



BUSINESSatOECD

Business and Industry Advisory
Committee to the OECD

Stronger Together: Health Security for Economic Security

Key Messages to the to the 2025 Canada B7 Presidency

Recommendations Paper
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Introduction

On 15 May 2025, *Business at OECD* (BIAC) organized a high-level roundtable under the theme of **Health Security for Economic Security** held back-to-back with the B7 Summit in partnership with its host, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce. Marking our first official contribution to the B7 Summit agenda, this roundtable provided a strategic platform to advance multi-stakeholder collaboration between the public and private sectors, aligning priorities to address emerging health challenges. This paper reflects on the discussion held during this roundtable and outlines key insights and recommendations emerging from the dialogue.

Opening Remarks

The opening remarks focused on the critical need to view health not only as a societal obligation but also as a strategic economic priority. The importance of resilient health systems for stable labour markets, reliable supply chains, and sustained long-term growth was also emphasized. There is a call for deeper collaboration among governments, businesses, and civil society. Policymakers were urged to prioritize health as a foundational pillar of economic policy and a driver of national growth and competitiveness. The remarks also reaffirmed the OECD's role in fostering resilient and future-proof health systems.

As part of our *Stronger Together Campaign*, this roundtable aimed to emphasize the central role of health in achieving economic security. It brought together representatives from the B7, Business, and the OECD to engage in meaningful dialogue on strengthening the resilience and responsiveness of health systems in the face of current and future crises. In the context of growing global health risks, recognizing health as both an economic imperative and a pillar of economic resilience is increasingly necessary.

Setting the Scene

The COVID-19 pandemic was a turning point in recognizing health as a cornerstone of economic resilience. This roundtable discussion exposed how weak health systems can disrupt labour markets, supply chains, and investor confidence. Hence investing in healthcare is not just a social need but an economic priority. Participants stressed that economic stability depends on health security and called for global, cross-sector efforts to strengthen health systems.

Innovation, particularly in biotechnology, artificial intelligence (AI), and life sciences, was highlighted as a critical economic driver, capable of generating jobs, boosting productivity, and addressing demographic challenges. Countries like Canada were recognized for leveraging research and higher education to translate scientific advancement into economic value.

The discussion also called for rethinking global preparedness and health governance as fragmented crisis responses were shown to have high economic costs, reinforcing the need for prevention, sustainable financing, and strong public-private partnerships. International organizations, including the OECD, were seen as key platforms for promoting transparent, risk-based policies.

This roundtable recalled that resilient health systems are essential for economic competitiveness, and that long-term, strategic investment in health must remain at the centre of global policy agendas.

Health Security for Economic Security

Panel Discussion

From Dialogue to Action: Advancing health as a pillar of economic resilience in the international agenda

What began nearly four years ago as a dialogue within the OECD has now evolved into a strategic priority, reflecting a growing global consensus: resilient health systems are fundamental to sustainable economic growth. The panel discussion explored this evolving understanding, emphasizing that health should no longer be viewed as a cost but as a strategic investment and essential driver of economic stability.

Against a backdrop of geopolitical instability, demographic transitions, population aging, climate change, and rapid technological transformation, panellists examined both the risks and opportunities facing today's health systems. They emphasized the systemic nature of health, with vulnerabilities in supply chains, labour markets, and environmental systems underscoring the urgent need to transition from reactive, disease-focused models to proactive, prevention-oriented care. Since, despite its benefits, prevention is still underfunded, panellists urged smarter investments, especially in the health workforce, system efficiency, and healthcare solutions and innovations.

Key points included the need to redesign health systems around people's needs, emphasizing prevention and population resilience; to recognize the health sector as a driver of economic growth and industrial innovation, and tackle workforce shortages by rethinking care models and strengthening talent pipelines. Digital health and artificial intelligence were presented as a game-changer, capable of transforming healthcare delivery and expanding access, only if the appropriate regulatory frameworks and global collaboration are in place. Initiatives like the OECD's PaRIS initiative were cited as vital tools to measure the effectiveness of

health investments and enhance system accountability.

Panellists reinforced that health is not a standalone issue, it is inherently global and cross-cutting, demanding coordinated action across sectors and borders. Avoiding protectionism, fostering international trust, and maintaining open, rules-based trade were viewed as critical to enabling global health innovation and ensuring equitable access. Canada's leadership in research, regulatory excellence, and innovation was highlighted as a model contribution to the international effort.

The panel expressed a strong call for continuity, accountability, and deeper collaboration. The discussion also stressed that health should stay central in global economic policy and that B7 recommendations must lead to real action and long-term strategies on the topic.

Health as a Strategic Asset: Advancing whole-of-society resilience through cross-sectors cooperation

The second part of the panel discussion dwelled further into the risks, opportunities, and shared responsibilities in global health. Panellists stressed that lasting progress needs a whole-of-society approach, emphasizing the need for strategic collaboration with the private and public sectors to reframe health as a long-term economic investment.

The industry was identified as a critical driver of this transformation, bringing to the table data, infrastructure, and innovation, including AI-driven health tools. Panellists stressed the importance of embedding the private sector into health strategy development and urged policymakers across all ministries, not just health, to recognize health as a core component of economic and national resilience.

Successful practices from B7 countries were highlighted, showcasing the benefits of treating health as an investment. These included multi-year budgeting for health, targeted spending on health workforce development, and robust public-private partnerships. Crucially, the panel called for clearer demonstration of returns on health investments to secure sustained political and financial backing.

The discussion also addressed the growing challenge of building public trust and depoliticizing health. Participants advocated for greater transparency in demonstrating the return on health investments, combating misinformation, and leveraging international platforms like the B7 and the OECD to

maintain consistent dialogue and accountability.

The conversation also emphasized the importance of open and predictable markets for health goods and services. In this context, the OECD was recognized for its valuable role in this space, particularly through initiatives, which strengthens the foundation for global cooperation on the topic of health.

The event concluded with a call to action: global health resilience must be proactively embedded into multilateral frameworks, including the B7 and the OECD. The time to act is now, before the next crisis, by investing in sustainable health systems, enabling collaboration, and making health a permanent pillar of international economic policy.

Key Takeaways and Recommendations

The discussion resulted in concrete insights and recommendations for shaping international health policy. Panellists called for key actions to guide forward momentum:

- **Foster predictable, innovation-friendly policy environments** that de-risk long-term investments and help attract private capital into health innovation—including from institutional **investors**
- **Embedding prevention in health financing** by recognizing its long-term value and correcting the current underinvestment – including through life course immunization programs that reduce healthcare costs, improve workforce productivity, and deliver measurable economic returns.
- **Strengthening global response to antimicrobial resistance (AMR)** by advancing science-based, sustainable incentives such as pull mechanisms. Canada and G7 countries have a leadership opportunity to support innovation and ensure timely access to next-generation antimicrobials.
- **Accelerating innovation adoption**, particularly in AI and digital health, by scaling infrastructure and streamlining regulatory frameworks for greater international cooperation. This includes fostering regulatory convergence to reduce delays in clinical trials and product launches and ensure more timely access to innovation.
- **Shifting political narratives from reactive crisis management to proactive preparedness**, with a focus on workforce readiness, aging populations, and health literacy.
- **Promoting collaboration across ministries and sectors**, particularly through public-private partnerships, to ensure health policies are aligned with wider economic, labour, and digital priorities and sustainably financed.
- **Strengthening the OECD's leadership in making health a strategic policy** priority by promoting sustainable and resilient health systems through transparent, evidence-based, and risk-informed policymaking.

- **Accelerate and expand access to innovative treatments** through predictable and transparent markets for

new medicines and international regulatory cooperation.

Conclusion

This roundtable discussion highlighted that health security is essential to economic resilience and stability. Panellists emphasized a growing recognition that health should be treated as an economic priority, not merely a social concern. There was strong support for embedding health within high-level policy frameworks, including the B7 and OECD agendas. The role of the business sector was recognized as critical in driving innovation, strengthening health systems, and providing practical, scalable solutions, particularly through public-private collaboration.

A key takeaway was the imperative to reframe health as a strategic investment that yields economic returns, through a more productive workforce, reduced long-term costs, and greater crisis preparedness. To reinforce this, health should be reclassified from a recurring expenditure to a long-term strategic asset in national budgets, as is increasingly done for sectors like energy and defense. Examples shared included investments in preventive care, digital health technologies, and health workforce transformation.

This roundtable also emphasized that building health resilience requires cooperation across sectors and government ministries.

Integrating health policy with broader economic and innovation strategies was seen as essential. There was strong support for including business expertise in the design and implementation of future health systems. Panellists supported the creation of a concrete, actionable health policy that formally recognizes the private sector's role in achieving global health and economic objectives.

The discussion underscored the need to keep health high on the G7 and OECD agendas, with concrete proposals such as convening a G7 Health Ministerial, implementing national AMR incentives, strengthening intellectual property frameworks, and aligning regulatory systems to accelerate people access to innovation. These priorities are essential to translate scientific progress into societal and economic gains.

The outcomes of this discussion will contribute to our Stronger Together Campaign and will be a provide inputs for our *Business at OECD Health 2025 Report*, with further engagement planned at our annual Health Forum in Paris on December 3rd, 2025.

Keynote Presentation

The Innovation Imperative - A Time-Critical Policy Crossroad for Economic Growth and Healthcare Resilience

High-income countries, particularly the G7, are at a critical juncture where aging populations and the rising burden of non-communicable diseases (NCD) are converging into a “silent pandemic.” Cardiovascular diseases, cancers, chronic respiratory conditions, diabetes, and neurological disorders are replacing infectious diseases as the primary threats to public health. The demographic shift toward older populations is accelerating this burden, with NCD-related deaths in the G7 projected to rise sharply by 2050.

The cost of inaction is not just human, it is profoundly economic, particularly noting that:

- A projected **46% increase in productivity-related economic burden** from selected diseases (HER2+ breast cancer, MS, retinal diseases) will be seen high-income countries over the next decade.¹
- The **five major NCDs could cost more than the GDP of most G7 countries** combined between 2010 and 2030.²
- The broader impact could reach **\$12 trillion in lost global GDP by 2040**, if the trend remains unchecked.³

Contrary to perceptions of healthcare spending as a financial drain, the data presented affirms that health innovation is a driver of economic growth:

- Up to **one-third of economic growth** in advanced economies over the last century is linked to improved health.⁴
- **35% of life expectancy gains between 1990-2015** were due to pharmaceutical innovation.⁵
- Every **\$1 invested in health yields a \$3 economic return**, making innovation not only a moral imperative but also an economic necessity.⁶

Strengthening prevention, including through immunization for older adults and those living with chronic conditions, can significantly reduce hospitalizations and complications, protect system capacity, and improve healthy life expectancy. Immunization, early diagnosis, and timely access to innovative treatments are essential components of a sustainable, cost-effective strategy to reduce the NCD burden and support both workforce and economic resilience.⁷

¹ Wifor Institute, The Value of Investing in Innovative Medicines: Socioeconomic Burden and Annual Social Impact of Roche Treatments for HER2+ Breast Cancer, Multiple Sclerosis and Retinal Disease. Available from: [link](#).

² World Bank. GDP (current US\$). Available from: [link](#).

³ McKinsey Global Institute. Prioritizing health: A prescription for prosperity. July 8, 2020.

⁴ Arora, S. (2001). Health, Human Productivity, and Long-Term Economic Growth. The Journal of Economic History, 61(3), 699–749. Available from: [link](#).

⁵ Buxbaum JD, Chernew ME, Fendrick AM, Cutler DM. Contributions of Public Health, Pharmaceuticals, And Other Medical Care To US Life Expectancy Changes, 1990-2015. Health Affairs. 2020;39(9):1546-1556.

⁶ McKinsey Global Institute. Prioritizing health: A prescription for prosperity. July 8, 2020.

⁷ Reimagining our response to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and mental health | IFPMA: [link](#).






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Business at OECD (BIAC)
13/15, Chaussée de la Muette
75016 Paris, France

 www.businessatoecd.org
 [@BusinessatOECD](https://twitter.com/BusinessatOECD)
 Business at OECD

Tel: +33 (0)1 42 30 09 60
communications@biac.org