

## Taking Action on Endometriosis in Canada

### Canada's endometriosis health gap

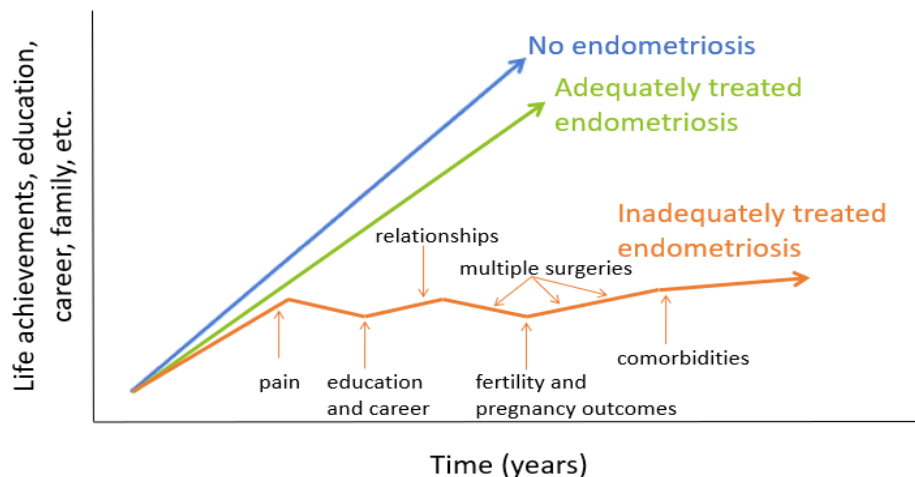
#### **What is endometriosis?**

Endometriosis is a gynecological condition that affects approximately **1 million people in Canada** -- 1 in 10 women and unmeasured numbers of transgender and gender nonconforming people. Common symptoms include severe menstrual pain, chronic pelvic pain and infertility. There is neither a definitive cause nor a known cure for endometriosis – symptoms are managed using a combination of medical and surgical care. Despite the burden of endometriosis, awareness of this condition is low because of menstrual stigma and taboo.

#### **What is the impact of endometriosis?**

Long waits for diagnosis and difficulties accessing effective treatment lead to years of suffering for many people with endometriosis in Canada, impacting their ability to thrive in life, work and play.

- Average delay to diagnosis in Canada is 5.4 years, but can be as long as 20 years.<sup>1,2</sup>
- Adolescents with symptoms are 10 times as likely to miss school.<sup>3</sup>
- Decreased social and economic participation as well as mental health concerns.<sup>1,4,5</sup>
- Estimated cost of at least **\$1.8 billion per year** to Canadian society.<sup>6</sup>



### How have peer nations mobilized on endometriosis?

Canada has not taken comprehensive action on endometriosis to date, creating knowledge and practice gaps. Peer nations have:

- **Australia:** In 2018, the Australian government published a National Action Plan for Endometriosis with the objectives of 1) increasing awareness and education about endometriosis, 2) improving clinical management and care, and 3) driving research.<sup>7</sup> The government has committed almost \$15 million to advancing these objectives.<sup>8</sup>
- **United Kingdom:** In 2018, an All-Party Parliamentary Group was struck to raise awareness of endometriosis and investigate how those who suffer from the condition can receive the support they need.<sup>9</sup>
- **United States:** In 2020, the U.S. House of Representatives passed an amendment doubling annual federal research funding for endometriosis from \$13 million in 2019 to \$26 million.<sup>10</sup>

### Potential for impact

By investing in a **national endometriosis strategy**, Canada will advance patient-centered and evidence-based solutions for the impact of this condition, take a leadership position on gendered health issues, and support the equal and full participation of all people in Canadian life.

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