

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington St.
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

April 15, 2020

Subject: Eligibility of the health research community for the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy

Dear Prime Minister:

We are writing to you today as senior leaders of foundations that raise funds to support the research at many of Canada's most prominent academic health sciences centres and health research institutes.

This past weekend, your government, with the support of the opposition parties, passed historic legislation pledging \$73 billion dollars to assist Canadian workers. Unfortunately, the employees at Canada's hospital-based research institutes do not qualify for relief under the current guidelines.

By not including them in the subsidy, Canada's ability to respond now to COVID-19 will be severely impacted. It will also have serious long-term effects on our country's health research sector.

Canada's academic research hospitals employ more than 40,000 highly skilled researchers and staff members. They conduct the largest percentage of biomedical science research in Canada, including the work they are doing around COVID-19. The future of the entire sector, however, is now at significant risk. Research hospitals have faced a sudden and substantial loss of funding from research sponsors (external charities and industry funders) due to the suspension of research activities. Research institutes receive funding through three primary sources that include government (Tri-Council agency grants), philanthropy/external charities, and external industry funds. The most significant and urgent issue relates to loss of revenue from external industry (pharmaceutical and biotech) sponsors as a consequence of the suspension of virtually all clinical research trials that are deemed non-essential, including those not directly related to essential clinical care.

Most hospitals have substantially reduced elective clinical procedures to make room for COVID-19 patients and have suspended all clinical trials that are unrelated to COVID-19 or not required for life-saving care. The external industry sponsors of this clinical research provide funding to research hospitals on a per-patient basis and thus that money is contingent on accruing research subject participation. The acute loss of funding means that research hospitals are unable to pay and retain critically important highly qualified personnel (HQP) for these activities. Moreover, our charitable organizations that support the operating costs of research are struggling during this challenging time, and are unable to continue to support research during the suspension period. This situation has consequences not only for thousands of HQP that are crucial to Canada's clinical research sector, but will also decimate this same infrastructure that is now needed to support new COVID-19 research activities and for research hospitals to innovate in Canada and beyond.

We are asking the Government of Canada to specifically include research institutes within the research hospital sector under the eligibility guidelines for the 75% wage subsidy program. Research institutes are often located within larger hospital structures as part of a single corporation, but are funded separately through non-provincial health ministry sources described above. Hospital operations and patient care

are funded by the provincial health ministries but according to provincial rules, those funds cannot be used to support research. It is thus essential that research institutes find a way to secure temporary wage support for the clinical research staff that are affected by the suspension of research activities. Securing these funds will ensure the continued employment of thousands of HQP across Canada. It will enable research hospitals to divert resources toward COVID19-related research, including randomized control trials for treatment and prevention, development of vaccinations, epidemiology and other observational studies.

For several decades, our foundations have invested billions of donor dollars to help build the backbone of Canada's research sector. If we don't act now, those investments are at substantial risk. Equally as important, providing this support now will help research hospitals nationwide to rebound and re-engage our industry partners, to continue developing the life-saving treatments that will be vital in the wake of COVID-19.

Yours sincerely,



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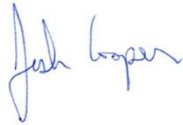
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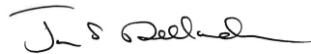
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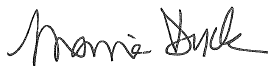
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Also Supported by:



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cc: Hon. Chrystia Freeland, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs
Hon. Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance
Hon Jean-Yves Duclos, President of the Treasury Board
Hon. Navdeep Bains, Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry
Hon. Bill Blair, Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness
Hon. Mélanie Joly, Minister of Economic Development and Official Languages
Hon. Carla Qualtrough, Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
Hon. Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health
Hon. Diane Lebouthillier, Minister of National Revenue

