

HEALTH CARE SUSTAINABILITY IN CANADA — WE NEED TO TALK

The risk of unnecessary testing is more than physical

WHAT IS SUSTAINABILITY?

MORE THAN FISCAL

Sustainability is not always about costs of tests and services. It is also about protecting dwindling health care resources to ensure quality future care for all Canadians. It represents the health of our population; comprising many values such as efficiency, compassionate care, confidence, and quality.

Sustainability is also about respecting the limits of health care resources as unnecessary testing can put a strain on these resources. The cost is not just physical, as unnecessary diagnostic testing not only impacts harm on the body but leads to an increase of more tests — more impact on an already over-burdened system. Although many people believe that an aging baby boomer tsunami is threatening to overwhelm health care, it is in fact a combination of all ages of an increasing population, the rising costs of services, and increased usage that is the problem. It's up to everyone to have a conversation, and change the culture of unnecessary and routine testing to ensure that health care resources go to the people who need it the most.



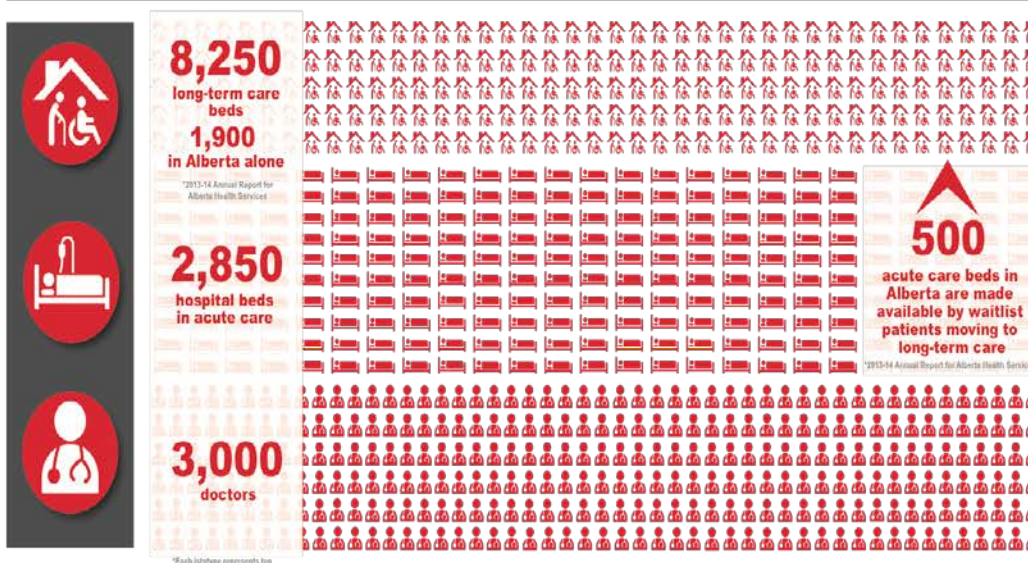
SUSTAINING SERVICES

THE COMPOUND BENEFIT

Canada spent 220 billion on health care in 2014. In which 10% was estimated to be diagnostic imaging. Of this 10%, an additional 30% was estimated to be unnecessary, or duplicate testing.

220 billion 2014 health expenditures
 2.2 billion estimated diagnostic imaging
 660 million estimated unnecessary/wasteful

What could \$660 million of savings buy per year?



THE HEALTH VARIABLE

30% of CT scans may be unnecessary

When unnecessary testing happens, it not only increases the cancer mortality rate by exposing the patient to excess radiation, but it also results in follow-up tests being done, which increases exposure even further.

Lifetime cancer risk from radiation

The radiation exposure from three or four chest CT scans (7 mSv) is roughly equivalent to that experienced by atomic bomb survivors in Japan who were located one to two miles from "ground zero." (FDA, 2010)

THE POPULATION VARIABLE

Health care user profiles

Healthcare spending/capita			
2013	\$10,897	\$2,637	\$8,746
	age 0-1yr.	15-64yr.	64-79yr. age 80+yr.

Age percentage of senior population	
2013 approx.	75% age 64-79yr. 25% age 80+yr.
2063 projected	61% age 64-79yr. 39% age 80+yr.

*CIRI, National Health Expenditure Trends report, 1975 to 2010

OUR FUTURE...

DO WE NEED A CULTURE CHANGE?

Communicating risk

An open dialogue between patients and clinicians can result in good decisions about whether or not a test is relevant, helpful, or causes harm.

When good choices are made, everyone benefits, as valuable resources spent on following up on false positives and incidental findings could be allocated to high-need patients or programs that improve community health.

Four Questions Patients Can Ask:

- 1 Do I really need this test, treatment, or procedure?
- 2 What are the downsides?
- 3 Are there simpler, safer options?
- 4 What happens if I do nothing?

A linked online records system has been shown to reduce repeat CT scans. (Johnson et al., 2012)

41% of lab tests have been repeated within 90 days
13% of CT scans have been repeated within 90 days

*Each ordering site from the Calgary Laboratory Services, Laboratory Information System, Jan 1 2010 to Dec 31 2014

*Results from Western in edmonton. Study done from January 1, 2013 to December 31, 2013

The frequency of repeat imaging is lower in a geographical subset of Ontario, where a linked, online radiology system is employed.

The adoption of a linked, online Emergency Medical Records (EMR) system and a radiology system would help reduce unnecessary and redundant routine testing by showing full patient history, as well as cost associated with that particular test.

Show the costs

The frequency of unnecessary testing could be reduced with a cost-per-test window popping up along with the requisition.

MORE IS MORE IS MORE
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Health care spending as a percentage of GDP is an accepted indicator of future sustainability according to the 2010 research Council of Canada panel report.

GDP spending as a percentage over the last few years

