



MEDIA Release

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CA Study Shows Manitoba is Improving as a Place to Live **Challenges exist, despite gains over the past decade**

WINNIPEG – A new study by the Chartered Accountants of Manitoba shows that quality of life has improved in the province over the past decade. The *MB Check-Up, Edition 2002* assesses the province in the five areas of income, health, education, poverty, and safety.

“Manitoba has taken great strides in improving as a place to live,” said Gary Hannaford, chief executive officer of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba. “However, there still remains a significant amount of work to be done.”

Real personal income increased by 3.1 per cent in Manitoba between 1992 and 2001 while the national average increased by 6.4 per cent.

The *MB Check-Up* also shows that the number of physicians per capita, a key indicator in Canada when assessing the quality of health care, has increased, bringing the average up to 182 doctors per 100,000 people.

“We started out toward the bottom of the pack in 1992, but by 2001 we were in second place. However, rural and northern Manitoba still have difficulty recruiting and training physicians and in fact only 25 per cent of physicians in the province practice outside of Winnipeg,” Hannaford said.

Hannaford notes that provincial government’s expenditures on health care on a per capita basis were second only to British Columbia and that expenditures on health care in 2001 represented 39 per cent of the provincial government budget.

The study also shows that Manitoba has the highest number of nurses per capita and the province expects the number of nursing graduates to at least double this year.

“I expect that the recent wage settlement will also aid in attracting and retaining nurses in the province,” Hannaford said.

Full-time post-secondary enrolment among 18 – 24 year olds has increased by 11.7 per cent between 1992 and 2001, coupled with a decline in the size of the 18-24 age group.

“High education levels are proven to be powerful contributors to a country’s standard of living and its opportunity for growth,” Hannaford said, “and these findings suggest more support for post-secondary education in Manitoba over the past decade. For example, the building of the Red River College downtown campus.”

Throughout the 1990s Manitoba consistently had one of the highest percentages of families living in poverty, however the province saw the largest annual decline in poverty between 1998 and 1999 (1.3 per cent) as well as an overall reduction of 2.6 per cent between 1992 and 1999.

“Definitely one of the contributing factors to our improvement in poverty levels is Manitoba’s low and stable housing prices. The *MB Check-Up* shows that while every other



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region has seen an increase we are the only province whose housing prices have actually decreased over the past ten years,” Hannaford said.

One of the factors considered when assessing safety is the property and violent crime rate and the *MB Check-Up* shows a 10 per cent decrease since 1992.

“There has been a decrease in the overall crime rate,” Hannaford said, “Although when you separate the property crime rate from the violent crime rate, what you actually see is a decrease in property crimes contrasted with an increase in violent crimes in the province. Overall, crimes have decreased, but the statistics mask an increase in the violent crime rate.”

“In absolute terms, we still lag behind the other provinces in some areas, but we have seen steady improvement in most areas in the past decade,” Hannaford said. “As long as we continue to see the positive trends shown in *Check-Up* we will remain competitive as a place to live.”

Today’s release of the study of Manitoba as a place to live is the second of three studies on the province. Next week, the CAs will release their assessment of Manitoba as a place to work. The report is available on the Internet at www.cacheckup.com.

The 2,700 CAs and over 200 CA students in Manitoba provide expert advice to a variety of small and large businesses; are key members of management teams; or consult to private industry and the private sector. As members of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba, they adhere to a strictly enforced code of conduct and ongoing professional development.

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