

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)

Pre-budget consultations 2012

Canadian Cancer Society

Responses

1. Economic Recovery and Growth

Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?

2. Job Creation

As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

The Canadian Cancer Society urges the Government of Canada to increase investments in the prevention of cancer and other chronic diseases with a focus on research, knowledge translation and programs with measurable impacts that encourage Canadians to adopt healthy behaviours. It has been shown that about half of all cancers can be prevented through healthy living and policies that help protect the health of Canadians. With an increasingly aging population, it is critical that Canada maintain a healthy workforce to sustain economic growth and increased productivity. The impact of cancer and other chronic diseases on our labour force is significant. In a 2004 study, it was estimated that indirect costs due to lost productivity from chronic disease disabilities and deaths accounted for \$54.4 billion annually, and productivity losses for cancer alone cost \$12.9 billion annually. An estimated 186,400 new cases of cancer will be diagnosed in Canada in 2012. While we are making tremendous progress in early diagnosis and treatment, too little focus has been placed on preventing cancer and other chronic diseases. Other jurisdictions have realized returns on investment through their focus on prevention, and Canada could do the same by working in partnerships with researchers, charities, businesses and other partners in prevention. Evidence shows that the major risk factors for cancer are

tobacco and alcohol consumption, unhealthy weights and lack of physical activity. These risk factors are also common to other chronic diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and respiratory diseases. By investing in the prevention of these risk factors Canada would be investing in a healthier and therefore much more productive workforce. The Canadian Cancer Society believes that more can be done to prevent the premature onset of many chronic diseases, including cancer. We urge the federal government to commit increased investments to integrate cancer prevention research, policy and practice to ensure that all Canadians, regardless of where they live or their economic status, can adopt healthy lifestyles and continue contributing to Canada's economic and social development.

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?