



- Phone 613-829-6667
- 512-33 Banner Road
- Ottawa, ON K2H 8V7 Canada
- mefminfo@mefmaction.com
- (BN) 89183 3642 RR0001

January 10, 2024

To: Budget2024@fin.gc.ca

**Including Health and Disability Issues
Experienced by Canadians with ME and FM
in Canada's 2024 budget**

The National ME/FM Action Network has been working on behalf of Canadians with Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (also referred to as chronic fatigue syndrome) and Fibromyalgia since 1993. Nearly 1 million Canadians had a diagnosis of one or both conditions in 2019. Most were of working age. Most were women. ME and FM are frequently triggered by infection so we are expecting a surge in new cases as a result of Covid.

The health and disability systems have not paid attention to ME and FM for decades. This has resulted in poor health outcomes. People with these conditions have unnecessarily high rates of distress, seen in variables like unmet health care needs, poverty, food insecurity and social isolation. This has also resulted in the health and disability systems being unprepared for the Covid related surge in cases. Everyone deserves better.

To address gaps in the health and disability systems, we recommend that the following items be included in the government's plans and priorities for the 2024-25 fiscal year:

- Make up-to-date health information about ME and FM available on government websites. If ME and FM are on the Health Canada website, they are extremely well hidden. Out of about 250 health conditions on the Public Health Agency of Canada website, ME is the only condition whose information is labelled as "archived".
- Make statistical information about ME and FM available to the public so that policy issues can be identified and discussed.
- Provide fair funding for ME and FM research, taking into account the burden of illness and the many years of neglect.

- Implement the Canada Disability Benefit to address the very serious issue of working-age disability poverty. Develop fair, inclusive eligibility criteria for the Canada Disability Benefit before it is introduced.
- Review the disability statistics program in time for the 2026 Census and the 2027 Canadian Survey on Disability.
- Review disability training programs for public servants to ensure that all types of disability, including chronic disabling illnesses, are covered.

cc.

Minister of Health hcmminister.ministresc@hc-sc.gc.ca

Minister for Disabilities kamal.khera@parl.gc.ca

Minister for Statistics Canada ministerofisi-ministredeisi@ised-isde.gc.ca