

**Infection Prevention and Control Canada**

**Pre-Budget Submission 2024**

**Recommendations**

1. Invest in ICP training and retention and IPAC to better support Canada’s systems of care, minimize future healthcare costs, and improve pandemic preparedness.
2. Continue investing in antimicrobial resistance (AMR) measures and research to ensure the pan-Canadian surveillance of AMR is supported.

**Recommendation 1: Invest in Infection Control Professional training and retention and Infection Prevention and Control to better support Canada’s systems of care, minimize future healthcare costs, and improve pandemic preparedness.**

The effects of escalating financial pressures within provincial, territorial, and health authorities has led to fewer individuals being required to do more in their roles. The value of well-trained Infection Control Processionals (ICPs) within healthcare is foundational to the prevention of infections and their transmission, including organisms that may be implicated in a future pandemic. CIHI data suggests that approximately one-third of healthcare harm involves infection. Federal governmental support for training and retention of ICPs would demonstrate commitment and understanding of a major means by which healthcare in all care settings is made safer and more cost-effective.

The COVID-19 global pandemic clearly illustrated how a dedicated Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) program working with pandemic planning and response enables jurisdictions to navigate a new global threat in a cost-effective manner, saving lives and reducing resource burdens on hospital systems. Canadian institutes that did not have sufficient ICP supports experienced tragic and overwhelming human and financial costs.

It is critical to invest in pandemic preparedness and planning to ensure all Canadian healthcare facilities have sufficient supplies of PPE and vaccines in times of crisis. IPAC Canada advocates for the continuation and enhancement of investments in pandemic preparedness planning, specifically directed toward domestic personal protective equipment (PPE) and vaccine research and production.

Vulnerabilities in the global supply chain mean that it is essential for Canada to bolster its domestic capacity for the manufacturing of critical healthcare supplies. By investing in domestic PPE production, Canada can ensure a steady and reliable supply of protective equipment for healthcare providers during pandemics and other public health emergencies. Moreover, focusing on vaccine research and production will not only enhance Canada's self-sufficiency in vaccine availability but also contribute to the development of cutting-edge medical technologies and biotechnologies, ultimately benefiting the nation's healthcare and scientific communities. Finally, domestically produced PPE supplies and vaccines would result in significant cost-savings and reduce Canada’s exposure to the negative impacts of global supply chain shortages.

Continued and expanded investments in federal pandemic preparedness planning, including investments in ICP education, research, and prevention efforts will enable Canada to proactively respond to future health crises, reducing the reliance on foreign markets and ensuring the well-being of Canadians during times of emergency.

**Recommendation 2: Continue investment in antimicrobial resistance (AMR) measures and research to ensure the pan-Canadian surveillance of AMR is supported.**

IPAC Canada applauds the government’s actions to date in addressing antimicrobial resistance (AMR). The Pan Canadian Action Plan on AMR underscores the federal government’s understanding of the major threat that AMR poses for the health of Canadians. However, the continued need for robust, timely, and accurate surveillance of these organisms remains a concern. Antimicrobial resistance is a growing global threat, referred to as a “silent pandemic” by the WHO, that undermines the effectiveness of currently available antibiotics and other antimicrobial agents, making infections harder or impossible to treat and posing significant risks to public health. IPAC Canada emphasizes the importance of ongoing investments in AMR measures and research to support pan-Canadian surveillance efforts.

The Auditor General’s Report on AMR reiterated the importance of addressing the gaps in the surveillance of these organisms at a population level. By allocating additional resources to AMR surveillance, Canada can better understand the prevalence and patterns of antimicrobial resistance, allowing for the implementation of evidence-based strategies to effectively combat this issue. Further, this detail is critical to allow targeted public health interventions and to inform effective policy, program, and guideline development. Additionally, investments in research and development of new antimicrobial agents and alternative therapies will be crucial in the fight against drug-resistant pathogens.

Continued support for AMR measures and research aligns with Canada's commitment to safeguarding public health and reinforces the country's leadership in tackling global health challenges. By proactively addressing AMR, Canada can protect the effectiveness of essential medical interventions and promote a sustainable and resilient healthcare system for the future.

**About IPAC Canada**

Infection Prevention and Control Canada (IPAC Canada) is a multidisciplinary, professional organization for those engaged in the prevention and control of infections across the continuum of healthcare. IPAC Canada was incorporated in 1976 and is a registered not-for-profit organization. IPAC Canada has over 2000 members in Canada and across the globe. We coordinate communication between stakeholders, support and develop evidence-based infection prevention, control, and standards recommendations, and promote research and education for infection prevention and control professionals. Our goal is to prevent infections and as a result make healthcare safer in hospitals, long-term care, and the community.