

Public funds
should be
for public
health, **not**
private
profits



MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES
DOCTORS WITHOUT BORDERS

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Public funds should be for public health, not private profits

Around the world, governments fund critically important medical research and development using public money — including more than \$1 billion already committed by the Canadian government to develop a COVID-19 vaccine, as well as diagnostic tests and medicines.

**Tell Canada's
Minister of Health
to take concrete
steps to prioritize
patient access
over private
profits:**

Publicly funded research has led to dramatic healthcare innovations. In Canada alone, researchers have used government funds to support the discovery of an Ebola vaccine, insulin, the cardiac pacemaker and more.

Unfortunately, most countries — including Canada — rarely demand that the resulting health innovations be safeguarded for public health, or be made affordable and accessible to those who need them most.

In fact, these publicly funded vaccines, medicines and health technologies are often sold to private companies, who then determine who receives access to them — and at what price.

This is unacceptable.

Safeguards can make the difference

Simply put: publicly funded medical innovations — including urgently needed medicines, vaccines and other technologies — should be used to meet the needs of public health providers, not private pharmaceutical companies. Today, as governments spend billions to develop the tools needed to fight COVID-19, we must ensure that the resulting medicines and vaccines are affordable and accessible to everyone who needs them.

We can make that happen. By requiring that medicines, vaccines and other medical tools developed with public funds in Canada are

I believe that all medicines, vaccines, diagnostic tests and medical devices discovered with public funds — including those for COVID-19 — must be affordable, accessible and available for everyone who needs them.

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Phone



I'd like to receive future updates on this campaign and information from Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) by email.*

*MSF will protect your **privacy** and keep you updated about how to take further action to make medical aid, health care and on-the-ground emergency humanitarian response accessible to everyone around the world.

affordable and accessible for patients and health systems around the world, we can protect our public investments in medical research and development.

Take action today!

Today, Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is asking 100,000 Canadians to join us in demanding that Canada's Minister of Health make one simple policy change:

Canada's medical research and development funding system should include safeguards requiring that any medicines, vaccines and any other health innovations discovered or developed with Canadian public funds be made affordable, accessible and available for everyone that needs them – free of patents, monopolies and high prices.

By signing our petition, you're helping us send a clear message to the Canadian government that urgently needed medicines, such as those being developed against COVID-19, will be available to those who need them most – including to Canadians who paid to develop them.

Your message to Canada's Minister of Health

Dear Minister Hajdu,

As the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has made clear, public funding to develop new

medicines, vaccines and other health technologies is essential. Governments around the world have committed billions of dollars to develop the public health tools that we all need for COVID-19 – including the Canadian government which has committed more than \$1 billion to COVID-19 research and development.

Public funding is often the backbone of medical R&D, supporting the discovery and development of new medicines, vaccines and other health technologies that we all need. In Canada alone, researchers in publicly funded labs have discovered an Ebola vaccine, insulin, the cardiac pacemaker, a vaccine for haemophilus influenzae and many others.

However, the way that the medical research and development system functions today often prices lifesaving health technologies out of reach for patients and health systems – even when the public has paid to develop them.

That's because even when governments spend public money on health research, the innovations they pay for almost inevitably are sold and become the property of private pharmaceutical companies rather than the public. That in turn means that companies are free to charge whatever they want and even essential lifesaving medicines are often accessible only to those who can afford to pay high prices for them, instead of those who need them most.

This is unacceptable – public funding for medical research should produce medicines, vaccines and other medical tools that are affordable and accessible to everyone that needs them. Medicines shouldn't be a luxury.

Canada can take immediate, common-sense steps to help change this reality. Any public funding for medical research and development should include enforceable requirements that the final products be affordable, accessible and available for everyone who need them – whether they are in Canada or around the world. Public funding for medical research should deliver medical technologies that patients and health systems can afford and access.

That's why I am urging you, Minister Hajdu, as a representative of the Canadian government and the federal Minister of Health, to take the following action:

- Prioritize patient access over private profits by immediately implementing safeguards

and conditions, requiring that any recipient of Canadian public funds be required to make any medicines, vaccines, diagnostic tests, and other health technologies discovered or developed with public funds available and accessible for everyone that needs them, including Canadians and people living in low- and middle-income countries, at an affordable price, free of patents and monopolies.

There is no more urgent time than now. Canada has already committed more than \$1 billion to fund research into medicines and vaccines that can stop the spread of COVID-19. But without safeguards in place, there is no guarantee that the public health tools funded by your government will be affordable and accessible to people in Canada or around the world most at risk from this disease.

Medicines shouldn't be a luxury. Canada's taxpayer dollars should not be used to provide private pharmaceutical corporations with intellectual property. By making this one, simple change, your government can help ensure that urgently needed medicines – including those being developed to fight the spread of COVID-19 – will be available to those who need them most, and to the Canadians who helped pay for them.

Sincerely,

- Your Name

