

Let's Put Cancer at the Top of the Agenda

Dear Federal, Provincial and Territorial Health Ministers:

As you convene to discuss Canada's healthcare system crisis, we urge you to prioritize the hundreds of thousands of people living in Canada affected by delays and gaps in screening, diagnosis, treatment and surgery of all forms of cancers across the country.

2022 may well be the [worst year for cancer deaths](#) in Canada due to the widespread disruptions on cancer screening, diagnosis, treatment, and surgeries during the pandemic. It is estimated that 21,247 *additional* Canadians could lose their lives to cancer due to pandemic-related delays over the next decade.ⁱ Many of these lives could be prolonged or spared if you collectively take urgent action to address the gaps in screening, diagnosis, treatment, and surgery resulting from both the deterioration of our healthcare systems in recent years and the interruptions in cancer care systems from the pandemic.

That's why we have come together to form the [Cancer Action Now Alliance](#), a national alliance of patient organizations, professional associations, and life sciences companies that are witnessing the magnitude of the problem to the public, to those Canadians living with cancer, and to our own cancer care systems. We are calling on governments to address the issues in our cancer care systems so that people living with cancer have a chance to live longer, better quality lives.

We call on all Health Ministers to:

- Commit to address backlogs in cancer diagnosis and care by increasing cancer screening and treatment capacity by at least 10% over pre-pandemic levels for a period of three years to regain ground we have lost due to the interruptions caused by the pandemic. This figure is in consensus with research conducted by the McGill Task Force on the Impact of COVID-19 on Cancer Control and Care.ⁱⁱ
- Commit new investments in health care to the improvement of measurable value-based patient outcomes in cancer with meaningful input from cancer stakeholders including patient and caregiver representatives.
- Use the Federal / Provincial / Territorial structure to convene a pan-Canadian working group to address the issues impacting cancer delivery systems.

Only with concerted and coordinated action can we make up for lost ground and begin to close the widening gaps to improve health outcomes and save lives.

Please commit to taking cancer action now.

Sincerely,

The Cancer Action Now Alliance

ⁱ <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1002/ijc.33884>

ⁱⁱ [ibid.](#)