

The new Canada Social Transfer: Impetus for a renewed era of innovative social policy in Canada? ^[1]

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Excerpts from the speech:

Now that the Canada Health Transfer has been established as a separate payment for medicare and a new agreement has been reached for the next several years, we need to focus on the social transfer side of things. While health care as a social policy has been a defining feature of what it means to be Canadian, the CST & its purposes, its standards, and the amount of resources dedicated to it & provides a crucial opportunity for us to further build the kind of nation we desire.

It can well be argued that the social transfer side of the equation is far more important to producing well-being and healthy outcomes for our neighbors than the health side. We know that the determinants of health & things like income, early learning and care, clean air and water, education and training, and housing & contributes as much, and sometime more, to health outcomes that the "illness" system. One of the key points that I made in my Report as Health Commissioner is that we have to set a national goal of making Canadians the healthiest people in the world. And one of the keys to achieving this goal is a greater emphasis on preventative health measures and improving population outcomes.

We know for a fact that a child subject to deprivation or stress is far more likely to experience mental illness, obesity, adult on-set diabetes, heart disease and a shortened life span. Even if these children move into a better environment after childhood, they suffer poorer health throughout their lives. Thus government investments and initiatives in early childhood education and development is vital & given the link between access to child care and income security.¹ Support to families with children is essential. This includes affordable, regulated childcare to enhance children's well-being and development. We should be encouraged by the Federal government's commitment to a national childcare program, especially if it is truly national and has some standards and real accountability to go along with it.

Region: Canada ^[3]

Tags: health ^[4]

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http://www.ccsd.ca/pr/2004/social_transfer/romanow.htm [3] <https://childcarecanada.org/taxonomy/term/7864> [4]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/health> [5] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/funding> [6]

<https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federalism> [7] <https://childcarecanada.org/category/tags/federal-programs>