent consideration of health improvements including eating healthier (+20%) smoking reduction (+18%) and jogging (+10%).

### *Online Campaign*

- When viewing the website, 54% of users would click on content, and about ¼ would return to the website
- Men were most likely to engage with the “10 Health Tips” section (68%) as well as how easy changes could be made (50%)
- Men also took an interest in the meal planner function of the website (42%) and the exercise planner (37%)
- Men perceived the website to be positive and useful (61%).

**The CMHF have a campaign that has been developed with men in mind, which has been proven to make an impact with its target audience. However, additional support is needed to help spread this message and foster positive behavioural changes in men.**

### **Why should the Government of Canada provide funding support?**

**Supporting the CMHF is an opportunity to speak to middle class Canadians in a way that works for them.**

- The disassociation between how healthy men are and how healthy they *think* they are provides proof that we need to be speaking to men differently about their health and wellness.
- CMHF’s campaign is already having an impact. More than 10% of men who saw the advertisements or website reported they were considering health behavior improvements in eating, smoking and activity
- CMHF has initially targeted its message at males aged 30-55 about the importance of their health and wellness, with the ability to engage and communicate with this group of men in a creative and unique way.
- Financial support will allow CMHF to broaden its awareness campaign, enabling us to better reach French speaking markets in Quebec and Atlantic Canada.
- CMHF works with other healthcare organizations to spread the mutual message of lifestyle improvement to men. For example, in the first ever Canadian Men’s Health Week the CMHF partnered with the Canadian Medical Association, the Canadian Mental Health Association, and the Dietitians of Canada.

### **A cost-effective way to connect other health funding.**

- The CMHF discusses all aspects of male health; including fitness, sleep patterns, diet, and mental health. It takes a holistic view of men’s health, rather than focusing on just one area of concern (cardiac, prostate, etc.).
- Financial support for the CMHF is a cost-effective way to reach men about all health and wellness issues they should be concerned about, rather than tackling the problems one by one.
- This funding would allow us to meet our shared goals, while respecting Canada’s current fiscal environment.
- The CMHF would use allocated funds to leverage investment from corporate Canada in the Foundation, with the goal of doubling the initial investment over 5 years.

### **A chance to take a leadership role in supporting men's health awareness.**

- The CMHF is the first “hub” of information on all aspects of male health in Canada, and one of the first of its kind in the world. Support from the Government of Canada for the CMHF would display global leadership and commitment to solving the men's health problem we face.
- This government has shown global leadership in maternal and child health through its recent contribution of an additional \$3.5 billion. Support for men's health awareness would be complimentary to these family-health initiatives.
- The federal government would join the Government of British Columbia as well as several corporate investors in financially supporting the CMHF. The CMHF would like to use any federal contributions to help leverage additional financial investment from the private sector, where possible.

### **Canadians see a role for the federal government in advocating for male health and wellness.**

- In a public opinion survey conducted by Abacus Data, 79% of respondents mostly or strongly agreed with the statement that Governments in Canada should do much more to promote the importance of healthy lifestyles for men.

### **What is our long-term goal?**

Investing in men's health awareness is an important component of preventative healthcare. The CMHF wants to be part of a healthcare system which sees fewer men with diabetes, heart disease and mental illness. Healthier men are more able to contribute to society, and are less of a burden on Canada's healthcare system. The long term goal of the CMHF is to inspire behavioural changes in men that take them beyond just “thinking” about their health, and instead motivate men to take small steps and create new habits which lead to improved health outcomes.

*CMHF's founding Chair Dr. Larry Goldenberg is a urologic surgeon and clinical scientist with an international reputation for excellence in prostate cancer research and treatment. His current research involves the evaluation of the role of multiparametric MRI in prostate cancer, the potential use of focal therapy, patient education, daVinci robotic prostatectomy and novel treatments for benign prostatic hyperplasia. He has been recognized for his contributions to health care by being inducted into the Order of British Columbia and the Order of Canada.*