



Action Canada
for Sexual Health & Rights

MY BODY
MY CHOICE
MY FUTURE
SAFE ABORTIONS
SAVE LIVES

Annual Report 2023–2024:

Holding Ground and Pushing for Progress



Contents

Executive Summary:	
Letter from the Leadership	3
Mission & Vision	4
Advocacy and Policy	5
Major Legislative Impact	5
SRHR Advocacy in Times of Polarization	6
The Impact of Our Advocacy Efforts	8
Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration ..	10
The Impact of Collaboration	10
Key Partnerships.....	11
Stronger Together.....	13
The Access Line & the Norma Scarborough Emergency Fund (NSEF)	15
Assessment of Impact.....	15
Trends in Access Line Calls	15
Mobilizing Networks of Knowledge.....	16
Access Line & NSEF Impact in Numbers	17
Access Line Impact on Real People.....	19
Media Mentions & Social Media Engagement.....	20
Financial Overview	21
Fundraising Overview	21
Forging the Path Ahead with a New Strategic Plan 2024-2029	22
Your Voice is Crucial to our Mission.....	22
Board of Directors	23

All-Staff Retreat in Ottawa, April 2024

Executive Summary: Letter from the Leadership

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This past year has been pivotal for our organization. As we approach our 10th anniversary, we reflect on a decade of growth, transformation, and unwavering advocacy for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). With this experience and renewed vision, we enter our next year, driven by the knowledge that our work has never been more crucial.

The external landscape has been particularly difficult this year. We've faced mounting attacks on trans rights and gender equality across Canada and human rights crises around the world. Despite these realities, we've continued to remain steadfast in our mission, demonstrating our resilience and rallying together with our partners to advance our vision for a more just and equitable world for everyone.

Despite these hurdles, this year has been marked by tremendous progress. The passage of Bill C-64 (the Canada Pharmacare Act) was a landmark victory for our community and a testament to the power of collective action and policy we've worked tirelessly to influence. Our impact on policy and politics continued to grow, as does our role in supporting partners across the sector and ensuring our presence in key feminist spaces and international forums like the UN.

As Canada approaches a federal election amid a rapidly changing global political landscape, the stakes are higher than ever. Protecting sexual and reproductive health care is critical, particularly in the face of political divisiveness. As elections worldwide reshape international dynamics, our ability to remain agile and resilient will be crucial in navigating the road ahead.

To prepare for the future, our team has invested in reframing and refining our public engagement strategies to draw in more supporters of sexual and reproductive rights. We are focusing on impactful, proven approaches to drive meaningful change. Additionally, we have built strong networks and coalitions to face the challenges ahead together.

Looking forward, we know our work is far from done. We will continue championing policies that protect and empower our communities while forging partnerships that strengthen the global feminist movement. Together, we have achieved much, and together, we will continue to create lasting change.

Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission. The road ahead is not without obstacles, but with you by our side, we are ready to make an even more significant impact.

In solidarity,



Frédérique Chabot
Acting Executive Director



Rajesh Pisharody
Chair of the Board of Directors



Mission & Vision

Our Mission

To advance and uphold reproductive and sexual rights and health in Canada and globally.

Our Vision

All people everywhere have full control over and are able to decide freely upon all matters related to their sexuality, reproduction, and gender, including their reproductive and sexual health.

Our Work

To fulfill our mission, Action Canada's work focuses on four key pillars of sexual and reproductive health and rights:

- abortion,
- contraception,
- comprehensive sexuality education, and advocacy.



Advocacy and Policy

Major Legislative Impact

Bill C-64: Universal Access to Contraception

Following years of advocacy—including writing petitions, briefings for decision makers, letter campaigns, submitting policy briefs to elected officials, and joining forces with public health champions—we achieved our longstanding goal of establishing legislation for a universal, publicly funded pharmacare program in Canada.

Bill C-64 provides a framework for a national pharmacare plan and designates contraceptives and diabetes medication as the first class of drugs and devices to be covered under the program. The main objective is to provide all Canadians with access to necessary prescription medications, regardless of income, age, region, or employment status.

This win isn't just about expanding access to medication or reducing unplanned pregnancies. It's part of a bigger impact:

- It's about a transformative shift in public healthcare delivery that will save lives, reduce public healthcare

system costs, and enable individuals to make meaningful choices about their bodies, relationships, and futures that will positively impact future generations.

- It's about making our public healthcare system work for underserved populations, including young people, people on low incomes and those who have been denied real choice in using the method of contraception that works best for them.
- It's about ensuring we all have what we need to thrive and not just survive.
- It's about the belief that no one should have to choose between paying for groceries and buying the contraceptives they need.

We celebrate this momentous policy achievement, which promises to improve the lives of millions of Canadians. We won't give up until all provinces and territories have signed up for this transformative public health initiative and the program is implemented nationwide.

“The introduction of a single-payer universal pharmacare program, starting with contraception and diabetes drugs, marks a monumental step forward. This is the biggest healthcare news since the Canada Health Act and a sign that people's demands that our healthcare system be a political priority are being heard. This initiative will have incredibly positive impacts on people across Canada.”

—Frédérique Chabot, Acting Executive Director,
Action Canada



SRHR Advocacy in Times of Polarization

In 2023-24, we faced and addressed an increasingly polarized environment for sexual and reproductive health and rights in Canada and globally. Fuelled by misinformation and disinformation, we countered attacks on the rights of trans people, sex workers, people seeking abortion care, and migrants. We did this through strategic communications, effective coalition building, decisive advocacy, and showing up to make our voices heard in decision-making spaces.

While some politicians and people of influence at home and abroad sought to divide communities further and sow distrust in democratic institutions, we focused on bringing people together.

We **connected** with our network of sexual health centres across the country to develop a joint statement to engage parents in our shared goal of ensuring the health and safety of all youth.

We **collaborated** with migrants' rights organizations to document the impact of their exclusion from the public healthcare system and bring this to the attention of the United Nations Human Rights Council. Because of their precarious status, migrants often have their sexual and reproductive health and rights curtailed and face significant barriers to care.

Alongside our partners in the Sexual Rights Initiative and sex worker-led organizations, we **mobilized** cross-regional and cross-movement support for the rights of sex workers to be recognized as rights holders and as experts in the harms of criminalization.

As governments around the world cut funding for sexual and reproductive health within their international assistance budgets, we **doubled down on our advocacy** with the Future Planning Initiative to ensure Canada meets its 10-year (\$750 million per year) Commitment to sexual and reproductive health globally, including and especially, in times of crises.



SCAN ME

Read our **“Dear Parents: A Unified Call for Inclusivity and Comprehensive Sexual Health Education”** letter by scanning the following QR code with your phone.

The goal of the letter was to express our solidarity and confirm that we are here, ready to listen, answer your questions, and eager to collaborate to build healthy communities.



We published articles, crafted submissions to UN mechanisms and Canadian-elected officials, and wrote social media posts to share our analysis of the state of sexual health and our proposed policy solutions. We delivered presentations on advocating for progressive policies using evidence-based communications to civil

society, unions, and community groups. We showed up alongside our partners on Parliament Hill and the United Nations, at conferences, and at strategic convenings to push forward our vision of a world where everyone has what they need to claim their rights to autonomy over their bodies and lives.



“Undocumented individuals, particularly women, queer, and trans people, face additional obstacles in protecting their sexual health and rights due to their immigration status. Accessing vital care and services risks exposing them to immigration authorities, making them reluctant to seek help until necessary. This severely impacts their health outcomes, the well-being of their families, and our communities.”

—Frédérique Chabot, Acting Executive Director,
Action Canada

The Impact of Our Advocacy Efforts

Action Canada advocates for the realization of human rights related to gender, sexuality and reproduction. We refuse to allow sexual and reproductive rights to be separated from the reality of peoples' lives and used for political power plays. Through our advocacy, we push back against polarizing forces, stop harmful legislation in its tracks, mobilize for evidence-informed and human rights-based policies, equip our partners with the tools and resources they need to advocate for themselves and their communities and hold governments accountable.

SPOTLIGHT:

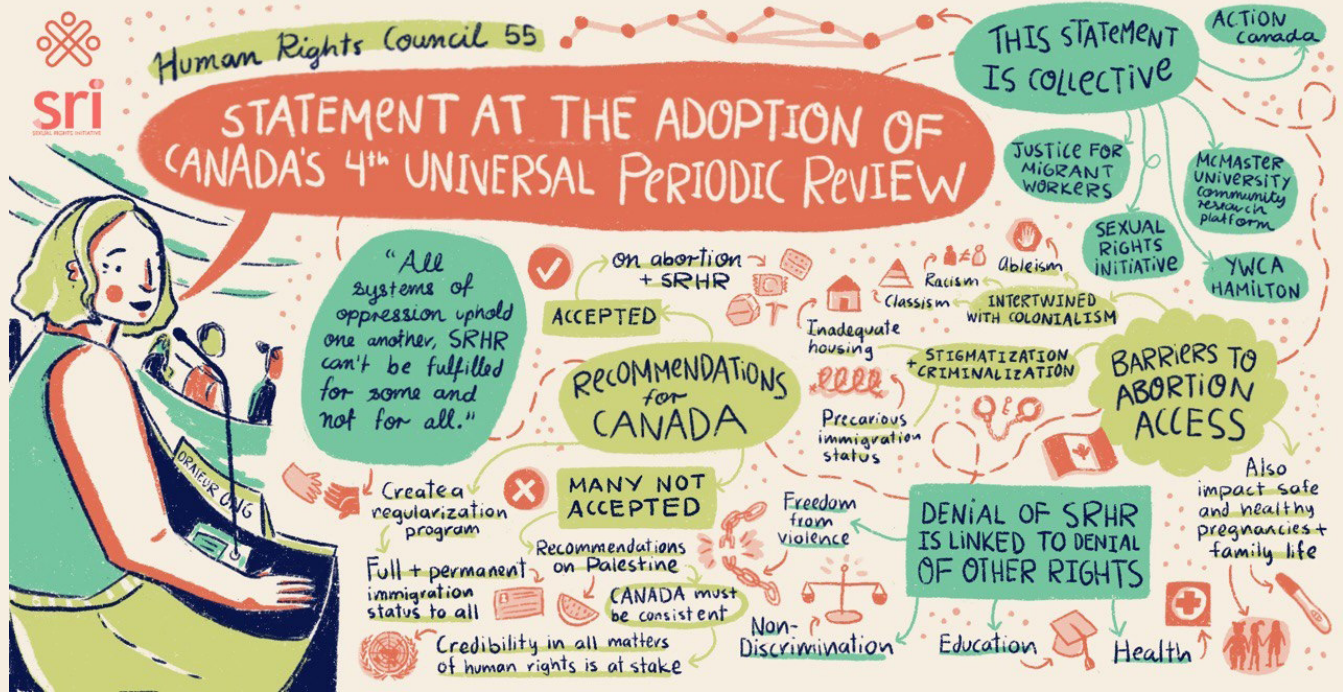
Action Canada's National STBBI Testing Awareness Campaign

STBBI stands for: Sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections

Action Canada's National STBBI Testing Awareness Campaign—a national social media campaign encouraging young people between the ages of 16 to 24 to get STI tested at least once a year. Video ads, social media posts, and content posted by Instagram influencers were developed with the help of Action Canada's National Youth Advisory Board and focus groups with youth across Canada. They show open conversations about getting tested and encourage viewers to visit www.onceayear.ca to find their nearest STI testing clinic.

The campaign reached over 3 million people on Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat in just five weeks. Given that the number of ad impressions (over 5 million) significantly exceeded the number of youths in these cities (estimated at 429,000), it is likely that nearly every youth in Edmonton, Montreal, and Winnipeg who is on social media saw the campaign ads several times.





Graphic Statement at the Adoption of Canada's 4th Universal Periodic Review

At the 55th Human Rights Council, Action Canada delivered two joint statements during the adoption of Canada's Universal Periodic Review (UPR), which brought global attention to sexual and reproductive issues that remain unaddressed and provided concrete policy recommendations to the government to remedy human rights violations. The first statement was delivered on behalf of Justice for Migrant Workers, YWCA Hamilton, the McMaster University Community Research Platform, and the Sexual Rights Initiative on barriers to abortion care related to housing and migration. The second statement—delivered on behalf of 23 civil society organizations—called for a more robust human rights architecture in Canada.

Drawing from insights gained through our Access Line and the experiences of all collaborating organizations, we demonstrated that although abortion is legal in Canada, it is not always accessible for everyone. Rights related to housing, safe working conditions, and migration have a significant impact on the realization of sexual and reproductive rights.

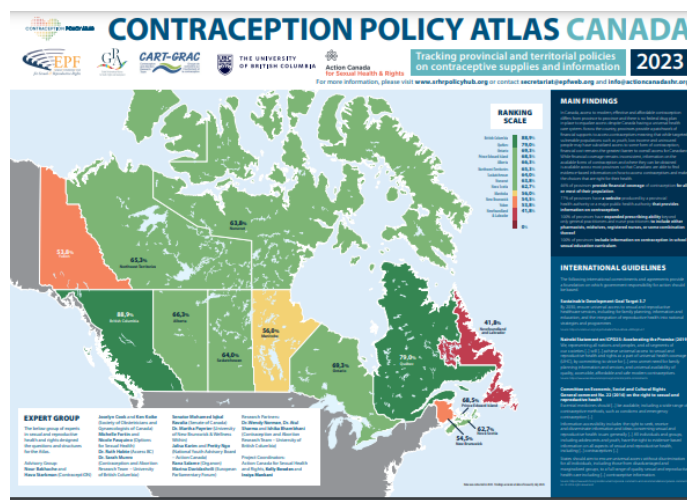
From this endeavour, we secured five recommendations for improving access to sexual and reproductive health services in Canada. Over the coming year, we will work diligently to ensure these recommendations are implemented.

Strategic Partnerships and Collaboration

The Impact of Collaboration

Partnerships and networks are central to Action Canada's policy and advocacy work. The relationships we form are crucial in amplifying voices, driving social change, and addressing complex global and local issues. These collaborations unite individuals, organizations, coalitions, feminist movements, activists, advocates, and academics with shared goals, leveraging collective resources and expertise.

Our unique positioning as a national sexual and reproductive rights organization that also works in global policy spaces enables us to identify trends, access the most up-to-date research and evidence, and be informed by leading thinkers and doers in all regions of the world. This allows us to have a broader reach, navigate complex but interconnected global contexts, build awareness, and mobilize action for amplified impact.







CONTRACEPTION POLICY ATLAS CANADA

Tracking provincial and territorial policies on contraceptive supplies and information

Access to modern contraception

Province/Territory	Access to supplies	Availability of online information														
		Contraceptive supplies available in community pharmacies	Contraceptive supplies available in hospitals	Contraceptive supplies available in primary care	Contraceptive supplies available in other settings	Online information available in English	Online information available in French	Online information available in Indigenous languages	Online information available in accessible formats	Online information available in multiple languages	Online information available in multiple formats	Online information available in multiple locations	Online information available in multiple times	Online information available in multiple ways	Online information available in multiple places	Online information available in multiple people
Alberta	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
British Columbia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Manitoba	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ontario	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Quebec	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Saskatchewan	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Atlantic	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes



With the support of the Government of Canada



SCAN ME

Contraception Policy Atlas

In 2023, Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights published Canada's first comparative analysis of provincial and territorial contraceptive policies. The Contraception Policy Atlas ranks provinces from best to worst in overall performance based on an evaluation of government policies in place that support access to contraceptive supplies and information.

The Canadian Contraception Policy Atlas was a collaboration between the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, the University of British Columbia Contraception and Abortion Research Team and Action Canada.

Key Partnerships

Through our **Associates Network**, we convene provincial sexual health organizations to share experiences and knowledge, identify gaps in sexual health service provision, and advocate for this sector's critical role in Canada's public healthcare system. During **Sexual Health Week 2024**, we came together to highlight the incredible work our partners are doing to raise awareness about sexual health issues while striving to reduce stigma, educate the public, and promote open discussions around topics related to sexual well-being.



Sexual Health is for Everyone was this year's Sexual Health Week slogan intended to raise awareness on critical issues in sexual health, education, and healthcare. As in the previous 20 years, we wanted to make the campaign as inclusive as possible. We promoted our message on our campaign page by sharing a social media toolkit and disseminating posters to over 850 locations across Canada. The response from our partners and the community exceeded our expectations. We saw high participation from our Associate Members and over 90 non-associate organizations. Seven statements were issued from parliamentarians, and a radio station in Calgary invited us to an interview about the campaign.



Through our **Rights from the Start Project**, we moved resources to national sexual and reproductive health organizations in Bolivia, Ecuador, Guyana, and Peru so they could deliver comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive health services and shape their advocacy demands to work best for their contexts. In the fourth year of this project, the partners delivered comprehensive sexuality education to 66,182 young people and sexual and reproductive health services to 789,538 people. Through this project, we also created spaces for cross-regional solidarity at our youth forum, bringing together young people from Canada, Latin America, and the Caribbean to share experiences and ideas and learn from each other's struggles.



Future Planning Initiative (FPI) Retreat

Cynthia Callard, Shereen El Feki, Anu Kumar,
Lauren Ravon, Debbie Owusu-Akyeeah

Through the Future Planning Initiative, we convened leading Canadian organizations to advocate for Canada's global leadership on SRHR and hold Canada accountable for its 10-year commitment to health and rights.



“We urge States to heed the Working Group’s recommendations for realizing individual and collective rights to substantive equality, including through decent work, social protection, decriminalizing poverty and moving away from the neoliberal paradigm. We welcome the Working Group’s evidence-based guidance on sex workers’ rights and urge States to implement it.”

—Quinn Lazenby reads a statement at the UN in support of sex worker rights.

Stronger Together

Collaboration is central to our work. Our partnerships, coalitions, and networks are the foundations of our policy and advocacy work, as well as the key to connecting people to the right services and information they need.

Associates Network

This is a network of 20+ sexual health centers providing a range of services to their communities across Canada in nine provinces and territories. This year, Action Canada strengthened the infrastructure for better connection and support across this network of healthcare providers and educators. We met quarterly to share information and stories

from our regions, identify common trends and strategize together. We met with 21 people from 16 partner organizations in Ottawa for a weekend of conversations, connection, and planning, which culminated with a roundtable discussion with the Federal Minister of Health to discuss the daily realities of sexual health centres.

Feminist Influencing Group

The Feminist Influencing Group (FIG) is a coalition of close to 50 national organizations jointly committed to advancing feminist priorities in Canada’s federal policy and practice. Together the network shares

best practices on advocacy, strengthens solidarity across movements, and builds collective power to advance a more equitable society for everyone living in Canada.



Future Planning Initiative

The Future Planning Initiative is a coalition of Canadian organizations working together to advocate for Canadian leadership on SRHR. Recognizing these rights as central to good health and sustainable development, the Future Planning Initiative strives to push the SRHR agenda forward.

The Future Planning Initiative is made up of six organizations:



Canadian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

Action Canada is proud to support the work of the Canadian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development in serving as their secretariat. The CAPPD provides a forum for the exchange of ideas on population, sexual and reproductive health, human rights, and development issues. Formed in 1997, CAPPD is open to all sitting Senators and Members of Parliament.



Sexual Rights Initiative

Action Canada is a founding partner and secretariat of the Sexual Rights Initiative (SRI), a coalition of feminist organizations from around the world that have been working together since 2006 to advance a broad and intersectional sexual rights agenda with the UN human rights system. Since its inception, the SRI has been at the forefront of normative progress on human rights related to sexuality, gender, and reproduction and making space within the UN human rights system for sexual and reproductive rights advocates to hold governments accountable to their obligations.

The Access Line & the Norma Scarborough Emergency Fund (NSEF)

Our Impact

The Access Line and Norma Scarborough Emergency Fund (NSEF) are lifelines for individuals navigating complex and often overwhelming barriers to sexual and reproductive health care.

Our team of Navigators and volunteers address calls and texts to the Access Line each day on critical topics such as abortion, contraception, pregnancy options, and STBBIs. They work tirelessly to dismantle barriers to care, from medication abortion access issues to misinformation that further isolates vulnerable populations. This firsthand experience equips them with the insights necessary to inform and strengthen our broader organizational mission of advocacy.

Our highly skilled Navigators are not only deeply knowledgeable about sexual health issues but also experts in health system navigation. This expertise has become indispensable, especially as we witness an increase in requests for options counselling and support with abortion access. Our Navigators are pivotal to ensuring that the most marginalized communities are heard and supported in accessing essential care with the support of our NSEF.

As part of our more extensive advocacy efforts, their expertise extends beyond direct service by contributing to systems-level changes in policy and practice through collaboration with research teams, healthcare providers, and policymakers. Together, we aim to create sustainable solutions that close the gaps in access to sexual and reproductive health care for all.

The Access Line and NSEF have had a life-changing impact on many. This year, we undertook an evaluation of the Access Line and NSEF to understand better how they are perceived by service providers who refer clients to them. We will share these findings in the next Annual Report.

Trends in Access Line Calls

Over the past year, the Access Line has seen a significant rise in requests for options counselling, with about half of the calls focused on abortion. Many clients sought help accessing medication abortions, facing persistent barriers such as high costs, lack of insurance coverage, and difficulties securing a private space or provider.

An increasing amount of time was spent addressing misinformation related to sexual and reproductive health. For example, misinformation about medical abortions with claims that they are very painful or have lasting effects on fertility influenced some callers to seek surgical abortions instead. The presence of misinformation around sexual and reproductive health in Canada reflects a polarized public discourse and the presence of groups that are trying to influence policy based on untrue or misleading information. This highlights the need for Action Canada's continued advocacy and the publication of factual, evidence-based resources (please see the section below for our outputs).

Additionally, this year, we witnessed a trend of uninsured or undocumented clients, particularly those seeking abortion care at higher gestational ages, which increases logistical complications and costs. Despite growing demands and limited resources, our team's expertise allowed for vital support, while ongoing collaborations with partner organizations helped mitigate some financial and logistical challenges to support equitable healthcare access for all.

Mobilizing Networks of Knowledge

In an era where misinformation about sexual and reproductive health is rampant, the importance of providing accessible, reliable information cannot be overstated. Our commitment to being a trusted voice ensures that individuals can make informed decisions about their health, especially as false or misleading narratives continue to spread.

Toward this goal, we launched several resources and tools that serve as vital platforms offering clear, evidence-based information. We want to empower users with the needed facts. Maintaining this reliability supports individual decision-making and counteracts harmful misinformation, fostering a more informed and empowered public. This role is critical, particularly for those most marginalized, who often face the most significant challenges in accessing trustworthy health resources.

Your Sexual Health Hub provides reliable, accessible information on key topics related to sexual and reproductive health and rights. In addition to the website, we now have an app that allows people to access the information without an internet connection (meaningful for folks who are unhoused or under-housed) and a chatbot that helps them navigate to find the information they need.

▶ The Sexual Health Hub has had over 50,000 visits over the year.

Asking for an Abortion: A Pocket Guide is based on research from our colleagues at the Contraception and Abortion Research Team (CART-UBC) showing that a healthcare provider being asked even once by a patient if they can prescribe medication abortion increased the likelihood of them providing it in the future. The Guide provides straightforward, step-by-step information for patients to use when speaking to their doctors about abortion. Providing tools to support those conversations can contribute to an increase in the number of primary care providers offering medical abortion to their patients. This intervention supports the integration of abortion care within primary care networks as well as the normalizing of abortion provision among health care providers.

▶ Since its launch in the spring of 2024, **Asking for an Abortion: A Pocket Guide** has had 23,985 visits.

Abortion Access Tracker (abortionaccesstracker.ca) – The Abortion Access Tracker illustrates the legal landscape of abortion in Canada and the reality of accessing abortion care across the country. Through this resource, developed with our colleagues at LEAF, we aim to better understand gaps and identify opportunities to protect and improve abortion access through policy and law.

▶ Since its launch in June 2024, the **Abortion Access Tracker** website received 1772 unique visitors.

Contraception Policy Atlas ranks provinces from best to worst in overall performance based on an evaluation of government policies in place that support access to contraceptive supplies and information.

Access Line & NSEF Impact in Numbers

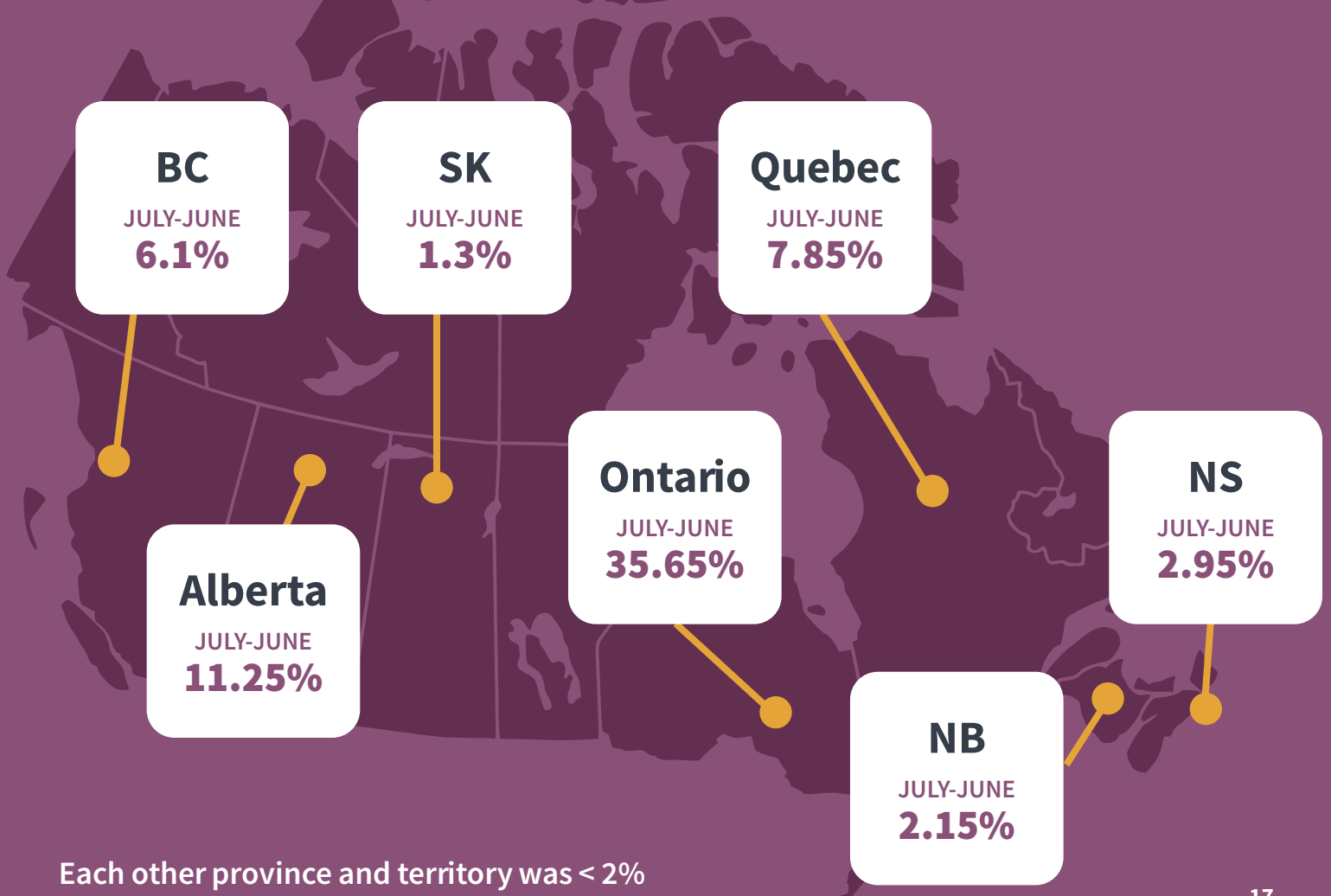
Between July 2023 and June 2024,
the Access Line received

6553 calls

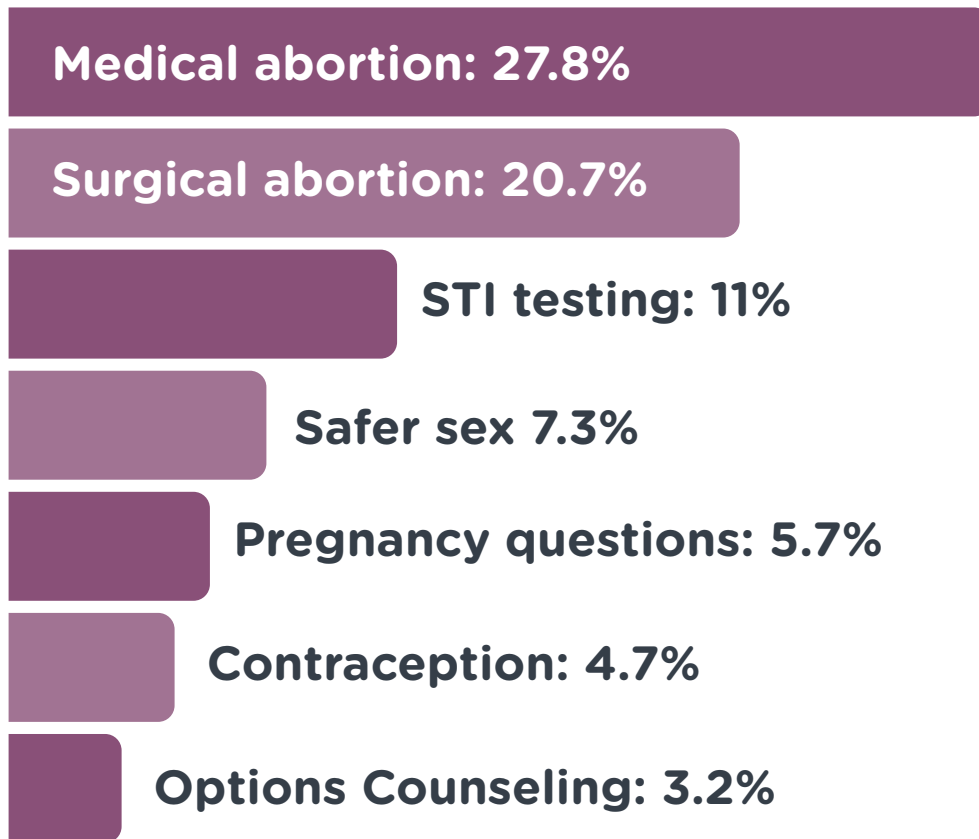
1,523 more calls than last year!



Geographical Distribution of Callers:



Top reasons for calling:



Between July 2023 and June 2024, the NSEF supported 504 clients in accessing abortion care.


Support was required around the following realities:

- status (uninsured clients),
- high gestational age (over 20 weeks),
- geographic distance to services, and
- youth (under age 25)

Most clients were from Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta, with approximately 30% from rural/remote areas and 70% from urban centres.

Access Line Impact on Real People

Gratitude Note



“Thank you so much for all of your help and support. Happy Women’s Day. Thank you for the wonderful job you do in supporting pregnant people—you’ve made something that was heavy and extremely exhausting into something light and easy to understand. Is there a way to give you 5 million stars as a review? Because I will.”

—An email from a client, permission to share was granted.

Manpreet’s Story

Manpreet’s story is one of profound courage and resilience. At just 19, she found herself pregnant, uninsured, and without citizenship status, facing the overwhelming challenge of arranging abortion care. She had called clinic after clinic, only to be quoted fees she simply couldn’t afford. By the time she reached one of us, she was 24 weeks along, hopeless and consumed by the fear that it was too late to get help. Misinformation and isolation left her scared of both childbirth and abortion and unable to see a way out.

But amid that uncertainty, Manpreet made a powerful decision—she sought help. She refused to give up despite the overwhelming circumstances. Our team of Navigators immediately responded, offering emotional support and mental health resources to ensure she knew she wasn’t alone. We worked alongside Manpreet, navigating

the healthcare system and finding a provider for her procedure when options seemed scarce.

Despite the barriers, we secured an appointment for Manpreet. With the help of our fund, we were able to cover the costs of her procedure, removing the financial burden that had weighed so heavily on her. Manpreet also embraced the support of a local doula, who provided culturally sensitive care, ensuring she had someone by her side throughout the process.

Manpreet’s story is a testament to the power of our program and its vital role in saving lives. Manpreet—like many other callers—took control of her situation, and through her persistence and the support of our program, she felt empowered to find a path forward.

The name has been changed to maintain confidentiality.

Media Mentions & Social Media Engagement



14 articles



2 tv



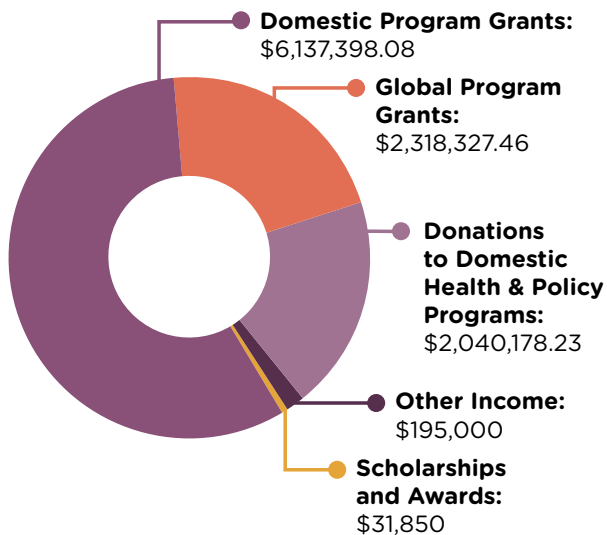
9 radio



1 podcast

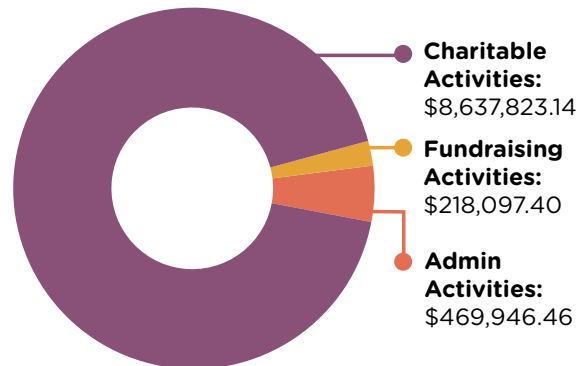
Financial Overview

Revenue



TOTAL \$10,722,753.77

Expenses



TOTAL \$9,325,867.00

Fundraising Overview

156 NEW DONORS

675 MONTHLY DONORS

1268 NUMBER OF GIFTS

LEGACY GIFT:
\$1,000,000

TOTAL REVENUE RAISED:
\$2,002,267.25

Forging the Path Ahead with a New Strategic Plan 2024-2029

Action Canada embarked on a 2024-2029 Strategic Planning process to reflect on where we've made the greatest impact over the past decade and focus on where we can continue to drive meaningful change.

The Strategic Plan looks to the future and sharpens our focus on improving access to sexual and reproductive health services, resources, and education. Through a comprehensive discovery process, we identified key areas for growth, strengthened our partnerships, and honed our role as a leader in advocating for SRHR, ensuring our work remains inclusive and impactful.

We are excited to move forward, remaining agile and adaptable when responding to our ever-evolving global landscape. We will be sharing our new Strategic Plan with our supporters in the new year.

Your Voice is Crucial to our Mission



If you haven't already done so, please join our community by visiting our website and subscribing to our newsletter! By joining our mailing list, you'll get regular updates on our work and opportunities to lend your voice by signing petitions or participating in events.



You can also help our mission by becoming a donor. We can't do this work alone. With your support, we will continue to strengthen and advocate for access to healthcare, including sexual health and abortion.



Board of Directors

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