



Choosing Wisely Canada's

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# Annual Report

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**Highlights:**  
2024-2025



**2024  
2025**

# Annual Report

With funding support from federal, provincial and territorial governments, as well as the Canadian Medical Association, Choosing Wisely Canada made significant progress in expanding offerings and strengthening partnerships to reduce overuse in health systems.

This report summarizes our activities and impact for the 2024-25 fiscal year.

# Highlights 2024-25

Ten years in, Choosing Wisely Canada continues to mobilize individuals and their organizations to reduce the overuse in Canadian health systems.

The 2024-2025 fiscal year placed a strong emphasis on moving from awareness to action—scaling up efforts across health care sectors and laying the groundwork for the next decade of meaningful, impactful change.

**This report shares 2024-25 highlights on:**

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# Regional Hubs

Choosing Wisely Canada continued its support of provincial and territorial hubs to advance local initiatives. Efforts focused on various priority areas including deprescribing, reducing low-value testing, and promoting climate-conscious activities.

## 2024-25 Regional Spotlights



### Québec: Declaration on High-Value Care

In 2024-25, Choosing Wisely Québec played a leading role in establishing the *Montreal Declaration for High-Value Care*, a call to improve care and access to appropriate services. The Québec hub convened more than 20 partner organizations in early 2025 to share their initiatives, explore challenges and enablers of high-value care, and commit to meaningful, collaborative action moving forward.

### Desflurane has Des-appeared in Newfoundland and Labrador



From Practice Points Volume 11: Annual Anesthetic Gas Purchasing Trends in NL

In December 2024, Newfoundland and Labrador became the first province in Canada to officially stop purchasing desflurane, shifting to more environmentally sustainable anesthetic alternatives. Desflurane is a potent greenhouse gas with no significant clinical advantage over other options.

This system-wide change, led by Quality of Care NL/Choosing Wisely NL, marked a major step toward climate-conscious health care.

# Clinician Engagement

Collaboration with clinician societies remains central to Choosing Wisely Canada's work. This year, that collaboration delivered **83 new recommendations**, record-breaking webinar attendance, and a new focus on climate-conscious actions to reduce low-value care.

## 2024-25 Highlights

**330+ participants** at Choosing Wisely Canada's National Meeting in Montreal, marking 10 years of progress in reducing overuse. In partnership with Choosing Wisely Québec, the event featured timely topics on medication appropriateness, health care access, and climate action.

**3600+ registrants** over eight Choosing Wisely Talks webinars exploring issues that impact the health system sustainability.

**39 publications** published by Choosing Wisely Canada leads, strengthening the evidence base on overuse in health care.

**65 nurses** from across Canada participated in a newly established Community of Practice to advance Choosing Wisely principles in nursing, with a focus on leadership and implementation.

**7 grants** of up to \$10,000 awarded to Canadian medical societies to advance recommendations in practice. Projects focused on development of new toolkits, awareness events, and a new video series.



### Climate Recommendations

In 2024, Choosing Wisely Canada released **53** climate-conscious recommendations with over **20** clinical specialties, highlighting actions that can be avoided to protect patients and the planet. The launch webinar attracted more than **600** registrants.

### New Series: Climate Rounds

In 2025, Choosing Wisely Canada launched *Climate Rounds* with the Canadian Medical Association. The new series offers practical guidance on reducing environmental harm in health care. The first rounds launched in February 2025 highlighting the discontinuation of desflurane.

### Publications on Climate

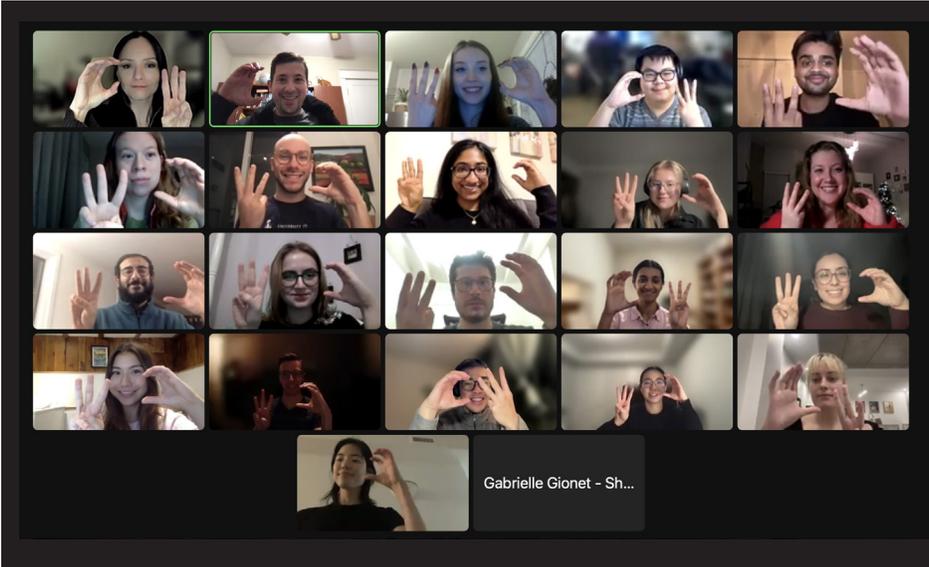
Choosing Wisely Canada leads have also contributed to the growing body of literature on environmental harm with publications in the *Lancet*, *JAMA* and other leading journals:

- [Medical Practice and the Climate Crisis](#)
- [Engaging Clinicians to Reduce Carbon-Intensive, Unnecessary Tests and Procedures](#)
- [Minimizing the Effects of Surgical Care on Climate Change](#)
- [The Role of Clinicians in the Climate Crisis](#)

# Education & Training

From undergraduate medical students to practising clinicians, Choosing Wisely Canada continued building a community of future leaders in resource stewardship. Through its education and training programs, the latest cohort of fellows and students advanced individual and collaborative projects to reduce low-value care.

## Choosing Wisely STARS: Students & Trainees Advocating for Resource Stewardship



STARS supported its **10<sup>th</sup>** cohort of medical student leaders, representing all 17 medical schools across Canada.

Recent initiatives have expanded to include cross-disciplinary collaboration with pharmacy and nursing, student-led events, and resource development. Current and past STARS are showcased in a quarterly spotlight series.



Chandan Bal



Elaine Bland



Mikha Alegria

### 2024-25 Fellows

## Healthcare Improvement Fellowship

In its third year, the Healthcare Improvement Fellowship, in partnership with the Centre for Quality Improvement and Patient Safety (CQIPs), welcomed a new cohort of Choosing Wisely Canada fellows. Three fellows from across Canada received advanced training and mentorship in quality improvement and de-implementation science strategies. Fellowship projects focused on improving care for hospitalized children, advancing Choosing Wisely in primary care, and blood management stewardship.

# National Hospital Programs

Choosing Wisely Canada's hospital improvement programs continued to drive large-scale changes in blood stewardship, reducing low-value lab testing, and improving overall hospital utilization. In 2024-25, efforts focused on expanding participation by engaging hospitals not yet involved.



## Using Blood Wisely

With **297 participating sites** and **167 designated** hospitals, the *Using Blood Wisely* program continues to grow. In 2024-25, efforts focused on engaging hospitals not yet involved through targeted outreach and community of practice webinars. Over the 2024-25 fiscal year, an additional **61 hospitals** across seven provinces signed on to learn about meeting benchmarks and the process for reaching designation status.



## Using Labs Wisely

Since 2022, more than **150 hospitals** have joined *Using Labs Wisely*, a national effort to reduce low-value lab testing. Participating sites have launched targeted projects and are reporting meaningful reductions. One site of Island Health in BC, reduced low-value blood testing in the emergency department resulting in:

- **15.5 litres** of blood saved – equal to 34 blood donations.
- **70 hours** of lab technologist time saved.
- **764 kg of CO<sub>2</sub> cut** – equal to charging 61,000 smartphones, driving 4,275 km in a gas car, or burning 849 pounds of coal.



## Hospital Designation Program

In 2024, **four sites** earned recognition as Choosing Wisely Canada Hospitals. Island Health, Kingston Health Sciences Centre, and Health Sciences Centre-NL Health Services achieved Quality Improvement status, while Sinai Health reached the highest level, earning Leadership status. The program continued to recognize hospitals making Choosing Wisely part of their core quality and leadership strategies.

# Long-Term Care

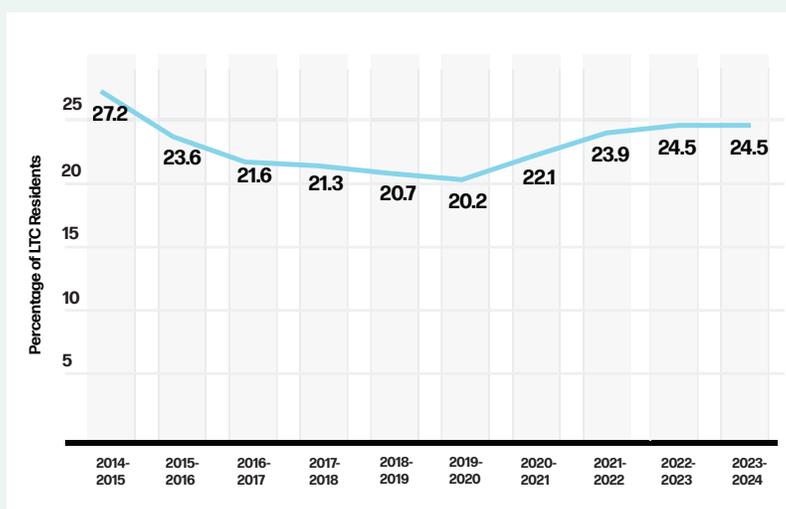
In 2024-25, Choosing Wisely Canada strengthened partnerships with system organizations to advance medication appropriateness in practice. Launched in 2024, Choosing Wisely Canada was a founding member of the Appropriate Use Coalition, bringing together 11 health organizations. Its first focus was setting targets and improvement goals to reduce inappropriate antipsychotic use in long-term care.

## Rising Rates

In December 2024, the Appropriate Use Coalition released the *Rising Rates* report, a comprehensive, data-driven examination of the inappropriate use of antipsychotics in Canadian long-term care homes.

The report found that since the pandemic, the national rate has climbed to **24.5%**, well above comparable countries. These findings helped establish the extent of the problem and informed a national target to be released on the coalition's new website in June 2025.

Ten-Year Trend:  
Potentially Inappropriate Use of Antipsychotics in LTC in Canada

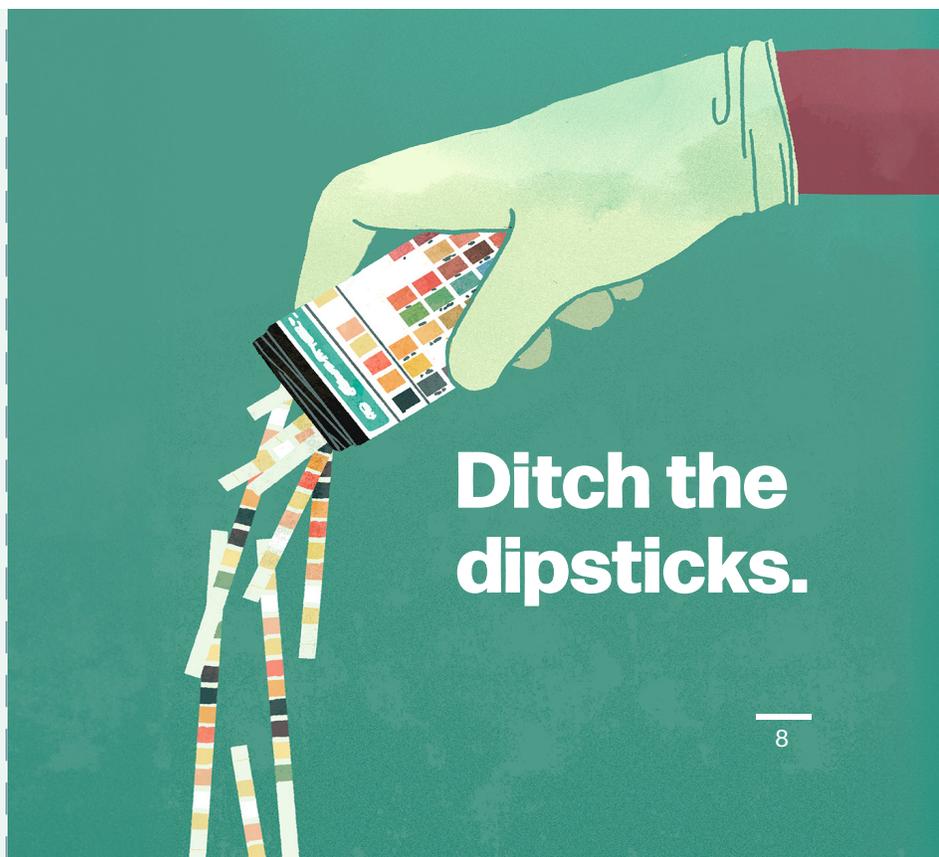


From the Appropriate Use Coalition's *Rising Rates* report available on: [itcmeds.ca](https://www.itcmeds.ca)

## Urine Dipsticks

In 2024, Choosing Wisely Canada tackled the overuse of urine dipsticks, a common but unreliable test for diagnosing bladder infections in older adults. Urine dipsticks can lead to misdiagnosis, delayed treatment, and unnecessary antibiotic use.

A consensus statement, endorsed by 10 societies, was developed along with tools to support providers, patients and caregivers in long-term care.



# Primary Care

In 2024-25, Choosing Wisely Canada deepened its strategic focus on primary care through its Primary Care Network, a representative group of clinicians and patient partners working together to address key priorities in the sector.

## Workload Burden



This year a strong focus was placed on reducing workload by tackling unnecessary or redundant tests and treatments that can limit access to care and strain finite health care resources.

At the 2024 Family Medicine Forum in Vancouver, a Choosing Wisely Canada survey found that **50%** of primary care physicians reported spending more than **five hours a week** on low-value activities. Building on these findings, a new campaign is now in development to quantify time saved by avoiding low-value tests and treatments, as well as raise national awareness about the issue.

## Overuse Alerts

Choosing Wisely Canada collaborated with the College of Family Physicians of Canada's Self Learning™ Program, a continuing professional development resource used by thousands of family physicians. Volumes feature overuse alerts linked to Choosing Wisely recommendations, tools, and resources to support practice change. Choosing Wisely Canada's overuse alerts appeared in 6 volumes.



## Choosing Wisely Series in CFP

Choosing Wisely Canada continued to spotlight overuse issues in family medicine, including a feature series in *Canadian Family Physician*. Topics in 2024-25 tackled urine testing in older adults, optimizing proton pump inhibitors, reducing repetitive blood draws, and diabetes management.

# Patient and Public

Choosing Wisely Canada continues to engage, educate, and partner with patients and the Canadian public through opinion pieces, resource development, and a growing network of patient partners.

## Opinion Editorials



### The Role of Healthcare in Mitigating the Climate Crisis

By: Dr. Wendy Levinson



### Antipsychotic Use is Rising in Long-Term Care. We Can Do Something About It

By: Dr. Sid Feldman and Julie Weir



## Patient Partnership

Choosing Wisely Canada engages patient partners in its implementation programs, research, and resource development.

In 2024-25, patient partners contributed to new materials on dental pain, led awareness activities for World Patient Safety Day, and co-presented in the Choosing Wisely Talks series. These ongoing opportunities bring patient perspectives to initiatives across the country.

# Less but better.

**Better** for patients.  
**Better** for the system.  
**Better** for the planet.

## Future Directions

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In 2025, Choosing Wisely Canada announced its new commitment, *Less but Better*, marking the next chapter of our work. This guiding principle challenges the Choosing Wisely community to think beyond simply doing less. Ultimately, it's about doing better—for patients, for the health care system, for the planet.

Looking ahead, Choosing Wisely Canada will continue to mobilize clinicians to reduce unnecessary tests, treatments, and medications. Over the next decade, it will also:

- Advocate for better patient care by advancing medication appropriateness, with a focus on reducing inappropriate antipsychotic use in long-term care.
- Build a better health system by expanding hospital partnerships, improving blood stewardship, optimizing lab utilization, and reducing clinician workload.
- Advance better climate-conscious care by mobilizing clinicians to reduce high-emission activities and waste, protecting patients and the planet.



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