

Dean Del Mastro, Member of Parliament – Peterborough

Media Release

For immediate release



GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN RESEARCH ON ANTI-VIRAL DRUGS

(PETERBOROUGH, ON, September 25, 2009) – The Government of Canada is investing \$2 million to support the International Consortium on Anti-Virals (ICAV), a Canadian-based consortium of scientists who conduct research on low-cost antiviral therapies that can be used to combat viral infections including influenza.

“As the world copes with the threats posed by new and emerging pathogens, we must continue to expand research networks and build on existing scientific knowledge,” said Peterborough MP Dean Del Mastro who made the announcement today on behalf of Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq. “This funding, from the Pandemic Preparedness and Response Fund, will increase the availability of effective alternatives to high-cost anti-viral drugs for use in a variety of settings in Canada and abroad,” he said.

ICAV works to develop novel anti-virals for therapeutic purposes and to accelerate their delivery in Canada and abroad. The research is intended to build Canada’s preparedness and response capacity in the short, medium and long term.

The project has four main objectives:

- Establishing a rapid pre-clinical development path to generate anti-viral medications specific to the current H1N1 pandemic strain;
- Disseminating the results obtained from the research;
- Evaluating and prioritizing a complete range of development opportunities for other possible treatment options for viral infections including influenza; and
- Raising additional funds from outside sources through the efforts of ICAV’s independent philanthropic arm, the Foundation for Anti-virals (FAV).

ICAV will draw on the resources of a network of 250 scientists from 25 countries to achieve the four objectives. A number of top scientists from the network will be invited from around the world to international symposia planned for 2009 and 2010.

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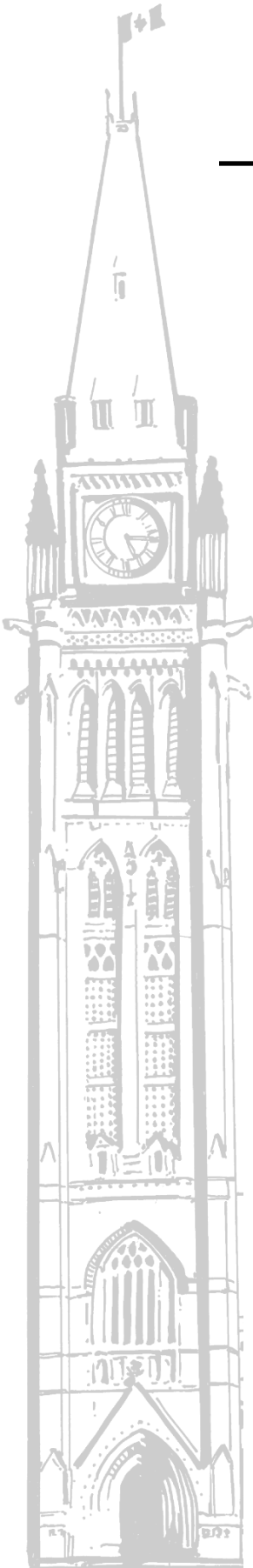
“Research is a key component of pandemic preparedness and response,” said Minister Agluk-kaq. The Pandemic Preparedness and Response Fund supports a range of research projects, including several that explore innovative solutions to anti-viral resistance as well as future treatment options.

“Progress on this front could potentially offer Canadians a greater degree of protection against illnesses caused by influenza and other viral infections,” said Mr. Del Mastro.

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