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Infection  
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Prévention  
et contrôle  
des infections  
Canada

December 9, 2024

The Honourable Mark Holland, M.P., P.C.  
Minister of Health  
70 Colombine Driveway, Tunney's Pasture, Floor 16  
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9

Submitted via email: [hcmminister.ministresc@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:hcmminister.ministresc@hc-sc.gc.ca)

Dear Minister Holland,

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the greatest public health threats of our time. It must be tackled with urgency and broad cooperation. The G7 Summit stands out as the paramount forum for catalyzing discussions and forging the necessary commitments to tackle the market-oriented challenges associated with Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and its profound effects on global health. We commend the diligent efforts of past host nations in leveraging their presidencies to champion push and pull incentives for AMR innovation. We encourage Canada to follow the lead of its colleagues and ensure that AMR remains a priority topic for 2025 G7 under Canadian leadership.

AMR is a threat to the international economy in addition to global public health. At least 1.27 million people die each year worldwide from antibiotic-resistant bacterial infections. This is 30% more deaths than those from HIV/AIDS and twice as many as deaths from malaria.<sup>1</sup> In Canada, it was estimated that more than 5400 Canadians die every year from infections from antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and AMR costs our health care system \$1.4 billion. If no action is taken, the rate of resistance in Canada is projected to grow to 40%, resulting in 13,700 deaths a year and a cost of \$7.4 billion to Canada's healthcare system.<sup>2</sup> Further, an estimated 75,000 cases of sepsis occur in Canada each year.<sup>3</sup> The majority of deaths due to sepsis can be prevented with rapid access to appropriate therapy, including antimicrobials.<sup>4</sup>

The burden of AMR touches several of the global climate and humanitarian crises we are facing today. At the 9th Meeting of the Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme called for a

<sup>1</sup> Antimicrobial Resistance Collaborators. (2022). Global burden of bacterial antimicrobial resistance in 2019: a systemic analysis. *The Lancet*, 399(10325), 629-655.

<sup>2</sup> A Council Canadian of Academies, When Antibiotics Fail. <https://cca-reports.ca/reports/the-potential-socio-economic-impacts-of-antimicrobial-resistance-in-canada/#:~:text=Using%20existing%20data%20and%20a, and%20%24396%20billion%20in%20GDP.>

<sup>3</sup> Government of Canada. Government of Canada Invests \$5.7 million in new research network to study deadly blood infections. <https://www.canada.ca/en/institutes-health-research/news/2020/07/government-of-canada-invests-57m-in-new-research-network-to-study-deadly-blood-infections.html>

<sup>4</sup> AMR Industry Alliance. Antimicrobial Resistance and the Burden of Sepsis. <https://www.amrindustryalliance.org/blog-post/global-sepsis-alliance-post-for-amr-industry-alliance-blog/>

coordinated strengthening of environmental action and a response is non-negotiable to reduce the burden of AMR on the crisis of climate change, the crisis of nature and biodiversity loss, and the crisis of pollution and waste.<sup>5</sup> Additionally, as we globally address the impacts of migrant migration, the 4<sup>th</sup> WHO Global Evidence Review on Health and Migration stressed that equitable access to and appropriate use of antibiotics for refugees and migrants is essential to tackling AMR.<sup>6</sup>

Globally, leaders are beginning to address the negative impact of AMR on the global economy and public health and are taking action. The last four G7 Summits in the UK (2021), Germany (2022), Japan (2023), and Italy (2024) have prioritized conversations about limiting AMR progression. These conversations have led to global and national commitments, including Canada's 2023 commitment to investing \$6.3 million to Combatting Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria Biopharmaceutical Accelerator (CARB-X), joining Germany, the UK, and the US in bringing together global partners to address AMR by developing new antibiotics, vaccines, and diagnostics. Commitments around pull incentives in the UK, Japan and now Italy have recognized and rewarded innovation as part of a national and international response to sustain the global pipeline for novel antimicrobials.

Within Canada, the release of the Pan-Canadian Action Plan in 2023 was an encouraging first step to align AMR strategies at a national level. The Action Plan establishes federal, provincial, and territorial commitments on AMR over five years and five key pillars of action: research and innovation, surveillance, stewardship, infection prevention and control, and leadership. Now is time to take steps to implement the Pan-Canadian Action Plan and its key pillars of action.

From 2021 to 2023, Canada has been increasing efforts to combat AMR, beginning with the publication of the Canadian Antimicrobial Resistance Surveillance System Report in 2021 and 2022, which presents integrated national-level data on AMR and antimicrobial use. In 2022, the Public Health Agency of Canada AMR Task Force resumed efforts to finalize the Pan-Canadian Action Plan presented in 2023. Further, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) launched a national AMR call in October 2022 for projects that evaluate interventions to reduce inappropriate antimicrobial use.

In September 2024, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) High-Level Meeting on AMR took place, where Canada joined other nations in supporting a political declaration that reaffirmed commitments in research and innovation, infection prevention and control, stewardship and surveillance, both domestically and for lower-middle income countries (LMICs).

We believe it is important that Canada maintain AMR as a key topic during Canada's G7 presidency to signal to other nations that Canada takes its responsibilities as a leader in the battle against AMR. As a global economic and health concern, AMR must be prioritized internationally.

We propose a number of actions the government should in advance of Canadian leadership of the 2025 G7. It is crucial to capitalize on timing to implement measures to combat AMR that will have a substantial positive effect on public health and the Canadian economy.

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<sup>5</sup> Inger Anderson, 9th Meeting of the Global Leaders Group on Antimicrobial Resistance [Speech]. May, 2024. <https://www.unep.org/news-and-stories/speech/strong-political-push-action-amr#:~:text=A%20coordinated%20strengthening%20of%20environmental,crisis%20of%20pollution%20and%20waste.>

<sup>6</sup> Fourth WHO Global Evidence Review on Health and Migration stresses that equitable access to and appropriate use of antibiotics for refugees and migrants is essential to tackling Antimicrobial Resistance. September 19, 2022. <https://www.who.int/news/item/19-09-2022-fourth-who-global-evidence-review-on-health-and-migration-stresses-that-equitable-access-to-and-appropriate-use-of-antibiotics-for-refugees-and-migrants-is-essential-to-tackling-antimicrobial-resistance>

1. Canada must proceed with funding and programming to support the implementation of the Pan-Canadian Action Plan with its four priority areas: surveillance, stewardship, infection prevention & control and research & innovation.
2. Canada's government, health providers and patients must work together to develop a patient-oriented AMR strategy that addresses areas with great impact, including sepsis prevention, recognition and treatment.
3. The Canadian government, with Health Canada and PHAC, must demonstrate a commitment to the global fight against AMR by launching a pull incentive pilot project with funding that reflects a fair share of Canada's G7 GDP per capita. The pilot should be designed to fit within Canada's FPT health system and provide clarity regarding ongoing program obligations once pilot is complete, to encourage optimal participation among manufacturers in the program.
4. The Canadian government should support research, development and commercialization of antimicrobials, diagnostics, devices and antibiotic alternatives in Canada through funding to universities and private firms that engage in local research, as well as domestic manufacturing of antimicrobial therapies.
5. Canada must establish a national antimicrobial stewardship program with funding to contribute to a coordinated Pan-Canadian approach to antimicrobial stewardship and innovation to protect the efficacy and sustainability of new antibiotics entering the Canadian market and being discovered here in Canada with the recommended push and pull incentive programs.

By using the upcoming G7 2025 presidency to prioritize AMR and demonstrate its leadership through domestic action, Canada has a significant opportunity to not only demonstrate its adherence to previous G7 commitments but to move the goalposts further for all G7 nations to make AMR a fear of the past. We believe that Canada can and must become a leader in AMR.

c.c. **The Honourable Chrystia Freeland**  
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance  
**The Honourable Mélanie Joly**  
Minister of Foreign Affairs  
**The Honourable François-Philippe Champagne**  
Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry Canada