

For immediate release

Canada's health research enterprise welcomes federal support

May 15, 2020 (Ottawa) — Health researchers from across Canada today welcomed news that the federal government will provide urgently-needed financial support for personnel working in health research institutions shuttered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Today’s federal commitment recognizes the importance of protecting Canada’s research enterprise and we thank the government for help to get researchers to work so that they can continue their efforts and use the results of their research as quickly as possible to benefit Canadians,” said Paul-Émile Cloutier, President & CEO of HealthCareCAN, the national voice of hospitals and research institutions in Canada. “Canada’s health research community is struggling right now – just as so many other Canadians are – because COVID-19 has effectively shut down all research not related to the virus.”

COVID-19 has exposed the precariousness of health research in Canada and HealthCareCAN is eager to continue working with the federal government to ensure that Canada’s research sector can contribute to improved health outcomes and advances in treating disease.

“As a nation we must understand that health research is fundamental to life in a society and the key driver for progress, innovation and the economy,” added Mr. Cloutier. “Health research cannot function with a ‘wait and see’ approach because any break in the work of researchers can have serious impact on the health of Canadians.”

The federal support announced today recognizes the importance of Canadian healthcare-based research as a \$3 billion annual sector of our economy, employing over 50,000 highly skilled researchers and other staff across the country. Health research is one of our great national achievements and biomedical research conducted in Canada is at the forefront of current essential research and clinical trials around COVID-19. By their actions today, the federal government has recognized the importance of our sector.

“We are extremely thankful to the federal government for providing financial support to sustain Canada’s hospital-based biomedical researchers through this period where this critical research has been interrupted,” said Dr. Bradly Wouters, Executive Vice President of Science and Research at University Health Network in Toronto. “Canada’s health researchers are global leaders in driving improvements in disease prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care. This support will help ensure these researchers will be able to contribute to COVID-19 research and to rapidly resume progress against the entire spectrum of health and disease including cancer, Alzheimer’s disease, heart disease and infectious diseases.”

“Tackling the COVID-19 crisis in Canada has required an all-hands on deck approach and Canada’s health researchers have answered the call by suspending all other crucial hospital-based research to meet the challenge,” added Dr. David Hill, Scientific Director of the Lawson Health Research Institute in London, ON. “With this federal support we can now work to ensure that we can maintain other critically needed research on other diseases even as we pursue what promises to be a lengthy battle against COVID-19.”

“This funding support will significantly help Canada to remain competitive with other academic health science research centres globally,” said Dr. Bruce Mazer, Interim Executive Director at the Research Institute of the McGill University Health Centre. “Canada can and will remain a leading force in health research.”

HealthCareCAN is the national voice of healthcare organizations and hospitals across Canada. We foster informed and continuous, results-oriented discovery and innovation across the continuum of healthcare.

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