House of Commons
Chambre des communes
Canada

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – Pre-budget Consultations 2013

This brief is submitted by:

(●) **an organization** **Organization name:** Canadian Chiropractic Association

or

( ) **an individual** **Name:** _____

Topic: Disabled persons

*Recommendation 1: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Amend Income Tax Act, 118.4 (2), to add chiropractors to the list of practitioners eligible to assess disability. This change would make it easier for a person with a disability to have appropriate access to the Disability Tax Credit in cases of disability caused by chronic joint dysfunction that results in a severe and prolonged restriction on walking, feeding or dressing. Chiropractors are sometimes in the best position to assess changes in condition because they work closely with these patients over an extended period to manage symptoms.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$1 million-4.9 million

2 years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

This recommendation improves access for people with disabilities to a pre-existing tax credit. The degree of additional claims will not necessitate tax increases or spending reductions in other areas. The Disability Tax Credit has increased 21% over the past five years, and this modest increase in access would fall well within current growth projections. Provincial governments will save by preventing unnecessary supplementary visits to other practitioners for patients who are already being assessed and treated by chiropractors, resulting in better use and value of health dollars.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

The primary beneficiaries are people with qualifying disabilities who are currently having conditions or symptoms related to their disability treated by their chiropractor. Common severe disabilities treated by a chiropractor include osteoarthritis and chronic lowe back pain. In some cases, these disabled patients have not claimed the Disability Tax Credit due to barriers to access care. Secondary beneficiaries include caregivers, family and friends of the patient who may be alleviated of the extra burden of unnecessary redundant visits to an additional health care provider.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Many people with disabilities related to joint dysfunction seek diagnosis and treatment from chiropractors to make it easier for them to accomplish activities of daily living (walking, dressing, feeding). Their chiropractor is in the best position to assess the duration and effects of their impairment related to NMSK conditions. This change also eliminates the difficulty for a disabled person to travel to an unnecessary appointment with another practitioner (with related costs) and improves health care system efficiency with all practitioners able to make a full contribution to patient care.

Topic: Please select from the pull-down menu

Recommendation 2: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

Please select from the drop down menu

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Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Topic: Please select from the pull-down menu

Recommendation 3: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

Please select from the drop down menu

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Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Please use this page if you wish to provide more explanation about your recommendation(s).

Chiropractors are regulated in all Canadian provinces, and have training and qualifications comparable to other eligible professions, with the addition of a unique expertise in diagnosis and treatment of spine and joint dysfunction. Persons with a disability due to joint dysfunction, or with joint dysfunction as an effect of their disability may seek treatment from their chiropractor weekly or more to relieve symptoms and increase functionality to complete activities of daily living. Notably, chiropractors are highly trained in the assessment of gait, function and mobility, all of which are related to the ability to walk, dress or feed themselves, and to determine whether this dysfunction has a severe and prolonged impact necessary to certify disability in those areas outlined in Form T2201E(03).

Including chiropractors in the list of recognized health care providers would benefit specific people with disabilities related to joint dysfunction but overall have limited impact on overall Disability Tax Credit claims. This change will also decrease the burden for repeated health care visits, redundant costs and accommodations for travel. This is particularly true in rural communities where primary physicians may be already overworked, and community chiropractors are often the primary contact providers for patients suffering from chronic and severe NMSK conditions. Currently, chiropractors must refer these patients to other practitioners, requiring the disabled patient to go through the effort of this additional and often unnecessary medical visit.

Chiropractors are already responsible for assessing disability for other programs, with all the related accountability of a regulated health profession. Chiropractors are recognized by Workers' Compensation Boards and insurance companies for the assessment of work and motor vehicle accident related injuries. Of the professions eligible to perform these kinds of assessments, only chiropractors are currently excluded from assessing eligibility for the Disability Tax Credit.

Chiropractors have the appropriate professional qualifications, recognition of training, and regulation to be included in the list of eligible professions. The chiropractic program is a four year post-graduate program at one of two accredited schools in Canada: the Université du Québec à Trois Rivières, and the Canadian Memorial Chiropractic College in Toronto. The program consists of a full range of health sciences as well as diagnostic and clinical skills. Upon graduation, all chiropractors must pass national written and clinical exams in order to be eligible to practice. All Canadian provinces recognize chiropractors as one of the professions able to provide a differential diagnosis of the cause of a person's condition, similar to medical doctors and nurse-practitioners.

For more information, please contact Alison Dantas, CEO of the Canadian Chiropractic Association. She can be reached at ADantas@chiropracticcanada.ca.

*Please note that at least one recommendation must be provided