



**Diabetes Canada
2022 Pre-Budget Consultation Submission**

**To: The Standing Committee on Finance and Government Services
Government of British Columbia
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About diabetes in British Columbia

Every 20 minutes, another British Columbian is diagnosed with diabetes. Approximately 1.6 million people in the province have diabetes or prediabetes. 558,000 cases of diabetes or 11 per cent of the population have been diagnosed while many British Columbians are undiagnosed, so not being treated. The direct cost of diabetes to British Columbia's healthcare system in 2021 is \$546 million with 80 per cent of that cost attributed to treating its serious and costly complications.

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the discovery of insulin in Canada, the Nobel Prize winning achievement by Sir Frederick Banting, Charles Best, JJR Macleod and James Collip. While we celebrate this life-saving discovery, it is not a cure. British Columbians with diabetes are at risk of the many consequences of the disease, including blindness, heart attack and stroke, amputation and kidney failure. With its growing prevalence and cost, we can't wait another 100 years to end diabetes.

To alleviate the burden of diabetes in British Columbia on individuals, communities, the economy and the health care system, it is imperative that the government commit to implementing a comprehensive diabetes strategy. At current projected disease growth rates, the province can expect a 32 per cent increase in diabetes by 2031 and with that the increase of direct healthcare costs to \$717 million. To stop the diabetes epidemic, we need urgent action.

About Diabetes 360°, a nationwide diabetes strategy framework

In late 2017, Diabetes Canada joined up with partners from a variety of sectors across the country and took over one year to develop [Diabetes 360°](#) – a measurable, outcome-focused national strategy for the prevention and management of diabetes. It is based on the hugely successful 90-90-90 model implemented globally to combat HIV/AIDS and is the product of the collaborative efforts of 129 stakeholders representing over 100 different organizations, including nine provincial governments.

The World Health Organization recommends that every country implement a national diabetes strategy, yet despite having more diabetes cases and higher per capita costs than most of the world's developed nations, Canada has been without one since 2013.

Diabetes 360° could achieve \$9 billion in health care cost savings across Canada from diabetes prevention alone over seven years.

The Diabetes 360° framework includes specific evidence-based recommendations in the areas of prevention, screening, treatment and patient outcomes for diabetes, and is set up to deliver results in just seven years by focusing on the following key targets:



- 90 per cent of Canadians live in an environment that preserves wellness and prevents the development of diabetes
- 90 per cent of Canadians are aware of their diabetes status
- 90 per cent of Canadians living with prediabetes and diabetes are engaged in appropriate interventions to prevent diabetes and its complications
- 90 per cent of Canadians engaged in interventions are achieving improved health outcomes

These targets are based on extensive consultation and rigorous analysis of research, and the actions required for their achievement are detailed in Diabetes Canada's [Diabetes 360°](#) report.

In 2021, the Government of Canada has confirmed the urgent need for a nationwide strategy by committing resources in [Budget 2021](#) and in passing [Bill C-237, An Act to Establish a National Diabetes Framework](#).

In working to develop a nationwide diabetes strategy by the July 29, 2022 deadline, the federal government should use Diabetes Canada's Diabetes 360° framework as its model and dedicate the necessary resources to implement the strategy in a timely way

Diabetes Canada's recommendations for British Columbia Budget 2022

1. Commit to participate fully in federal consultations on the nationwide diabetes framework

To date, British Columbia has been supportive of the federal government implementing Diabetes 360°.

The new *Act to Establish a National Diabetes Framework* requires comprehensive consultation with the provinces, territories, and Indigenous groups to help inform the development of the nationwide diabetes framework that must be tabled before Parliament by July 29, 2022. The nationwide diabetes strategy should be based on the Diabetes 360° framework and British Columbia should join with the federal government to design a strategy that will best meet the long-term needs of British Columbians.

Recommendation:

Diabetes Canada recommends the government of British Columbia commit the resources necessary to participate fully in federal/provincial/territorial consultations that will contribute to the development of a nationwide diabetes strategy for Canada. This strategy should align with Diabetes Canada's Diabetes 360° framework that includes evidence-based recommendations aimed at improving patient outcomes and reduce unnecessary healthcare spending.



2. Simultaneously implement a provincial diabetes strategy

Unnecessary hospitalizations can be significantly reduced by introducing a comprehensive British Columbia diabetes strategy that is aligned with the [Diabetes 360°](#) framework. The strategy should set aggressive targets to stem the tide of the diabetes epidemic and improve health outcomes for British Columbians with diabetes.

While British Columbia works with the Government of Canada to design a comprehensive diabetes strategy by July 2022, the province should resume its work to implement a provincial diabetes strategy, adopting the Diabetes 360° framework harmonized with the nationwide strategy.

British Columbia's Provincial Health Services Authority (PHAC) was poised to release a strategy in spring 2020, the timing unfortunately coincident with the start of global COVID-19 pandemic. As we have learned, many people with diabetes are at high-risk of developing more severe symptoms and complications of COVID-19 if they contract the virus, are about twice as likely to require hospitalization and intensive care as those without diabetes, and about three times as likely to die of COVID-19.

While the urgent need to address the COVID-19 pandemic has understandably absorbed the attention of the government of British Columbia, the pandemic has shown that people with diabetes are more vulnerable to infectious diseases like COVID-19 and demonstrated how critical it is to reduce the burden of diabetes to protect citizens and our healthcare system.. British Columbia's diabetes rate will continue to rise if a concerted effort is not made to address diabetes prevention, screening, management and improved health outcomes soon through the implementation of a provincial strategy.

Recommendation:

Diabetes Canada urges the Government of British Columbia to resume its priority to implement a provincial diabetes strategy, using the Diabetes 360° framework. The provincial strategy can be coordinated with and supported by the nationwide diabetes strategy framework once implemented.

3. Enhance access and individual choice for diabetes devices and medications

Diabetes is a complex and heterogenous disease. Diabetes Canada feels strongly that a diabetes management plan should always be individualized and include options for care. Patient choice is the cornerstone of person-centred healthcare and policy. Given this, we believe that a one-size-fits-all does not adequately provide people with access to the therapies that may be best suited to their individual self-management needs.



Insulin pumps:

Providing one insulin pump at no cost to eligible British Columbians with diabetes regardless of age is certainly a relief to many people with diabetes. However, if it is not compatible or preferred, an individual through his or her provider must receive special approval to access another option that is subject to costs. In order to best manage their diabetes, British Columbians require equitable access to the device that best suits their needs, including insulin pumps that are approved by Health Canada, but not included for coverage in British Columbia.

Diabetes medications:

British Columbians with diabetes require timely access to medications with evidence-based criteria that are in-line with Diabetes Canada's Clinical Practice Guidelines (CPGs). Criteria for access should not be a barrier when the evidence is clear. The SGLT2 inhibitor class of medications can prevent a life-threatening cardiovascular event for those with pre-existing cardiovascular disease. However, provincial reimbursement policies do not align with evidenced-based national recommendations from the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technologies in Health or Diabetes Canada's [CPGs](#). British Columbians and their prescribers would benefit from less prohibitive criteria to access the drugs that could provide benefit or even be life-saving.

Glucose monitoring devices:

For some people with diabetes, devices such as a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) or a Flash glucose monitor can help them achieve and maintain better glycemic control. Staying within the target blood sugar range is important to reduce the risk of long-term complications, including heart attack, stroke, kidney failure, blindness and amputation. It can also prevent severe hypoglycemia (low blood sugar) which can be life-threatening.

Diabetes Canada welcomed Health Minister Adrian Dix's June 2021 announcement that British Columbians aged two years and older living with diabetes who meet special authority criteria will now have access to a single type of continuous glucose monitor (CGM) through BC PharmaCare. While this will benefit many British Columbians with diabetes, there will be others who will be left behind because the one device available does not meet their diabetes management needs. As a result, they will be required to go without a needed CGM or pay out-of-pocket for the device they require, adding to the financial burden imposed on them by diabetes.

Recommendation:

Diabetes Canada recommends that the Government of British Columbia remove barriers to access and enhance individual choice for diabetes medications and devices needed to manage diabetes, so the risk of its devastating and costly complications can be decreased.



About Diabetes Canada

Diabetes Canada is the registered national charitable organization that is making the invisible epidemic of diabetes visible and urgent. Diabetes Canada partners with Canadians to End Diabetes through:

- Resources for health care professionals on best practices to care for people with diabetes;
- Advocacy to governments, schools, and workplaces; and
- Funding world-leading Canadian research to improve treatments and find a cure.

For more information, visit diabetes.ca or call **1-800-BANTING (226-8464)**.