



Friday, March 20, 2020

The Hon. Patty Hajdu, P.C., M.P.  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON  
K1A 0A6

Dr. Theresa Tam  
Chief Public Health Officer  
Public Health Agency of Canada  
785 Carline Avenue, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

**Re: Offer to assist the federal COVID-19 reponse from HEAL /  
Survey to assess healthcare professionals ' immediate challenges and needs**

Dear Minister Hajdu and Dr. Tam,

We would like to take this opportunity to commend the federal government on its well-coordinated response regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, including its robust COVID-19 Economic Response Plan announced on March 18th.

As a coalition of 40 national health organizations which collectively represents well over **650,000 healthcare providers**, we are writing to offer our help with the federal response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our member associations include those representing regulated health care providers working within the public sector, those working in communities and in the private sector, as well as organizations that deliver health care services to Canadians. We are an effective and essential conduit to Canada's regulated health care providers. A complete list of our members is attached to this letter for your reference.

Our national member associations are already reporting to us the ripple effects that COVID-19 are having on their members as the healthcare professionals of all types across Canada. Here are just a few examples:

- Confusion due to siloed provincial and territorial government approaches to the crisis;
- The emerging scarcity of various resources, including protective gear, equipment (such

as ventilators) and healthcare workers;

- The impact of clinic closures on both patients and providers (including financial duress) as well as limited attention to populations already vulnerable due to social and economic exclusion;
- The concerns of front-line healthcare workers overexposing their families to COVID-19 after having worked on the front lines;
- Healthcare students no longer being able to find placements to complete their programs, having their classes cancelled and sometimes seeing their confirmatory and entry-into-practice exams postponed, and thus creating the conditions for a delay of much needed new professionals entering the sector, as well as an additional financial burden on these students;
- The need for expediting the training of healthcare professionals who will feel better prepared to carry out instructions or directives regarding the treatment of a patient;
- The roadblocks to virtual care delivery, delaying much needed access to services (including technology requirements, reimbursement and health profession regulatory issues); and
- The reliance on professional associations like ours to play critical roles in supporting Canada's healthcare resources through accreditation of training, delivering continuing professional development and supporting knowledge growth and translation. COVID-19 will impact all of the in-person activities through which some of this support is provided to health professionals (such as cancellation of conferences and continuing professional development events).

In order to have a clearer picture of the impacts on the healthcare sector, and how we can work together to ensure proper measures are taken to keep Canadian healthcare workers as safe as possible, **HEAL is launching a COVID-19 impact survey to members** this week. We believe this data could be useful as you decide by which means to deploy additional resources, as well as how and where to allocate emergency Coronavirus funding.

Moreover, **HEAL is creating a special COVID-19 Response Task Force** to ensure that the health providers it collectively represents are well informed and equipped to effectively respond to the pandemic, and that communications between government and providers flows quickly and accurately as this crisis unfolds. Please consider this task force to be at your service.

On the morning of Tuesday, March 24, HEAL will be holding its quarterly meeting virtually, which will focus uniquely on COVID-19. We are grateful to have received confirmation that a senior PHAC representative will also be attending virtually to share updates from your office. This will be an important opportunity to engage with our members, and to communicate any

vital information to our thousands of frontline healthcare workers.

Catherine Fortin LeFaivre will be following up with your respective offices next week on the matters proposed in this letter. She can also be reached at 613-979-8683 or by email at [CFL@impactcanada.com](mailto:CFL@impactcanada.com).

**Finally, recognizing that all governments levels are being asked to act very quickly during these unprecedented times, we do believe that the federal government must continue to play a strong leadership role.**

**We are therefore urging the federal government and its agencies to engage with HEAL and its members immediately in order to respond effectively to this global crisis. Our collective healthcare expertise and networks are at your immediate disposal.**

Sincerely,



Hélène Sabourin  
HEAL Co-Chair



François Couillard  
HEAL Co-Chair

Cc:

The Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, P.C., M.P.

Kim Emmslie, Vice President, Infectious Disease Prevention and Control Branch, Public Health Agency of Canada

Bercabel Ephrem, Director General, Centre for Communicable Diseases and Infection Control, Public Health Agency of Canada



# HEAL MEMBERS

Alzheimer Society  
CANADA

CANADIAN COLLEGE OF HEALTH LEADERS  
COLLÈGE CANADIEN DES LEADERS EN SANTÉ

CPMA  
Canadian Podiatric Medical Association / L'association médicale podiatrice canadienne

AFMC  
THE ASSOCIATION OF FACULTIES OF MEDICINE OF CANADA  
L'ASSOCIATION DES FACULTÉS DE MÉDECINE DU CANADA

CANADIAN COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DE COUNSELING ET DE PSYCHOTÉRAPIE

Canadian Psychiatric Association  
Dedicated to quality care  
Association des psychiatres du Canada  
Dévouée aux soins de qualité

ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES CENTRES DE SANTÉ COMMUNAUTAIRE / CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES

CANADIAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION / SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DE PSYCHOLOGUE

CAIR  
Canadian Association for Interventional Radiology  
Association canadienne pour la radiologie d'intervention

CANADIAN DENTAL ASSOCIATION

CSMLS / SCSLM  
Canadian Society for Medical Laboratory Science  
Société canadienne de science de laboratoire médical

CAMRT / ACTRM

CDHA / ACHD  
THE CANADIAN DENTAL HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES

CSNM  
Canadian Society of Nutrition Management

CAMACSF  
Canadian Association of Midwives  
Association canadienne des sage-femmes

CMTA  
Canadian Massage Therapist Alliance / Alliance Canadienne de Massothérapeutes

CANADIAN SOCIETY OF RESPIRATORY THERAPISTS  
SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE DES THÉRAPEUTES RESPIRATOIRES

CANM / ACNM  
The Canadian Association of Nuclear Medicine  
Association canadienne de médecine nucléaire

ASSOCIATION MÉDICALE CANADIENNE / CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION

THE COLLEGE OF FAMILY PHYSICIANS OF CANADA / LE COLLÈGE DES MÉDECINS DE FAMILLE DU CANADA

CAOT - ACE  
Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists  
Association canadienne des ergothérapeutes

CANADIAN NURSES ASSOCIATION

Dietitians of Canada  
Les diététistes du Canada

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF OPTOMETRISTS  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES OPTICIENNES

Canadian Society Ophthalmological / canadienne Society d'ophtalmologie

HealthCareCAN / SoinsSantéCAN  
Leading. Innovation. Together.

CASW / ACTS  
Canadian Association of Social Workers / Association canadienne des travailleurs sociaux

Canadian Cardiovascular Society  
Leadership. Knowledge. Community.

Pallium Canada

Association chiropratique canadienne / Canadian Chiropractic Association



Paramedic Association of Canada / Association des Paramédics du Canada

CANADIAN PHARMACISTS ASSOCIATION / ASSOCIATION DES PHARMACIENS DU CANADA

ROYAL COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS OF CANADA / COLLÈGE ROYAL DES MÉDECINS ET CHIRURGIENS DU CANADA

Canadian Physiotherapy Association / Association canadienne de physiothérapie

SAC / OAC  
Speech-Language & Audiology Canada / Orthophonie et Audiologie Canada  
Communication | La communication est clé