

PM speaking notes for the October 23 COVID update

23 October 2020

Good day, everyone.

Our lives have changed considerably over the past few months.

And for young people who are still trying to find their place in the world, this change is particularly difficult.

Earlier this week, I had a chance to speak to high school students at the Ottawa Catholic School Board's Virtual Academy.

We talked about what this pandemic has been like for them, their family, and their friends.

And just like young people always do, they had a lot of great questions.

One student, Laiya [LAY-ah], asked how long it will be until we have a vaccine for COVID-19.

As I told Laiya, we're coming at this from every angle, whether that's investing in Canadian research or securing the world's most promising vaccine candidates.

This morning, I want to let Laiya and her class know - along with everyone else who's following this - that we're taking another step forward.

[Pause]

Today, I can announce that we are investing \$214 million for made-in-Canada vaccines.

To begin with, our government is providing up to \$173 million for Medicago, to advance their vaccine candidate and create a production facility in Quebec City.

We have also reached an agreement with them to supply up to 76 million doses of their vaccine.

This is about securing potential vaccines for Canadians, while supporting good jobs in research.

On that note, the second part of today's investment is for the Vancouver-based biotech company, Precision NanoSystems.

They're also making progress with a vaccine candidate, so we're allocating up to \$18.2 million for their development and testing.

The final piece of this made-in-Canada investment is over \$23 million through the Industrial Research Assistance Program for earlier-stage vaccine candidates being developed across the country.

From Dartmouth to Burnaby, Canadian researchers are doing great work and we're here to support that.

[Pause]

Canadian expertise is one of our best assets in the fight against this virus.

That is why, in April, we invested over \$1 billion in Canada's plan to mobilize science to fight COVID-19.

As part of this plan, we have invested in the Strategic Innovation Fund, which supports researchers across the country in the development and manufacture of vaccines.

Today, we are taking another step forward.

We will provide up to \$173 million to Medicago to advance its vaccine candidate and create a production facility in Quebec City.

Our government has also reached an agreement with the company to supply up to 76 million doses of its vaccine.

We are also investing up to \$18.2 million in the vaccine candidate from the Vancouver-based company Precision NanoSystems.

Lastly, through the Industrial Research Assistance Program, we are investing over \$23 million in other vaccine candidates across the country.

[Pause]

Of course, it's not just Canadian researchers who are working on vaccine options.

Around the world, the best and the brightest are coming together to find a solution to this pandemic.

Canada has direct agreements with a range of vaccine developers for their most promising candidates.

And through our investment in GAVI's COVAX Facility and Advance Market Commitment, we also have access to additional doses for Canadians as part of their international program.

When a vaccine is ready, Canada will be too.

[Pause]

As vaccine development moves forward, we must continue to use the tools at our disposal to keep people safe.

Our government is working tirelessly to help the provinces and territories increase their testing capacity.

And today, I have some good news to announce.

We have now received hundreds of thousands of the Abbott Panbio rapid tests, which are currently being distributed across the country.

Two trucks of the other Abbott rapid test—ID NOW—have also arrived in Ontario, with more coming soon.

We have now received hundreds of thousands of the Abbott Panbio rapid tests, which are currently being distributed across the country.

Two trucks of the other Abbott rapid test - ID NOW - have also arrived in Ontario, with more coming soon.

In the weeks to come, we will continue to support the provinces and territories as we get tests out to the frontlines.

[Pause]

I want to end today by talking about where we are with this pandemic, and where we need to go from here.

Yesterday, Canada had the highest-ever number of new COVID-19 cases.

We have to get these numbers down.

This is serious, and everyone must do their part.

Your loved ones with pre-existing conditions, your parents, your grandparents - they're counting on you.

Our frontline workers, our nurses and doctors - they're counting on you, too.

People's lives are at stake.

We can't afford to be careless or think that this virus will just go away on its own.

So please:

- Keep following your local public health guidelines.
- Wear a mask and keep your distance.
- And if you haven't already, join the almost 4.8 million Canadians who have downloaded the free COVID Alert app.

We flattened the curve once before.

We beat the first wave and saved lives.

I know we can do it again.

Yesterday, the country recorded 2,788 new cases of COVID-19.

That is the most we have ever had in a single day so far.

We need to reduce the spread.

People's lives are at stake.

We cannot afford to be careless or think that this virus will just go away on its own.

So, keep following your local public health guidelines.

Wear a mask.

Keep your distance.

And download the free COVID Alert app.

We managed to flatten the curve this spring, and I know we can do it again this fall.

Thank you.

I will now turn it over to Dr. Tam.