



CANADIAN
PUBLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION

ASSOCIATION
CANADIENNE DE
SANTÉ PUBLIQUE



The Honourable Ahmed Hussen
Minister of Families, Children and Social Development Minister responsible for the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
ahmed.Hussen@parl.gc.ca

The Honourable Seamus O'Regan
Minister of Natural Resources
nrcan.minister-ministre.nrcan@canada.ca

The Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson
Minister of Environment and Climate Change
ec.ministre-minister.ec@canada.ca

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Health
hcminister.ministresc@canada.ca

May 5, 2021

Dear Ministers Hussen, O'Regan, Wilkinson and Hajdu:

Re: Key Ideas for the Low -Income Energy Efficiency Program

We are writing to you to express our support for recommendations on the newly announced Low Income Energy Efficiency Program sent to you by low-income energy efficiency policy and program implementers and researchers. Specifically:

- This program should be delivered in the form of a no-cost and turnkey service to participants with social investment goals, rather than through low- or no-interest loans;
- It should leverage and improve (not disrupt) existing programs;
- Consultations with jurisdictions across Canada that have implemented programs to reduce energy poverty in low-income populations should be undertaken;
- The intersections of race, gender/lone parent, and rural/urban geography should be considered in the design of programming;
- The funding should be sufficient to allow for multi-fuel, deep retrofits, and allow for the switching to efficient and low- to zero-carbon heating systems; and
- This program should offer sufficient funding to include moderate-income households that are above official low-income measures.

As public health associations working to improve population health and address the social determinants of health, we recognize the link between health inequities, energy poverty and indoor environmental conditions that contribute to health hazards. As articulated in our joint [Backgrounder](#) and [Factsheet](#) entitled ***“Investing in Building Retrofits to Create a Healthy, Green and Just Community”***, extreme heat, cold, mould and dampness in indoor environments are associated with increases in cardiovascular disease, strokes, asthma and other

respiratory diseases, and premature deaths. Studies have found that interventions that improve the comfort and quality of indoor environments can also improve overall health, respiratory health and mental health, with particular benefits for those with pre-existing respiratory conditions.

Building retrofits such as improved insulation, energy efficient windows, modern heating and cooling systems, and better ventilation can improve health by keeping occupants warmer in winter, cooler in summer, and by improving indoor air quality. They can also improve outdoor air quality and increase climate resilience, while mitigating greenhouse gas emissions.

Lower-income populations, newcomers, racial minorities, Indigenous Peoples, and people with long-term health conditions can experience higher rates of illness and premature deaths because of social disadvantages. As a result, they are at increased risk from climate-related impacts such as extreme heat and wildfire smoke. These groups may also lack the resources needed to protect themselves or recover from extreme events such as wildfires and floods.

Health inequities can be reduced by prioritizing lower-income households and housing for retrofit funding and ensuring that funding is sufficient to support comprehensive retrofits that provide air sealing, insulation, and zero-carbon heating and ventilation systems to make a meaningful improvement to air quality and thermal comfort.

In addition, by reducing energy use, retrofits can cut energy bills, leaving people with more money to spend on healthy food, clothing and other necessities. In addition, programs that strategically target people from disadvantaged populations for training in building retrofits can help reduce health inequities in communities across the country.

We ask you to heed the recommendations of the low-income energy efficiency policy and program implementers and researchers who have first-hand knowledge about how these programs work and the policies needed to ensure that they achieve their goals.

Yours sincerely,



Kim Perrotta MHSc
Executive Director
CHASE



Ian Culbert
Executive Director
CPHA



Pegeen Walsh
Executive Director
OPHA