

## **News Release**

For Immediate Release

### **Government of Canada announces major steps in treating and preventing COVID-19 through vaccines and therapies**

August 5/6 [TBC], 2020 – Ottawa, Ontario – Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

The Government of Canada is aggressively pursuing the purchase and development of COVID-19 vaccines, treatments, and related supplies to protect Canadians. This includes engaging with international and domestic scientists, and businesses and manufacturers stepping up to fight COVID-19. The Government of Canada is investing in projects that will position Canada at the forefront of the global race to find a treatment for COVID-19, while building domestic capabilities to fight future pandemics.

The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, and the Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of Public Services and Procurement, today announced several measures being taken by the Government of Canada to secure a future supply of COVID-19 vaccine.

Minister Bains unveiled the members of the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, which are advising the Government on how to best support vaccine research in Canada and help ensure Canadian leadership in vaccine development, related bio-manufacturing and international partnerships to secure access for Canadians to safe and effective products.

Task force members include vaccine and immunology experts, as well as industry leaders with a proven ability in developing and commercializing vaccines. The co-Chairs of the task force are Joanne Langley, Head of Infectious Diseases at the IWK Health Centre in Halifax and Professor in the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology at Dalhousie University, and J. Mark Lievonon, former President of Sanofi Pasteur Limited.

Since June, task force members have reviewed 40 vaccine and biomanufacturing applications from domestic candidates for which it has provided advice to the Ministers of Innovation, Science and Industry, and Health on the most promising options aimed at providing Canadians with safe, effective vaccines as soon as possible, as well as a robust manufacturing sector to increase our secure access to vaccine production. The task force has also provided scientific and technical advice to the government on a portfolio of leading international vaccine candidates, which are now under negotiations to secure necessary supply for Canadians of these candidates once sufficient evidence of safety, quality and effectiveness has been demonstrated and reviewed by Health Canada.

Minister Anand announced the Government of Canada has entered into two agreements with **XXX** and **ZZZ** to secure millions of doses of the **XXXX** and **ZZZZ** vaccine candidates. All potential vaccines will require Health Canada regulatory approval prior to being used to vaccinate Canadians.

In addition, following careful review and the recommendation of the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, Minister Bains announced an investment of up to \$56 million to support clinical trials for a COVID-related vaccine candidate from [Variation Biotechnologies Inc.](#) (VBI) through the Strategic Innovation Fund. VBI's project is in direct response to the global fight against COVID-19 and contributes to Canada's ability to secure an effective vaccine. This is the first investment to be funded from the Government's \$600 million to support COVID-19 related vaccine and therapy clinical trials led by the private sector, and Canadian bio-manufacturing opportunities.

Minister Bains also announced the members of the COVID-19 Therapeutics Task Force. The Therapeutics Task Force are providing expert advice to the Government on the development of COVID-19 treatments, including how best to prioritize financial support for promising COVID-19 treatment projects. The task force includes experts drawn from research and industry who have a proven ability to develop and bring new therapies to market in Canada. The Therapeutics Task Force is co-chaired by

Nancy Harrison, Director and Past Chair of LifeSciences BC, and Cédric Bisson, Partner at Teralys Capital.

From the beginning, the Government has worked across all departments and agencies to meet the challenges posed by COVID-19 with the goal of protecting the health of all Canadians. Today, the Government also announced investments that will help support the development of and access to treatments for COVID-19, including:

- Support of more than \$3 million for Nova Scotia-based [IMV Inc](#) to advance clinical development of its vaccine candidate for the prevention of COVID-19 infection. This support is being provided with contributions from the [National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program](#), and [the Next Generation Manufacturing Canada Supercluster](#);
- Support of more than \$19 million in funding through the [Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada](#) (NSERC), in collaboration with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), to leverage the expertise of researchers in the natural sciences and engineering and their partners across Canada to address this unprecedented crisis. This investment will support 369 COVID-19 research projects, including work related to vaccines.

## Quotes

“The Government is committed to protecting the health and safety of Canadians. That’s why we are working hard on all possible fronts to deliver safe and effective treatments and vaccines against COVID-19 for Canadians as fast as possible. Through the expertise of these task forces and the VBI investment announced today, we are exploring every promising option and enhancing our research and development capacity for long-term emergency preparedness. We owe this to Canadians.”

– The Honourable Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry

“Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have been working around the clock to secure the necessary supplies and equipment to combat COVID-19. While that work continues, we are now squarely focused on preparing Canada for an eventual vaccine. Given intense global competition, we are taking an aggressive approach to secure access to the most promising candidates so that we will be ready to vaccinate all Canadians as quickly as possible. We are extremely pleased to be among the first countries to establish an agreement with **XXXX**. Canadians can rest assured that the Government will continue to do everything possible to keep them healthy and safe.”

– The Honourable Anita Anand, Minister of Public Services and Procurement

“Through close monitoring of the vaccine development pipeline, both domestically and internationally, the Government of Canada is working quickly to negotiate advanced purchase agreements with vaccine manufacturers to secure supply for all Canadians as soon as it is feasible. While every effort is being made to expedite vaccine development, I can assure Canadians that their health is of the utmost importance and we will ensure the safety, efficacy and quality of a vaccine will not be compromised before we approve its use in our country.”

– The Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health

## Quick facts

- On [April 23, 2020, the Government of Canada announced more than \\$1 billion in support of the Plan to Mobilize Science](#) to fight COVID-19 that includes developing vaccines, producing treatments, and tracking the virus. This includes \$600 million through the Strategic Innovation Fund to support COVID-19 vaccine and therapy clinical trials led by the private sector, as well as Canadian biomanufacturing opportunities. The Strategic Innovation Fund contribution to VBI is part of this plan.
- This investment will be part of a larger strategy the Government of Canada is implementing to protect Canadians against COVID-19. This strategy prioritizes the health and safety of Canadians, ensures

- the capacity of our health care system, and mitigates the economic impacts on Canadians and Canadian business. This investment will help create and maintain up to 30 full-time jobs.
- [The COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force](#), with a secretariat supported by the National Research Council of Canada, is mandated to provide advice to the Government of Canada on developing and producing COVID-19 vaccines.
  - The COVID-19 Therapeutics Task Force, supported by a secretariat housed at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, is mandated to provide advice to the Government of Canada on COVID-19 therapeutics.
  - At this time, there are no vaccines authorized for the prevention of COVID-19 but there are many in clinical trials or in development. For each candidate vaccine, once additional studies have been completed, Health Canada will review evidence of safety, efficacy and manufacturing quality to make a decision on whether the individual vaccines will be approved for use in Canada.
  - The Vaccine Task Force is in place for at least twelve months, and the Therapeutics Task Force for at least six months, subject to extension at the discretion of the Government of Canada. Both task forces meet regularly as needed.
  - Public Services and Procurement Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), Health Canada and Industry and Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada are working together, along with the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force to prepare for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccines and related supplies.
  - Public Services and Procurement Canada is also procuring the equipment supplies that will be needed to perform the final manufacturing and packaging stages of vaccine production in Canada, as well as the materials needed to support safe, efficient immunization such as syringes, needles, alcohol swabs and other supplies.
  - As active negotiations with other potential vaccine suppliers are underway, the Government of Canada cannot disclose contract details at this time.
  - **XXX** is a biopharmaceutical company involved in the discovery, development and manufacture of health care products, including medicines and vaccines.
  - **ZZZ** is a biotechnology company focused on the discovery and development of medicines and vaccines made of messenger RNA.

### **Associated links**

- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [Helping Canadians with the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic](#)
- [Prime Minister outlines Canada's COVID-19 response](#)
- [Prime Minister announces new actions under Canada's COVID-19 response](#)
- [Prime Minister announces more support for workers and businesses through Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan](#)
- [Prime Minister announces Canada's Plan to Mobilize Science to fight COVID-19](#)
- [Prime Minister announces Canada's Plan to Mobilize Industry to fight COVID-19](#)
- [COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force](#)
- [COVID-19 Therapeutics Task Force \[LINK\]](#)

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