

Press Release: March 7, 2024

Cuts to CADTH Research Information Services Undermines Policy Decisions on Health and Drugs

Canadians expect that decisions about which medications are recommended for reimbursement in Canada will be determined by an independent, unbiased organization. These recommendations are made by the Canadian Agency for Drugs and Technology in Health (CADTH), but recent cuts to CADTH's Research Information Services undermines its ability to judge the value and effectiveness of new pharmaceutical products.

Instead of conducting unbiased clinical and economic drug reviews internally using a team of subject experts and information specialists, recommendations now rely on information provided by pharmaceutical industry sponsors. CADTH's Rapid Response and Rapid Reviews evidence summary services for decision makers in Canadian health care systems has been eliminated. Most recently, half of CADTH's Research Information Services staff were terminated in mid-February 2024.

Staff affected by the recent job losses were told that cuts to the Research Information Services division were in keeping with "industry trends", but according to Canadian Health Libraries Association / Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada Vice-President Amanda Ross-White, local hiring and information services trends are not consistent with this statement; The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and Health Canada have recently restored library services and the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario (CHEO) and Library of Parliament have been growing their health information expertise with new hires. "At a time when unbiased evidence-based information is under threat, the cuts to CADTH's research team pose a serious threat. The public expects health care decision makers to use the best evidence in their decision, not whatever evidence the pharmaceutical company provides them."

We live in an age where misinformation and disinformation is prolific. Access to high quality information and the expertise of information professionals is more critical than ever. CADTH's disinvestment in evidence-based information services is not just disappointing, it threatens to undermine the basis of health and drug policy decisions in Canada.

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More information

Members of the media may contact Amanda Ross-White, Vice-President, Canadian Health Libraries Association / Association des bibliothèques de la santé du Canada at vice-president@chla-absc.ca with questions about this press release.

CHLA/ABSC is a professional organization of approximately 300 individuals in the health sciences library and information field. We promote and advocate for high quality health information and library services, and aspire to build a community of Canadian Health Library and Information professionals who are valued partners in the improvement of health, health care, research, and education. CHLA/ABSC is a registered charity organization in Canada. More information about the Canadian Health Libraries Association is available at <https://chla-absc.ca/>.

The Canadian Agency on Drugs and Technology in Health (CADTH) is a globally recognized, independent agency funded by the federal, provincial, and territorial governments. It was established 35 years ago to assemble and interpret the latest drug and health technology research, with the goal of ensuring sound decision making on health care policy for the benefit of all Canadians. More information about CADTH is available on their website <https://www.cadth.ca/>.