



SUBMISSION TO HOUSE OF COMMONS STANDING COMMITTEE ON HEALTH (HESA)

BRIEFING ON THE CANADIAN RESPONSE TO THE OUTBREAK OF THE CORONAVIRUS

SUBMITTED BY INNOVATIVE MEDICINES CANADA

Innovative Medicines Canada would welcome the opportunity to brief the House of Commons Standing Committee on Health (HESA) on the contribution of the innovative pharmaceutical industry to the fight against COVID-19, and on the challenges ahead for industry.

ABOUT INNOVATIVE MEDICINES CANADA

Innovative Medicines Canada represents Canada's innovative pharmaceutical industry. We help our members discover, develop, and deliver innovative medicines and vaccines.

Our membership consists of 40 companies, from established organizations to startups, all of whom are revolutionizing healthcare through the discovery and development of new medicines and vaccines.

Guided by a strict Code of Ethical Practices, we work with governments, insurance companies, healthcare professionals, patient groups and other stakeholders to advance the field and enhance the wellbeing of Canadians. We are committed to being valued partners in Canada's healthcare system.

We work to achieve these goals by forming effective alliances, supporting policies that encourage innovation, advocating for improvements to Canada's regulatory environment, widening access to innovative medicines, and ensuring the effective protection of intellectual property.

We believe that Canadians should have access to the innovative treatments they need and that our activities are fundamental to safeguarding our healthcare systems for future generations. Our work allows our members to focus on what matters: delivering better healthcare to Canadians.



BACKGROUND

An unprecedented public health crisis demands an unprecedented global response.

That is why, in the short time since COVID-19 emerged, the biopharmaceutical industry is collaborating like never before, with governments, researchers, as well as with the private and philanthropic sectors to discover, develop and deliver medicines to treat those infected by the virus, and vaccines to stop its spread.

As a founding partner of the World Health Organization's ACT (Accessing COVID-19 Tools) accelerator initiative, our international body IFPMA (International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations) has committed our industry to working with governments and partners to make treatments available and affordable for the patients that need them – wherever and whoever they may be. Working through the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator, 15 of IMC's member companies have opened up their libraries of molecular compounds for study by the global scientific community. In just two weeks, Roche Canada received over 800 high-quality submissions from Canada's scientific community through its COVID-19 Innovation Challenge, a funding program to bring forward innovative ideas to address the pandemic.

Major global corporations such as Sanofi and GSK are joining forces to develop a vaccine, leveraging their respective scientific and technological expertise. Others, such as Janssen and Boehringer Ingelheim, have forged landmark partnerships with governments in the US and Germany to discover and develop new treatments and vaccines.

Here at home, Quebec's Medicago is rapidly moving forward on clinical trials to assess the safety and efficacy of their vaccine candidate and scaling up production. In Atlantic Canada, BioVectra is manufacturing critical raw materials for COVID-19 diagnostic testing kits and collaborating with multiple Canadian biopharmaceutical companies and academia on COVID-19 therapeutic products. And in British Columbia, AbCellera is partnering with Eli Lilly to co-develop antibody products for the treatment and prevention of COVID-19.

Collaborations like these are critical in responding to a challenge like COVID-19, and progress is being made. There are currently more than 280 clinical trials for potential treatments and vaccines underway in Canada and around the world.

The biopharmaceutical industry is contributing in other ways too. For instance, we continue to support patients and communities by enhancing patient support programs to ensure they have access to critical medicines in this time of need. IMC member companies are also enabling employees who are trained healthcare professionals to take paid leave from their jobs and go back into Canada's hospitals and clinics to fight the pandemic on the front lines.

We look forward to the opportunity to appear before the HESA Committee and provide its members with more details on the specific contributions that Canada's biopharmaceutical industry is making to the fight against COVID-19, and to answer members' questions.



POTENTIAL CHALLENGES AHEAD FOR CANADA'S BIOPHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

While the industry remains focused on the current crisis, our members - and the patients on whose behalf they are concentrating their efforts - cannot afford distractions from the vital work they are doing to discover tests, treatments, and vaccines. Unfortunately, the looming July 01, 2020 deadline for the implementation of amendments to the *Patented Medicines Regulations* is just such a distraction. That is why we have requested that the Government delay their implementation until January 01, 2021, as has occurred in other industries during this unprecedented time. Furthermore, it is the industry's position that implementing these amendments will discourage future investments in research, infrastructures, and potentially delay the launch of new therapies in our country, post COVID-19. We would be pleased to explain our concerns to the members of the HESA Committee.

We also urge Parliamentarians to consider the role and value of a strong life-sciences sector in Canada and to take a whole-of-government approach to building the sector, and to work with provinces and territories, industry and academia to implement the [HBEST](#) report as a foundation for rebuilding our economy post COVID-19.