

New report reveals gaps in care of premature babies and their families

Canadian Premature Babies Foundation identifies seven areas that require rapid improvement

Edmonton, Alberta (November 10, 2014) – Premature birth is the leading cause of infant mortality nationwide and a growing healthcare concern in Canada. In advance of World Prematurity Day (November 17), the [Canadian Premature Babies Foundation](#) (CPBF), a not-for-profit, national organization dedicated to raising awareness of premature birth and advocating for quality care, today released *Premature Birth in Canada*, a report that identifies gaps within the healthcare journey of premature children and provides recommendations for how to improve the lives of these babies and their families.

“You cannot determine what needs to be fixed until you realize what exactly is broken,” said Katharina Staub, President of the Canadian Premature Babies Foundation. “Today’s report pinpoints the areas that demand our attention and empowers CPBF to focus our energy and play a vital role in ensuring premature infants and their families receive the best care, treatment and support at birth and throughout their lives.”

Eight per cent of all babies born in Canada are delivered prematurely, a percentage that has been steadily increasing since 1991. Babies born prematurely have immediate health and supportive care needs and may experience long-term impacts such as the risk of development or physical challenges. As the rate of prematurity continues to rise so too does the need to improve the standard of care for Canadian infants and their families.

While the report launched today identifies high quality clinical care and an increasing emphasis on research as areas of strength for Canada, it also uncovered seven areas that should be addressed immediately. These are:

- greater consistency of care across the country;
- the need for family-centered care in hospital (such as on-site accommodations for family and greater parent/healthcare provider education);
- support for families’ emotional needs; support for the financial burden of an extended hospital stay;
- support for the period immediately following a preemie’s discharge home;
- support when a baby is transferred to another healthcare facility;
- and increasing access to long-term follow-up care for all premature babies.

“Every day, I witness firsthand the developmental and health impacts of prematurity. They are far greater than the average person may realize,” said Dr. Jennifer Toye, Neonatologist, Stollery Children’s Hospital in Edmonton. “Today’s report challenges healthcare providers and Canadian families to aim for a higher standard of care and to be part of the solution.”

In addition to providing a fulsome overview on the state of premature care in Canada, the report outlines ten recommendations that, if implemented, have the potential to improve the care and support of families impacted. CPBF hopes to use these recommendations to start a meaningful conversation with key stakeholders, including parents and families of premature children, about the need for change to premature care in Canada.



In recognition of World Prematurity Day on November 17, CPBF will also unveil its second-annual [Global Illumination Project](#). Several landmarks, including Montreal's Olympic Stadium and Niagara Falls, will be lit purple in honour of all prematurely born babies.

About the Premature Birth in Canada Report

The Premature Birth in Canada report was prepared for CPBF by Research Power Inc. through an unrestricted educational grant from AbbVie Canada. The researchers used a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional review of grey and academic literature, along with stakeholder interviews and focus groups, to determine their recommendations.

To read the [complete study](#).

About the Canadian Premature Babies Foundation

Founded in 2012 by Katharina Staub, a mother of premature twins, the goal of the Canadian Premature Babies Foundation (Fondation pour Bébés Prématurés Canadiens) is to provide a voice and a face to the major health issues associated with prematurity. The Foundation's mission is three-fold; to reduce preterm birth through education and research, to support the best standards of care for premature babies, and to give premature babies and their families a voice across Canada. Learn more visit www.cpb-fbpc.org

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