



Ensuring Equitable Access to Diabetes Devices and Supplies in Canada



I would love to have the sensors available through insurance plans. Not all cover it. And they're very expensive. I have tried it for a short period of time and found it so effective as a compliment to my current lifestyle in managing my diabetes, as well as medication...it helps me identify what foods spike my sugars and when I'm starting to go on low, and be proactive in managing future food choices. Having the sensor helps to identify what foods you may not think would increase your blood sugar as each person is so very different. It's like a personal coach."

- Person living with T2D

Purpose & Introduction

In February 2024, the [federal government announced](#) its intention to create a Diabetes Device Fund to make essential technologies—like glucose monitoring devices (continuous and intermittently scanned) glucometers/test strips and insulin pumps more accessible. Yet more than a year later, people in Canada living with diabetes are still waiting.

This document outlines Diabetes Canada's policy position on the need for equitable access to diabetes devices and supplies across Canada. It calls on the Government of Canada to follow through on its commitment to establish a stand-alone, dedicated Diabetes Device Fund, with its own budget apart from pharmacare to ensure consistent, sustainable, and needs-based access to these essential technologies for all people in Canada living with diabetes. Diabetes devices are not prescription drugs; they are specialized technologies that require distinct policies, procurement systems, and reimbursement mechanisms. Including them as a subset of pharmacare risks creating further administrative complexity, inconsistent implementation, and uncertainty for patients and provinces/territories.

A dedicated federal fund would provide predictable, long-term investment in diabetes technology access, ensuring that every person in Canada living with diabetes—regardless of income or postal code—can benefit from proven, life-changing tools that reduce complications, hospitalizations, and healthcare costs.

More than four million people in Canada are living with diabetes, and for many, managing this chronic condition carries both significant health and financial burdens. To prevent or delay serious complications, people with diabetes need timely access to medications, devices, and supplies that allow them to safely and effectively manage their condition.



The Challenge

The out-of-pocket costs of diabetes management are substantial.

- People with type 1 diabetes can face annual costs of up to \$18,300 depending on where they live.
- Those with type 2 diabetes can pay as much as \$10,000 each year.¹

While some devices and supplies are covered through public or private health plans, eligibility restrictions, coverage caps, and inconsistent provincial policies result in a patchwork of inequitable access across the country.

- Eligibility rules often differ from what Health Canada has approved and from the most recent clinical evidence.
- Administrative delays and deductibles make access slow and costly.
- Disparities with the Non-Insured Health Benefits (NIHB) program create additional inequities for First Nations and Inuit populations, especially between those living on- and off-reserve.

Make no mistake: these are not luxury items.

CGMs and insulin pumps are life-changing technologies that provide real-time glucose data and automate insulin delivery. They empower people to manage their diabetes proactively and prevent dangerous complications such as diabetic ketoacidosis, cardiovascular disease, and kidney failure.

As one person living with type 2 diabetes shared:

"The sensors help me identify what foods spike my sugars and when I'm starting to go low. They're like a personal coach—helping me stay healthy, independent, and proactive in managing my diabetes."

Another person explained:

"These devices help me prevent health crises before they happen. Covering them would save money long-term, because prevention costs far less than hospitalization."

Context

Diabetes Canada recognizes that many people in Canada living with type 1, type 2 and gestational diabetes continue to face barriers to accessing the medical devices and supplies required to safely manage their condition. Glucose monitoring devices, glucometers and test strips as well as insulin pumps represent proven, life-saving technologies that reduce complications such as sight loss, lower limb amputations, cardiovascular disease and kidney failure, improve glycemic control, and enhance well-being.

While provinces and territories provide varying levels of coverage, this patchwork approach results in inequities that compromise the health and safety of people in Canada living with diabetes. We believe a coordinated national approach anchored by the federal Diabetes Device Fund will promote consistency, fairness, and better outcomes for all.

¹ Diabetes and Diabetes-Related Out-of-Pocket Costs: 2022 Update. Ottawa: Diabetes Canada; 2023



The sensors help manage real time fluctuations so therefore you can be more preventative and proactive in immediate food choices, exercise and weight management. It would be helpful having the sensors covered, would help financially if it didn't have to be purchased out of pocket. Long-term it helps to contribute to managing health such as preventative care helps me avoid further taxing the healthcare system."

- Person living with T1D

The Case for a Federal Dedicated Diabetes Device Fund

When the Government of Canada announced its intent to establish a Diabetes Device Fund in February 2024—alongside national pharmacare legislation—it raised real hope among people living with diabetes. Yet, over a year later, that full promise remains unfulfilled. While recent pharmacare agreements include “device fund funding” this approach doesn’t create a permanent, stand-alone fund designed specifically to address gaps in device access. The dependence on pharmacare agreements also risks delaying progress in each province/territory while waiting for these agreements. Canadians with diabetes cannot afford to wait.

Integrating diabetes devices within broader pharmacare frameworks creates uncertainty, fragmentation, and administrative complexity. Provinces and territories are hesitant to act without federal clarity on how funding will flow, what will be covered, and whether essential ongoing supplies, such as sensors, transmitters, and infusion set will be included. Without a dedicated structure, access will continue to depend on where a person lives rather than what their health requires.

A stand-alone federal Diabetes Device Fund is the most effective and equitable way forward. It would:

- Eliminate inequities in access across provinces and territories;
- Harmonize eligibility criteria with the latest clinical evidence and Health Canada indications;
- Reduce preventable complications such as hypoglycemia, diabetic ketoacidosis, and cardiovascular events which can lower healthcare costs by decreasing hospitalizations and emergency visits;
- Enhance quality of life and mental health for people living with diabetes and their families.
- Ensure comprehensive coverage for both devices and their essential supplies;

Creating a stand-alone fund would demonstrate national leadership and accountability ensuring that access to life-changing diabetes technologies is determined by medical need, not by postal code. It is time to move from promise to action.

Evidence Supporting Access

Evidence from a cost-effectiveness study commissioned in 2023 demonstrates the substantial health and economic benefits of universal access to diabetes technologies.²

The study found that:

- Universal coverage of continuous glucose monitors could prevent up to 11,500 premature deaths and thousands of severe complications over 20 years;
- These technologies are highly cost-effective, with thresholds well below the accepted standard of \$50,000 per quality-adjusted life year (QALY);
- The long-term savings resulting from reduced hospitalizations, emergency room visits, and complications significantly outweigh initial costs.

Beyond clinical outcomes, diabetes devices improve quality of life by providing real-time data, reducing the fear of hypoglycemia, and supporting greater independence and participation in daily activities.



Policy Direction and Federal Leadership

To ensure consistent and equitable access to these essential technologies, Diabetes Canada recommends that the Government of Canada:

1. Fast track implementation of the Diabetes Device Fund, working in partnership with provinces and territories to ensure alignment with existing health system structures and coverage programs.
2. Engage people living with diabetes and health system experts in the fund's design, monitoring, and evaluation.
3. Remove administrative and financial barriers, including deductibles, age caps, and waiting periods.
4. Track outcomes and system savings, using standardized reporting to demonstrate long-term benefits.

Collaboration between federal, provincial, and territorial governments, alongside patient organizations and clinical partners, will be essential to the fund's success.

Conclusion

Diabetes Canada believes that all people living with diabetes in Canada deserve equitable access to the devices and supplies necessary to manage their condition safely and effectively. The creation of a stand-alone national Diabetes Device Fund represents a critical step toward closing existing gaps in care, improving health outcomes, and strengthening health equity across Canada.

The evidence is clear. The partnerships are ready.

That is why we urge the Government of Canada and all Provinces and Territories to continue demonstrating leadership by moving swiftly and collaboratively to make this stand-alone fund a reality.

National Office
1000-170 University Ave.
Toronto, ON M5H 3B3
416-363-3373

diabetes.ca

**DIABETES
CANADA**

² Rotondi, M. A., Wong, O., Riddell, M., & Perkins, B. (2022). Population-Level Impact and Cost-effectiveness of Continuous Glucose Monitoring and Intermittently Scanned Continuous Glucose Monitoring Technologies for Adults With Type 1 Diabetes in Canada: A Modeling Study. *Diabetes care*, 45(9), 2012–2019. <https://doi.org/10.2337/dc21-2341>