

Addressing Gaps in Health Research

A call to action for Governments and Businesses

Championing Public Health Nutrition
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Canada's Health-Care Future

- Health care is consuming an ever-increasing share of the budgets of Canada's governments
- Businesses too will need to address the growing pressures on firm level performance from an aging workforce
- Canadians are increasingly aware that
 - The publicly funded health-care system is facing severe financial challenges
 - Something needs to be done to make the health system more sustainable

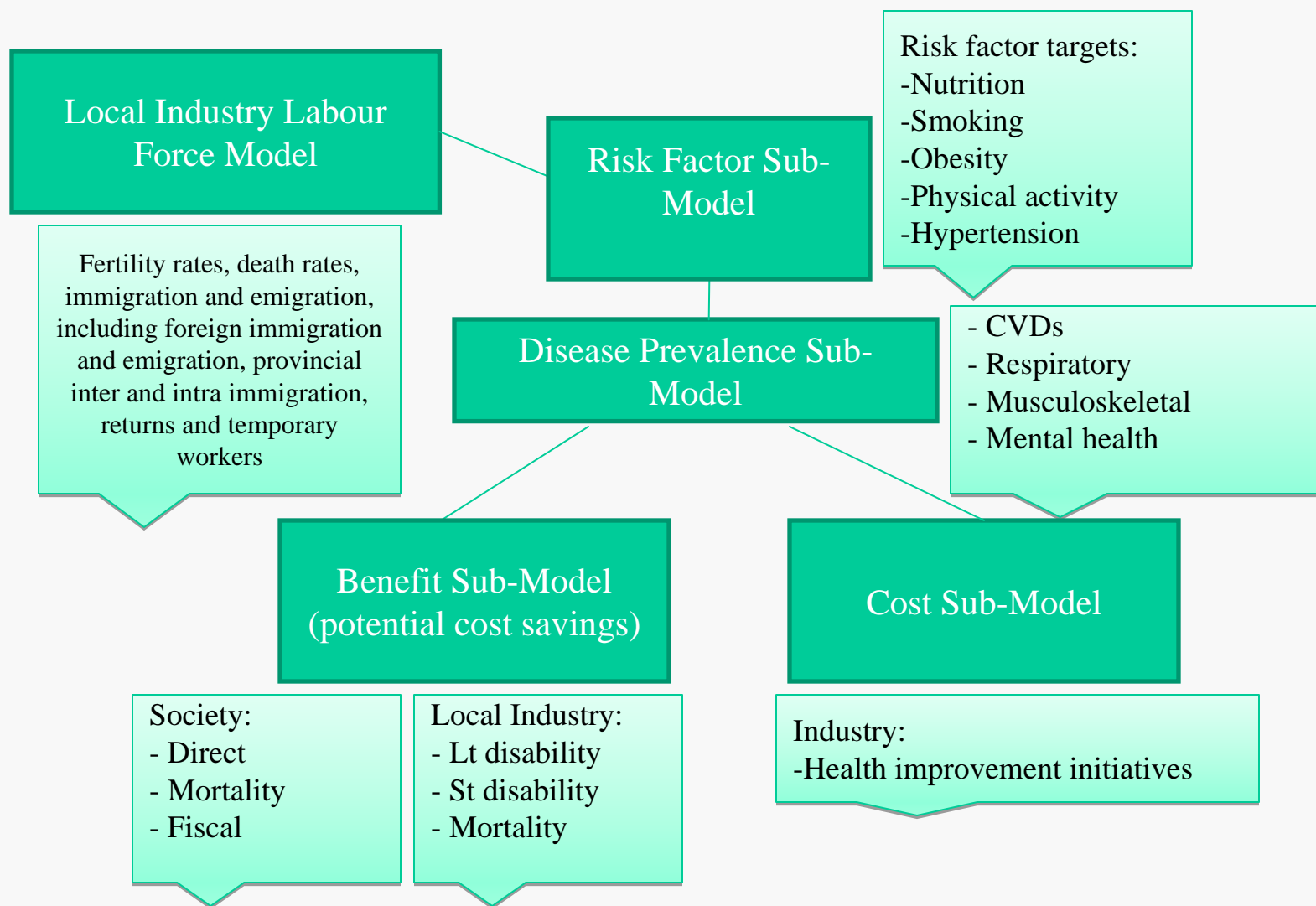


The Conference Board Approach

- Governments and businesses have a vital role in helping address the burden of chronic diseases
- Strategies to reduce modifiable risk factors are key to make to health system more sustainable
- But these strategies can be expensive and the return on investment to society and the firm is not always clear
 - Research in the U.S. is creating a better understanding of the long-term financial implications
 - This research is increasingly relevant in a Canadian context
 - A healthier, more productive workforce brings significant financial benefit to society and businesses



Nutrition in the Quantitative Framework



Prevalence of Chronic Diseases

- Beyond aging, relative risk ratios drive results
 - Research on impact of nutrition is a cornerstone
- Benefits are defined as cost differences between
 - Scenario with minimum impact of initiatives on risk factors
 - Scenario with larger impact of initiatives on risk factors
- This approach highlights areas of highest impact from reduction in risk factors



Is Cost/Benefit Relevant?

- Cost/benefit needs to be reconsidered in the public policy context
 - Particularly true when dealing with specific diseases
 - Makes all policies comparable while in reality they are not
 - For example: air pollution standards vs recommended daily salt consumption
 - Costs can be grossly overestimated
- Comparing costs with benefits and including ROI makes sense for businesses
 - Costs are well defined

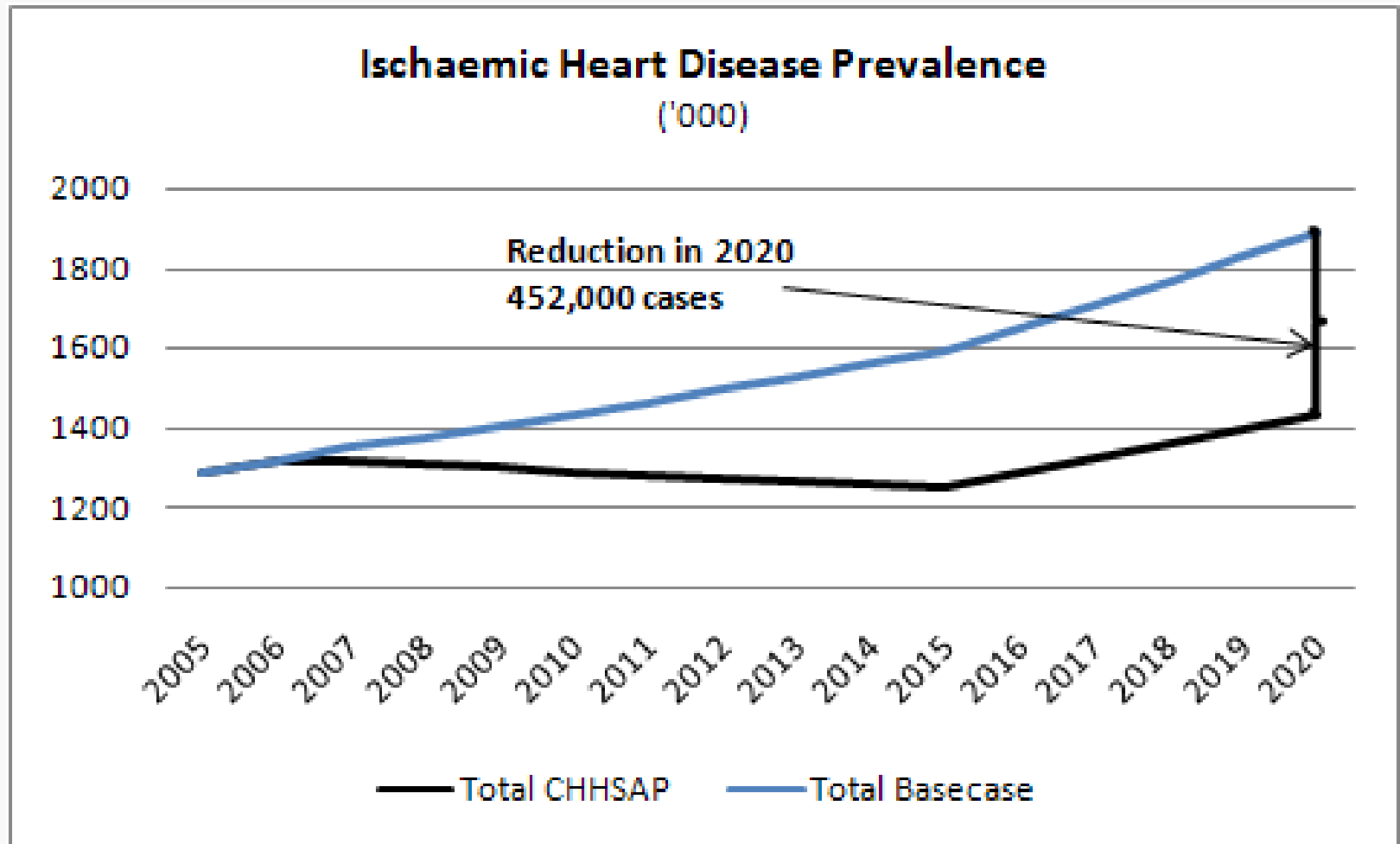


The Canadian Heart Health Strategy & Action Plan

- The Canadian Heart Health Strategy & Action Plan (CHHS-AP) established risk factor targets which could be achieved via:
 - Education
 - Legislation
 - Regulation
 - Policy
- Relationship between modifiable risk factors, cardiovascular diseases and future health care expenditures can help policy development
 - Support risk factor reduction initiatives
 - Prioritize actions with an assessment of the impact of efforts



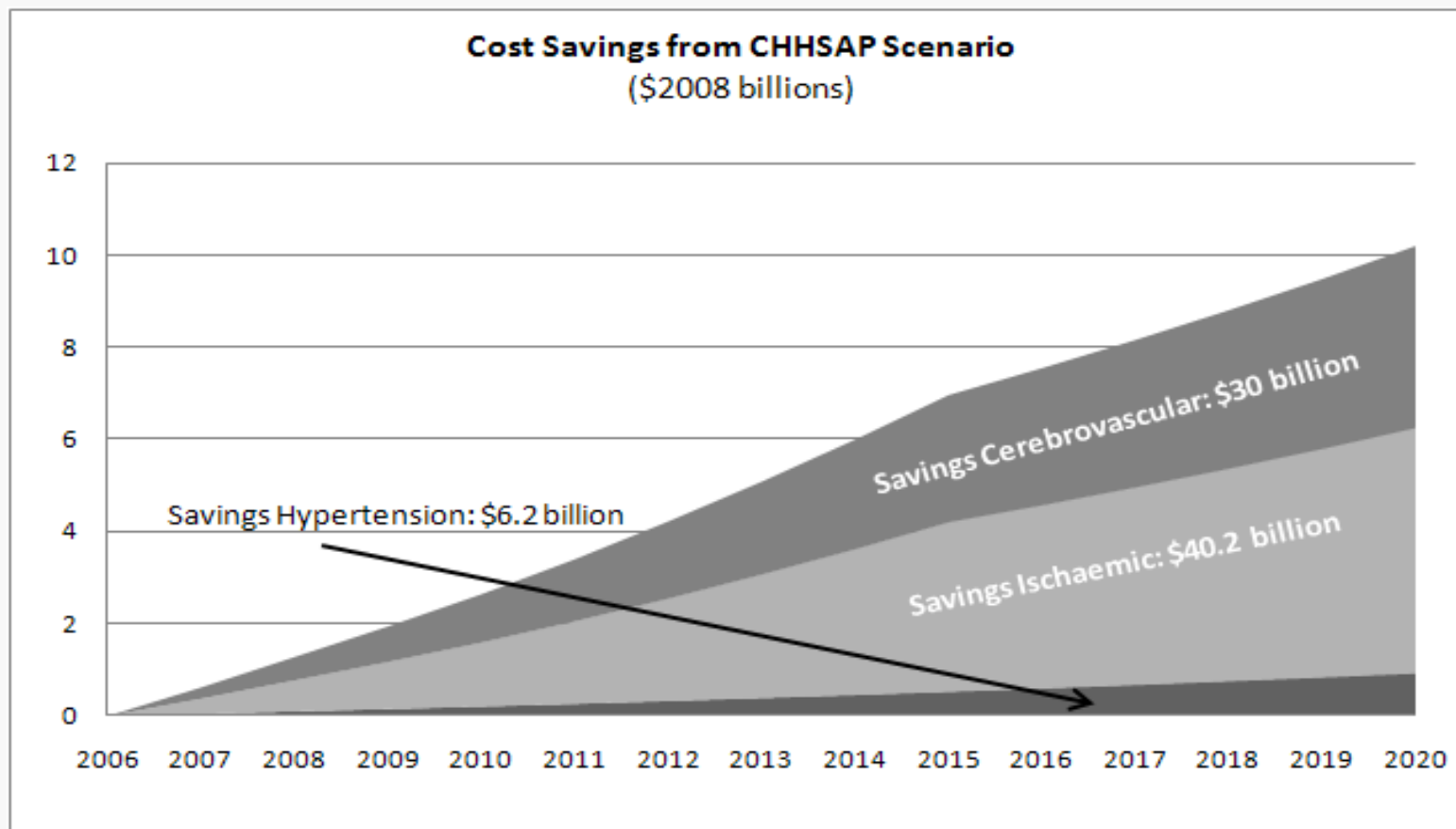
Impact of CHHS-AP Targets are Large and...



Sources: Canadian Community Health Survey; The Conference Board of Canada.



Substantial Cost Savings for Health System, Governments and Economy



Source: The Conference Board of Canada.



What Strategy for a Call to Action?

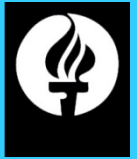
- Health-care is a complex industry
 - Supply chain difficult to identify
 - A vast array of organizations that focus on one or more research themes
- Overall strategic alignment challenging
 - The system has a large number of players with various priorities that are not necessarily complementary
- Filling gaps in the health research market would help
 - Build a common vision of sustainable health care among key stakeholders
 - Identify policies, strategies, and practices that contribute to ongoing transformation of the healthcare system



Conclusion

- There is no agreement on how to address
 - Fiscal pressure from the health-care system on budgets of Canada's governments
 - Competitiveness of firms in a context of slowing labour productivity due to an aging work force
- Comprehensive research is required to delineate both
 - the challenge to the sustainability of the Canadian health care system
 - the impact of various interventions that have been proposed
- A neutral venue is needed where stakeholders can discuss areas for reform and action
- The Conference Board of Canada is proposing the Canadian Alliance for Sustainable Health Care (CASHC)





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