

# Thrive: The Economic Case for Investing in Children's Health

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## Executive Summary

This report makes the case for early investment in children's healthcare by estimating the social return on investment of expanding access to health interventions.

Applying a cost-of-illness approach to three chronic pediatric conditions as examples, the report quantifies the current economic burden of these illnesses; models the costs and benefits of scaling up access to targeted interventions for children with these illnesses; and estimates the additional benefits of investing in this care earlier in the child's life

### Key findings include:

- 1** Chronic pediatric conditions impose a significant annual burden on Canada's economy, with estimated costs of \$483 million for type 1 diabetes, \$6.0 billion for mood and anxiety disorders, and \$2.2 billion for epilepsy.
- 2** Modeling in this analysis across three child health conditions indicates a positive social return of \$1.39 – \$4.89 per dollar invested in improved access, consistent with global evidence of \$1.80 – \$17.10 returned per dollar invested.
- 3** Investments tend to yield higher social returns when directed to health interventions with limited access but strong potential benefits.
- 4** Investing earlier in a child's healthcare journey yields greater return on investment by reducing the ongoing burdens the illness causes for the child and their family.
- 5** Additional future investments in children's healthcare should be coupled with a strategic plan to ensure that they are being allocated where they are most needed.

