



RTOERO says key issues affecting aging Canadians missing from Canadian federal budget

RTOERO calls for increased action in three areas, public inquiry into long-term care

April 27, 2021

RTOERO is calling on the federal government to increase action to address national pharmacare, a national seniors strategy and geriatric health care, which were missing from the federal budget released April 18. RTOERO is also calling for a public inquiry into the long-term care situation experienced with COVID-19 in Canada.

The organization applauds the investments made in Old Age Security and national childcare. The [complete response to the 2021 Canadian federal budget](#) is available on the RTOERO website.

Quotations

Rich Prophet, Chair of Board, RTOERO:

“In looking at these three broad issues, it is clear that the infrastructures that support Canadians as they age must be redesigned and re-engineered. This won’t happen overnight. Still, we can immediately put plans in motion to truly provide dignity and quality to the lives of older Canadians. The federal government cannot let them down.”

“The conditions that have allowed this have been presented to governments over the past decades. If the same number of people who have died in LTC had died in daycare, the institutions would have shut down. The government responses would likely have been very different. Indifference or inaction is a reflection of ageism at its worst. We call for a public inquiry into the LTC situation we’ve experienced with COVID-19.”

Jim Grieve, CEO of RTOERO:

“RTOERO wants to ensure that our members, and all seniors, can live their best life as they age. That’s why we were pleased to see how the budget will improve benefits via Old Age Security. We also applaud the intention to invest in affordable and accessible child care. It’s vital to create systems that support people in need – at any age.”

“Pharmacare is now fragmented across the provinces and territories. The solution demands a national initiative. We support a national health plan, and efforts to assist financially-strapped older adults – so they needn’t choose between purchasing the necessities of everyday life or their medical prescriptions.”

“Gaps in our healthcare and social policies are creating barriers — to seniors’ independence, and to their essential role in vibrant, healthy communities and economies. Tackling these issues independently won’t give us the results we need. We need a national seniors strategy.”

Facts

- Canada is the only developed country in the world that has universal health but lacks universal drug coverage.
- Ten per cent of citizens don’t have adequate coverage to meet their needs. One in four households can’t afford to fill their prescriptions.
- Seniors are Canada’s fastest growing demographic. Today Canadians age 65 or older account for 17 per cent of the population. Statistics Canada predicts this will rise to 20 per cent — one-in-five Canadians — by 2024.
- A report from the Canadian Institute for Health Information indicated that by spring 2021, more than 14,000 residents of long-term care had died from COVID-19, making up 69 per cent of all COVID-related deaths in Canada.

About RTOERO

RTOERO is a bilingual trusted voice on healthy, active living in the retirement journey for the broader education community. With 81,000+ members in 51 districts across Canada, the organization is the largest national provider of non-profit group health benefits for education retirees. Members work in or are retired from the early years, schools and school boards, post-secondary and any other capacity in education. RTOERO believes in a better future, together.

Relevant links

- [Full response to the 2021 federal budget](#)
- [RTOERO official advocacy positions](#)