

Dear election candidate:

I would like to share with you a summary of the Canadian Pulmonary Fibrosis Foundation's (CPFF) pre-budget submission, which recommends that the Government of Ontario remove barriers to qualifying for and accessing oxygen therapy, starting with the unfair age restriction on people under the age of 65.

Receiving oxygen therapy in Ontario

- Qualifying for oxygen therapy in Ontario is much more complicated than it needs to be.
- Ontario's Assistive Devices Program (ADP) covers home oxygen therapy for residents who meet specific medical criteria. For individuals under 65 however, the ADP covers only 75% of the cost of home oxygen therapy. The remaining 25% is the responsibility of the patient.

Facts about Pulmonary Fibrosis:

- Pulmonary fibrosis (PF) is a disease in which the lungs become scarred, making breathing progressively more difficult. Approximately 12,000 Ontarians live with PF.
- For many, the use of supplemental oxygen is a life saver that reduces breathlessness and fatigue and offers the chance to continue working.
- People living with PF who require oxygen to breathe will always need oxygen.
- The number of people living with PF in Ontario is expected to increase. Those with Scleroderma, Rheumatoid Arthritis, Lupus, and other connective tissue diseases may also develop PF.
- The data shows that one of the most serious long-term consequences of COVID-19 patients is pulmonary fibrosis.
- The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) estimates the cost of a standard hospital stay in Canada is \$7,800. Individuals unable to access supplemental oxygen often end up in the hospital, resulting in significant costs to taxpayers and Ontario's healthcare system—funds that could instead support the provision of at-home oxygen and necessary equipment.

CPFF's recommendation: Help Ontarians living with pulmonary fibrosis breathe easier, continue working, and put money back in their pockets by removing barriers to qualifying for and accessing oxygen therapy, starting with the unfair age restriction on people under the age of 65.

Benefits to Ontarians

- The Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) estimates the cost of a standard hospital stay in Canada is \$7,800 (in 2021-2022). The average stay in hospital for someone with PF is 4.6 days per visit and 20 days per year.
- Providing and fully funding oxygen therapy not only reduces healthcare costs and enhances the quality of life for those in need, enabling them to continue working and enjoying daily activities.

CPFF would be pleased to share more details and to answer any questions. Please do not hesitate to contact CPFF's government relations lead Mr. Puneet Luthra at gr@cpff.ca or 416-953-5791.