

Poverty is not always apparent: In Ontario 20% of families live in poverty.¹

1 Screen Everyone

“Do you ever have difficulty making ends meet at the end of the month?”

(Sensitivity 98%, specificity 40% for living below the poverty line)²

2 Poverty is a Risk Factor

Consider:

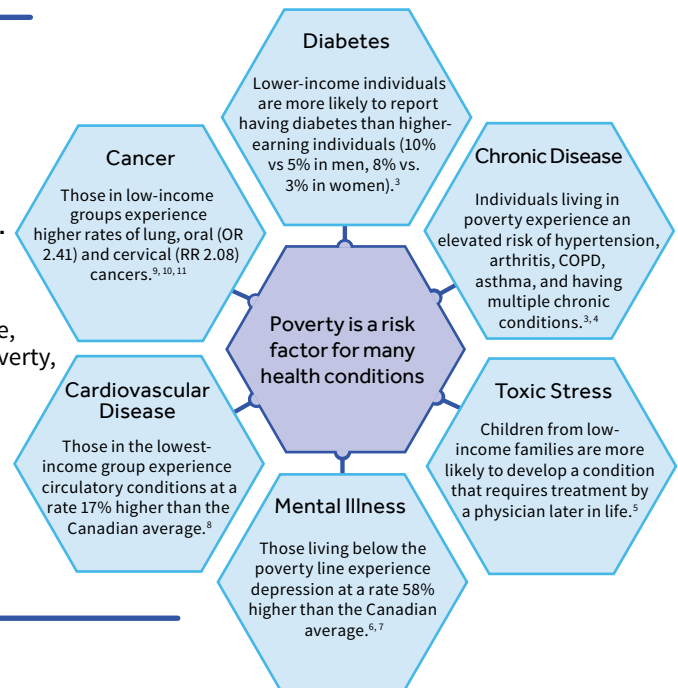
New immigrants, women, Indigenous peoples, and LGBTQ+ are among the highest risk groups.

Example 1:

If an otherwise healthy 35-year-old comes to your office, without risk factors for diabetes other than living in poverty, you consider ordering a screening test for diabetes.

Example 2:

If an otherwise low-risk patient who lives in poverty presents with chest pain, this elevates the pre-test probability of a cardiac source and helps determine how aggressive you are in ordering investigations.



3 Intervene

Ask Everyone: “Have you filled out and sent in your tax forms?”

- Ask questions to find out more about your patient—their employment, living situation, social supports, and the benefits they receive. Tax returns are required to access many income security benefits: e.g., GST / HST credits, child benefits, working income tax benefits, and property tax credits. Connect your patients to [Free Community Tax Clinics](#).
- Even people without official residency status can file returns.
- Drug Coverage: up-to-date tax filing is required to access Trillium plan for those without Ontario Drug Benefits. Visit [drugcoverage.ca](#) for more options.

Ask



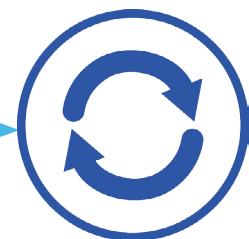
Ask questions to find out more about your patient—their living situation and the benefits they currently receive.

Educate



Ensure you and your team are aware of resources available to patients and their families. Start with [Canada Benefits](#) and [2-1-1](#).

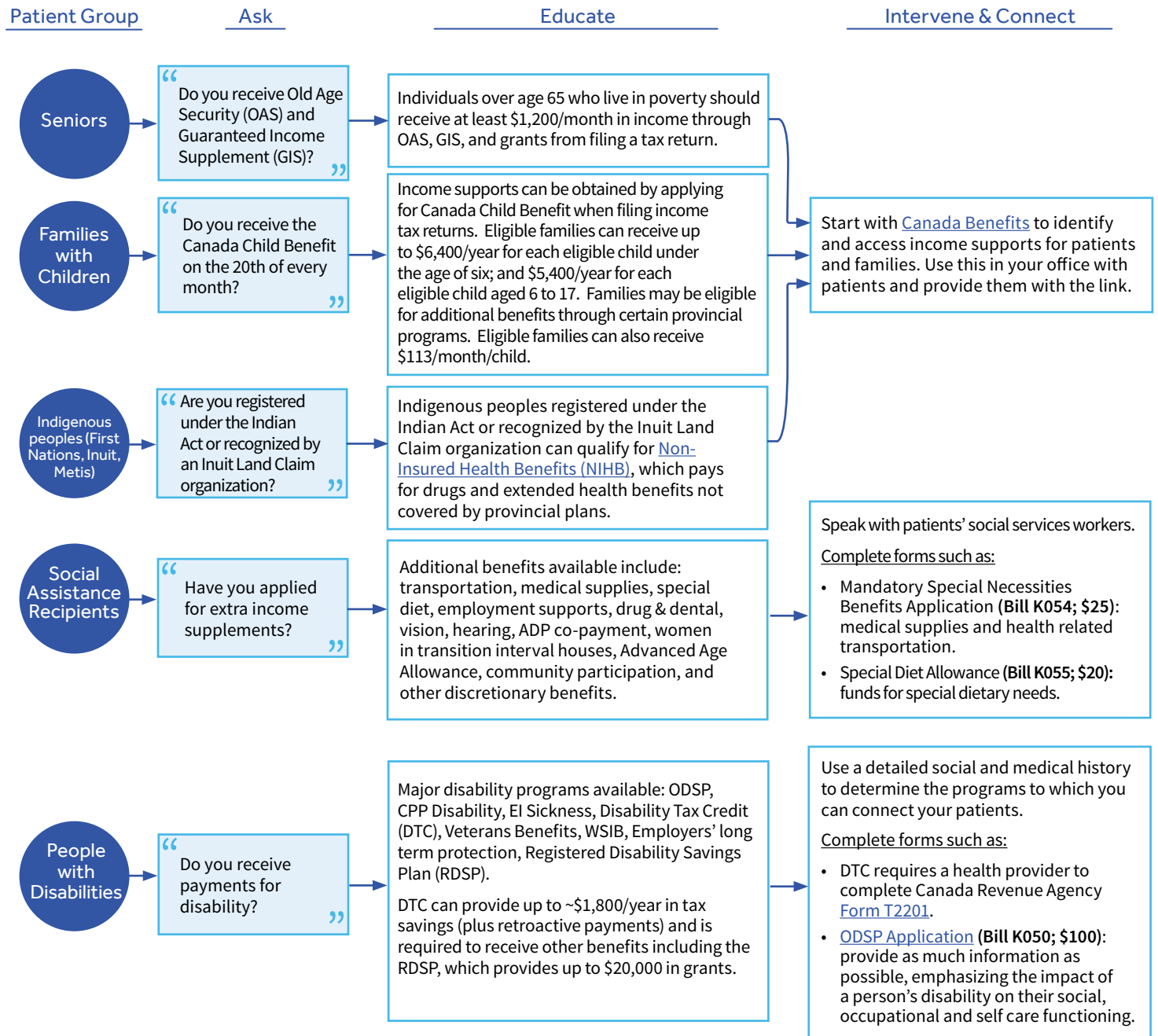
Intervene & Connect



Intervene by connecting your patients and their families to benefits, resources, and services.

more interventions on reverse

Intervening can have a profound impact on your patients' health



For further training on interventions to address poverty, enroll in the [OCFP Treating Poverty Workshop](#).

Key Resources

<p>Canada Benefits (www.canadabenefits.gc.ca)</p> <p>Provides a full listing of federal and provincial income and other supports, organized by personal status (e.g., “parent,” “Indigenous peoples”) or life situation (e.g., “unemployment,” “health concerns”), with links to the relevant program websites and to application forms.</p>	<p>2-1-1 (www.211ontario.ca)</p> <p>Call 2-1-1 or browse the website to find community support and advocacy organizations, based on topic and location.</p>	<p>Your Legal Rights (www.yourlegalrights.on.ca)</p> <p>Well-organized easy-to-find legal information. If your patients are denied any of the above benefits, consider referral to nearest legal clinic - acceptance rates on appeal can be high.</p>
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Remember: As health providers, it is our responsibility to provide complete and detailed information that accurately portrays our patients' health status and disability.
It is **NOT** our role to serve as the gatekeepers for income security.

Supporting Material*

- [i] Free Community Tax Clinics: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/vlntr/clncs/on-eng.html
- [ii] DrugCoverage.ca: www.drugcoverage.ca
- [iii] Canada Benefits: www.canadabenefits.gc.ca
- [iv] 2-1-1 Ontario: www.211ontario.ca
- [v] Non Insured Health Benefits for First Nations and Inuit: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/nihb-ssna/index-eng.php
- [vi] OCFP Poverty Workshop: <http://ocfp.on.ca/cpd/povertytool>
- [vii] Form T2201: www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pbg/tf/t2201/README.html
- [viii] ODSP Application: www.cleo.on.ca/en/publications/ods-prof
- [ix] Additional advocacy resources: Health Providers Against Poverty: www.healthprovidersagainstopoverty.ca
- [x] To see who is an eligible Non-Insured Health Benefits Client: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/fniah-spnia/nihb-ssna/benefit-prestatiion/index-eng.php
- [xi] Canada Child Benefit - about the program: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tg/t4114/t4114-e.html>
- [xii] Canada Child Benefit - how to calculate your CCB: <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/bnfts/ccb/clctyrccb-eng.html>

*These supporting materials are hosted by external organizations, and as such the accuracy and accessibility of their links are not guaranteed. CEP will make every effort to keep these links up to date.

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This Tool was developed as part of the Knowledge Translation in Primary Care Initiative which is led by CEP with collaboration from Ontario College of Family Physicians and Nurse Practitioners' Association of Ontario. Clinical leadership for the development of this tool was provided by Dr. Gary Bloch MD CCFP and was subject to external review by primary care providers and other relevant stakeholders. This Tool was funded by the Government of Ontario as part of the Knowledge Translation in Primary Care Initiative.

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Family & Community Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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