

Key Messages for Advocates

August 28, 2025

Overall Key Messages

- ACCESS (Advancing Childhood Cancer Experience, Science & Survivorship) is a pan-Canadian network launched in 2023 that unites more than 1,000 survivors, families, researchers, clinicians, and community partners to transform the pediatric cancer landscape.
- Childhood cancer is the leading cause of disease-related death among Canadian children. One in five diagnosed children dies from the disease, and diagnoses are increasing each year. Survivors often face lifelong health challenges that impact their quality of life and productivity. Sustained investment is vital for ensuring childhood cancer survivors have a chance at a healthy, productive future.
- Canada is currently overly dependent on international sponsors for clinical trials and other advanced treatments, especially from the United States. Our clinical research network is fragile, leaving our children vulnerable to loss of access due to political volatility in the US. We must become true partners, capable of 'paying our own' way.
- ACCESS focuses on three strategic priorities: **Community, Research and Data**. It is driving innovative clinical trials, connecting fragmented data systems, and building a united national strategy for pediatric cancer.
- With initial federal investment, ACCESS has supported **180 researchers across 50 studies**, built partnerships with **45 national and international collaborators**, and mobilized Canada's pediatric cancer community into a unified network.
- Early treatment and innovation ease pressure on the economy and healthcare system, while healthier survivors live longer, more productive lives and contribute to Canada's economy. Federal leadership now will improve cures, reduce costly late effects and secure a healthier population. Without sustained funding, both the health and economic burden of pediatric cancer will rise.
- Continued federal investment is urgently needed. Without it, Canada risks losing momentum, talent and critical research progress. With it, Canada can lead globally in childhood cancer care and ensure every child has equitable access to life-saving treatment. Federal action is needed to build Canadian capacity and reduce our reliance on other nations for life-saving care.

- ACCESS is asking the federal government for:
 - **\$8 million in 2025–2026** to sustain ongoing work and develop a national pediatric cancer strategy.
 - **\$80 million over four years (2026–2030)** to implement the national strategy and ensure equitable access to care across Canada.

Detailed Key Messages

ACCESS is Canada’s solution to transform pediatric cancer care.

- ACCESS is a unique collective, survivors, families, clinicians, researchers and community partners to build a national strategy whose lived experience drives our work created to overcome provincial barriers, fragmented data and inequitable access to care.
- We believe that children and their families should be at the heart of our mission.
- ACCESS has already engaged more than 1,000 members of Canada’s pediatric cancer community and created a culture of collaboration and shared purpose creating a unified, inclusive network centered on those who have experienced cancer firsthand.
- We are united in our commitment to effect meaningful change and ensure the voices of people with lived experience reach policymakers and government members in an impactful way.
- This strong national network is essential to transforming the pediatric cancer landscape for Canadian children and their families, positioning Canada as a global leader.

Childhood cancer is an urgent health crisis in Canada.

- Cancer is the most common cause of disease-related death in Canadian children.
- One in five children diagnosed with cancer dies from the disease.
- More than 45,000 survivors live with long-term effects, including chronic health issues, reduced independence and barriers to workforce participation.
- The number of Canadian children being diagnosed with cancer is rising each year.
- The loss of a child to cancer represents far more years of life lost compared to most adult cancers, underscoring the urgency of prioritizing pediatric investment.

Federal action is needed to build Canadian capacity and reduce our reliance on other nations for life-saving care.

- Canada is currently overly dependent on international sponsors for clinical trials and other advanced treatments.
- Borders, whether provincial or international, should not be a barrier to a child's access to the best providers, emerging treatments, or transformative technologies and research.
- Federal leadership is essential to expand Canada's own capacity for clinical trials and advanced treatment technologies, ensuring equitable access to care for all Canadian children.
- Investing in a national strategy will enable Canada to retain and grow its own research talent and become a global leader in pediatric cancer care.
- Sustained investment will enable Canada to become true partners in the global Children's Oncology Group (COG), ensuring Canadian children access cutting-edge therapies. It will also advance proton therapy capacity in Canada, reducing reliance on U.S. systems and securing equitable access for families.

Sustained investment is vital for ensuring childhood cancer survivors have a chance at a healthy, productive future.

- While cure rates have improved, many childhood cancer survivors in Canada face lifelong health issues that impact their quality of life, independence and productivity in the workforce.
- Investing in survivorship research and care is crucial to addressing these challenges, reducing the long-term health and economic burden of the disease and ensuring that survivors can lead full and healthy lives.

Federal investment in ACCESS is delivering measurable results.

- Supported 180 researchers across 50 studies, including Canadian-led clinical trials such as glioma and sarcoma that are expanding access nationwide.
- Established collaborations with over 45 national and international organizations spanning research, care and advocacy.
- Produced more than 20 training and communications resources and began addressing policy and regulatory barriers that limit children's access to trials and innovative care.

Community: A united voice for change.

- ACCESS is creating a unified, inclusive community centred on children and families.

- Canada's pediatric cancer community is motivated but needs structure and resources to effect meaningful change.
- A strong national network positions Canada as a global leader in childhood cancer research and care.

Research: Innovation that saves lives.

- Clinical trials are often the only treatment option for children not cured by standard therapies. Yet Canadian children often lack access due to regulatory and resource barriers.
- ACCESS is enabling Canadian-led trials and advancing cutting-edge science in genomics and AI to accelerate discoveries.
- Federal support will expand clinical trial capacity, attract industry investment, and provide high-quality jobs in Canada.

Data: Connecting Canada's fragmented pediatric cancer landscape.

- Data about pediatric cancer is scattered across jurisdictions and often inaccessible.
- ACCESS is building on federal initiatives like the Cancer in Young People Canada (CYP-C) platform to connect and mobilize data nationally.
- Co-designing data systems with families will build trust, improve research power, and accelerate innovations in care.

Federal investment drives economic and social returns.

- **Reducing health system burden:** Effective early treatment reduces the costly complications and late effects that often require lifelong medical care. Every child cured early represents decades of avoided healthcare costs.
- **Improving quality of cures:** Investment in research and clinical trials increases the number and quality of cures, reducing relapses and chronic conditions that are expensive for families and the system.
- **Supporting economic productivity:** Survivors who receive effective treatments are healthier, live longer and contribute to Canada's workforce and economy, rather than facing barriers to employment and independence.
- **Attracting investment & jobs:** Building sustainable national pediatric cancer infrastructure attracts industry partnerships and high-quality jobs, positioning Canada as a global leader.

The Ask: Federal leadership is essential.

- **\$8 million in 2025–2026:** \$7M to sustain ongoing research, trials, and community-building + \$1M to develop a national pediatric cancer strategy.
- **\$80 million over four years (2026–2030):** to implement the national strategy, ensuring equity of access and coordination across provinces.
- This investment will secure Canada's leadership, improve survival rates and quality of life for children and reduce long-term health and economic burdens.

Key Stats and Figures

- One in five children diagnosed with cancer in Canada will die from their disease.
- The number of Canadian children diagnosed with cancer is increasing each year.
- There are 45,000 childhood cancer survivors in Canada
- The federal government invested \$22 million in pediatric cancer research in 2021
- ACCESS has connected more than 1,000 survivors, patients, families, healthcare providers, researchers, and community organizations.
- ACCESS has supported 180 researchers in conducting 50 innovative pan-Canadian research studies, including new clinical trials.
- ACCESS has built partnerships with 45 national and international collaborators.
- More than 20 educational resources have been created for ACCESS members.
- ACCESS is requesting \$8 million in 2025-2026
- ACCESS is requesting \$80 million over 4 years, beginning in 2026-2027.
 - This funding is proposed to be broken down as follows
 - 2026/27: \$17 million
 - 2027/28: \$21 million
 - 2028/29: \$21 million
 - 2029/30: \$21 million