

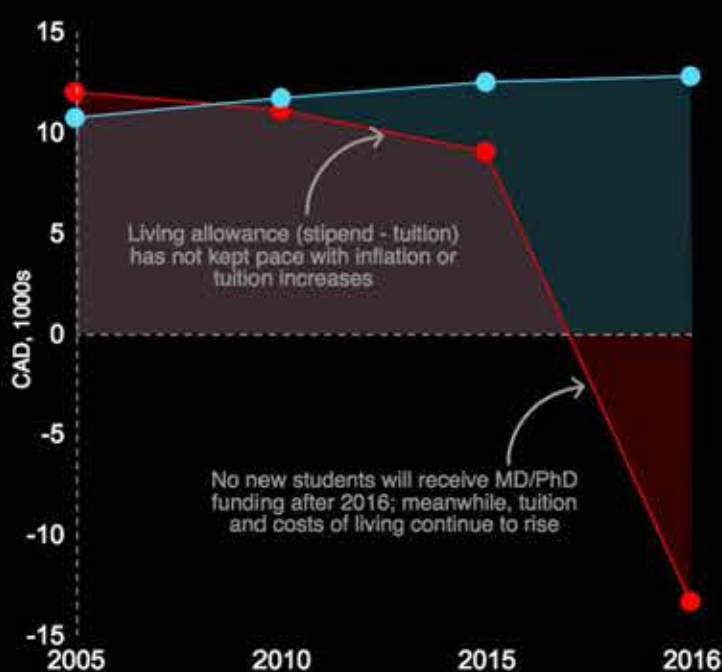


Shocking cuts to MD/PhD funding



The Canadian Institutes of Health Research cancels a program to train doctors who care for patients and research new treatments

MD/PhD TRAINING



Decades-old program cancelled

Starting in the 1990s, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) funded MD/PhD programs due to concern that Canada lacks specialists 'bilingual' in patient care and research.

Despite patient-oriented research being a top priority for the CIHR, after 2016, no new students will be funded under the MD/PhD program.

Living allowance (stipend - tuition) has not kept pace with inflation or tuition increases. No new students will receive MD/PhD funding after 2016; meanwhile, tuition and costs of living continue to rise.

Tuition information and Consumer Price Index (CPI) from Statistics Canada. Tuition data reflect national averages for undergraduate medical training. CPI data is in units of 10% with 2002 = 100%. 2016 data is projected based on 3% increase from previous year.

7-10 years to earn degrees



On average, 48% stipend goes to tuition



% based on a \$27,000 total stipend (CIHR + institutional supplements), average medical tuition in 2015 (\$12,959, Statistics Canada), and \$950/month rent (average rent, 2 bedroom apartment in a Canadian city centre, CMHC)

Key players in innovation



MD/PhD students are trained to care for patients, recognize gaps in care, research potential solutions, and translate results into healthcare innovations.

The MD/PhD marathon

The MD/PhD program funding helps students focus on their intensive training pathway without working part-time jobs or going into debt. Consistent funding support is critical to help candidates choose this arduous and uncertain path.

Examples of work done by clinician-scientists in Canada



James C Hogg revolutionized the medical understanding of lung diseases like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and asthma



Peter A Singer and colleagues tackle global health challenges including the health of mothers and infants in poor communities



Michael R Hayden is leading efforts to develop treatments for rare genetic diseases like Huntington's and lipid diseases



Daniel Drucker's research on hormones has led to new classes of therapies for type 2 diabetes and short bowel syndrome



Anne Bassett's team is studying how genetic factors contribute to schizophrenia and other developmental disorders



Heinz Feldman helped lead the National Microbiology Laboratory in Winnipeg to develop a vaccine for the Ebola virus

Cancellation of the MD/PhD program with no plans for viable alternatives is short-sighted



Expert reviews find that Canada needs an increase in clinician-scientists to address urgent health-care questions. Cutting funding "pulls the plug" on training the next generation of healthcare innovators.



For more information



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<http://www.cbc.ca/news/health/cuts-to-md-phd-funding-greeted-with-horror-by-medical-scientists-1.3190215>

Clinician Investigator Trainee Association of Canada / Association des cliniciens-chercheurs en formation du Canada

http://www.cmaj.ca/site/earlyreleases/10aug15_cihr_cutting_md_phd_training_program.109-5124.xhtml

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