



June 12, 2015

Dr Jeremy Grimshaw
Director of the Canadian Cochrane Centre
1 Stewart Street, 2nd Floor
Ottawa ON K1N 6N5

Dear Dr. Grimshaw:

Re: Cochrane Canada's CIHR funding cut

The Health Action Lobby (known as HEAL) is disappointed to learn that the Canadian Institutes of Health Research will not renew Cochrane Canada's funding.

Formed in 1991, HEAL is a coalition of 39 national health organizations, representing over 650,000 health and service providers. We are committed to the highest standards of care and applying the best evidence available to support practice. Cochrane systematic reviews are the gold standard in health evidence, which is why we are so concerned with the impact this could have on the Canadian health system.

All health professionals use Cochrane evidence. It is well known that physicians go to the Cochrane library for the most up-to-date and reliable evidence on medical treatments, but Cochrane covers every health field from public health to dentistry, physiotherapy to nursing. Our members recognize Cochrane Canada as the most productive and efficient producer of systematic reviews in Canada.

Cochrane Canada's training programs are also building Canada's capacity for evidence-informed healthcare. As federal, provincial and territorial governments are seeking opportunities to highlight innovation to drive health system change it is short-sighted to change funding streams that will impact the availability of high-quality evidence. The result will undoubtedly be fewer health professionals possessing the knowledge and know-how to find and conduct systematic reviews to advance knowledge in their area of practice.

Cochrane Canada partners directly with 14 of HEAL's member organizations. Through this partnership, Cochrane Canada offers regular training in how to assess, use and participate in Cochrane reviews through face-to-face workshops and webinars. It also assists with the dissemination of Cochrane evidence relevant to each partner's priorities.

HEAL places a high value on the participation of consumers in healthcare decision making, and Cochrane Canada has set an example by reaching out to consumers, training them to use and participate in systematic reviews, and drawing on their expertise in the dissemination of health

evidence. The availability of freely accessible, plain language summaries and abstracts in both official languages is a major resource for consumers in Canada.

Fiscal constraints dominate health policy and planning discussions across Canada and around the world. But, the response to tightened budgets should not be the elimination of funding for evidence. The governments of other countries comparable to Canada, such as the United Kingdom, Australia, and the United States, continue to invest strongly in the international Cochrane Collaboration. We feel the Canadian government should uphold the same level of commitment and continue funding for Cochrane Canada.

Sincerely,



Michael Brennan, CEO
Canadian Physiotherapy Association
HEAL Co-Chair



Karen Cohen, CEO
Canadian Psychological Association
HEAL Co-Chair