



# Annual Food-Service Spending in Canadian Health Care: Updating the 2012 Sector Estimate to 2026 Dollars

Methodology Memo  
July 17, 2026

This memo clarifies the present day value of health care food service spending, which has been cited as approximately \$4B by Nourish, the McConnell Foundation, and partners for over a decade. The memo refers to the original known source, calculates for inflation, and provides recommended wording.

| Memo field                   | Detail                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Purpose                      | Document the evidence and calculation supporting Nourish's estimate of Canadian healthcare foodservice purchasing power. |
| Prepared for                 | Nourish Leadership; funders, partners, hospitals, and researchers requesting substantiation.                             |
| As of                        | July 2026                                                                                                                |
| Recommended working estimate | Approximately \$5 billion annually across Canadian healthcare institutions.                                              |

## Conclusion

### Recommended statement

Canadian healthcare institutions, including hospitals, long-term care and retirement facilities, command approximately \$5 billion in annual foodservice purchasing power.

The estimate begins with 2010 national institutional foodservice data from fsSTRATEGY, reproduced by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Health care represented 52% of a \$6.6-billion institutional foodservice market, or \$3.432 billion. Adjusting that amount for inflation produces a current planning estimate of approximately \$5 billion.

## 1. Source and original calculation

The 2011 Canadian Institutional Foodservice Market Report by fsSTRATEGY used 2010 market data. Its principal findings are reproduced in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's An Overview of the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food System 2011.

| Original finding                                | 2010 value          | Calculation or interpretation                               |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Total Canadian institutional foodservice market | \$6.6 billion       | Includes health care and other institutional sectors.       |
| Health care share of institutional foodservice  | 52%                 | Health care share of the total market.                      |
| Implied healthcare foodservice market           | \$3.432 billion     | $\$6.6 \text{ billion} \times 52\%$ .                       |
| Scope of health care                            | Not hospitals alone | Hospitals, long-term care facilities, and retirement homes. |

The calculation is  $\$6.6 \text{ billion} \times 52\% = \$3.432 \text{ billion}$  in healthcare institutional foodservice activity in 2010.

## 2. Inflation Calculation

The estimate uses Statistics Canada's all-items Consumer Price Index because total foodservice activity includes labour, operations and supplies as well as food ingredients.

| Input                                     | Value                        | Source or formula                                |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| 2010 annual all-items CPI                 | 116.5                        | Statistics Canada, 2002=100                      |
| 2025 annual all-items CPI                 | 164.2                        | Statistics Canada, 2002=100                      |
| Cumulative price change, 2010–2025        | 40.9%                        | $164.2 \div 116.5 - 1$                           |
| 2010 health care estimate in 2025 dollars | \$4.84 billion               | $\$3.432\text{B} \times 164.2 \div 116.5$        |
| 2026 working estimate                     | Approximately \$4.95 billion | \$4.84B increased by approximately 2.3% for 2026 |

The calculation produces approximately \$4.84 billion in 2025 dollars and approximately \$4.95 billion for 2026 planning. Because both the original market estimate and the inflation adjustment are approximate, Nourish rounds this to approximately \$5 billion.



### 3. Scope and Appropriate Use

- The estimate covers healthcare institutions, not hospitals alone.
- Health care includes hospitals, long-term care facilities, and retirement homes under the original source definition.
- Foodservice expenditure is broader than food or ingredient purchasing; it includes self-operated and contracted service activity.
- The 2010 amount is a national industry market estimate.
- The 2026 figure is an inflation-adjusted planning estimate; it is not a new census of institutional spending.
- Use approximately \$5 billion rather than presenting \$4.95 billion as a precise current total.
- Public wording should retain the institutional scope: hospitals, long-term care facilities, and retirement homes.

### 4. Recommended wording

#### Standard wording

##### Preferred

Canadian healthcare institutions, including hospitals, long-term care and retirement facilities, command approximately \$5 billion in annual foodservice purchasing power.

#### Longer evidence-based wording

Canadian healthcare institutions spent an estimated \$3.4 billion on foodservice in 2010, according to industry research reproduced by Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. Adjusted for inflation, this represents approximately \$5 billion annually today. The estimate includes hospitals, long-term care facilities, and retirement homes, and covers total foodservice rather than food ingredients alone.

#### Source note

Nourish estimate based on fsSTRATEGY Inc., 2011 Canadian Institutional Foodservice Market Report, as reproduced in Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, An Overview of the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food System 2011. Health care represented 52% of Canada's estimated \$6.6-billion institutional foodservice market in 2010, or approximately \$3.43 billion. Adjusted to 2026 dollars using Statistics Canada's Consumer Price Index. Health care includes hospitals, long-term care facilities, and retirement homes.



## Sources

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, An Overview of the Canadian Agriculture and Agri-Food System 2011, institutional foodservice discussion and Chart C2.12, pp. 78–79.  
[https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2012/agr/A38-1-1-2011-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2012/agr/A38-1-1-2011-eng.pdf)
- fsSTRATEGY Inc., 2011 Canadian Institutional Foodservice Market Report. Underlying industry report cited by AAFC; proprietary publication.
- Statistics Canada, Table 18-10-0005-01, Consumer Price Index, annual average, not seasonally adjusted. <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1810000501>
- Statistics Canada, Consumer Price Index Portal; 2025 annual CPI of 164.2.  
[https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/prices\\_and\\_price\\_indexes/consumer\\_price\\_index](https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/subjects-start/prices_and_price_indexes/consumer_price_index)  
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