



Heart Valve Voice Canada

Submission to 2020 Budget Consultations

Thank you for allowing Heart Valve Voice (HVV) Canada the opportunity to submit its recommendations for the 2020 Budget. There is an imminent need for the increased diagnosis and access to treatment for heart valve disease, especially minimally-invasive procedures where appropriate for patients. Better access can directly contribute to shortened hospital stays, improved recovery time, quality of life, and reduced stress on patients and their families.

HVV Canada is a non-profit patient advocacy organization that works to improve the health and quality of life of people living with heart valve disease. We advocate for increased and early diagnosis, timely access to appropriate treatment, removal of barriers to receiving diagnosis and treatment, and ensuring meaningful support systems for those with heart valve disease.

Approximately 12% of seniors aged 75+ have aortic stenosis, which is only one form of valve disease. Patients with severe aortic stenosis, of which 3.5% of seniors aged 75+ have a severe case, require heart valve replacement. These patients have two choices: open-heart surgery or the minimally-invasive TAVI. For patients who are too high-risk for open-heart surgery, TAVI is their only option. Left untreated, most of these patients will die within five years from heart failure. TAVI is most often recommended for high-risk inoperable and operable patients, but recommendations are increasing that encourage TAVI for intermediate risk patients as well – which would expand the gap between funded volumes and patients in need. Unfortunately, funded TAVI volumes remain far less than required to meet the needs of the eligible high-risk population.

The demand and evident need for increased access to TAVI procedures points to the equally important need for a provincial strategy and broader funding increases for heart valve disease. As with every disease, each patient case is unique and requires a specific treatment plan based on the individual. In the absence of a strategy, there is insufficient funding being allocated to both traditional, minimally invasive and emerging innovative treatment options that would help improve health care in the province. A provincial heart valve disease strategy would provide a trajectory, and acknowledge consequential funding needs, that ensures the treatment and care of individuals with valve disease does not fall to the wayside.

Heart valve disease is treatable if it is diagnosed in time. Thus, we believe that our recommendation for continued funding for TAVI in tandem with support for a provincial heart valve disease strategy to ensure the right access to the right treatment at the right time - and recognition of additional funding needs - aligns with the Province's goal of elevating the care offered by the health care system. We call on you to increase the quality of life of thousands of residents living with heart valve disease.