

INVESTING IN HEALTHCARE

Healthcare is top of mind for people across the country. I have heard from many in our community about the difficulties in finding a family doctor, how emergency room wait times are incredibly long, and how the need for mental health and substance use support far outweighs the capacity we are seeing in BC. Our healthcare system and our health workers are under strain, a situation that was made worse by the pandemic, and needs immediate action to deliver better healthcare for Canadians.

While the delivery of healthcare is a provincial responsibility, we know that the federal government has an important role to provide the funding to help provinces and territories meet improved goals and outcomes. On February 7, we announced a historic investment to do just that, with nearly \$200 billion over 10 years for provinces and territories to improve healthcare services for Canadians. In March, we also signed a tailored made agreement-in-principle with the BC government that will invest \$27 billion over 10 years, a \$273 million immediate injection to address urgent needs, and setting aside \$3 billion to negotiate a bilateral deal on shared healthcare priorities. Canada's new healthcare funding focuses on five investment areas:

1. Access to high-quality family health services, including in rural and remote areas and underserved communities
2. A resilient and supported health workforce that provides high-quality, effective and safe health services
3. Access to timely, equitable and quality mental health, substance use and addictions services
4. Modernizing health data and creating access to your own electronic health information
5. Ensuring Canadians can age with dignity with access to home care and safe long-term care.

We are also making sure federal funding is tied to outcomes, by requiring provinces and territories to develop action plans that outline how the funding will be spent and developing and using comparable indicators such as surgery backlogs, population with access to a family doctor, wait times for mental healthcare, and more.



1



IMPROVING ACCESS TO FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES

Better access to quality family health services helps us live healthier lives and reduces the need for hospitalizations and emergency room visits, especially for children. With our healthcare plan, we are investing in family health teams, including funding to support the hiring of physicians, physician assistants, nurse practitioners, and other healthcare professionals.

One of the top concerns I hear on healthcare is how qualified immigrants are unable to get the credentials they need to practice medicine in Canada. This represents a huge pool of talent that is being wasted. That is why provinces and territories are being asked to streamline foreign credential recognition for internationally-educated health professionals, and to advance labour mobility, starting with multi-jurisdictional credential recognition for key health sectors. The federal government will be working with provinces and territories to advance this important work through areas such as our Immigration Levels Plan.

Our health workers have sacrificed a lot to support us during the pandemic; it's right that we now support them. This means investing to keep workers in their current roles, helping the sector recruit new employees, and making data better to help long-term workforce planning. We are also establishing a Coalition for Action for Health Workers to inform immediate and long-term solutions to address health workforce challenges, and creating a Chief Nursing Officer to provide strategic advice from a nursing perspective on priority policy and program areas.

Supporting workers also means providing funding to help reduce backlogs in our healthcare system. We are therefore providing an immediate unconditional \$2 billion Canada Health Transfer top-up to address immediate pressures on the health care system, especially in pediatric hospitals, emergency rooms and surgical and diagnostic backlogs.

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SUPPORTING HEALTH WORKERS

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IMPROVING ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE USE SERVICES

Over a third of Canadians are struggling with mental health challenges, and early diagnosis and intervention is vital to ensure effective treatment and recovery. Canadians deserve a multi-disciplinary system of care, one that integrates mental health across all the shared priorities. For example, with better access to family health teams, those suffering can be more easily referred to a psychologist or psychiatrist.

Our healthcare plan attaches conditions to make sure provinces and territories treat mental health as a full and equal part of our healthcare system, and support Canadians with better access to family health teams – because we know that mental health IS health. Over the years, so many constituents have shared with me personal stories that underscore the need for greater mental health funding; I believe this investment will go a long way to building the support systems we need.

Investing in Indigenous Healthcare

As part of our commitment to upholding the principles of reconciliation, we will continue to improve healthcare access and resources for Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous Peoples face unique challenges when it comes to receiving the healthcare they need, including for example a lack of family doctors and nurse practitioners in rural and remote communities. This is especially important in parts of the Sea to Sky and Sunshine Coast. Through our healthcare deal, we are providing \$2 billion over 10 years to address unique challenges that Indigenous communities face when it comes to fair and equitable access to culturally safe healthcare services. The new Indigenous Health Equity Fund will be distributed to support First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities, and our ministers will work alongside Indigenous partners to prioritise and implement these investments so that all Indigenous Peoples have the access to quality care they need.

4



ACCESSING YOUR OWN ELECTRONIC HEALTH INFORMATION

Health information and data saves lives. Health providers currently cannot easily access or share health information because systems do not always connect, which can affect patient safety, create unnecessary or duplicate tests, and results in longer wait times and hospital stays. That is why we are modernizing our healthcare system with standardized health data and tools. This means that you will never have to feel the frustration when being referred from one health provider to another, only to be asked to repeat tests that were already performed because medical records could not be shared — meaning more quick and effective diagnosis and treatment.

We are also providing Canadians with electronic access to their own health information, which will let them be more active in the management of their personal health.

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IMPROVING ACCESS TO HOME AND LONG-TERM CARE

The last three years have highlighted long-standing gaps in our long-term care system which have proved devastating for seniors, their families, and those who care for them. Our government is continuing to work to make sure Canadians can age with dignity, closer to home, and with access to home care or safe long-term care through a joint investment of \$6 billion over five years. This important new funding includes:

- The Safe Long-Term Care Fund which will improve the quality of care for those living in long-term care facilities by providing provinces and territories with financial resources to hire additional staff, invest in PPE, reduce crowding, and keep seniors safe.
- Adopting independently-developed national standards on Long-Term Care, to protect seniors and make sure they are getting the best care possible.
- Making historic investments in healthcare research including in innovations in brain health and improving treatment for those living with dementia.

Through our healthcare plan, we are also providing an additional \$1.7 billion over five years to support wage increases for personal support workers and related professions. Provinces and territories are also being asked to commit to negotiate and implement action plans for the remaining funding for Home and Community Care and Mental Health and Addiction Services. Measures like these will make a huge difference in so many parts of our riding, especially in areas with higher senior populations such as West Vancouver and the Sunshine Coast.



PATRICK WEILER

Member of Parliament

West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country

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A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MP

With sunnier days, Persian New Year (Nowruz) in March, and flowers in bloom, spring is finally here. I hope everyone is enjoying the longer days and warmer weather.

Many community members have brought up questions on Canada's immigration and health policy. This newsletter is partly a response to those priorities, and it highlights key recent developments. Last November, the Government of Canada announced our new 2023-2025 Immigration Levels Plan. This plan sets goals for immigration in the next three years that will grow our economy, fill job vacancies, and support Canada's aging population. I invite you to read this newsletter to learn more about the critical impact that immigration has in so many sectors of Canada's economy and society.

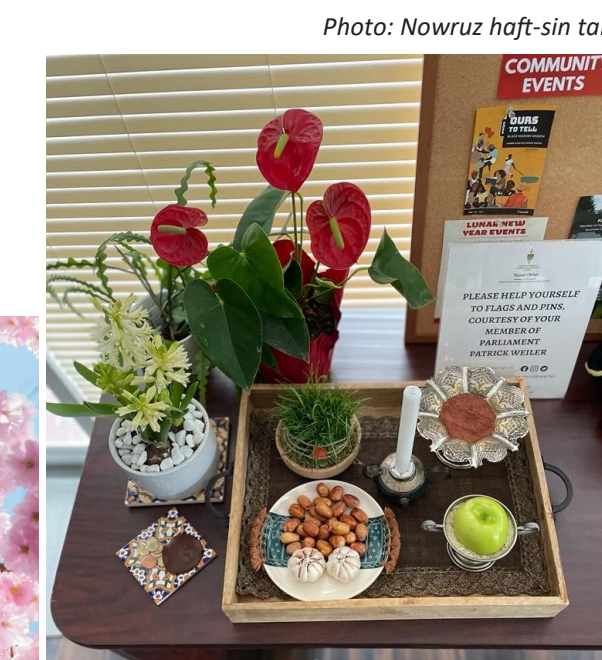
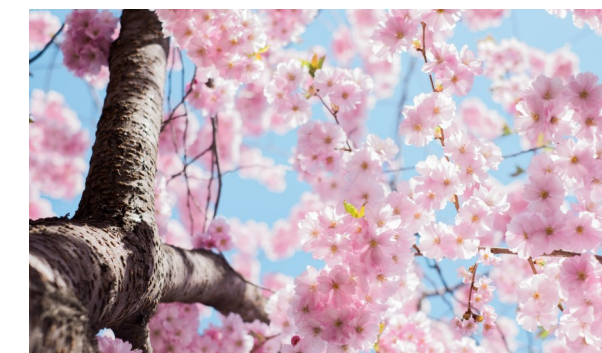
In February, we announced a historic investment in our healthcare system to support provinces and territories to reduce backlogs, sustain services, and create better outcomes for Canadians. This newsletter breaks down our healthcare plan and where these investments are being made.

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office using the contact information to the side.

Sincerely,

Patrick Weiler, MP

West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast-Sea to Sky Country



I would like to acknowledge that our riding is located on the ancestral and unceded lands of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Shísháhl (Sechelt), Líl'wat (Lil'wat), səllwəṭəṭ (Tsleil-Waututh), x'məθk'əyəm (Musqueam), and N'Quatqua Nations.

MP Newsletter: Spring 2023

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CANADA'S IMMIGRATION LEVELS PLAN

Canada is largely a nation of immigrants, and we are proud of the diverse, multicultural mosaic that over 38 million of us call home. Immigration is critical to the Canadian economy, with newcomers working in and filling key positions in all sectors, creating small businesses, and otherwise contributing to the local economy. We are very lucky in our riding to be home to many, diverse communities who have enriched our neighbourhoods in a myriad of ways.

The Canadian economy has experienced one of the fastest recoveries from COVID-19 among advanced economies, with over 800,000 more jobs than before the pandemic. However, we are still facing large labour shortages, which is causing uncertainty for Canadian businesses and the services they deliver. Small businesses across our riding, especially in tourist-heavy areas like the Sea to Sky, have made clear to me how critical the situation is. To respond to this challenge and to set the course for Canada's long-term economic success, our government released Canada's 2023-2025 Immigration Levels Plan. This plan embraces immigration as a strategy to help businesses find workers and to attract the skills required in key sectors including healthcare, construction, skilled trades, manufacturing, and technology, and to manage the social and economic challenges Canada will face in the decades ahead.

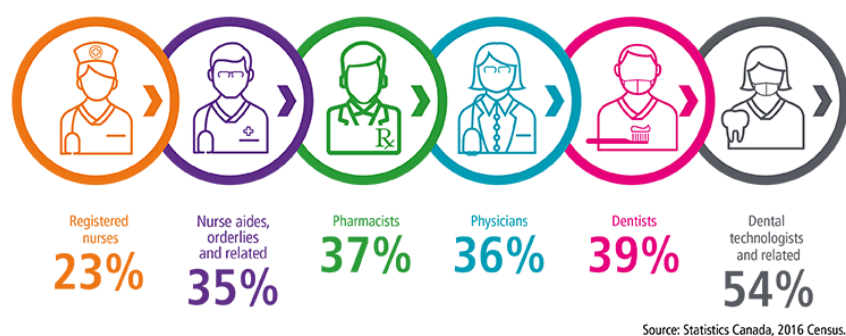
Our Immigration Levels Plan means Canada will welcome 465,000 permanent residents in 2023, 485,000 in 2024 and 500,000 in 2025.

Our plan includes:

- A long-term focus on economic growth, with just over **60% of admissions in the Economic Class** by 2025
- New features in the Express Entry System to **welcome newcomers with the skills and qualifications in sectors facing acute labour shortages**, such as healthcare, construction, and transportation
- **Increases to regional programs to address targeted local labour market needs**, through the Provincial Nominee Program, the Atlantic Immigration Program, and the Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot
- **Faster family reunification**
- Easing access to **permanent residence for foreign-trained doctors in Canada**
- Investing in programs to assist the provinces to fast track **Foreign Credential Recognition**
- **Allowing international students to work more hours** by lifting the current cap
- **Allowing more international graduates to stay and work in Canada longer** by extending their Post Graduate Work Permits
- New measures to **bring wait times from 20 months to 1 month for work permits** for asylum seekers

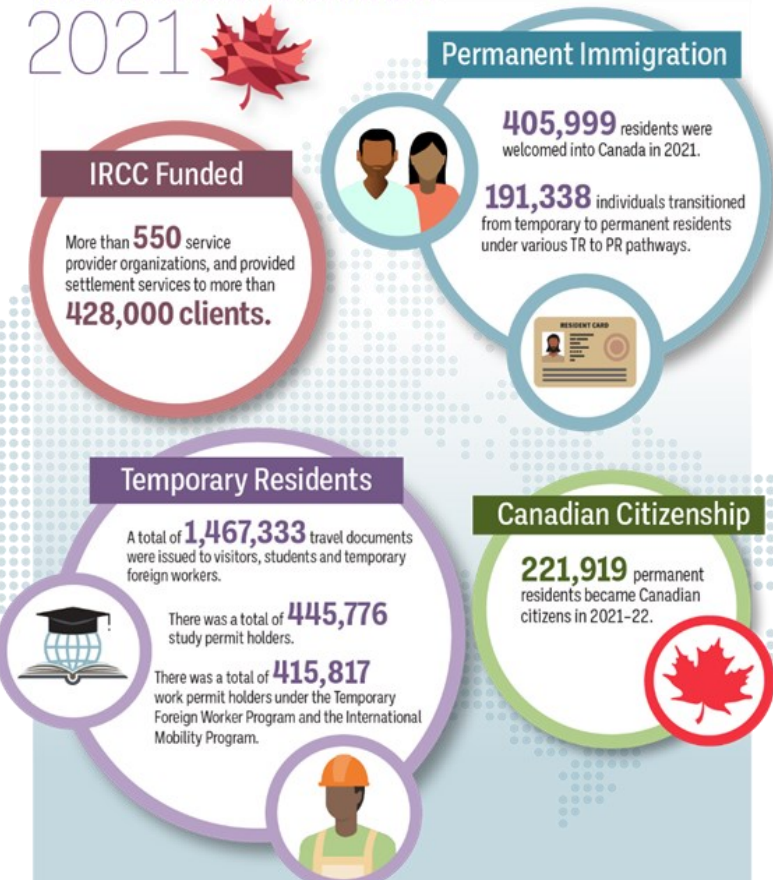
How Immigration Impacts Healthcare

Percentages that immigrants account for in each healthcare sector



More than 1.6 million people work in Canada's healthcare sector and almost 500,000 workers are over the age of 55; most of them will be retiring in the next decade or so. In addition, existing recruitment challenges for nurses, residential care staff and home health care staff means there is a clear opportunity for immigrants to play an important role in ensuring there are enough people working in the healthcare sector. Immigrants currently account for 1/4 of healthcare sector workers, but more will be needed to support Canada's aging population, including in communities in our riding such as West Vancouver and parts of the Sunshine Coast, where this will be an acute problem.

Key highlights for IMMIGRATION TO CANADA 2021



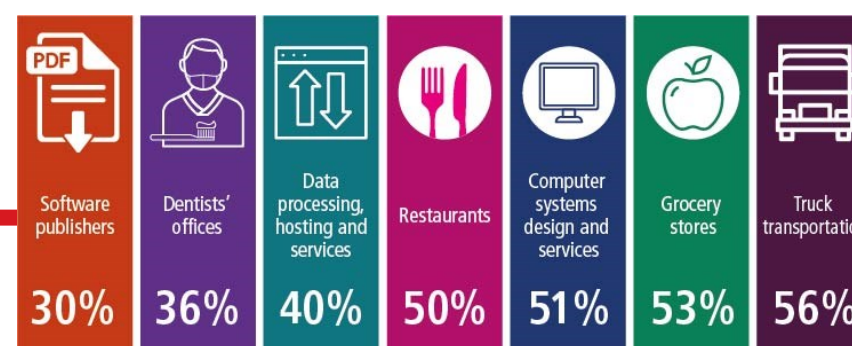
How Immigration Impacts Business

The private sector employs more than 12 million people in Canada. As we look to the future, immigrant workers, entrepreneurs, and business leaders will have an important role to play, ensuring we have a growing and successful economy.

Immigrants account for 33% of all business owners with paid staff, creating important local jobs in all sectors of our economy such as construction, professional services, healthcare and retail trade. There are more than 600,000 self-employed immigrants across the country, and over 260,000 of them have paid employees.



The percentage of business owners who are immigrants, by sector

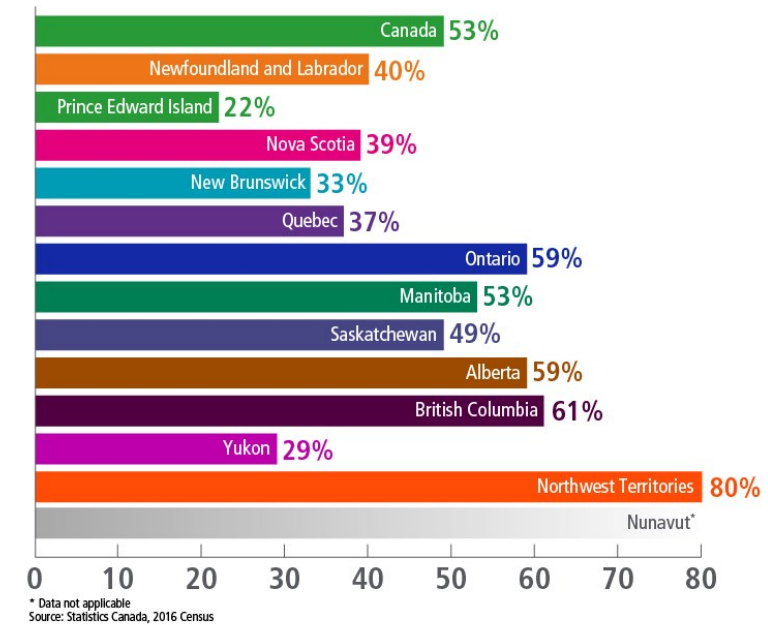


How Immigration Impacts Food Services

The food services sector is one of the top employers in Canada with 1.16 million employees, but restaurant and other food service businesses still need workers. Immigrants will continue to be an important source of workers for this industry in the years ahead. Currently, more than 1 out of every 4 workers in the food and beverage sector are immigrants.

The sector employed 11% of all working immigrants who arrived here between 2011 and 2016, making it the top employer of recent immigrants in Canada. Across the country, immigrants also make up more than half (53%) of business owners with paid staff in the food and beverage sector.

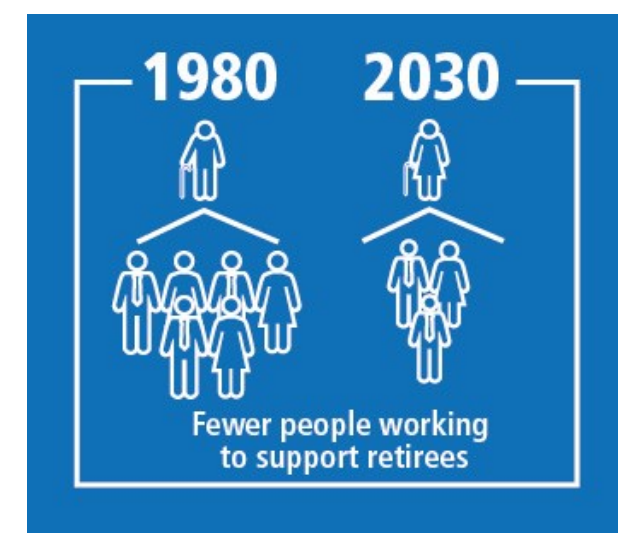
Percentage of immigrant business owners in the food & beverage sector



How Immigration Supports an Aging Workforce

The income tax paid by working Canadians pays for healthcare and other supports for retired Canadians. In 1980, there were roughly 6 workers for every retiree. In 2015, there were 4 workers for every retiree. By 2030, when 5 million Canadians are set to retire, the ratio will be down to only 3 workers for every retiree. Without immigrants to help support the needs of an aging population, younger Canadians would end up paying more income tax per person to provide retired Canadians with the same benefits that are available today.

Immigration alone cannot solve this challenge, but it can help as we look to keep our economy growing and maintain our commitments to healthcare, public pensions and other social programs. More than 80% of the immigrants we have admitted in recent years are under 45 years old, meaning they will have plenty of working years in Canada. Our Immigration Levels Plan will work to continue this trend.



How Immigration Impacts Housing Supply

The construction industry is facing huge headwinds with current labour shortages and significant job vacancies projected due to a wave of recent and future expected retirements. According to the Canadian Home Builders' Association, more than 20% of Canada's construction workers are set to retire in the next decade, making it even harder to build the housing we need to meet high demand we have now and will continue to have in the future.

This is why our Immigration Levels Plan focuses on welcoming skilled immigrants in the trades to help fill these unfilled jobs in the construction sector. In order to build the housing supply we desperately need, we need to build the workforce that can deliver these projects and new homes.



Streamlining the Immigration Process & Clearing Backlogs

We have made significant progress in reducing our immigration backlogs, with wait times for study permits, work permits, visas, spousal sponsorship, Express Entry, PR cards, and citizenship all down and on track to hit our service standards. Last year, we processed approximately 4.8 million applications—nearly twice the 2.5 million processed during the same period the year before. To achieve this, we have implemented a number of new measures including:

- Hiring 1,250 new staff at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Streamlining processes, expanding advanced analytics, and using more automation for straightforward cases
- Moving from paper-based to electronic applications
- Streamlining medical exams and removing the requirement for a repeat medical exam, which has already benefitted 126,000 clients
- Eliminating duplication in processing with the Provincial Nominee Program
- Digitizing and modernizing our systems, including the underlying IT infrastructure



Photo: Immigration Minister Sean Fraser at a citizenship ceremony

Supporting Refugees & Immigrants Fleeing Violence

Canada continues to help and welcome those feeling violence, persecution, and other horrific situations around the world. Whether it is people fleeing Taliban rule in Afghanistan, persecution in Iran, violence and war in Ukraine, and crackdowns in Hong Kong, Canadians are committed to helping those in need and providing safe refuge to the most vulnerable.

We are doing this through special programs such as the Special Immigration Measures Program for Afghan refugees, the Canada-Ukraine authorization for emergency travel (CUAET), and priority application, extension of temporary visas, and waiving of fees for Iranians in Canada so that they do not need to return and be persecuted in Iran.

To date, we have settled more than 29,000 Afghan refugees, more than 165,452 Ukrainians have arrived in Canada through CUAET, and we have sponsored dozens of persecuted individuals in Iran who are being targeted by the regime. Canada's humanitarian commitments will never waiver.

Photo: Announcing new supports for Iranian residents in Canada fleeing persecution

