

Talking Points: Priority – Accelerating Research

LINE - Background

“Make Health Research a Priority”

- For Canadians living with MS, research is key to new treatments, better quality of life, and ultimately a cure.
- The MS Society is focused on accelerating research and since 1948 has provided over \$175M of funding for MS research and researchers in Canada.
- Therefore, we ask the federal government to make health research a priority by continuing to invest in fundamental research and by recognizing and supporting the unique role health charities and patients play in the health research ecosystem.

The MS Society supports the recommendations in the [Investing in Canada’s Future: Strengthening the Foundations of Canadian Research](#) (Naylor) report and sees great value in investing in fundamental research. We are pleased to see progress with these recommendations in the announcements made in the 2018 Federal Budget and feel there is still more investment needed. Additionally, the perspective of people living with health conditions (i.e. the patients) are not included in this discussion. This needs to change.

Investing in Research

Fundamental research is imperative to improving the lives of people living with MS and other health conditions as it creates new avenues of discovery and improves the shared knowledge base of science. Canadians rely on advances in fundamental research to explore questions about how a disease develops, determine whether a new treatment may be effective, and help to identify optimal care. Investments made in research serve a dual purpose of not only impacting health outcomes and promoting innovation, but to also stimulate the economy through employment opportunities, which leads to the commercialization of products and the development of intellectual property.

Fundamental research in Canada is key for generating new knowledge, driving innovation, training the next generation of scientists, for globalization as well as for socio-economic impact leading to improved lives for all Canadians. Responsive and committed federal funding of fundamental research in Canada will provide the stimulus needed to bolster our economy, support innovation, and attract and retain talent to our country. Investments in research today provide jobs and stimulate the economy, setting the stage for improved prosperity and innovation in the future. Health research funding is an investment that attracts and retains talent and, ultimately, improves health outcomes and supports economic growth.

Unique Roles - Health Charities and Patients

Health research is essential to addressing unmet patient needs by furthering our understanding of diseases and how to cure and care for those living with them. With their lived experiences, patients provide a unique perspective on the current state of clinical care that must shape the health research agenda moving forward. As such, the perspective of patients should be embedded within the health research agenda.

The role of health charities in funding research is substantial, not only in terms of financial contributions, but also in its investment in new researchers and its focus on building capacity and attracting talent to particular health fields. Research funded by health charities often addresses areas that might not be prioritized by government or private industry, but which are important to Canadians affected by particular diseases. This is a result of direct engagement with and direction from patients who are served by health charities in Canada and who in turn support them with gifts of time and treasure.

SINKER—Our Request:

The federal government should make health research a priority by:

- Continuing the investment of fundamental research in Canada and include health charities as key partners of government, universities and private industry.
- Creating a framework for enhanced coordination among these four groups to better leverage health charity research investment with additional public and private investment dollars for research.
- Meaningfully engaging patients in setting health research policy. Federal research funding programs should be informed by the perspectives of patients, their caregivers and healthcare providers.
- Implementing research agenda priority setting approaches that include patients and health charities across granting programs. Health charities are leaders in this area and have extensive experience in using a variety of mechanisms to shape the health research agenda, including direct engagement with patients and international collaborations.