



**A CANADIAN CALL-TO-ACTION  
ROUNDTABLE MEETINGS SUMMARY REPORT**

**December 2019**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the fall of 2019, Diabetes Canada traveled the country engaging with their stakeholder communities, including people living with diabetes, health care professionals, representatives from Indigenous communities, health agencies, researchers and provincial governments. Sessions were held in British Columbia, Ontario and New Brunswick. Throughout the roundtable discussions, these communities emphasized the overwhelming human and economic toll diabetes takes and the costs it imposes on people living with diabetes, on their families and on our health care system.

Many challenges and issues were raised over the course of Diabetes Canada's engagement. Canadians living with diabetes, their families and caregivers face myriad obstacles, many of which are captured in the summary below. However, from these dynamic and complex discussions emerged one clear call- to-action, identified in each session and by a wide range of stakeholders as a foundational building block to improving diabetes care in Canada: **the need for a comprehensive national strategy**. Throughout the engagement process, Canadians voiced that it is time for a national approach to a disease Canada cannot afford to ignore.

Since 2013, Canada has been without a diabetes strategy and without targets to help address the epidemic. To fill this crucial gap, Diabetes Canada developed Diabetes 360°, an adaptable strategic framework informed by more than 100 stakeholder organizations to help governments build and enhance strategies that will tackle the diabetes epidemic and deliver real results for Canadians. Participants in each session endorsed Diabetes 360° as the vehicle to implement a national strategy.

In 2017, multi-sectoral stakeholders in Canada came together to develop an approach created by, and for, the diabetes community. Over seven years, Diabetes 360° would target four key areas that would make a substantive difference for Canadians:

- 90% of Canadians will live in an environment that reduces their risk of diabetes
- 90% of Canadians will be aware of their diabetes status
- 90% of Canadians with diabetes will be engaged in preventing complications
- 90% of all Canadians will achieve improved health outcomes

Diabetes 360° can be implemented by a task force that bring metrics, best practices and continuous improvement expertise through partnership with the provinces, territories and municipalities to address key needs for people with or at risk of diabetes. That task force would need seven years to do this work, at a total cost of \$150 million in federal funding.

## WHAT WE HEARD

Diabetes Canada convened three roundtables in British Columbia, Ontario, and New Brunswick, in addition to a national roundtable in Ottawa that brought together a multitude of stakeholders from across the country. Discussions explored regional needs, identified practical solutions and called for coordinated action across the country to address the diabetes epidemic in Canada. The priority areas for focused action that resulted from conversations across the country were consistent with that of Diabetes 360° targets: prevention, screening, treatment, and outcomes. Areas in which Canada can – and must – do better.

### British Columbia

Diabetes Canada estimates that 1.5 million people in British Columbia live with diabetes or prediabetes in 2019 and prevalence is expected to grow to 1.9 million by 2029. The estimated direct cost to the health care system in British Columbia is \$509 million and is expected to rise to \$685 million by 2029.

Conversations in British Columbia were primarily concerned with the need to improve diabetes treatment and outcomes by building on effective systems currently in place. To date, there are several prevention and treatment initiatives available in British Columbia, however, they generally operate in isolation and are thus not sufficiently coordinated or comprehensive enough to achieve the positive health outcomes and economic relief to which they set out. The Diabetes 360° framework would address fragmented access to care by enhancing linkages across the health care system at a national level.

In 2019, in response to dialogue with Diabetes Canada, the British Columbia Ministry of Health tasked the Provincial Health Services Agency with developing a provincial diabetes strategy based on Diabetes 360° by March 31, 2020.

### Ontario

In Ontario today, more than 4.4 million people live with prediabetes or diabetes – and every 6 minutes, someone new is diagnosed with this progressive chronic disease. The direct cost to the health care system is astronomical – currently \$1.5 billion – and expected to rise to \$2 billion by 2029.

With the health system transformation currently underway in Ontario, there is unprecedented opportunity to take bold action to address this public health crisis. There is a call for help to

ease the burden on hospitals and the health care-system while improving health outcomes for Ontarians currently living with diabetes.

Stakeholders from the province of Ontario envision a national strategy that addresses inequity in the health care system by focusing on marginalized communities, prioritizing data collection on vulnerable populations and building multisector partnerships across the network. A national strategy should address systemic barriers that drive health inequities and ultimately lead to increased rates of diabetes, as well as its accompanying health complications among specific sub-groups.

Diabetes 360° is committed to achieving better health outcomes for all Canadians and addressing systemic barriers that drive health inequities and that lead to increased rates of diabetes and accompanying health complications.

### **New Brunswick**

New Brunswick is expected to have the highest rates of diabetes/prediabetes of all the Atlantic provinces. The direct cost on the health care system is \$100 million and is expected to increase to \$127 million by 2029. The costs and effects on people living with diabetes in the province will be compounded given lower annual income and less robust health supports in New Brunswick and other Atlantic Provinces relative to other jurisdictions.

The province of New Brunswick has taken strides to address this burden with the development of the Provincial Comprehensive Diabetes Strategy; a promising first step that paved the way for a strong foundation with government commitments and engagement from the health care community. The province is now at a critical juncture with the government shifting from a dedicated Diabetes Strategy to incorporating diabetes into its Chronic Disease Prevention and Management Framework. This is viewed as an opportunity to inform the provincial CDPM approach and identify targeted actions on diabetes. Discussions did arise during roundtable conversations that this type of approach could lead to isolated policies and programs and insufficient resources to address diabetes within the province. A comprehensive national strategy to avoid creating further silos in the health care system.

## NEXT STEPS

11 million Canadians are living with diabetes or prediabetes. Treating the disease will cost our health care system nearly \$30 billion this year. Diabetes rates are rising at a rate of 40% per decade and show no signs of slowing down. The numbers are startling – but there is hope. **A \$150 million investment in federal funding will save \$20 billion in health care costs and reduce over 770,000 new cases of diabetes in Canada in just seven years.** Canada can no longer afford to ignore this epidemic.

Urgent adoption of Diabetes 360° is required to improve the health outcomes of Canadians at risk of, or living with, diabetes. The strategy will coordinate the efforts currently underway in the provinces and territories, strive to reduce the crippling human and economic burden on Canadians living with diabetes and their families, and save millions in Canadian health care costs moving forward.

The [Diabetes Charter for Canada](#) presents a common vision: all people living with diabetes in Canada should be given the opportunity to manage their diabetes to the best of their ability and to achieve their full health potential through equal access to needed care and support. Canadians are already rallying in support of this vision – now is the time to deploy Diabetes 360° to address the diabetes health crisis.

Multi-sector stakeholders from across the country have endorsed Diabetes 360°. Now Diabetes Canada requires meaningful commitment and coordinated leadership from the federal government to drive the action for this most necessary change.