

Health professionals lay out fall policy priorities

September 22, 2022 (Ottawa, ON)

As Members of Parliament return to Ottawa for the House of Commons fall session, the Extended Healthcare Professionals Coalition (EHPC) looks forward to collaborating with federal leaders and policy makers to address some of the most pressing healthcare issues facing Canadians.

First and foremost on the agenda: Canada is in the middle of a healthcare human resource crisis. While much attention has been paid to hospital closures and access to primary health care, the issue is much broader and affects all parts of the healthcare delivery system, across the public and private sectors. EHPC members are committed to providing innovative solutions to address longstanding systemic pressures noting that current system challenges extend beyond physicians and nurses.

“The EHPC represents over 100,000 of Canada’s regulated healthcare professionals who are grappling with these challenges and have a crucial role to play in terms of identifying and implementing solutions,” said **Ondina Love**, Chair of the EHPC. The EHPC looks forward to working with key federal decision makers in the coming weeks and months to improve timely access to care and overall system performance for all Canadians.”

The four key recommendations which EHPC will be advancing this Fall are:

- Address the health human resources crisis by investing in short and long-term retention and recruitment strategies for all healthcare practitioners. This includes expanding the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness Program, supporting provincial and territorial recruitment strategies, and expanded funding for educational institutions.
- Ensure the long-term resiliency of the healthcare sector by improving the collection of workforce data to identify and understand labour trends and challenges within and across the public and private sectors.
- Reduce the reliance on in-hospital care by improving access to preventative and early intervention interdisciplinary community-based primary care that includes the services provided by EHPC members such as Audiologists, Chiropractors, Dental Hygienists, Dentists, Denturists, Dietitians, Occupational Therapists, Optometrists, Pharmacists, Physiotherapists, Psychologists, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Social Workers.

- Explore models that require Canadian employers to provide their employees with health and dental benefits to cover their health and wellness needs that are not covered by Canada’s public healthcare system.

“We encourage decision makers to broaden their understanding of Canada’s healthcare landscape and bring extended professionals into the conversation”, said **Ms Love**. “Addressing the many challenges facing healthcare in Canada, including the human resources crisis, will require all hands on deck, and our members offer the expertise and perspective needed to keep Canadians healthy and productive.”

About EHPC: The EHPC is a coalition of organizations representing Canada’s Audiologists, Chiropractors, Dental Hygienists, Dentists, Denturists, Dietitians, Occupational Therapists, Optometrists, Pharmacists, Physiotherapists, Psychologists, Speech-Language Pathologists, and Social Workers. As regulated professions, these practitioners play a vital role as part of every Canadian’s healthcare team and ensure timely access to the treatment needed. Our coalition works to ensure health services provided in the public and private sectors are fully recognized by stakeholders and decision-makers and are accessible to the Canadian public.

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