

Sustainability & Resilience in the Canadian Health System

Transitioning Canadian Healthcare into the Low-Carbon Economy



The drive to elevate access and quality of healthcare to Canadians is happening at a time when there are equally urgent concerns about the well-being of our planet and its resources. New research, from The Partnership for Health System Sustainability and Resilience (PHSSR) in Canada, makes a case for focusing on environmental sustainability as part of a more holistic strategy.

Avoiding the Carbon Tax by Meeting Government Thresholds

The UN's COP26 summit underscored the importance of working collectively to reduce global greenhouse gas emissions, and Canada's federal and provincial governments have been following through with plans that include the health sector. However, the work done to date fails to encompass the wider community of CO2 emitting entities. The same lack of data, HR and infrastructure challenges that affect other healthcare domains will make further efforts in this area, such as measuring emissions in the supply chain, more challenging.

Climate change is already producing rising temperatures, flash floods and other risks to public health in other parts of the world, and the health system needs improved capabilities to assess and respond to the needs that will arise.

Environmental Sustainability Within Reach

In addition to factoring emissions into the data gap that the health system needs to close, there are other best practices to adopt:



Gather and report on the data that is readily available

Healthcare facilities managers should be able to monitor and estimate on Scope 1 emissions, whether they come from activities conducted on site or via owned equipment. The same is true of Scope 2 emissions from burning fuel to generate electricity or steam. Analyzing and using this data to test and learn could provide insight into more comprehensive sustainability measures.



Commit to a more sustainable supplier ecosystem

Healthcare institutions are important customers to a wide range of vendors, all of whom can contribute positively or negatively to climate change. That opens the possibility of redefining vendor requirements to support sustainability.



Build upon the foundation for sustainable healthcare that has already been laid

The quest to preserve our planet's health for future generations doesn't have to start from scratch. Networks such as Creating a Sustainable Canadian Health System in a Climate Crisis, and the Canadian Coalition for Green Healthcare are demonstrating leadership in this area. Their work needs to be supported and scaled for maximum impact.

There are **seven domains** researched in this study:

- GOVERNANCE
- FINANCE
- WORKFORCE
- TECHNOLOGY & MEDICINE
- SERVICE DELIVERY
- SOCIAL DETERMINANTS
- ENVIRONMENT

Learn more about the research findings and key recommendations by reading the full report, *Sustainability and Resilience in the Canadian Health System*, or contact the PHSSR at PHSSR@hkstrategies.ca

