

BUDGET ANALYSIS 2025



**Action Canada
for Sexual Health & Rights**



Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights is the Planned Parenthood Federation of Canada. We are a progressive, pro-choice charitable organization committed to advancing and upholding sexual and reproductive health and rights in Canada and globally.

WHAT WE HOPED FOR

We were hoping to see a budget that strengthened the systems that make freedom real, a plan that ensured everyone in Canada can make and act on decisions about their bodies, health, and futures. Sexual and reproductive health and rights is foundational for of a healthy, equal, and prosperous society.

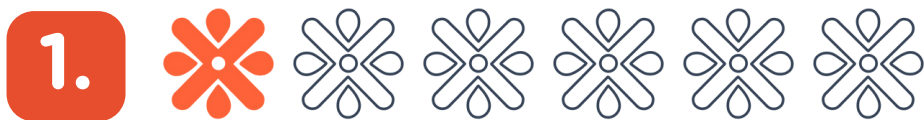
From the Government, we hoped to see clear investments in care: in access to contraception and abortion, in robust health care systems that include community sexual health centres, and in the programs that help young people get accurate, inclusive sexual health information and education. We were looking for a plan that treated these as essential public goods, not optional services, because when people can plan their lives, every other investment performs better.

WHAT WE GOT

There is no mention of sexual and reproductive health and rights anywhere in Budget 2025. But absence in text doesn't always mean absence in action. Policies in health transfers, information technology, immigration, and infrastructure shape whether people can get care, information, and support when they need it.

That's why we combed through more than 500 pages of the budget to look beyond the line items and see what this government's choices mean for people's autonomy and wellbeing. We asked: will young people have the information and skills they need to build healthy relationships and keep themselves healthy? Will people have to choose between groceries and birth control? Will those seeking abortion care be able to get it in their own communities or going into debt?

Because at its heart, sexual and reproductive health and rights are about freedom: the freedom to decide what happens to our bodies, our health, and our lives. **A budget that invests in that freedom invests in everyone's wellbeing, dignity, and opportunity.**



A MAJOR WIN FOR GENDER EQUALITY — BUT FOLLOW-THROUGH MATTERS.

The \$660 million investment in gender equality signals that the government recognizes equality as nation-building work. Permanent funding to the Department of Women and Gender Equality (WAGE) offers much-needed stability for organizations advancing gender justice and strengthens the department's ability to work across government. To realize this potential, the funding must translate into coordinated, sustained action that embeds gender equality in every major policy decision.

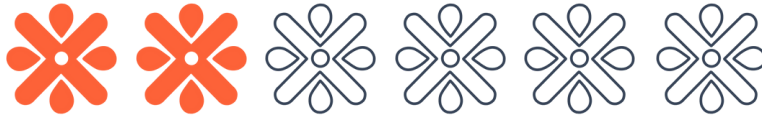
Budget 2025's investment, \$660.5 million over five years, with \$132.1 million ongoing, represents a meaningful step toward recognizing that equality work is not a side project but a cornerstone of a healthy, democratic Canada. New funds were announced for WAGE's three key programs: the Women's Program, the Sex, Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression Program, and the Gender-Based Violence Program.

While funding remains project-based, the permanence of these resources provides a more predictable foundation for both the sector and WAGE to plan, partner, and lead. It signals that gender equality is not a temporary initiative but an enduring public policy priority. With stable resources, WAGE will be better positioned to act as a cross-government partner, ensuring gender equality, inclusion, and rights are woven into decisions about health, climate, international development, and the economy.

This investment sustains critical work nationwide: preventing gender-based violence, strengthening 2SLGBTQI+ communities, advancing policy reforms, and building safer, more inclusive workplaces and institutions. These aren't abstract goals, they shape the safety of classrooms, homes and communities, the fairness of paycheques, and the accessibility of care, among many other things.

International evidence is clear: countries that invest in gender equality grow stronger, fairer, and more resilient. By treating gender equality as infrastructure, not charity nor a "nice to have", Canada strengthens its economy, deepens democracy, and builds a foundation for progress that lasts.

2.



THE MISSING INVESTMENT IN UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO CONTRACEPTION AND SRH MEDICATIONS.

Budget 2025 reaffirms the government’s focus on “empowering Canadians by lowering costs, expanding opportunity, and protecting the vital social programs Canadians rely on, from child care to dental care to pharmacare,” a welcome sign that affordability and health remain priorities. But with no new funding, timeline, or plan to operationalize pharmacare, the vision of universal access to essential medications, including contraception, remains out of reach.

Universal access to contraception is one of the clearest, most evidence-based investments a government can make in people’s health, equality, and economic security. It gives people real control over their futures, reduces health system costs, and strengthens gender equity across the board. Before British Columbia implemented free contraception in 2023, nearly **37 per cent** of contraceptives were paid for out of pocket. Within a year of implementation, pharmacists reported a 60 per cent increase in uptake, and cost modelling shows the program will pay for itself within four years through reduced unintended pregnancies and related costs.

This kind of policy doesn’t just improve individual health, it drives population-level change. When people can plan if, when, and how to have children, they are more likely to finish school, stay in the workforce, and avoid cycles of poverty. Universal coverage for contraception is preventive care, and like all good infrastructure, it saves money in the long run.

A strong, universal drug coverage framework would extend these benefits across the spectrum of sexual and reproductive health. That could lead to universal access to hormone therapy for menopause or gender-affirming care, fertility treatment, and HIV prevention and treatment, among many other essentials. These aren’t niche or optional expenditures, they are fundamental to health, autonomy, and participation in daily life.

The framework to deliver this vision already exists through national pharmacare. What’s missing now is the political will and financial investment to make it real. When people can afford the medications that sustain their health and autonomy, every other part of the system, from the economy to education to family wellbeing, performs better. That’s what it means to build a country where health is prosperity and care is infrastructure.

3.



CARE CAN'T WAIT: BUILDING A HEALTH SYSTEM WHERE EVERYONE CAN ACCESS THE CARE THEY NEED.

Abortion is the most common medical procedure in Canada. Every day, people rely on sexual and reproductive health services, from abortion and pregnancy care to contraception, IUD insertion, STI testing, and prenatal and postpartum support. These are not specialized services; they are essential health care. Yet for many, they're increasingly out of reach.

Without a strong public health system that is staffed, resourced, and accessible, the right to care exists only on paper. Abortion rights mean little if there are no providers nearby, if wait times stretch for weeks, or if people must travel hundreds of kilometres and pay out of pocket just to access care.

Budget 2025's \$5 billion Health Infrastructure Fund is a welcome acknowledgment that Canada's health system is under great pressure. Investments in hospitals and urgent care centres are vital, but buildings alone won't ensure timely, equitable care. The foundation of access is not concrete, it's people.

That's why nearly \$400 million in health cuts by the end of the decade are deeply concerning. These cuts will shrink national leadership capacity, the very systems that coordinate prevention, equity, and access across provinces. Similarly, while the budget funds construction, it lacks a plan to train, recruit, and retain the care workforce needed to staff those facilities. Nurses, midwives, counsellors, and physicians are already stretched thin, with burnout driving skilled professionals out of the system.

At the same time, cuts to refugee health care will make many, including people working in our health system, even more vulnerable.

Health care is only universal when it is accessible to everyone who lives and works in Canada.

3.



CARE CAN'T WAIT: BUILDING A HEALTH SYSTEM WHERE EVERYONE CAN ACCESS THE CARE THEY NEED (CONTINUED).

Community-based sexual and reproductive health centres are part of strong health care ecosystem. They provide contraception, pregnancy support, abortion referrals, and sexual health education, often as the only point of access for youth, queer and trans people, newcomers, and the uninsured. Yet most haven't seen a core funding increase in over a decade and are operating beyond capacity, holding together essential services with shrinking budgets and rising need.

If this government is serious about building health infrastructure that works, it must expand the definition of infrastructure to include care, the people and community systems that make every hospital, clinic, and medical school functional. Federal spending powers must ensure sustainable funding for sexual and reproductive health centres and prioritize workforce investment alongside capital investment.

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4.



STANDING STRONG FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS: CANADA'S LEADERSHIP IS ON THE LINE.

Budget 2025 arrives at a moment of profound global instability marked by widening inequality, rising authoritarianism, and escalating attacks on women's rights, queer and trans rights, and bodily autonomy. The systems built to uphold peace, democracy, and human rights are fraying, and global health infrastructure is under immense strain. In this context, the federal government's decision to cut \$2.7 billion from Canada's international assistance envelope sends the wrong message at the worst possible time.

Just weeks ago, the Minister of Foreign Affairs reaffirmed that Canada's foreign policy rests on three pillars: defence, economic resilience, and core values: promoting democracy, human rights, gender equality, and environmental protection. Yet this third pillar is conspicuously absent from Budget 2025, undermined by cuts that weaken the very foundations of those values.

These reductions are disproportionate and short-sighted. Overseas Development Assistance already represents less than 0.34% of Gross National Income, and yet it carries enormous weight for millions of people worldwide. Cutting here means fewer resources for global health systems still recovering from the pandemic, less access to sexual and reproductive health care, and greater vulnerability for women, young people, and marginalized communities who bear the brunt of global crises.

The most alarming signal is the potential threat to Canada's 10-Year Commitment to Global Health and Rights, which includes a ringfenced \$700 million annually for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This commitment has positioned Canada as a global leader and a reliable partner in advancing gender equality, reproductive justice, and health for all. Weakening that pledge made on a global stage would not only harm millions worldwide but also erode Canada's credibility as a country that steps up when others step back.

At a time when the United States has withdrawn from the World Health Organization and imposed ideological restrictions on global health funding, Canada's leadership matters more than ever. Retreating now abandons the field to actors who view women's and queer people's rights as negotiable and it makes all of us, everywhere, less safe and less healthy.

4.



STANDING STRONG FOR GLOBAL HEALTH AND RIGHTS: CANADA'S LEADERSHIP IS ON THE LINE (CONTINUED).

Global health and rights are not charity; they are a strategic investment in stability, security, and prosperity. By championing sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), politically and financially, Canada strengthens the global systems that make peace and democracy possible.

Canada still has the opportunity to course-correct: to recognize that investing in global health is not only the right thing to do but the smart thing.

By reaffirming its 10-Year Commitment to Global Health and Rights, the government can ensure that millions of women, girls, and gender-diverse people worldwide continue to access the care they need, and that Canada remains a country known for its courage, compassion, and commitment to human rights at home and abroad.

5.



PROTECTING YOUTH AND TRUTH IN THE AGE OF AI.

In an era where artificial intelligence and social media shape how young people learn, connect, and form beliefs, access to trustworthy information has become a matter of public health and human rights. Yet while Budget 2025 makes major investments in AI infrastructure, it does not address how these technologies are transforming, and too often distorting, what young people see and know about their own bodies, relationships, and futures.

Across Canada, youth increasingly turn to online spaces for information about sexuality, contraception, consent, and gender identity. But the digital environment they enter is riddled with disinformation and bias. Algorithms amplify false claims about birth control and abortion, anti-trans rhetoric circulates unchecked, and accurate, inclusive sexual-health content is often flagged or censored. AI-generated media, unregulated advertising, and weakened platform accountability now mean that misinformation can reach millions before facts ever catch up.

This has real-world consequences. Disinformation about contraception influences birth-control use in young people and communities already facing discrimination encounter even greater barriers to reliable information. When the right to accurate information erodes, so does the ability to make informed, autonomous choices about health and life.

Canada urgently needs a coordinated, cross-government strategy to safeguard digital spaces as part of its commitment to health, equality, and democracy. That means regulating AI and social-media platforms to prevent algorithmic bias, ensure transparency in content moderation, and hold corporations accountable for the spread of harmful misinformation. It also means ensuring every young person in Canada can access comprehensive sexuality education that meets national standards, both in classrooms and in the online spaces where so much learning now happens.

AI can be a tool for progress, but only if it is guided by human rights, not simply profit or growing the economy. Protecting the right to information, especially about sexuality, gender, and health, is essential to protecting truth, autonomy, and the wellbeing of the next generation.

6.



HEALTH CARE FOR MIGRANTS: RIGHTS CANNOT HAVE CONDITIONS.

Every year, Action Canada supports hundreds of people navigating some of the most complex barriers to health care in Canada, many of them newcomers, international students, refugees, or undocumented people. They call because they cannot afford contraception, cannot find a provider who will accept their insurance, or have been denied coverage for an abortion. These barriers are not accidents of bureaucracy, they are the result of policy decisions that leave people without access to essential care.

Budget 2025 introduces a new co-payment model for the Interim Federal Health Program (IFHP), requiring refugees and asylum seekers to pay a portion of the cost for health products and services such as prescription medication and dental care. While framed as a modest adjustment, even small out-of-pocket costs can deter people in precarious circumstances from seeking care. For those already struggling with financial and legal insecurity, these changes can make the difference between getting timely treatment or being forced to delay until their condition worsens.

This is especially concerning for sexual and reproductive health. Providers already report difficulties with the IFHP, the administrative burden of reimbursement often means clinics turn away patients, leaving people without options. Adding co-payments introduces another layer of complexity, requiring clinics to collect fees up front and manage new billing processes. The result will be fewer willing providers, more barriers for patients, and ultimately, higher public costs as preventable conditions become emergencies.

The human consequences are profound. Denying or delaying access to abortion, prenatal care, contraception, or STI treatment does not only endanger individuals, it undermines families, communities, and the health system itself. When people cannot get basic care, they turn to emergency rooms already stretched beyond capacity. What begins as an attempt to save money ends up costing more, in both dollars and dignity.

At a time when Canada is welcoming newcomers to fill critical labour gaps and sustain an aging economy, restricting their access to health care is both unethical and self-defeating. Health care is not a privilege or a perk, it is the backbone of an inclusive, functioning society.

6.



HEALTH CARE FOR MIGRANTS: RIGHTS CANNOT HAVE CONDITIONS (CONTINUED).

A gender lens makes this even clearer: women, girls, and gender-diverse people bear the greatest burden when access to reproductive health care is curtailed. Abortion rights, in practice, depend on a public health system that works, for everyone.

If Canada is serious about building a generational budget that strengthens both the economy and our shared humanity, it must begin by ensuring that all who live and work here can access care, without exception, and without conditions.

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