

the future? A list of 14 key representative questions is appended, there are of course many others. Importantly, CAHS will provide the expertise and neutral space assessments that will answer these questions and inform potential directions for governments, health care facilities, voluntary organizations, academic institutions and research centres.

Potential CAHS Assessment Topics 2006

1. Striking the best balance between privacy & access to health records to inform public policy & future research
2. Promoting healthy human behaviors
3. Enhancing the health of disadvantaged populations
4. Individual human genomic typing: risks & opportunities
5. Stem cell research: striking the right balance for human health
6. Public funding for health care in the 1st and last 100 days of life: Making the right choices
7. Positioning Canada as the best location for novel health research and development
8. Enhancing the interface between technology and humanism in health care
9. Planning the right quantity, character and integration of human health resources for 2017
10. Priority setting in a publicly funded health system
11. Preparing for global threats to health & positioning Canada as a key strategic leader in the process
12. Mental Health: community social support and responsibility
13. Systems issues – intersection between process and content of health care delivery
14. Addressing the challenge of chronic diseases
15. Ensuring the integrity of health research



Canadian Academy of Health Sciences
Académie canadienne des sciences de la santé

A New Resource for Canada

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Canadians are cared for in a health care system that is multidisciplinary in its composition and increasingly collaborative. This is well reflected in its interdisciplinary decision-making where physicians, nurses, pharmacists, dentists, physical, occupational and speech therapists, and those from other disciplines all contribute to the care patients receive. This teamwork also characterizes the health promotion and prevention activities required to enhance the health of current and future generations of Canadians. Whereas Canadians are well served by clinicians and scientists operating in their respective disciplines, Canada is facing complex and challenging health-related questions requiring resourceful solutions that can be best developed through the combined multidisciplinary expertise of clinicians, scientists, and policy and planning experts.

CAHS: Mission

1. Serve as a credible, expert, independent assessor of science & technology issues relevant to health of Canadians
2. Support the development of timely, informed & strategic advice on urgent health issues
3. Facilitate development of sound & informed public policy on these issues
4. Enhance understanding of health-related science & technology issues affecting the public by transmitting results of assessments & providing opportunities for public discussion
5. Provide a single authoritative & informed voice for the health science communities
6. Monitor global health issues to enhance Canada's state of readiness for the future
7. Represent Canadian health sciences internationally & liaise with international academies to enhance understanding and potential collaborations

Until the creation of the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences in 2004 there was no forum in Canada that brought together experts from the full range of health disciplines and scientific endeavors to address the questions, dilemmas and challenges confronting the country about its health and its health care system. The Canadian Academy of Health Sciences (CAHS) is one of three founding academies of the new Council of Canadian Academies (formerly the Canadian Academies of Science) that was established by the federal government in late 2004. The other two academies are the Royal Society of Canada and the Canadian Academy of Engineering.

The CAHS membership comprises approximately 200 Fellows with diverse backgrounds who have attained the highest levels of academic and professional accomplishment in their respective fields. CAHS is not an advocacy group but rather an organization comprised of individuals who have agreed to volunteer their time and expertise to participate in assessments of crucial health- and biomedical-related issues affecting the lives of all Canadians.

Remarkably, Canada has been unique in not having this type of resource as compared with many other countries such as the United States, France, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. Both the American Institute of Medicine and the British Academy of Medical Sciences are interdisciplinary organizations that respond to questions and issues put to them from a variety of sources: government, national non-governmental organizations, industry, academia and major research organizations. Consider some of the reports that the Institute of Medicine in the U.S. has produced after careful study and analysis that have had a meaningful impact on all aspects of health:

- To Err is Human: Building a Safer Health System (1999)
- Stem Cells and the Future of Regenerative Medicine (2001)
- Who will Keep the Public Healthy?: Educating Public Health Professionals for the 21st Century (2002)
- Preventing Childhood Obesity: Health in the Balance (2004)
- Crossing the Quality Chasm: A New Health System for the 21st Century (2001)

What will the CAHS be in a position to provide? Most importantly it can serve as an independent, arms-length, credible body of experts that will undertake major strategic assessments. These will result in highly focused reports that contain the analysis of issues, and the reporting of facts and their interpretation for implications relevant to future planning and policies in Canada. The experts required to undertake these assessments can be mobilized quickly and their reports prepared in a timely way. Furthermore, this process will enhance Canada's global position by providing international connectivity and an increased state of readiness related to global health and biomedical issues also likely to affect Canada.

What can CAHS provide?

- Strategic, well researched & focused assessments on issues of particular interest within a short time frame.
- Creation of a well vetted inventory of health science expertise of both national and international scope
- Serve as independent, arms-length, credible experts undertaking major assessments on science & technology issues relevant to the health of all Canadians
- Enhance Canada's global position by providing international connectivity & an increased state of readiness relating to world health issues likely also to influence Canada

Canadians and their leaders face many health and biomedical issues that have not received adequate attention and therefore leave our country vulnerable or performing at a level below their true potential. For example, how can the health of our disadvantaged populations be enhanced; how do we set public funding priorities to make the right choices for expenditures in the last 100 days of life; how do we best plan for the right quantity, skill-enabled and interactive health professionals in