

Position Paper

November 2023

Components of Successful Provincial and Federal Life Sciences Strategies: The Medical Technology Industry Perspective

“Ontario was in a precarious position at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. We were dependent on foreign supply for critical goods and faced hollowed out domestic production capabilities. The pandemic also exposed our inability to procure innovation in health care to improve patient outcomes. On our province’s road to recovery, we have an opportunity to fix this. In fact, we must make it our responsibility. We must build the foundation for a world class life sciences sector that allows globally competitive companies to thrive.”

- Ontario Government

(from the province’s Life Sciences Strategy:
[Taking life sciences to the next level](#)
- Ontario’s strategy | [ontario.ca](#))

Introduction

Medtech Canada, as the national association representing the medical technology industry in the country, advocates for a robust, resilient, and reliable health care system enabled by medical technology solutions. From basic patient care to the most complicated medical interventions, Medtech Canada members are here to support Canadian health care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has provided lessons learned which will be unpacked for years to come. Among them, that the life sciences sector - including the medical technology industry - is critical to supporting not only jobs and economic growth in Canada, but the health and well-being of Canadians. We know from lessons learned during the pandemic that deliberate efforts need to be made across the country to grow this important sector in Canada. This document addresses federal and provincial life sciences strategies from a medical technology industry perspective and provides suggestions where these strategies could be improved or built upon.

Medtech Canada believes in two fundamental, key principles on this front:

- 1) **All Canadian provinces, as well as the Federal Government, should have a Life Sciences Strategy and should invest in this sector. These strategies should be deliberate and implementable and aim to grow the Life Sciences sector in their respective jurisdictions.**
- 2) **All Life Sciences Strategies should have a robust medical technology component to them since medical technology is a distinct and critical sub-sector of Life Sciences and faces its own unique challenges.**

We commend those Canadian jurisdictions that are currently developing or implementing a life sciences strategy. By working together, government and industry can unlock the sector’s potential, create jobs and a strong economy in Canada, and keep Canadians healthy.

“With the launch of the B.C. Life Sciences and Biomanufacturing Strategy, we are building on B.C.’s reputation as a place where we value and invest in innovation - because it makes life better for people, and cultivates a sustainable economy for everyone.”

- Brenda Bailey,

Minister of Jobs, Economic Development
and Innovation, British Columbia

“Overall, we believe that Manitoba’s Life Sciences strategy has the potential to be transformative for the province’s economy and position Manitoba as a leader in this vital and growing industry.”

- Kim Kline,

President, Biosciences Association of Manitoba

PART A:
Recommendations for Provincial Life Sciences Strategies:
The Medical Technology Industry Perspective

1. Creation of a permanent, industry-government partnership table and a well-defined partnership framework

Medtech Canada, as the only national association representing the medical technology industry in Canada, should have a seat at the table. This permanent table will allow provincial governments and the life sciences sector to work together to not only support the implementation of a provincial life sciences strategy, but also to identify any future opportunities to contribute and grow the life sciences sector in each province.

2. Support the creation and growth of innovative businesses

Provincial governments should strengthen the infrastructure and supports available to the medical technology sector to bolster the growth of the industry. While many provinces have a variety of funding supports for various companies and industries, provincial governments should ensure that the life sciences sector is a priority sector to access these funds and should also consider providing a type of “concierge” service to help companies better access available opportunities. One potential model for this “concierge” approach is the Business Navigation Services program administered by the department of economic development in Manitoba. The Business Navigation Services program provides pathfinding services for business across sectors, by working across government departments and the Government of Canada to provide companies with program and policy supports that address their needs and encourage investment and growth.

3. Support the adoption of innovative technologies into the health care system

A successful life sciences strategy should include additional funding to hospitals and other health care providers to adopt new health innovations. This funding should be tied to health system priorities such as addressing wait times and backlogs. As demonstrated by the Medtech Canada Innovation Hub microsite, there are many technologies that can help solve health system challenges: [Medtech Solutions to Canadian Surgical Backlog – Medtech Innovation Hub](#)

A good example of this type of funding is the 2021 Ontario Government \$30 Million Surgical Innovation Fund: [Ontario Launching New \\$30 Million Surgical Innovation Fund | Ontario Newsroom](#). However, this type of funding should be available on an annual basis and not as a one-time funding program.

4. A more connected, comprehensive, secure, and transparent data ecosystem

Data is a key enabler to both the development and adoption of innovative medical technologies into our health care system. It’s critical that provinces develop a more comprehensive data ecosystem and that they also provide access to this data to the medical technology sector, which will not only support research and development, but will also enable better and more comprehensive patient care, as well as a more efficient health system through better supply chain management.

5. Legislate the use of value-based procurement in health care

Procurement for health care products or solutions should be conducted through a model which maximizes the value received from the use of public funds. Ideally, procurement should employ different tactics and approaches to allow for clinical choice and the varied impact of medical technologies to the clinician and the overall system. Value-based methodologies should be considered when the products affect short and long-term patient outcomes, patient or caregiver experiences or health care system costs.

For provinces to develop a world class life sciences sector, we must in tandem continue to develop a world class health care system that utilizes value-based procurement in health care.

For example, Newfoundland and Labrador introduced the Public Procurement Act in 2018 which promotes increased transparency, consistency, and flexibility within procurement practices, thus helping the province move toward value-based procurement in health care. Similarly, the European public procurement directive encourages the use of best quality/cost ratio and the best value for money, using the criterion, “most economically advantageous tender.”

6. Continue to modernize procurement and supply chain practices in health care

As many provincial governments in Canada move towards “centralized” procurement, a significant opportunity for improvement exists—particularly in health care. By working with key stakeholders, including suppliers, to reform procurement, there can be implementation of strategies and models which enhance and improve patient care, save money in the health care system, and grow the economy in Canada.



Centralized procurement mechanisms can support not only the shift to value-based procurement, but can also enable:

- More streamlined and balanced procurement process
- Better data & supply management, including demand forecasting from the health care system
- Strategically link economic development to health system spending
- Foster clinical and health system expertise during the procurement process

7. Promote provincial participation in sector events as an economic development opportunity

Many provinces have a strong life sciences foundation with compelling assets to attract investment and growth from the medical technology sector, such as world class research hospitals, universities and research institutes; a diverse patient population; and highly trained clinicians, surgeons and scientists experienced in medical device development. Provinces have much to offer global partners.

A successful provincial life sciences strategy should include a bold marketing approach aimed at industry and sector events such as conferences and trade shows.

There are many opportunities to consider – with the highest priority being The Medtech Conference 2024. Each year, The Advanced Medical Technology Association ([AdvaMed - Advanced Medical Technology Association](#)) hosts “The MedTech Conference”: [The MedTech Conference | The Leading Global MedTech Event](#). AdvaMed’s annual Medtech Conference is the largest global medical technology conference of its kind and attracts over 3000 participants of whom the majority are CEOs and senior executives from the global medical technology industry.

In 2024, for the first time ever, this conference will be held outside the United States with Toronto serving as the host city.

As such, we encourage provincial governments to not only capitalize on the opportunity this event brings to attract investment, but also to map a strategy for other sector events as well on an ongoing basis.

PART B:

Recommendations to Enhance the Federal Biomanufacturing & Life Sciences Strategy: The Medical Technology Industry Perspective

We recommend that the government continue to advance Canada’s Biomanufacturing & Life Sciences Strategy (BLSS) through the work being done by the Canadian Chamber of Commerce’s Life Sciences Strategy Council. The BLSS was a promising initial strategy to facilitate a robust national platform for future competitiveness, economic growth, and better health outcomes for Canadians.

Medtech Canada strongly believes that Canada must continue to strive for global competitiveness in this critical sector and we propose the following recommendations on advancing the BLSS and creating a BLSS 2.0 in Canada:

1. Dedicated funding for provinces to adopt innovative medical technologies

The federal government should create a funding stream for provinces for new health innovations that support faster access, better patient outcomes, and/or health system benefits. This would enable provinces to make immediate investments in health technologies that result in long-term savings in the health care system and faster access to life saving and life changing medical technologies, to ensure and support health system sustainability in Canada.

2. Strong and coordinated governance with multiple departments at the table for implementing strategies

Representatives from Health Canada (and other core Departments such as Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada) should be at the table when it comes to implementing the federal life sciences strategy. There should also be Deputy or Assistant Deputy Minister level accountability for both delivering on the strategy and developing a Biomanufacturing & Life Sciences Strategy 2.0.

3. Creation of a permanent, industry-government partnership table and a well-defined partnership framework

Medtech Canada, as the only national association representing the medical technology industry in Canada, should have a seat at the table. This permanent table will allow the federal government and the life sciences sector to work together to not only support the implementation of the BLSS, but also to identify any future opportunities to contribute to grow the life sciences sector in Canada.

4. House available provincial and federal health system data and share with the medical technology industry

This recommendation is key to support the development and timely introduction of innovative products and solutions in Canada. Medtech Canada fully supports the new health accord agreement where the federal government has asked provinces and territories to commit to improving how health system data is “collected, shared, used and reported” to promote transparency and better manage public health emergencies. It is important for the medical technology industry to be able to access this data for several reasons, including for the research and development of new technologies, and the ongoing management of supply chain challenges in our health care system.

5. Federal coordination of supply chain shortages and demand planning in health care

The medtech sector has functioned well through a variety of commercial and logistical challenges to maintain continuity of supply across an extensive range of products, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the pandemic also brought to light vulnerabilities within the supply chains where an over-reliance on single locations or sources of materials and supporting services exists.

We fully support Health Canada’s recent initiatives to bring together provinces and key stakeholders to find solutions for managing supply chain shortages in health care. We must continue to work together to put systems, plans and strategies in place to proactively prepare for emerging risks in a way that will allow us to effectively mitigate impacts when they arise, as well as improving the overall resilience of medtech supply chains.

6. World class regulatory approval processes

Currently, medical devices have various federal and provincial regulatory requirements that may apply to them depending on the device composition and intended use. In addition, there are other international regulatory requirements that diverge from the Canadian requirements. This results in a lengthy, repetitive, costly and complex system which makes the medtech ecosystem in Canada one of the most complex to navigate.

Increasingly we see additional regulations starting to apply to medical devices, all outside of the Food and Drug Act, making the system even more complex – such as new Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) regulations, Per - and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) requirements, plastics labelling, etc.

Medtech Canada and its members request that there be ongoing focus on adopting regulatory agility and convergence related to approval of medical devices in Canada. This will not only reduce the burden on the health care system, but also decrease time to market which will result reduced shortages and an increase in innovative products coming to Canada.

7. Research and talent

Continue with existing work the federal government has done to reduce the barriers to hiring highly skilled foreign talent and enhance the system for foreign credential recognition.

Conclusion

An opportunity exists for Federal and Provincial governments to establish Canada as a global leader in innovative medical technologies. The global medtech industry is undergoing unprecedented growth in the development of innovative products and Canada needs to take advantage of this trend. If Canada performed at the same level as our top global counterparts, medtech could rank among Canada’s top overall export products.

The medical technology sector is a “win-win” industry for Canadians. Not only is there an opportunity to create jobs and grow the economy, but provincial health system sustainability is better achieved when innovation and innovative technologies are leveraged to support productivity and quality improvement.

The Canadian health care system is a poor adopter of innovative health technologies compared to other developed countries and needs to be a key player. The goal is to improve patient outcomes by having an integrated and patient-centred health care system enabled by technology.

Medical technologies contribute to improved patient outcomes for Canadians every day. They save lives, improve productivity to keep Canadians at work and add to quality of life for patients and their families. Medical technologies play a vital role in supporting health care professionals to deliver the care that our loved ones and everyone in Canada needs as they access our health care system.

Canada’s medical technology industry is prepared to join governments across Canada to ensure that health care systems can reliably access safe, effective, and innovative medical technologies to deliver the best outcomes for patients.

APPENDIX – STATUS OF FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL LIFE SCIENCES STRATEGIES IN CANADA

Province	Life Sciences Strategy has already been or is currently being developed?	Life Sciences Strategy launched and being implemented?	If in place, is there a strong Medtech component?
Federally	✓	✓	✗
British Columbia	✓	✓	✗
Alberta	✗	✗	n/a
Saskatchewan	✗	✗	n/a
Manitoba	✓	✓	✗
Ontario	✓	✓	✓
Quebec	✓	✓	✓
New Brunswick	✗	✗	n/a
Nova Scotia	✓	✗	n/a
Prince Edward Island	✗	✗	n/a
Newfoundland & Labrador	✗	✗	n/a



2425 Matheson Blvd E., Mississauga ON L4W 5K4
 T: 416-620-1915 F: 416-620-1595
 E: medtechcanada@medtechcanada.org
www.medtechcanada.org

ABOUT MEDTECH CANADA

Medtech Canada is the national association representing the medical technology industry in Canada. Our association advocates for achieving patient access to leading edge, innovative technology solutions that provide valuable outcomes. Our members are committed to providing safe and innovative medical technologies that enhance the quality of patient care, improve patient access to health care, and help enable the sustainability of our health care system. The medical technology industry in Canada employs over 35,000 Canadians in approximately 1,500 facilities across the country.