

# Canada's Response to COVID-19

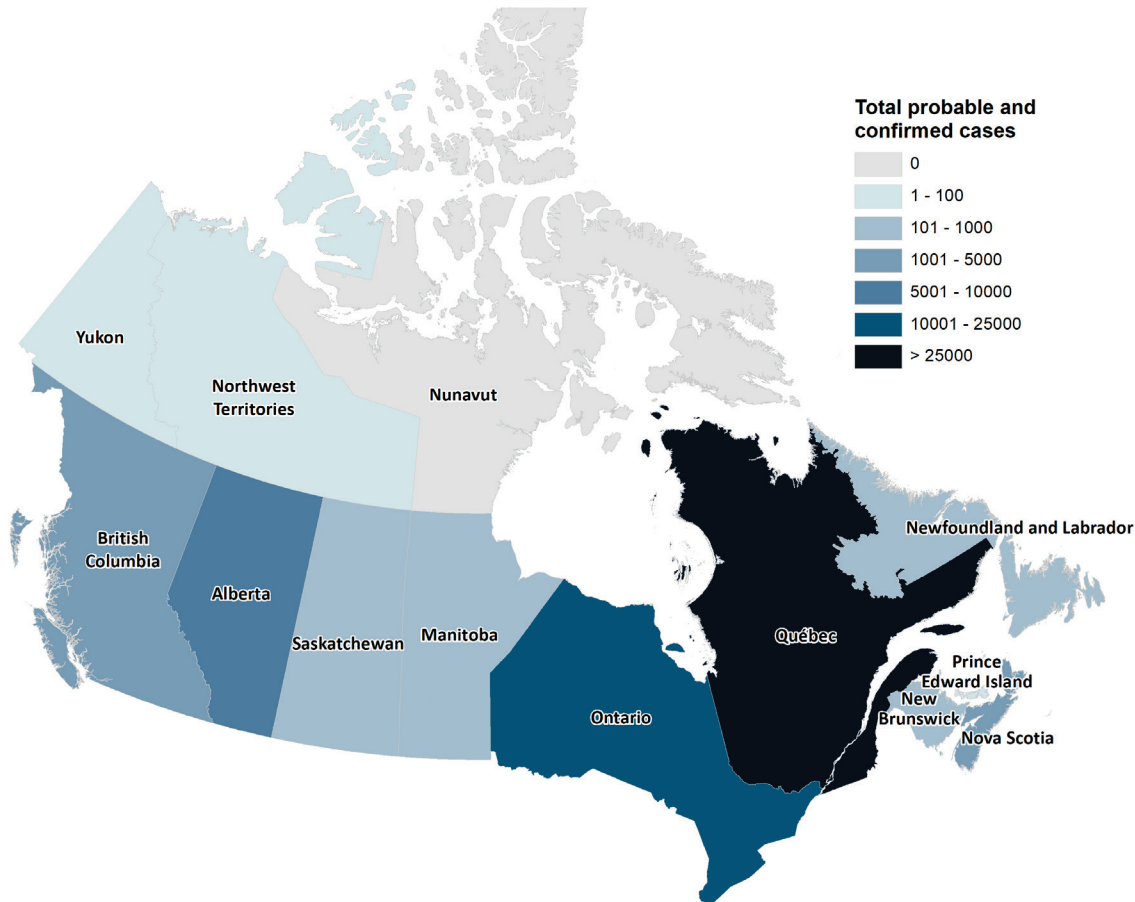
## WHO Member State Information Session

The Honourable Patty Hajdu  
Minister of Health  
Government of Canada  
May 14, 2020



# Current Situation

Figure 1: Map of COVID-19 cases reported in Canada by province/territory (N=71,473)



Data source: Surveillance and Risk Assessment Epidemiology Update. Map created by NML Geomatics.

As of May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**71,486** confirmed cases including **5,209 deaths** reported in Canada

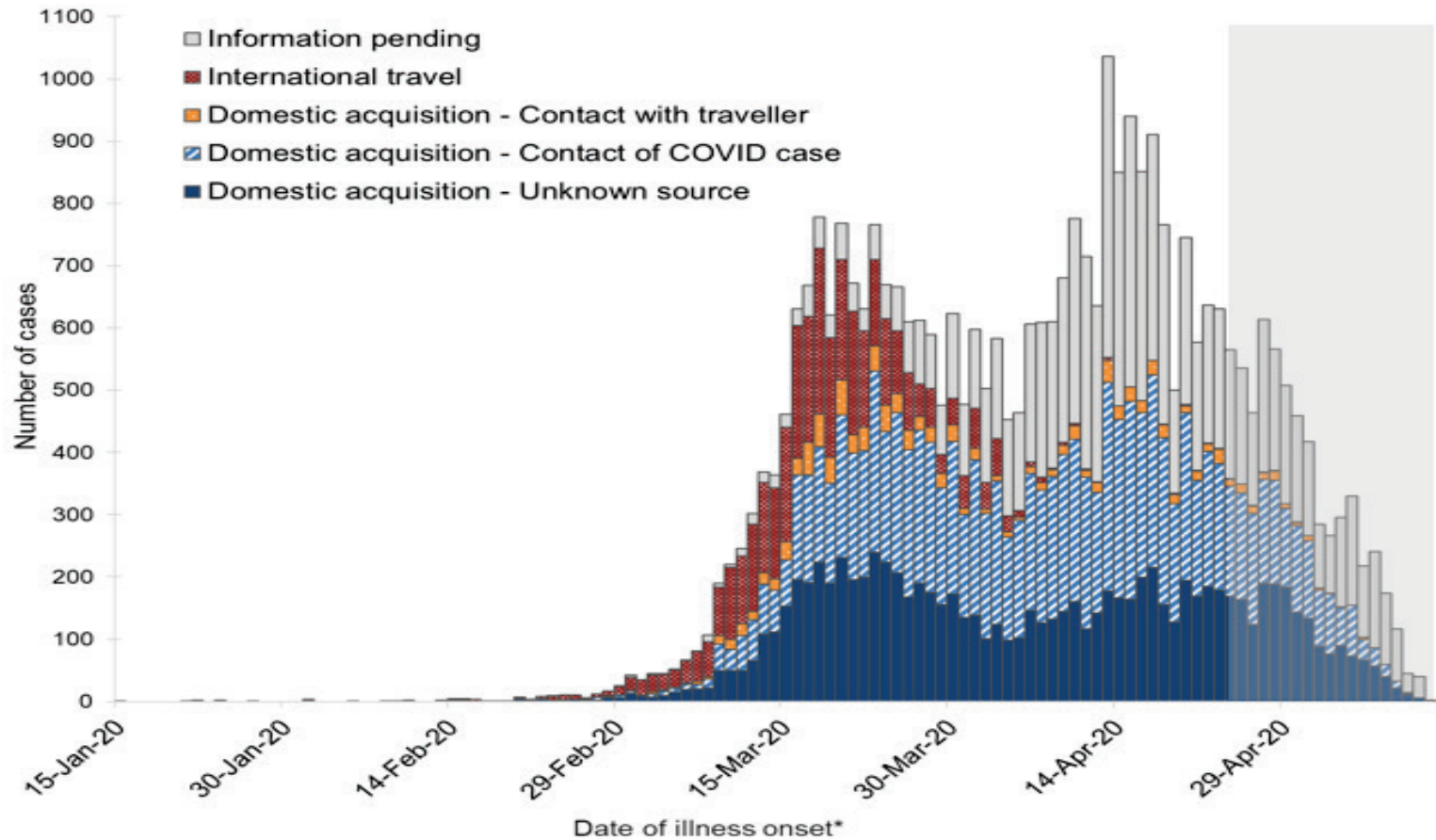
Over **1,169,456** people tested to date  
(31,111 per 1,000,000)

Highest proportion of cases:  
40-59 years (**32%**)  
followed by 20-39 years (**26%**)

Those aged  $\geq 60$  years have the highest proportion of reported **hospitalizations, ICU admissions, and deaths.**

# Current Situation (cont.)

Figure 2: Number of newly reported COVID-19 cases in Canada, by date of illness onset and exposure category (N=34,827)



**Note:** The shaded area represents a period of time (lag time) where it is expected that cases have occurred but have not yet been reported nationally.  
As of May 13<sup>th</sup>, 2020

# Guiding Principles for Canada's Response

Canada's response is based on plans and guidance related to pandemic preparedness, with the following guiding principles:

- 1 Collaboration**  
All levels of government and stakeholders need to work in partnership to produce an effective and coordinated response
- 2 Evidence-informed decision-making**  
Decisions should be based on the best available evidence
- 3 Proportionality**  
The response to a pandemic should be appropriate to the level of threat
- 4 Flexibility**  
Actions taken should be tailored to the situation and evolve as new information becomes available
- 5 A precautionary approach**  
Timely and reasonable preventive action should be proportional to the threat and informed by evidence to the extent possible
- 6 Use of established practices and systems**  
Well-practised strategies and processes can be rapidly ramped up to manage a pandemic
- 7 Ethical decision-making**  
Ethical principles and societal values should be explicit and embedded in all decision-making

# Collaboration: Key to Addressing COVID-19 in Canada

We are working closely with provinces and territories, Indigenous leaders and communities, and across sectors to ensure a comprehensive, coordinated response to COVID-19.

## Highlights:

- Weekly **Health Ministers' calls** with provincial and territorial counterparts
- The Federal/Provincial/Territorial **Special Advisory Committee on the Novel Coronavirus (SAC)** to provide advice on coordination, public health policy, and technical content related to the COVID-19 outbreak
- The **Cabinet Committee on the Federal Response to COVID-19** to ensure whole-of-government leadership, coordination, and preparedness for a response to health and economic impacts of the virus
- **The COVID-19 Immunity Task Force** to coordinate blood test surveys that will show how widely the virus has spread in Canada and provide reliable estimates of potential immunity and vulnerabilities in Canadian populations

# Canada: Taking Action on COVID-19

## HELP REDUCE THE SPREAD OF COVID-19

### TAKE STEPS TO REDUCE THE SPREAD OF THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19):



follow the advice of your local public health authority



wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds



use alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available



try not to touch your eyes, nose or mouth



avoid close contact with people who are sick



cough and sneeze into your sleeve and not your hands



stay home as much as possible and if you need to leave the house practice physical distancing (approximately 2 m)

### SYMPTOMS

Symptoms of COVID-19 may be very mild or more serious and may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus.



**FEVER**  
(greater or equal to 38°C)



**COUGH**



**DIFFICULTY BREATHING**

### IF YOU HAVE SYMPTOMS



Isolate at home to avoid spreading illness to others.



Avoid visits with older adults, or those with medical conditions. They are at higher risk of developing serious illness.



Call ahead before you visit a health care professional or call your local public health authority.



If your symptoms get worse, contact your health care provider or public health authority right away and follow their instructions.

### FOR INFORMATION ON COVID-19:

1-833-784-4397

[canada.ca/coronavirus](https://canada.ca/coronavirus)

- Mobilizing Canadians through education and information
- Supporting Canadian travellers
- Issuing public health guidance
- Investing in research
- Supporting testing and laboratory capacity
- Pan-Canadian surveillance
- Essential supplies and medicines
- Ensuring economic resilience
- Maintaining government services to Canadians
- Collaborating with provinces and territories, as well as international partners
- Working with Indigenous leaders and communities

# Canada's Public Health Approach to Support Economic Restart

## Objectives

1. **Protecting the health of Canadians**
2. **Easing restrictions gradually**
3. **Protecting high-risk groups** (e.g., those vulnerable due to age, underlying health conditions, remote location, close living spaces and temporary or unstable living spaces);
4. **Ensuring our public health capacity remains strong** to prepare and respond to any future waves of the pandemic, **including through enhanced testing and contact tracing**; and
5. **Supporting a broad range of economic sectors**

## Criteria and Measures

- COVID-19 transmission is controlled
- Workplace preventative measures
- Sufficient public health capacity is in place to test, trace, and isolate all cases
- Supports are in place for vulnerable groups/communities and key populations
- Expanded health care capacity exists for all patients, COVID-19 and non-COVID-19, including access to adequate medical supplies
- Avoiding risk of importation
- Engage and support communities to adjust to new normal

# Protecting Vulnerable Populations

## Vulnerable Populations

- Indigenous communities
- Long-term care residents
- Homeless people
- Inmates in correctional facilities
- Other people in congregate settings
- People living with disabilities

## Key Populations

- Health care workers
- Other workers designated as “essential”

- Canada is also providing support to:
  - People experiencing **homelessness**
  - **Women’s shelters** and **sexual assault centres**
  - The delivery of items and personal outreach for **seniors**
  - **Food banks** and local food organizations
  - People experiencing **mental health** challenges: **Wellness Together Canada** is a central resource for accessing confidential mental health and substance use support with respect to COVID-19





# Challenges and Early Reflections

## Key Challenges

- Preventing outbreaks at long-term care facilities, work place settings, and correctional facilities
- Collecting timely and comprehensive data
- Manufacturing and procurement of personal protective equipment
- Carefully monitoring the unintended consequences of Canada's response to COVID-19, including impacts on mental and physical health
- Regionally distinct drivers and impact
- Potential resurgence of COVID-19 and the flu season in the Fall and Winter
- Population behaviour

## Early Reflections

- Pandemic readiness is key
- Strong health systems and primary health care and public health system capacity
- Early and ongoing collaboration across jurisdictions and globally
- Aligning our research response with, and ensuring it is informed by, the efforts of international partners (e.g. WHO, GLoPID-R)
- Integrating social sciences and ethical research from the outset
- The importance of direct and consistent communication with the public
- Protecting remote and isolated communities

# International Cooperation

- **Coordinated efforts** are vital to help those affected and protect the health and safety of people around the world
- Canada has announced over **\$160 million CAD in funding** to support global efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic to date
- We continue to work closely with our **international partners**, including the WHO, to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 by:

Learning from each other's experiences

Collaborating on research and development

Coordinating action

Continuing to strengthen health systems and pandemic prevention and preparedness

Making sure no one is left behind

- Canada has a long history of **supporting health systems** that protect and promote health for all, including the most vulnerable and women and girls
- On May 4<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister Trudeau announced a \$850M CAD pledge at the Coronavirus Global Response pledging event to contribute to the **development and production of a vaccine, diagnostics and therapeutics that are equitably accessible and affordable to all**, including those living in the most vulnerable countries