



April 3, 2020

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau
Prime Minister of Canada
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau,

On behalf of Research Canada: An Alliance for Health Discovery, we would like to sincerely thank you and your Government for your leadership during the global COVID-19 crisis. We know that this is a very difficult time for Canadians across the country and your commitment to addressing the crisis using the best public health, biomedical and clinical research evidence available is duly noted and deeply appreciated.

We know that Canada's health innovation enterprise is a vital component of ensuring the health and wellbeing of Canadians, conducting ground-breaking health research and bringing life-saving, innovative treatments and therapies to patients every day. During a public health crisis like the one we are currently in, the critical value of Canada's health research and health innovation ecosystem—and in particular, our research hospitals and academic health science centres—to the health and wellbeing of Canadians is made all the more clear. Our sector has responded to your call for 'all hands on deck' during these challenging times, providing necessary clinical support and working diligently to develop treatment and preventive solutions for COVID-19.

The long-term health and integrity of our sector, however, is in jeopardy. As a result of COVID-19 and the necessary reallocation of resources—both clinical and research-based—to address this public health crisis, much of the ongoing clinical and biomedical research being conducted by our academic health science centres has been suspended. While this suspension is unavoidable and integral to preserving capacity to address the pandemic, it is also resulting in the sudden and substantial loss of funding from research sponsors that is likely to result in research hospitals' inability to pay and retain critically important, highly qualified personnel. These critical personnel include clinical research associates and coordinators, research nurses and laboratory technicians, biostatisticians and data managers, and graduate students and postdoctoral fellows.

The academic health science centres' research funding partners—which include health charities and the health and biosciences industry—are not able to maintain their research support as they too are being significantly impacted by COVID-19.

Canada's health and biosciences companies are committed to focusing their resources on supporting Canadian and global efforts to address the crisis. Moreover, industry-sourced research funding is provided to research hospitals on a per-patient basis and is therefore contingent on maintaining participation in research studies, something that cannot be done with the necessary suspension of 'non-essential' clinical trials.

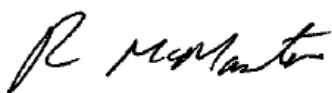
Health charities are also facing significant challenges that greatly impact their ability to support Canada's academic health science centres. With the cancellation of signature events and programs and the decline of charitable donations generally, health charities are seeing substantial losses in fundraising dollars that would normally be used to support health research.

Over the past several years, your Government has made historic investments in Canada's health research ecosystem and the talented, creative and committed professionals who sustain it. **We implore you to protect your investments into our sector and find a way to support our academic health science centres and the critically important researchers, clinicians, technicians and trainees whom they employ. While the Government's relief programs have been generous, they are not necessarily applicable to our teaching hospitals, forcing difficult decisions with respect to laying off research personnel when we most need them.**

We have made too much progress together—to which Canada's agile scientific and innovation leadership in the face of COVID-19 attests—to dim our potential in the post-COVID-19 world.

Once again, thank you for your dedication and commitment to protecting the health and wellbeing of Canadians.

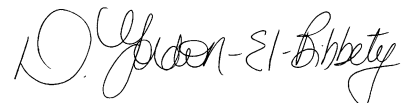
Sincerely,



Robert McMaster, PhD
Chair



Ryan Wiley, PhD
Policy Advisor to the Board



Deborah Gordon-El-Bihbety
President and CEO

cc. Rick Theis and Sara Hussaini, Prime Minister's Office