

Budget 2009: Health and Economy equal priorities

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The Canadian Healthcare Association (CHA) is pleased that several of the initiatives announced in Budget 2009 will contribute to the well-being of Canadians. The funding for Canada's Aboriginal population reflects a much-needed commitment to improving the health status of a large segment of our society. The promised further investment in Canada Health Infoway for the implementation of electronic health and medical records and the ongoing support for the Canada Health Transfer (including the 6% annual escalator) will go a long way to enhancing the quality, safety and efficiency of the health system.

However, it is not yet clear if health facilities will be permitted to equally benefit from the welcome funds promised for infrastructure projects. Nor, given the global and domestic shortage of health providers and concerns with healthy workplaces, do the initiatives announced in Budget 2009 address the "people factor" – the needed support for those who are the foundation of the health system.

CHA recognizes that our country is facing serious economic challenges for the first time in many years. A healthy economy is fully dependent upon a healthy citizenry. We look forward to working with this government to ensure the health of Canadians remains an equal priority.

Sincerely,

Pamela C. Fralick, President and CEO
Canadian Healthcare Association