

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, 3rd 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.

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

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François Couillard

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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











Canadian Association for Interventional Radiology





ACTRM





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Canadian Association of Occupational Therapists Association circachiernie des ergothérapeutes











































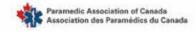


















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