



MP Sean Casey
Chair, Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Wednesday, October 16, 2024

RE: Support for the National Strategy on Brain Injuries Act

Dear MP Casey and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the Canadian Brain Research Strategy (CBRS), I am writing to express our **full support of Bill C-277 to establish a National Strategy on Brain Injuries**. As an organization committed to advancing brain health in Canada, we believe that this act represents a crucial step toward a more coordinated and integrated approach to addressing the significant and growing challenge of brain injuries in Canada.

Brain injuries, whether acquired or traumatic, can occur at any stage of life and present a complex health and societal issue requiring a comprehensive response¹. Traumatic brain injuries (TBI), in particular, are projected to become one of the most prevalent neurological conditions in Canada in the near future². Beyond TBIs, a large number of Canadians are living with other forms of acquired brain injuries, such as those resulting from strokes². Concussions are a common form of TBI especially in youth, and like other forms of brain injuries, carry long-term risks for developing other brain conditions, which can negatively affect mental health, quality of life, and the ability to participate fully in daily activities such as school or work³. Brain injuries also often intersect with spinal cord injuries, compounding the challenges faced by individuals⁴. Taken together, brain injuries impact millions of Canadians and their families, underscoring an urgent need to address this complex public health issue⁵.

Brain injuries also intersect with broader social issues². More than half of homeless individuals have experienced a TBI, often leading to unmet healthcare needs, higher rates of suicide attempts, and greater involvement with the criminal justice system. Additionally, a significant number of women affected by intimate partner violence sustain head injuries, which frequently go untreated due to a lack of awareness and appropriate services.

Given the multifaceted nature of brain injuries, it is clear that addressing this issue requires a comprehensive, cross-sector approach. The proposed National Strategy for Brain Injuries recognizes the need for a cohesive system of care that spans the entire continuum—from research and prevention and to rehabilitation and long-term support.



A key component of the proposed legislation is the implementation of standardized data collection, which will facilitate collaboration among researchers, healthcare providers, and caregivers, to ensure that resources are used efficiently to improve patient outcomes. Comprehensive data is essential to understanding the full spectrum of brain injury experiences across the lifespan and various social contexts, and can be leveraged to drive policy and healthcare strategies. By creating a collaborative framework, this approach will drive innovation in research, treatment, and rehabilitation, while ensuring healthcare resources are effectively allocated to meet the diverse needs of those living with brain injuries.

At CBRS, we are dedicated to fostering a national research strategy that encompasses all aspects of brain and mental health through similar open, collaborative, and transdisciplinary approaches⁶. Our organization unites a diverse network of experts, clinicians, and organizations across Canada, all committed to a cohesive and coordinated approach to brain health. We recognize that many brain conditions, including brain injuries, do not exist in isolation and often intersect with other neurological and mental health issues. While specific conditions like brain injuries are frequently viewed as an acute issue, it is crucial to also consider their chronic implications and long-term effects on individuals. These complex interconnections demand a coordinated approach to both specific conditions like brain injury and to brain health across the lifespan more broadly.

As such, we view the proposed National Strategy on Brain Injuries as a vital element of our broader vision for a collaborative and transdisciplinary ecosystem across all domains of brain research^{7,8,9}. A national strategy for brain injuries will complement existing national dementia and autism strategies, allowing for specialized focus and dedicated resources to address the complexities of each condition while contributing to a cohesive understanding of brain health overall.

We strongly encourage the Committee to advance this important legislation and provide the necessary resources for its implementation. CBRS stands ready to support further consultations or provide expertise as required.

Thank you for considering our perspective on this critical issue. We look forward to seeing continued progress on the National Strategy for Brain Injuries.

Sincerely,

Jennie Z. Young

Jennie Z. Young, Ph.D.

Executive Director

Canadian Brain Research Strategy

<https://canadianbrain.ca>



¹ Ontario Brain Institute. (2024). A Submission on Bill C-27 An Act to establish a national strategy on brain injuries to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health.

² Brain Injury Canada. (2024). A Submission on Bill C-27 An Act to establish a national strategy on brain injuries to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health.

³ Canadian Concussion Network (2024). A Submission on Bill C-27 An Act to establish a national strategy on brain injuries to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health.

⁴ Praxis Spinal Cord Institute (2024). A Submission on Bill C-27 An Act to establish a national strategy on brain injuries to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health.

⁵ Brain Canada Foundation (2024). A Submission on Bill C-27 An Act to establish a national strategy on brain injuries to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health.

⁶ Canadian Brain Research Strategy (2023). A Submission for the Standing Committee on Science and Research Study on International Moonshot Programs.

⁷ Brain Injury Canada (2023). A Submission for the Standing Committee on Science and Research Study on International Moonshot Programs.

⁸ Canadian Concussion Network (2023). A Submission for the Standing Committee on Science and Research Study on International Moonshot Programs.

⁹ Heart & Stroke Foundation (2023). A Submission for the Standing Committee on Science and Research Study on International Moonshot Programs.