

**OTTAWA, APRIL 2024 –**

The Extended Health Professional Coalition (EHPC), which represents over 100,000 regulated health care professionals, wishes to commend the federal government's Budget 2024 on expanding the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness Program to include: Dentists, Dental hygienists, Pharmacists, Social workers, Physiotherapists, and Psychologists. This acknowledgement of the invaluable contributions of these professions to the healthcare system is a significant step towards ensuring that Canadians can access the care that they need.

While we acknowledge this positive development, we strongly urge the Government of Canada to further expand its support to include Audiologists, Chiropractors, Denturists, Dietitians, Occupational therapists, Optometrists, and Speech-Language Pathologists.

The inclusion of all of our health professionals is essential towards reducing unnecessary hospitalization, dependency on pain medications, premature entry into long-term care facilities, and improving health outcomes.

EHPC members provide significant value to the health of the people of Canada, particularly in rural and remote areas of the country where timely access to primary care is a significant challenge. Our students are the future of essential extended healthcare professions and, thus, should be eligible for the Canada Student Loan Forgiveness Program. We call upon the federal government to expand its investment in the future of extended healthcare access in rural and remote regions.

EHPC looks forward to working with the federal government to improve the lives of all Canadians.

**Francois Couillard**  
Chair of EHPC

## **About EHPC**

### **About the Extended Healthcare Professionals Coalition (EHPC)**

EHPC aims to improve the health and welfare of all Canadians; promote excellence and innovation in health research and practice and promote the advancement, development, dissemination, and application of knowledge that advances health, social services and well-being for Canadians.

Our membership includes:

- Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists
- Canadian Association of Optometrists
- Canadian Association of Social Workers

- Canadian Chiropractic Association
- Canadian Dental Association
- Canadian Dental Hygienists Association
- Canadian Pharmacists Association
- Canadian Physiotherapy Association
- Canadian Psychological Association
- Denturists Association of Canada
- Dietitians of Canada
- Speech-Language & Audiology Canada

Ondina Love, CAE  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Canadian Dental Hygienists Association



François Couillard  
Chief Executive Officer  
Canadian Association of Optometrists



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Dr. Aaron Burry  
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Dr. Lisa Votta-Bleeker  
Chief Executive Officer  
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Krissy Bell  
Chief Executive Officer  
Canadian Physiotherapy Association



JP Cody-Cox  
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Speech-Language & Audiology Canada



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