



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

2019 Federal Budget: Investing in the Middle Class

On Tuesday, March 19, the Hon. Bill Morneau, minister of finance, tabled Budget 2019 in the House of Commons. This budget defines the federal government's fiscal priorities for the coming year. The following summary highlights key investments in areas that relate to or have implications for health and dental hygiene practice. To read the full budget, [click here](#).

In Budget 2019, the government proposes to:

Seniors

- Provide significant additional funding to the New Horizons for Seniors Program of \$100 million over five years, with \$20 million per year ongoing. This program supports projects that create opportunities for seniors to stay involved and active in their communities, improving their quality of life and overall wellness.

What this means for CDHA: Increased funding for wellness for seniors will help seniors stay healthier longer, facilitating better oral health care.

- Enhance the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) earnings exemption, beginning with the July 2020–21 benefit year, allowing low-income working seniors to keep more of what they earn.
- Ensure eligible Canadians receive their pension benefits by proactively enrolling CPP contributors (70 years old or older in 2020) who have not yet applied to receive their retirement pension. An estimated 40,000 Canadians are not receiving the pensions for which they are eligible as they missed the deadline to apply before they were 70.

What this means for CDHA: Increased income for low-income seniors may make preventive oral health care and the purchase of more nutritious foods more affordable for this vulnerable population.

- Provide the Public Health Agency of Canada with \$50 million over five years, starting in 2019–20, to support the implementation of Canada's first National Dementia Strategy.

What this means for CDHA: As this funding is designed to improve quality of life of people living with dementia, the majority being seniors, CDHA will advocate for the inclusion of oral health care in the National Dementia Strategy.

Indigenous Communities

- Invest \$327.5 million over five years to renew and expand funding of the Post-Secondary Student Support Program
- Invest \$125.5 million over ten years and \$21.8 million per year ongoing for an Inuit-led post secondary strategy
- Invest \$362 million over ten years and \$40 million per year ongoing in financial assistance for Métis Nations students in post-secondary education
- Provide Indspire, an Indigenous-led charitable organization that helps Indigenous students attend post-secondary institutions, with \$9 million over three years.

What this means for CDHA: Ongoing investments in Indigenous peoples' education and training may encourage some to attend dental hygiene educational programs, which in turn has the potential to improve access to preventive oral care services in Indigenous communities.

- Ensure that Inuit children have better access to health and social services by investing \$220 million over five years, beginning in 2019–20, as well as continuing to work with Inuit and other government partners to improve local capacity to deliver services.

What this means for CDHA: Increased funding for health services may allow CDHA to continue with and expand its contract with the Government of Nunavut to provide dental hygiene services in remote communities.

- Invest \$35 million in 2019–20 to ensure the Assisted Living Program in First Nations communities continues to help meet the needs of seniors and people with disabilities. This includes those living in their own homes and those living in long-term care facilities.
- Provide an additional \$8.5 million over two years, starting in 2019–20, to work with First Nations and Inuit communities on developing a new and more holistic long-term care strategy.
- Invest \$1.2 billion over three years, beginning in 2019–20, to ensure First Nations children have access to the health, social, and educational services they need.

What this means for CDHA: Investments in First Nations health, social, and educational services may allow CDHA to expand its Nunavut service model to First Nations communities in need of dental hygiene services. This is also an opportunity to continue to advocate for the advancement of the Oral Health Practitioner educational model to improve access to oral health care in these communities.

Pharmacare

- Create the Canadian Drug Agency to work with provinces, territories, and stakeholders to negotiate affordable prescription drugs for more Canadians. It is anticipated this will help lower drug costs to Canadians by billions per year.

What this means for CDHA: CDHA will continue to work with the federal government on this initiative to the benefit of seniors and low-income Canadians.

Canada Student Loans

- Lower the interest rates and create an interest-free grace period (six months after a borrower completes post-secondary education).

What this means for CDHA: Changes to the student loans program will provide more affordable education for those who wish to enter the dental hygiene profession.

CDHA remains committed to working with all levels of government on these and other key initiatives in the years ahead!

**For further information, please contact CDHA
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