

HealthPartners leads a collective of 16 Canadian health charities that are building a healthier Canada.

We invest in the health of Canadians through medical research, programs and services, health and wellness programs, education and advocacy.

2019 ProjectBe Funds

ProjectBe's three pillars allowed our charities to continue to invest in mental health supports and refugee health. Some support was also provided to work our charities undertake related to income support and poverty reduction within populations living with chronic disease – these are preventative activities that prevent those living with a chronic illness from becoming homeless.

HealthPartners is receiving 20% of these overall funds, representing \$95,317 from the 2019 campaign.

MENTAL HEALTH AND CHRONIC DISEASE

The majority of the ProjectBe dollars are directed to this area.

Canadians living with chronic disease or major illness are more prone to mental health issues, including depression. HealthPartners' health charities recognize this mind-body connection in their work to combat the chronic and major illnesses that are likely to directly affect 87% of Canadians in their lifetime.

- Approximately 25 to 50% of people living with a chronic illness will also experience depression.
- 20% of caregivers of chronically ill individuals reported experiencing depression as a result of their caregiving responsibilities.
- Of all the Canadians who are diagnosed with cancer, as many as 42% experience depression.
- People who survive heart attacks but suffer from major depression have a three to four time higher risk of dying within six months than heart attack survivors who are not depressed.
- Research shows that depression increases the risk of mortality in people with diabetes by 30%.

"There are a lot of people that are diagnosed in their late teens or twenties, like I was, and it was definitely really difficult at that time, because when you're 19 you think you're invincible, so it's difficult to understand the weight of the diagnosis. And at the time I was living with roommates and they were out partying and doing all the things that 19 year olds do and I was at home living in the bathroom. And on the outside of course I looked fine. People would think I was fit but really it was just because I wasn't absorbing any nutrients at all. So, finding people to identify with when you're 19 and you're going through a chronic illness is difficult, it's extremely isolating."

*-- Jessica Hawkes
On the impact of living with colitis
From the upcoming HealthPartners video on mental health*

With the advent of COVID-19 came an increased impact on those living with chronic disease. Not only are those living with chronic disease more at risk of complications from the virus, they are more susceptible to the negative impacts the pandemic has had on mental health and well-being.

The pandemic response has caused; delays in organ transplants, cancer surgeries and treatments, an increase in amputations of those living with diabetes due to a lack of regular diabetes care, isolation of those living alone or in long-term care, an increased burden on caregivers, gaps in ongoing medical care access (including receiving a diagnosis), and limited home care services, have all led to additional mental health supports provided by health charities.

As a result, health charities have increased their offerings of mental health supports to Canadians.

Impact Areas

ProjectBe dollars support the following programs and services that help increase the quality of life of persons impacted by one or more chronic diseases:

- The provision of over 120 webinars, specifically on mental health during the pandemic to Canadians and their caregivers on such topics as:
 - Canadian Cancer Society: getting through cancer treatment during COVID-19
 - End of life considerations during COVID-19 for those living with ALS.
 - Emotional supports for parents sending their children back to school with cystic fibrosis during the pandemic.
 - Mental health and well-being during COVID-19 for those living with Crohn's or Colitis
- All 16 health charities are providing information and referral on mental health supports in the community and specific information on their condition.
- Arthritis Canada provides support to children living with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA), including mental health and wellness through: Taking Charge with JIA.
- Parkinson Canada has created an e-book for mental health resilience.

These dollars also support the following research initiatives to advance the understanding of the connection between chronic disease and mental health and advancing treatment:

- The Kidney Foundation is studying depression and anxiety in patients with Chronic Kidney Disease
- Dr. Norbert Schmitz, whose research has been funded by the Heart and Stroke Foundation, oversees a laboratory focusing on mental health and psychiatric epidemiology.

They also support advocacy initiatives to bring awareness and change to public health policy as it relates to mental and chronic diseases:

- Alzheimer's Canada conducted a study to identify the top 10 research priorities for person's living with dementia, and are promoting the outcome with researchers across Canada. One of the top priority outcomes is to improve emotional well-being.

SUPPORTING REFUGEES WITH CHRONIC DISEASE

In 2018, HealthPartners, in collaboration with the UN Commission on Refugees, hosted a conference ENTITLED: [Pieces of Glass: A Mosaic of Solutions Report of the Forum on Refugees and Chronic Disease](#). This conference and report outline the health issues facing refugees, from the perspective of those living in settlement camps, to those that have immigrated to Canada as refugees and live with chronic disease.

Following the conference, the report produced was widely distributed to our partner health charities to not only highlight the important issues that were identified, but also to provide a lens from the perspective of the refugee standpoint to help further the work already being done in this area by our charities.

"I can't think of a more stressful situation than being a refugee. Having to leave your country of birth. Having to go through the process of moving to a new culture, a new country, a new way of living, sometimes with support, sometimes without adequate support. Health is an issue that unites us all. It's profoundly individual, but we all want good health for our community and our country. Everyone has that desire in common."

- Eileen Dooley,
CEO, HealthPartners

Our health charities continue to build the supports that they offer to refugees and new Canadians in the arena of inclusive services and supports.

Impact Areas

ProjectBe dollars support the following programs that provide support to immigrants and refugees:

- Diabetes Canada: Has produced webinars that include Cantonese, Italian, Portuguese, Farsi, Urdu, and Punjabi
- The Canadian Cancer Society provides information to Canadians in over 50 languages through interpreter services – this enables refugees and new Canadians to access accurate information on disease screening protocols, prevention information and resources to access medical care.
- Heart & Stroke
 - In BC, FAST (signs of stroke) awareness assets have been translated to Punjabi, Cantonese and Mandarin. These include TV ads as well as radio spots in those respective languages.
 - In Ontario, FAST resources have been translated or adapted for Chinese, Punjabi, and Indigenous communities.
- Hemophilia Canada
 - linking hemophilia organizations and treatment centres in developing and developed countries, the twinning program has improved diagnosis and medical attention for people with hemophilia in many countries including; Tunisia, India, Nicaragua, Bangladesh.

They also support the following Research initiative:

- MS Society of Canada - Study examining risk factors of developing MS for immigrants in Ontario *these studies looked at MS incidence, mortality rates, and access to health services to understand differences in immigrant populations as compared to long-term residents.*

Migrating at a younger age is associated with higher risk of developing MS, although environmental exposures into adulthood contribute to MS risk.

- MS Society research outcome on immigrant populations

PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS THROUGH POVERTY REDUCTION

HealthPartners and our 16 health charities invest in reducing poverty and preventing homelessness through a number of programs, service and advocacy. This includes participation in coalitions focussed on income supports, the social determinants of health and the root causes of chronic disease. Our health charities also provide information and financial assistance to help reduce the financial burden of living with a chronic disease. Increasingly, our charities are also looking specifically at racialized issues in healthcare and healthcare access.

Impact Areas

ProjectBe supports the following Programs, Services and Information:

- Information and referral services are provided to Canadians by all 16 health charities on income supports, accessible housing, food security, substance abuse supports and other community supports
- Financial assistance programs are offered by a number of health charities to reduce the financial burden from living with a chronic disease and often, disability.
 - The Kidney Foundation
- Programs to provide mobility equipment to individuals unable to afford the costs.
 - ALS and the MS Society

Funds also support Advocacy:

All 16 health charities advocate on the local, provincial and federal level on the need for better healthcare supports, which includes quality long-term care access, increasing income supports, a national pharamacare program, palliative care, employment discrimination, accessible and affordable housing, and food security.

People living with diabetes who rely on food banks experience challenges with diabetes management including an inability to schedule food intake, make dietary choices, and coordinate medications with meals.

From: Diabetes Canada: Food Security and Diabetes, a Position Statement