



# The Path to Change

CNIB's bold new direction for 2014 to 2018



## Our mission

To ensure all Canadians who are blind or partially sighted have the confidence, skills and opportunity to fully participate in life, and no Canadian loses their sight to preventable causes.

## Our values

- **Passion:** We proudly celebrate the achievements of people who are blind or partially sighted. We care about what we do, and it shows.
- **Empowerment:** We believe in the abilities of people who are blind or partially sighted to achieve their goals, and we are the catalysts who enable their success.
- **Respect:** We value respect – for diversity, for language and for all people who are blind or partially sighted.
- **Innovation:** We embrace forward thinking, creativity and innovation to best serve our community.
- **Professionalism:** We bring integrity, transparency and accountability to all that we do, holding ourselves to the highest ethical standards.
- **Dedication:** We're driven to make a difference, persevere against all obstacles and do our absolute best for all who need us.



# Our Bold New Direction

In 1918 when CNIB was founded, our country was a very different place. Technology was non-existent, universal health care was a distant dream and people living with vision loss were falling through the cracks by the thousands.

When CNIB began serving Canada's blind and partially sighted community in those early days, we were not only a **critical** source of support for that community, but we were among their **only** sources of support.

That was the path we forged almost a hundred years ago. Since then, Canadian society has changed dramatically, from the evolution of a robust social safety net to the guarantee of equal rights for every citizen under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Yet for all the changes our country has undergone, one thing remains the same: most Canadians still rely on CNIB, a charity, as the primary provider, funder and steward of the rehabilitation therapy they need to fully participate in life after a loss of sight. In fact, only in Quebec does the fundamental ownership and responsibility for this therapy reside not with a charity, but with the province's healthcare system.

Increasingly, it is clear that our present role is neither sustainable nor appropriate for a charity to play. That's why over the past number of years, CNIB has looked carefully at our role within the complex continuum of care for people with vision loss and listened to the views of more than a thousand people across the country on this issue – the Canadians we serve foremost among them.

What came out of those conversations was a clear consensus: If all Canadians with vision loss are ever going to receive the full range of high-quality, timely and essential services they have a right to, CNIB can no longer support the belief that these services belong under a charitable umbrella.

As we approach CNIB's centenary in 2018, we are proud to unveil a new path for the future – one that sees us working in partnership with those we serve, as well as provincial governments, the medical community, volunteers and supporters, to create a future in which every Canadian has the opportunity to fully participate in life, regardless of vision loss.

This is our bold new strategic plan. This is the **Path to Change**.

# The Unmet Need



## A diverse community

Currently, approximately half a million people in Canada are living with blindness or partial sight that impacts their quality of life. And without action, that number is likely to increase dramatically over the next 25 years as our population ages. Within this community lies a range of support needs:

- **Children** who are blind or partially sighted face significant challenges on the road to independence and lifelong

success. They and their families need intensive support throughout the early years so they can grow and thrive.

- For **adults** who are blind or partially sighted, full participation in community life includes competing and succeeding in the workforce. Specialized training and technology can enable them to contribute to the economy alongside their sighted peers.
- **Older adults**, including many seniors with age-related vision loss, are focused on achieving or maintaining their desired level of personal safety

and independence. For them, basic skills training and opportunities for emotional support and social inclusion are critical.

But when it comes to how Canada is doing in meeting these needs, the statistics speak for themselves.

- More than **2,000** children under 12 and their families rely on CNIB each year to support them through the challenges of early childhood.
- Only one-third of working-age adults with vision loss are **employed**
- Approximately half of Canadian working-age adults with vision loss are struggling to make ends meet on **\$20,000** a year or less.
- People with vision loss are at greater risk of **social isolation** and reduced community participation.

## What we heard

In 2013, we undertook the largest consultation process in our history, reaching out to Canada's vision loss community – including people who are currently receiving support from CNIB, consumer groups representing Canadians who are blind or partially sighted, eye care professionals, as well as our own staff and volunteers.

Through 68 group discussions and an online survey completed by almost 400 Canadians, we heard many perspectives about the issues that affect our community. But time and again, those we spoke with brought up the following major themes:

- **Rehabilitation therapy for Canadians with vision loss** must be better integrated within the continuum of care in every province. This therapy is crucial to enabling Canadians to develop or regain skills essential to their safety, mobility and independence after experiencing a serious loss of sight. It should be publically funded by government and should never depend on a charity's ability to raise funds.
- **CNIB's work as a charity** should focus on enhancing the quality of people's lives and expanding opportunities for participation in the community. We should strive to deliver innovative programs and services that complement rehabilitation therapy for people with vision loss and address the vital needs of Canadians. From giving children self-confidence and a greater sense of social belonging, to reducing the isolation of sight loss for countless adults, to promoting vision health and championing the removal of barriers in every part of society, the possibilities for strengthening our impact are vast.

# The Path to Change



After consulting with our community members across the country, we were left with many questions. How do we counter the unmet need people with vision loss are facing? How do we continue to support the needs of those we serve, while ensuring those needs become priorities within the continuum of care? How do we inspire real change in the way vision loss is perceived in our society? How do we expand the relevance and impact of our work from coast to coast?

Our new strategic plan, the **Path to Change**, seeks to respond to those questions and many others. It clarifies

the role CNIB can play in the lives of Canadians who are blind or partially sighted going forward, as well as the ways we will work with government and society as a whole to ensure the equal rights of this community are upheld.

From 2014 to 2018, the following two goals will drive and shape our work nationally and provincially. Meanwhile, our efforts in Quebec will centre on our charitable work given rehabilitation therapy for people living with vision loss has already been integrated into the province's healthcare system.

## Our national goals

# Integrate post-vision loss rehabilitation therapy into the continuum of care

We will strive to integrate post-vision loss rehabilitation therapy into the continuum of care so that high-quality, timely and essential services are available to and covered for every Canadian who needs them. As we do so, our hope is that we will continue to play a critical role in the delivery of these vital services.

### How we'll do it:

- Bring forward a compelling call to action for the integration of post-vision loss rehabilitation therapy into the continuum of care in each province.
- Collaborate with provincial governments, regional health authorities and sector stakeholders to develop and implement a best-in-class, sustainable model for integrated service delivery in each province, leveraging CNIB's knowledge and capacity in this area.
- Rally our entire community – including Canadians who are blind or partially sighted, medical professionals, CNIB staff, volunteers and supporters – to champion our cause, raising their voices in support of full equality.

# Redefine CNIB's role as a charity

We will create a new vision for CNIB that is relevant and meaningful to all Canadians, particularly those living with blindness or partial sight, in anticipation of the organization's second century.

### How we'll do it:

- Collaborate with stakeholders, particularly those we serve, to identify the key pillars of work in which CNIB should invest donations in the future, with a focus on delivering the greatest societal impact.
- Build and communicate a compelling vision for our future impact in relation to these pillars of work.
- Review and reinvigorate CNIB's brand and public image to reflect its new mandate and identity.

# Main Areas of Work



As we build towards tomorrow, we must ensure the needs of those we serve are met today. That's why, as we walk the **Path to Change**, we will continue to uphold the main areas of work we've been delivering upon for decades.

With a focus on quality, efficiency and delivering positive outcomes for those we serve, we'll work in collaboration with people who are blind or partially sighted, as well as the broader stakeholder community, to passionately provide post-vision loss rehabilitation therapy and innovative community-based support programs across the country.

We'll also strive to put an end to avoidable blindness in Canada by raising awareness of vision loss and eye health, and encouraging people to proactively care for their eyes.

At the same time, we'll work closely with our community to advance the issues that matter to them – from equality to accessibility to inclusion – and work towards a society where the opportunities to succeed are limitless for Canadians who are blind or partially sighted, just like their sighted peers.

# Post-vision loss rehabilitation therapy

Following an initial assessment from an eye doctor, rehabilitation therapy is a key part of a person's healthcare journey after vision loss. We will ensure best-in-class, timely delivery of this therapy for Canadians of all ages who are blind or partially sighted.

## Key initiatives:

- Deliver timely, customer-focused rehabilitation therapy to Canadians of all ages who are blind or partially sighted.
- Enhance service delivery through purposeful and effective community partnerships with eye care professionals, like-minded organizations and funders.
- Measure performance through the achievement of goals and the outcomes experienced by those we serve.

# Public education

We will motivate Canadians to care for their eyes and take proactive measures to prevent vision loss.

## Key initiatives:

- Benchmark and measure public awareness, attitudes and behaviours surrounding eye care and vision loss.
- Pursue awareness initiatives that educate the public about the importance of proactive eye care, eye safety, early diagnosis and effective treatment of eye disease.

# Community-based support

We will enhance the lives of people who are blind or partially sighted by ensuring access to community-based support, informational resources and technology.

## Key initiatives:

- Deliver complimentary programs and services that empower people who are blind or partially sighted to achieve their goals and reach their highest potential.
- Provide access to products and technology that enable people to lead fuller, more independent lives.
- Support the transition of accessible library services into the public sector, and promote continued growth and innovation in library service delivery.

# Advocacy

We will advocate for an inclusive and barrier-free society in which people with vision loss can participate fully and are seen as equal in every respect.

## Key initiatives:

- In collaboration with groups representing people who are blind or partially sighted, develop a national advocacy strategy to advance key issues facing the community.
- Create resources and provide counsel and support to enable people who are blind or partially sighted to self-advocate effectively.



# Optimizing Our Work

As CNIB moves forward with our ambitious plans for change, it will be essential to have best-in-class knowledge, resources and practices in place across our organization. That's why, from 2014 - 2018, we will continue to optimize operations in the following key areas:

## Volunteerism

We will build capacity by engaging volunteers in meaningful opportunities that meet the needs of the organization and the volunteers themselves.

## Human resources

We will adopt leading-edge human resource practices to attract, develop and retain the expertise, energy and commitment of talented staff.

## Philanthropy

We will inspire Canadians to engage with, understand and support CNIB, generating sustained income to fund our charitable needs.

## Research

We will conduct and support world-class research focused on exploring the causes of eye disease, improving treatments and better serving people with vision loss.

## Business practices

We will use best practice-based business models, tools and technologies to maximize efficiency, foster collaboration and support the provision of excellent services.

## Government support

We will work to establish and expand dialogues with all levels of government to generate support and ensure the best possible post-vision loss rehabilitation therapy and support services for people who are blind or partially sighted.

# Walking The Path ... Together



The **Path to Change** is the beginning of a better future – one in which vision loss and blindness are given the priority they deserve within Canada’s continuum of care, and Canadians who are blind or partially sighted have the same opportunities to fully participate in life as their sighted peers.

If you believe in this future too, we ask you to join us. Our success in achieving these ambitious goals will depend on the continued involvement and support of you – our community.



You can help us shape our future as a volunteer, advocate or supporter on the **Path to Change**. To learn more, please visit [cnib.ca/pathtochange](http://cnib.ca/pathtochange).



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