

HEALTH INDUSTRIES

- ▶ 2000 output of over \$10 billion
- ▶ Exports of over \$3 billion
- ▶ 1,300 firms
- ▶ 43,600 jobs

The global market for health products and services is enormous – estimated at more than \$2 trillion dollars annually. Population aging, urbanization, environmental impacts on health, the emergence of virulent and drug-resistant diseases, growing emphasis on preventive medicine, health education and self-managed health regimes, technological change affecting the research, development and delivery of health products, and cost containment efforts in industrialized countries are all influencing world demand for health products and services.

Canada's health industries export more than \$3 billion in pharmaceutical and medical device products each year. The sector's exports have been growing at a rate in excess of 20% each year, largely because Canadian companies bring unique comparative advantages and competitive values to the international marketplace.

Indeed, Canadian suppliers are well positioned to capture a growing share of world health markets. Canada has already established world leadership in a number of



medical devices areas including nuclear medicine and heart monitors. As well, Canadian telehealth companies offer world-class expertise in medical imaging, home telecare, distance medicine, telecardiology, continuing medical education and consumer health information systems.

Greater investment in the development of new products and services will be necessary to further build the sector's export potential. Also key to growth will be the harmonization of world regulatory systems for health products and health services professional certifications. Promotion of Canadian health companies as global "health keepers" who offer knowledge-based solutions to the health challenges of the 21st century will also be critically important to realizing the sector's full global potential.

*Ontario-based **Northern Digital Inc.** (NDI) lays claim to being the world's leading manufacturer of optical three-dimensional measurement products. Over the past 20 years, NDI has penetrated markets in 20 countries. NDI solutions are being used in many fields, from medical and industrial, to entertainment and human performance measurement. In medical image-guided surgery, special markers can be attached to a surgeon's instruments. Plotted against recorded imagery, the NDI systems help guide the surgeon in critical work. The movie and entertainment industry also uses NDI systems for replicating motion and actions in computer-generated sequences and video games. NDI's primary markets are the U.S. and Europe.*