



Infection Prevention and Control Canada
Pre-Budget Submission 2025

Recommendations

1. Invest in Infection Prevention and Control (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 support the pan-Canadian fight against AMR.

Recommendation 1: Invest in Infection Prevention and Control (IPAC) to better support Canada’s systems of care, minimize future healthcare costs, and improve pandemic preparedness.

We are not immune to global health threats. Another pandemic is a certainty. The timing, however, is uncertain, making the need for ongoing pandemic preparedness urgent and critical. IPAC Canada is concerned that the lessons learned, and that we are still learning, from the devastating impacts of the previous pandemic will be lost without specific attention.

We must continue making investments in pandemic preparedness to ensure Canada has appropriate pandemic plans, access to trained infection control professionals (ICPs), domestic availability of personal protective equipment (PPE), and timely vaccine production. Throughout COVID-19, Canada was subject to massive vulnerabilities in the global supply chain for critical healthcare supplies, including PPE and vaccines.

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 domestic 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, benefiting the nation's healthcare and scientific communities, and ultimately Canadians.

Finally, national independence in both PPE supplies and vaccine availability will be a major cost savings for Canada and make it easier to procure supplies in short supply. Continued investments in pandemic preparedness planning will enable Canada to anticipate, and proactively respond to future health crises, reducing the reliance on foreign markets and ensuring the well-being of its citizens during times of emergency.

Recommendation 2: Continue investing in Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) measures and research to support the pan-Canadian fight against AMR.

IPAC Canada emphasizes the importance of ongoing investments in measures to combat Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR). Prevention, access to available antimicrobials, support for pan-Canadian surveillance efforts, and research and development of new antimicrobials are critical pillars to invest in to avoid a looming major health crisis that “threatens a century of progress in human medicine, and the health of animals, plants, and the environment, as well as our economies and livelihoods”¹. Antimicrobial resistance undermines the effectiveness of available antibiotics and other antimicrobial agents, making infections increasingly harder or impossible to treat and posing significant risks to public health.

Despite the release of the Pan-Canadian Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance in June 2023, there remain many concerns, some of which were outlined by the Auditor General in her 2023 follow-up report². The report found that Canadians lack access to novel antibiotics available in other countries, and federal attention to the development of regulatory and economic incentives to address this gap is

¹ Global Leaders Group on AMR Report, March 2024

² Reports of the Auditor General of Canada to the Parliament of Canada: Antimicrobial Resistance, 2023

urgently needed. Additionally, investments in research and development of new antimicrobial agents and alternative therapies will be crucial in the fight against drug-resistant pathogens.

The development and dissemination of national antimicrobial prescribing guidelines announced in May 2024³ is welcome news but only scratches the surface of the problem. To enhance the effectiveness of that initiative, a public education campaign regarding the dangers of antibiotic misuse must be undertaken. This is a global public health threat and Canada is lagging in its response.

In March 2024, the World Health Organization (WHO) released a report outlining specific commitments that member countries should make to combat this threat¹, including surveillance and monitoring. Nationally, we do not have an accurate picture of the impact of AMR, as surveillance conducted through the Canadian Nosocomial Infection Surveillance Program (CNISP) is limited to data provided by a limited number of hospitals⁴ (88/1280 Canadian Hospitals participate). While this provides some valuable insight, it leaves significant gaps in data collection and hinders our comprehensive understanding of the problem.

By allocating resources to broadening AMR surveillance, Canada can better understand the prevalence and patterns of antimicrobial resistance, allowing for evidence-based strategies to be implemented to combat this issue effectively. Effective surveillance may also require additional funding for laboratory services, to ensure we have the best, and most timely detection methodologies to identify current and newly emerging antibiotic resistant organisms.

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. While the areas outlined above are of great importance, a “One Health” approach, which includes attention paid to antibiotics used in agriculture, is critical to success of the AMR movement. 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 health care. IPAC Canada is a registered not-for-profit organization with over 2100 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 making healthcare both safer and less expensive in hospitals, long-term care, and the community.

³ PHAC News Release May 17, 2024 “Government of Canada supports development & point-of-care dissemination of national antimicrobial prescribing guidelines”

⁴ Canadian Nosocomial Infection Surveillance Program. Healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial resistance in Canadian acute care hospitals, 2018–2022. *Can Commun Dis Rep* 2024;50(6):179–96. <https://doi.org/10.14745/ccdr.v50i06a02>