

## Executive Summary

Respiratory diseases have a major effect on millions of people living in Canada and affect all ages – from before birth through to the end of life.

Despite progress over the years in both prevention and treatment, respiratory diseases continue to have a devastating impact on both the physical and economic health of people living in Canada, taking a huge toll in lost lives, lost economic productivity, and costs to our health care system. But perhaps the most significant impact is on the long-term quality of life for individuals and families who face a respiratory illness.

For the year 2007, the estimated total economic burden of direct and indirect costs of respiratory diseases in Canada totaled \$154 billion. This represents almost \$5,000 per person, fully one-fifth of the median income per individual.

Individually and collectively, everyone living in Canada is at some level of risk for respiratory disease, making respiratory health everybody's business.

At the most basic level, anything that is inhaled into the lungs can put people at risk, whether it is an air pollutant, tobacco smoke, marijuana, solvent fumes, or other inhaled drug or substance. The two most understood, preventable or modifiable risk factors for respiratory disease are tobacco smoke (through personal smoking and exposure to second-hand smoke) and air quality (indoor and outdoor). Occupational exposure represents an avenue of important focus where exposure to irritating or toxic substances may cause a number of acute or chronic respiratory ailments.

Traditionally, the most common respiratory diseases include asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), lung cancer, tuberculosis, sleep disordered breathing (sleep apnea), and influenza. However, with changing demographics in Canada we are seeing new trends and shifts in disease. Since many of these trends can be tied to an aging population, the number of people affected can be expected to increase. The corresponding increase in demand for services will pose a significant challenge for the health care system.

When dealing with respiratory health issues, one size does not always fit all. Many individuals, families and communities encounter barriers as they seek information about, and take action towards, improving their health and quality of life. These barriers are often at the root of why, in communities and regions throughout Canada, some population groups are disproportionately affected by respiratory disease. For instance, certain segments of people living in Canada are at heightened risk for respiratory illness because of the social, economic, environmental and/or cultural conditions in which they live. First Nations, Inuit and Métis were communities most often cited by stakeholders as bearing the largest burden in this regard.

The National Lung Health Framework represents Canada's coordinated strategic response to these issues. As with all effective health strategies in Canada and around the world, this Framework was developed

collaboratively. A vast array of respiratory health stakeholders from all sectors and all regions of the country heeded the urgency of the situation and banded together to help develop this Framework, under the guidance of a volunteer Interim Steering Committee and with the support of the Lung Association and the Government of Canada.

The goal of this collaboration was to deliver a plan that would serve as a catalyst for change – building partnerships, sharing best practices and identifying gaps and opportunities in the respiratory health community – all the while supporting initiatives for advocacy and policy development. The result is a uniquely “Made in Canada” action plan: grounded in provincial and territorial health strategies, addressing barriers to access for at-risk populations, and recognizing the importance of the environment to respiratory health – yet also fully informed by international efforts in the field of respiratory health.

Indeed, in order to be successful, the National Lung Health Framework must align, coordinate, and collaborate with existing international, national, and provincial/territorial health strategies. We have been working closely with other national initiatives to ensure a cooperative approach to issues such as common risk factors and co-morbidity, and this will continue throughout the implementation stage.

Thanks to our stakeholders’ clear, consensus-based vision of the destination and their enthusiastic participation in the process, the Framework presents the collective view of what is needed for the future, addressing the fundamental gaps that exist between the current and desired state of respiratory health in Canada.

Many stakeholders commented during the development process that a National Lung Health Framework was long overdue...the time for action is *now*, and the window of opportunity unprecedented.

**A Vision for Lung Health in Canada**

Excellent respiratory health for all in Canada

**The National Lung Health Framework Mission**

To advance the respiratory health of all people living in Canada through collaborative and equitable patient care, policy, programming, research and leadership

## Guiding Principles for the National Lung Health Framework

The National Lung Health Framework is grounded in several important guiding principles – fundamental values that provide direction, set standards and underpin all the respiratory health decisions we collectively make going forward. Any goal set, and any strategy or activity proposed by the Framework, was developed within the following context:

- Efforts at improving respiratory health and overall wellness must be based on the needs of individuals, families, and communities, and with their participation.
- For all people living in Canada to attain equitable access to the benefits of respiratory health, we must eliminate barriers to prevention, management, and care by addressing the social, economic, environmental and cultural determinants of health.
- A key element of respiratory health is to improve quality of life at all stages throughout the continuum of care – from before birth through to the end of life.
- Respiratory health initiatives and programs must be culturally sensitive and respectful, building on existing strengths and values.
- Advocacy plays a crucial role in influencing policy and related behavior change.
- Progress can be maximized through collaboration with other health frameworks, strategies, initiatives, and programs, allowing health sectors, disciplines and jurisdictions to come together and build partnerships, share best practices, and encourage development of policy initiatives.

*Two additional principles will guide the Framework's ongoing development and implementation process:*

- The Framework will be developed and implemented with the cooperation, collaboration, and participation of stakeholders and all levels of government.
- This is a “living process,” flexible and responsive to evolving needs, research, and knowledge, and moving forward in the context of continuous evaluation and quality improvement.

## Goals and Strategic Areas for Action

Stakeholders broadly agree that this National Lung Health Framework initiative can be implemented with success by targeting the following set of common goals:

- Goal 1:** To prevent, and moderate the impact of, respiratory illnesses through the development and implementation of effective, coordinated: health promotion, awareness, exposure reduction, and smoking prevention/cessation activities.
- Goal 2:** Improve the health outcomes and quality of life for everyone in Canada through early detection and better management of respiratory diseases.
- Goal 3:** Develop, implement and strengthen the support structures essential to an effective respiratory health management strategy for all sectors, including policy and legislation, partnerships, community supports, and health care system design and delivery.
- Goal 4:** Drive effective prevention and management of respiratory disease and its risk factors, through enhanced, coordinated research and surveillance efforts that are then translated into both improved health outcomes and economic benefits.

To respond to these goals, the Framework has been organized into four broad Strategic Areas for Action:

1. Health Promotion, Awareness and Disease Prevention
2. Disease Detection and Management
3. Policy, Partnerships, and Community/Systems Support
4. Research, Surveillance and Knowledge Translation

## Key Strategies

Through extensive stakeholder consultations and feedback, key strategies and activities have been identified, within each of the Strategic Areas, that serve to frame collective efforts towards achieving the four goals.

Stakeholders acknowledge that the Framework’s strategies and activities, applied in the context of addressing First Nations, Inuit and Métis health issues, must not only aim to improve overall health outcomes, but to reduce the disparity between Aboriginal peoples and non-Aboriginal people living in Canada in terms of prevalence of respiratory disease and quality of life.

### 1. Health Promotion, Awareness and Disease Prevention

**Goal:** To prevent, and moderate the impact of, respiratory illnesses through the development and implementation of effective, coordinated: health promotion, awareness, exposure reduction, and smoking prevention/cessation activities.

*Strategies identified to meet this goal:*

- Make the prevention of chronic and infectious respiratory disease a national priority within health care reform;
- Increase awareness, knowledge, and understanding of – and active engagement with – respiratory health issues by the public and all stakeholders;
- Increase awareness of the impact of environmental issues on respiratory health – at work, at home, at school, and at play;
- Reduce exposure to environmental air contaminants by influencing people to avoid exposures and to reduce their own contribution to indoor/outdoor air contaminants;
- Assist people living in Canada to avoid taking up smoking and to stop smoking, and counter or “denormalize” tobacco industry promotional efforts (leveraging and coordinating with other tobacco strategies and initiatives);
- Collaborate with other strategies and initiatives relevant to respiratory health.

## 2. Disease Detection and Management

**Goal:** Improve the health outcomes and quality of life for everyone in Canada through early detection and better management of respiratory diseases.

*Strategies identified to meet this goal:*

- Implement earlier detection;
- Promote a system of inter-disciplinary health care teams for the management of respiratory diseases;
- Promote patient empowerment and self-management;
- Improve treatment, rehabilitation and supportive care in the full continuum from detection through to palliative care;
- Implement, and increase use of, standards, guidelines and best practices;
- Collaborate and coordinate efforts with other chronic and infectious disease strategies and initiatives.

## 3. Policy, Partnerships, and Community/Systems Support

**Goal:** Develop, implement and strengthen the support structures essential to an effective respiratory health management strategy for all sectors, including policy and legislation, partnerships, community supports, and health care system delivery and design.

*Strategies identified to meet this goal:*

- Advocate for healthy public policies and enforcement resources to prevent respiratory disease and improve respiratory health;
- Build and enhance strategic partnerships that cut across jurisdictions, disciplines, and sectors;
- Increase availability of, and access to, programs throughout the community across the continuum of care;
- Improve education and training for health care providers;
- Create widely accessible knowledge exchange structures for respiratory health stakeholders;
- Identify and address remaining support structure gaps, needs and priorities in the respiratory health community.

## 4. Research, Surveillance and Knowledge Translation

**Goal:** Drive effective prevention and management of respiratory disease and its risk factors, through enhanced, coordinated research and surveillance efforts that are then translated into both improved health outcomes and economic benefits.

*Strategies identified to meet this goal:*

- Increase funding for respiratory health research and knowledge translation towards disease prevention, detection, management, and cure;
- Increase respiratory research capacity;
- Improve surveillance of respiratory health and measurement of health outcomes as part of a broader, comprehensive disease surveillance system;
- Effectively translate respiratory health research findings into knowledge, best practices, policies and programs for a range of audiences, including the public, industry, healthcare providers, policymakers and funders;
- Expand the research that examines relationships between respiratory health and the needs of at-risk populations.

The Framework's vision, mission and principles embody Canada's respiratory stakeholders' collective direction for a coordinated response to addressing respiratory disease in Canada. The goals, strategies and associated activities identify their collective priorities for implementing this response. Built by stakeholders for stakeholders, the Framework serves as a tool for each to develop and implement their own strategic plans, budgets and programs.

This unprecedented collaborative effort is already facilitating the creation and support of new partnerships, networks and knowledge sharing among the many pockets of excellence in respiratory health across the country, and will continue to do so as more strategies and activities are implemented at all jurisdictional and community levels.

As a living process, the Framework will continue to be responsive to the evolving needs, research, and knowledge of respiratory health stakeholders in Canada, moving forward in the context of continuous evaluation and quality improvement.

Canada's respiratory health stakeholders are both the owners of the National Lung Health Framework, and its beneficiaries. Ultimately however, the advantages belong to all people living in Canada.

By working together to step up prevention, diagnosis, care, treatment, support structures and research, and to achieve the vision set out in this Framework, we can prevent thousands of new respiratory infections, save many lives, and improve the quality of life for people suffering from respiratory disease.

By acting now, our society will reap the enormous economic, social and personal benefits of their productivity and creativity.