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***Celebrating the 40th anniversary of
the Canadian Hispanic Congress***

The Origin and Evolution of New Year's Resolutions

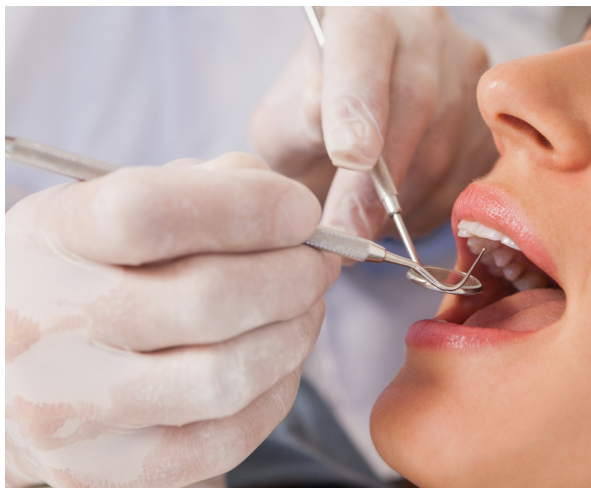
New Year's resolutions trace their roots back to ancient traditions such as Babylonian celebrations and the Janus festival in ancient Rome. These practices aimed to secure the gods' blessings and symbolized new beginnings. In religious contexts, Christianity and Judaism also influenced the adoption of resolutions as a means of repentance and personal improvement.

Over the centuries, the practice has secularized and diversified. In the 19th century, resolutions took on a more personal and pragmatic focus, distancing themselves from religious origins. In the 20th century, the popularity of resolutions solidified, addressing areas such as health and personal relationships.

Today, New Year's resolutions are a global tradition. People seize this moment to reflect on their lives, set goals, and commit to continuous personal growth. In summary, this ancient practice has evolved over time, becoming a universally recognized way to start the year with hope and determination.



Canada Unveils Groundbreaking Dental Care Plan for Millions



The Government of Canada has introduced the Canadian Dental Care Plan (CDCP), aiming to break down financial barriers and provide affordable oral health care for millions of Canadians. With a budgetary commitment of \$13 billion over five years, the CDCP is set to benefit up to nine million uninsured residents with a family income below \$90,000.

Acknowledging that oral health is integral to overall well-being, the government's phased rollout begins in December 2023, starting with seniors aged 87 and above. The plan encompasses coverage for a spectrum of oral health services, including preventive care, examinations, fillings, removable dentures, and root canal treatments.



To qualify, applicants must have an adjusted family net income below \$90,000, no access to dental insurance, be Canadian residents for tax purposes, and have filed their tax return in the previous year. The CDCP doesn't replace existing dental benefits but aims to fill critical coverage gaps for those currently without insurance.



With Sun Life as the contracted service provider, the CDCP ensures a dynamic approach, subject to regular reviews based on data and evidence. This guarantees its adaptability to meet the evolving needs of Canadians. The government's commitment to making essential dental care more accessible reflects a transformative initiative that could significantly impact the well-being of millions across the country.

Milestone \$8 Billion Settlement and Legislation for Clean Water in First Nations



Canada has reached an unprecedented \$8 billion settlement in response to class action lawsuits filed by First Nations grappling with long-standing drinking water advisories. Pending court approval, the settlement aims to compensate 142,000 individuals and 120 First Nations, reflecting a commitment to modernize First Nations drinking water legislation.

Simultaneously, the government introduced Bill C-61, the First Nations Clean Water Act, replacing the 2013 Safe Drinking Water for First Nations Act. The proposed legislation, a result of extensive consultation, recognizes First Nations' self-government rights over water-related matters. It establishes regulatory pathways, closes funding gaps, and upholds minimum national standards for water services, emphasizing the principle of free, prior, and informed consent.

This dual initiative marks a historic stride toward rectifying past injustices, ensuring sustainable funding, and empowering First Nations to control their water resources, promising a cleaner and safer future for generations to come.

Balancing Affordability and Corporate Power: Bill C-56 Overview

In a recent speech to the Senate Committee, Chrystia Freeland, the Deputy Prime Minister highlighted the importance of Bill C-56, the Affordable Housing and Groceries Act, in the government's economic plan. The legislation, aiming to expedite home construction and enhance affordability, has already yielded positive outcomes, with a Toronto developer committing to build 5,000 new rental units.

Crucially, Bill C-56 also addresses corporate power, particularly through the removal of the "efficiency exception" from the Competition Act. In a separate article, Dr. DT Cochrane, Senior Economist at the Canadian Labour Congress, stresses the need to counterbalance corporate influence. While the bill targets harmful mergers, Cochrane advocates for broader empowerment of institutions like unions and consumer rights groups.



In summary, Bill C-56 is a vital tool to tackle the affordability crisis and corporate dominance. The Deputy Prime Minister's call for Senate support aligns with Cochrane's emphasis on comprehensive measures for a balanced economic landscape.

Canada Launches Business Disability Network for Inclusive Workplaces



Canada celebrated the launch of the Canadian Business Disability Network on December 4, 2023, in a move to advance the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the workforce. The network, a result of the 2022 Disability Inclusion Action Plan, aims to empower member organizations, including EY Canada, Manulife Canada, TELUS Health, and IBM Canada, to adopt disability-inclusive best practices.



Minister Kamal Khera praised the initiative, emphasizing its importance in building accessible businesses. Founding members expressed commitment to fostering inclusive work environments, highlighting the positive impact on employees and customers.

The collaboration between the network and the disability community promises innovative programs and services to enhance workplace accessibility. As Canada takes strides toward a more inclusive workforce, the launch of this network marks a pivotal moment in the journey toward a fully accessible and integrated nation.

Canada's Child Care Breakthrough: Making Quality Care Affordable

The Government of Canada is swiftly progressing towards a nationwide early learning and childcare system. Announced in Budget 2021 with a hefty \$27 billion investment over five years, the initiative has resulted in historic agreements with all provinces and territories.

Already, six regions offer regulated child care for an average of \$10 a day or less, and others have slashed fees by at least 50%. The ultimate goal is for all jurisdictions to hit the \$10-a-day target by March 2026.

This measure recognizes the pivotal role of educators, the government is collaborating with provinces and territories to ensure a well-supported workforce. This commitment extends to the recruitment, retention, and recognition of early childhood educators.

The impact goes beyond financial relief, contributing to a stronger economy and promoting gender equality by facilitating greater workforce participation for mothers. Nearly half of all regions have achieved \$10-a-day or lower child care costs, aligning with the government's commitment to building an inclusive, community-based child care system.

In a bid for transparency, the government has launched the Early Learning and Child Care Information Hub, an interactive tool providing information on quality care, accessibility, affordability, flexibility, and inclusivity. This hub serves as a valuable resource, reflecting the government's dedication to making child care accessible and affordable for all Canadian families.



Message from the president

Dear friend of the Canadian Hispanic Congress,

On the threshold of a new year, I would like to take a moment to express my gratitude for your support and patronage of CHC. We wish you and your loved ones a year of good health, joy, and prosperity.

Reflecting on the journey we have collectively undertaken over the past year, and the many challenges we have overcome; I feel that our current situation is a testament to our resilience as a group, our ability to adapt and the unwavering spirit that defines us. I am grateful for the opportunity to lead this organization into the future, guided by the optimism, courage and enthusiasm that characterize the work of the Canadian Hispanic Congress.

As we move into 2024, we welcome the possibilities of a new year: new opportunities, untapped potential, and the chance to positively impact our lives and the lives of those around us.

In the coming months, we will focus on reconfirming our priorities and concentrating on the goals that are essential elements of our vision. As an organization, we will continue to focus on our strengths by prioritising unity, collaboration and acting on inspired ideas.

We know that we serve a diverse community that thrives on diversity and inclusion, and that by appreciating and celebrating our differences, we enrich the tapestry of our shared experiences. We cherish both our differences and all that unites us, with open minds and open hearts.

As we welcome this year and the next 40 years of service to our community, our vision for the future is positive and hopeful. We approach the future with a growth mindset. We want to continue to learn, evolve and grow together as an organisation and as a community. Whether it is personal growth, professional development or community initiatives, we will continue to challenge ourselves to reach new heights as an organization.

It has been said that challenges are opportunities in disguise, and by facing them with courage and determination, we emerge stronger and more resilient than ever. Let hope be the guiding light as we face new challenges.

As we embark on this new year in our lives, let us set resolutions for the year ahead: goals that inspire us, dreams that drive us and a commitment to make everyday count. Together, we have the power to create a year filled with achievement, joy, and shared victories.

May 2024 be a year of positive outcomes, growth, and fulfilment for each and every one of us! Here's to embracing the journey, continuing to celebrate one another, and supporting each other as a community, every step of the way.

From all of us at the CHC, we wish you and your loved ones a Happy New Year 2024.

Monique Forster, President
Canadian Hispanic Congress



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Edited by: Camila García Quiros and Monique Forster.



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