



## **Media Release – IPAC Canada applauds federal government’s significant budget investment in public health surveillance**

**Wednesday, April 13, 2022**

Infection Prevention and Control Canada (IPAC Canada) applauds the federal government on a historic five-year, \$436.2 million dollar investment in public health surveillance and risk assessment capacities at the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).

IPAC Canada is a multidisciplinary member-based association committed to public wellness and safety by advocating for best practices in infection prevention and control (IPAC) in all settings. For several years, IPAC Canada members have advocated for a strengthened and integrated public health surveillance system. Investments in surveillance will improve our ability to identify and respond to the spread of infections within and across our healthcare systems.

“This investment is an important step towards providing our healthcare workers with the tools needed to protect the integrity of our health systems,” says Zahir Hirji, President of IPAC Canada.

Each year, it is estimated that 220,000 Canadian patients (approximately one in nine) will acquire a healthcare-associated infection (HAI) during their stay in hospital. Many HAIs are caused by antimicrobial-resistant organisms (AROs), which make them difficult to treat.

Investments in data collection and reporting across the country are the first step in reducing the number of infections acquired in healthcare settings. However, local jurisdictions collect data using different HAI definitions, input data into different tracking systems, and often do not share data outside their jurisdiction.

“It is vital that these investments are paired with efforts to increase integration and uniformity within and across local, provincial and territorial jurisdictions,” says Jennifer Happe, Chair of the IPAC Canada Surveillance and Epidemiology Interest Group. “COVID-19 has shown us that infections do not respect jurisdictional borders.”

*For more information or media inquiries, please contact IPAC Canada Executive Director, Gerry Hansen.*

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