



News Release

For Immediate Release

Government of Canada invests in COVID-19 border study led by McMaster HealthLabs

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Hamilton, Ontario

Canadian Institutes of Health Research

To protect Canadians from the outbreak of COVID-19, in March 2020, the Government of Canada established restrictions to limit travel to Canada and put in place public health measures for travellers allowed to enter the country. Travellers are screened by public health officials on arrival at the border. They must quarantine for a period of 14 days if they have no symptoms of COVID-19 and self-isolate for the same period if they do have symptoms.

Today, the Honourable Filomena Tassi, Minister of Labour and Member of Parliament for Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas, on behalf of the Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health, announced that the Government of Canada will invest \$2.5 million in a study that will help us better understand the rate of COVID-19 infection among international travellers. The study will also review the importance of public health measures for travellers and assess the benefits and risks of an airport-based COVID-19 testing and surveillance program.

First initiated in September 2020, the *Canadian International COVID-19 Surveillance Border Study* is being conducted by McMaster HealthLabs (MHL) in partnership with Air Canada and the Greater Toronto Airport Authority. The funding from the Government of Canada, provided through a partnership between Health Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, will allow the MHL team to increase the number of participants to approximately 17,000, recruited from international travellers arriving at Toronto's Pearson Airport.

Quotes

"At the beginning of this pandemic, we introduced strong measures at the borders to keep Canadians safe. We've relied on data and evidence to respond to COVID-19, and as we gradually restart our economy, the findings of this study are vital to understand how best to protect the health of Canadians and the Canadian economy. I thank the team at McMaster HealthLabs, for their important work that will help support decisions about border measures that are based on science and evidence."

The Honourable Patty Hajdu

Minister of Health

"I want to congratulate Dr. Smieja and the whole team at McMaster HealthLabs, which stepped up quickly to work with universities, businesses and other partners to develop and test solutions to curb the social and economic impacts of COVID-19. Their work is another shining example of McMaster University's leadership and commitment to addressing challenges facing Canadians."

The Honourable Filomena Tassi

Minister of Labour and Member of Parliament for Hamilton West-Ancaster-Dundas

Associated Links

- [Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\)](#)
- [COVID-19: Travel, quarantine and borders](#)
- [McMaster HealthLabs](#)

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