

Bridging the Gaps: How Provincial Strategies Can Complement a National Vision for Brain Injury

By Janelle Breese Biagioni, CEO, CGB Centre for Traumatic Life Losses & Community Lead, National Strategy on Brain Injury

In Canada, brain injury doesn't discriminate. It affects people in every province and territory—urban and rural, young and old, housed and unhoused. Yet the responses vary wildly depending on where you live. Access to care, rehabilitation, housing supports, and education about brain injury is uneven and fragmented. That's why we're advocating for both a **National Strategy on Brain Injury** and **strong provincial frameworks** to complement it.

It's not a matter of federal versus provincial—it's about working in partnership to close the cracks people are falling through.

The Role of a National Strategy

A National Strategy on Brain Injury—such as the one proposed in former **Bill C-277**—would establish a **coordinated, pan-Canadian approach** that ensures:

- National standards of care and service delivery
- Federal investment in brain injury prevention, research, and rehabilitation
- Cross-sector collaboration across health, housing, justice, and education
- Recognition of brain injury in all major federal strategies (including mental health, substance use, intimate partner violence, and homelessness)
- A central voice for **people with lived experience** in shaping policies

This national leadership is essential. It provides vision, alignment, and accountability. But provinces and territories have a critical role to play in bringing that vision to life.

Where Provincial Strategies Fit In

Each province has its own population, resources, and healthcare infrastructure. A **provincial brain injury strategy** is where the work becomes real and relevant. It allows for:

- Tailoring services to meet local and regional needs
- Aligning brain injury supports with provincial healthcare and social services
- Building partnerships with Indigenous communities, rural networks, and community-based organizations
- Addressing provincial gaps, such as lack of rehab beds, system navigators, or specialized housing
- Coordinating early intervention within schools, emergency rooms, corrections, and child protection

When provinces build their own strategies within the context of a national framework, we create **consistency without sacrificing flexibility**. We ensure that wherever someone lives in Canada, they are **seen, supported, and not left behind**.

We've Seen the Impact of Working Together

British Columbia is one example where momentum is building. Through the **BC Consensus on Brain Injury, Mental Health, and Addictions**, we brought together survivors, families, frontline workers, and professionals to create a shared statement of values and priorities. That work is now informing efforts to develop a provincial strategy aligned with national goals—and it's a model that other provinces can build upon.

But the real power lies in **integration**. When provincial and federal governments align their efforts, the result is not duplication—it's **amplification**.

A Call to Action

We need federal leadership to establish the foundation. We need provincial action to build the supports. And we need **your voice** to make sure both levels of government step up.

Here's how you can help:

- Visit www.nationalstrategyonbraininjury.ca to learn more and add your name
- Write to your MP and provincial representatives asking them to support a coordinated approach
- Connect with provincial brain injury associations and survivor-led groups in your region
- Share your lived experience or that of someone you love—because stories move policy

Together, We Can Bridge the Gaps

No single policy will solve the challenges faced by people living with brain injury. But when we link national leadership with provincial innovation, we create a safety net that is stronger, smarter, and more compassionate.

Let's build a Canada where **every person with a brain injury—regardless of where they live—has access to the care, respect, and opportunities they deserve**.

It's time to stop letting geography determine dignity.

Let's bridge the gaps—together.

Janelle Breese Biagioni is the CEO of the CGB Centre for Traumatic Life Losses and Community Lead for the National Strategy on Brain Injury. With over three decades of experience in brain injury advocacy, she works across sectors and regions to ensure no one is left behind.