

## BIOTECCanada Responds to Federal Budget 2019

**March 21, 2019 (OTTAWA)** - BIOTECCanada has responded to the federal budget announced in Ottawa as an opportunity to build on 21<sup>st</sup> century economy needs while ensuring Canada remains at the forefront of discovery and development of biologic based products and technologies. “The federal budget offered important new commitments to help Canada continue to grow its potential as a global research leader and user of vital new products and technologies improving health outcomes for Canadians, protecting the environment we depend upon and meeting the demands for a skilled and competitive workforce,” offered Andrew Casey, President and CEO of BIOTECCanada.

The government made a number of important investments into world leading organizations including the Stem Cell Network and Genome Canada, allowing them to continue to grow and revitalize the research and development partnerships they have built in Canada with dozens of leading Canadian research institutions. Mr. Casey spoke to some of the specific initiatives outlined in the budget. “Building the capacity of the biotechnology ecosystem requires an environment for small companies to thrive here in Canada. The SR&ED tax credit remains a valuable tool for discovery and commercialization of SMEs to grow operations here in Canada. Ensuring the SR&ED credit remains relevant to the nature of commercialization needs is key to Canadian competitiveness in the global marketplace for new idea’s and solutions for the planet.”

“The biotechnology industry has valuable input to offer the federal government as they embark on the creation of a National Drug Agency and a pharmacare program for Canadians. The current system is duplicative, cumbersome, expensive to maintain, and extremely elongated when compared to other countries. The results of these processes mean Canadians are waiting longer for new life-changing and sometimes life-saving therapies. Canada can do better,” suggested Casey. “If the government truly wants to modernize the system, secure sustainability and improve health outcomes, then the industry is ready to help make this happen. There are remarkable innovative biological therapies being developed in Canada and around the world. It is imperative that Canadians are able to access these. The industry supports the government’s objective of ensuring access and commits to working with governments and the Canadian Drug Agency transition team in this regard.”

The recognition of rare diseases and the need to support the entry of the new life-saving therapies available for patients was also noted by the industry association. Canada has neglected the opportunity to systematically address the needs of patients with rare diseases for too long. Less than 65% of existing therapies for rare diseases are currently available in Canada. “The commitment presented by the federal government to establish a fund to help pay for these new cutting-edge therapies can create an opportunity for leveraging the value the industry invests in caring for rare disease patients and provide certainty for public drug plans.”

BIOTECCanada is the national industry association with over 200 members located nation wide, reflecting the diverse nature of Canada’s health, industrial and agricultural biotechnology sectors. In addition to providing significant health benefits for Canadians, the biotechnology industry has quickly become an essential part of the transformation of many traditional cornerstones of the Canadian economy including manufacturing, automotive, energy, aerospace and forestry industries. [www.biotech.ca](http://www.biotech.ca)

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