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Académie canadienne des sciences de la santé

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The Honourable Kirsty Duncan,
Minister of Science
House of Commons
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Dear Minister Duncan,

Further to our correspondence of April 14 commending you and the Government of Canada for undertaking the Fundamental Science Review, we have now undertaken detailed discussions of the report with the 607 members of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS). CAHS captures the full breadth of health science expertise including all of the medical and allied health sciences, which range from fundamental biomedical and clinical science to social science and population health science. There is a genuine sense of enthusiasm in our community that the implementation of the Fundamental Science Panel Review's recommendations will transform Canada's ability to compete on the global stage and meaningfully contribute to the health, prosperity and wellbeing of current and future generations of Canadians.

We also perceive a sense of urgency and a time-dependent window of opportunity for implementation of these recommendations that are fundamental to a preferred future for Canada. CAHS appreciates that the scope and complexity of the Panel's thirty-five recommendations are undoubtedly the subject of careful study and evaluation by your government.

It is our considered view that the creation of a National Advisory Council on Research and Innovation and appointment of a Chief Science officer for Canada should be the immediate first steps: these will ensure that optimal co-ordination, balance and synergies among the four grant funding agencies will be achieved in a transparent, timely and prudent fashion. We strongly support the Panel's view that restoration of more balanced independent peer reviewed operating grant funding is paramount. Pari-passu with this welcome initiative is the focus on young researchers in training and early career investigators that are so desperately needed to replace our ageing scientific community. Recruiting the best and brightest minds and looking outward to collaborate internationally is a strategy well poised to enrich Canada's research community. CAHS fully supports all of the Panels' recommendations and recognizes that recruitment of new and visionary leadership in Canada's Research agencies will also be key to our future.

All of the Panel's recommendations rest upon a four year measured increase in funding to begin in 2018. CAHS is cognizant of the government's desire to ensure that there is robust return on its investment in research. We suggest that you may find it useful to review our 2007 assessment MAKING AN IMPACT: A PREFERRED FRAMEWORK AND INDICATORS TO MEASURE RETURNS ON INVESTMENT IN HEALTH RESEARCH [http://www.cahs-acss.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/09/ROI_FullReport.pdf] *This report identified five dimensions through which health research impacts should be measured: advancing knowledge; building research capacity; informing decision-making; improving health and the health system; and creating broad social and economic benefits.* It also developed a framework spanning the spectrum from fundamental laboratory science to the population health status of communities as well as to the broader economic and social impacts of health research. This assessment was incorporated into the CIHR strategic plan and evaluation roadmap, our major assessment procedures, and those of several provincial research foundations as well as your government's science and technology planning procedures. We believe the insights contained would also be useful to the broader conduct of all research.

In establishing a thoughtful well led Council on Research and Innovation with a vigorous emphasis on the next generation of researchers who have access to independent grant funding, we are optimistic that together we can achieve a preferred future. CAHS stands ready to assist the government in any aspect of the Fundamental Science Review Panel's recommendations that the government perceives we may be helpful.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely,



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