



November 9, 2021

Minister of Health
70 Columbine Driveway
Ottawa, Ontario
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Submitted via email: hcminister.ministresc@canada.ca

Dear Honourable Jean-Yves Duclos,

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Canada's Minister of Health. We look forward to working collaboratively with you to improve the health of all Canadians.

The [Canadian Antimicrobial Innovation Coalition \(CAIC\)](#) is a member-based non-profit organization comprised of life science companies and organizations with a commitment to mitigate the rise in antimicrobial resistance (AMR) through biomedical innovation.

AMR represents a serious threat to the health of Canadians and the functioning of our health systems. Wide and inappropriate use of antibiotics, or overprescribing, has resulted in some bacteria developing resistance to commonly used antibiotic drugs, making existing therapies less and less effective. The microorganisms that produce antimicrobial resistance are sometimes referred to as "superbugs".

While COVID-19 numbers are trending downwards and progress on vaccines continues, AMR is picking up steam every day. Regrettably, the accumulating evidence is that the COVID-19 outbreak may accelerate the pace of antimicrobial resistance.

A recent study by the U.S. Pew Charitable Trusts found in the first six months of the pandemic, 52% of COVID-19 hospital admissions led to one or more antibiotics being given to patients, while only 20% of those admitted with the virus were diagnosed with common bacterial infections.¹

According to the Council of Canadian Academies, under an analysis performed prior to the COVID outbreak, approximately 26% of infections were resistant to the drugs generally used to treat them in 2018. This number is expected to increase to 40% by 2050, translating into a cumulative cost to Canada of 396,000 lives, \$120 billion in hospital costs and \$388 billion in GDP.²

AMR is a bigger problem than most people realize. Without effective antimicrobials, antibacterial, diagnostics, vaccines, antibiotic alternatives for prevention and treatment of infections, routine medical procedures such as organ transplant, cancer chemotherapy or conditions as simple as a throat infection will become life-threatening and increasingly high risk. We have now seen that emergency care procedures are compromised in their effectiveness by AMR and are likely increasing the AMR risk to the overall population.

¹ Pew Charitable Trusts, *Could Efforts to Fight the Coronavirus Lead to Overuse of Antibiotics?* https://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/assets/2021/03/could_efforts_to_fight_coronavirus_lead_to_overuse_of_antibiotics_final.pdf

² Council of Canadian Academies, *When Antibiotics Fail* <https://cca-reports.ca/reports/the-potential-socio-economic-impacts-of-antimicrobial-resistance-in-canada/>

Globally, we have seen increased awareness and activities to address the threat of AMR and encourage the Government of Canada not only to participate but identify ways for us to lead in the fight against AMR. Following the most recent G7 Summit in June 2021, we were pleased to see Canada join fellow G7 nations with a number of commitments on AMR, including: to invest in our health systems and domestic preparedness to foster resilient populations with the inclusion of AMR³; to work with Finance, Environment and Foreign and Development Ministers to deliver on the commitment to find an integrated and system-based approach to tackle AMR⁴; and to work with Canada's Minister of Finance to deliver on the commitment to identify an appropriate incentive model for AMR in Canada.⁵ Additionally, we support the creation of the Joint Finance-Health Task Force at the 2021 G20 Summit to advance pandemic, prevention, preparedness and response, as well as to prepare the way for stronger post-pandemic recovery, in line with the comprehensive One Health approach.⁶

In May 2015, the World Health Assembly endorsed a Global Action Plan to tackle antimicrobial resistance and urged all Member States to develop their own national action plans on antimicrobial resistance that are aligned with the objectives of the Global Action Plan.⁷ The government's Pan-Canadian Framework for Action on AMR, released in 2017, has set us down the right path in solving this complex public health problem.

The Pan-Canadian Action Plan is crucial to drive new programs and funding in infection prevention and control, stewardship, surveillance, research, and innovation to address the rising rate of resistance in Canada. The COVID-19 pandemic has created greater urgency around the release of a Pan-Canadian Action Plan, to ensure Canada's public health system is ready to address rates of antimicrobial resistance that are expected to accelerate in the COVID and post-COVID environment.

We have identified and shared with the Government several implementable policies and other government measures to encourage and expedite end-to-end biomedical-AMR innovation in Canada that will benefit Canadians and carry impact on the global stage. We look forward to continuing to be a resource to the Government of Canada to address AMR, both domestically and globally, and welcome the opportunity to brief you and your team as you set out to deliver on your new mandate.

Sincerely,

The Canadian Antimicrobial Innovation Coalition

³ "Global health and pandemic preparedness, as well as resilience to other health threats like antimicrobial resistance and climate change, rests on strong health systems and institutions that are responsive to the needs of the populations they serve." -Government of Canada, *G7 Carbis Bay Health Declaration*. https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/g7/documents/2021-06-13-health-declaration-sante.aspx?lang=eng

⁴ "Building on past G7 and G20 commitments, we call on our Health, Finance, Environment and Foreign and Development Ministers to continue to take action to tackle antimicrobial resistance." https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/international_relations-relations_internationales/g7/documents/2021-06-13-health-declaration-sante.aspx?lang=eng

⁵ "We will work together with our health colleagues in the second half of this year, including with industry, to explore proposals for strengthening market incentives for antibiotic drug development to help tackle antimicrobial resistance – the "silent pandemic." We must act now to secure the health and economic prosperity of our citizens and that of future generations." Government of Canada, *G7 Finance Ministers & Central Bank Governors Communiqué*. <https://www.canada.ca/en/department-finance/programs/international-trade-finance-policy/g7-finance-ministers-central-bank-governors-communique.html>

⁶ Italian G20 Presidency, *Joint G20 Finance and Health Ministers meeting Communiqué*. <https://www.g20.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/G20-Joint-Finance-and-Health-Ministers-Communiqué-29-October-2021.pdf>

⁷ World Health Organization, *Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance* <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241509763>

The Canadian Antimicrobial Innovation Coalition (CAIC) is composed of Canada's key players in biomedical innovation, biopharmaceutical, diagnostic, and research industries. CAIC's mandate is to help protect Canadians from the rise in antimicrobial resistance (AMR), by positioning Canada to be a leader in AMR research and product development, economic growth, and investment.

CAIC Membership:

Adapsyn	Merck Canada Inc.
BD Canada	Microbion Corporation
bioMérieux Canada inc.	Nobelex Biotech INC.
Bright Angel Therapeutics	Red Leaf Medical
DeNovaMed Inc	Roche
Fedora Pharmaceuticals	SaNotize Inc.
GSK Inc.	SterileCare

Innovative Medicines Canada (IMC)

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