

September 27, 2017

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau. P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Langevin Building
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0A2

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland. P.C. M. P.
Minister of Foreign Affairs
Global Affairs Canada
125 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0G2

Re: G7 2018 – Canada must demonstrate leadership, galvanize global attention, and marshal resources to address antimicrobial stewardship and antimicrobial resistance

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Freeland,

Canadians are increasingly becoming aware that antimicrobial resistance (AMR) poses a serious national and international public health threat. With new forms of resistance continuously emerging, the World Health Organization (WHO) has warned that without urgent, coordinated action, “a post-antibiotic era – in which common infections and minor injuries can kill – is a very real possibility for the 21st century.” Unless solutions are found, routine medical treatments may soon become too risky to undertake due to the threat of infection.

As organisations from across the country that share a concern for AMR, we are writing to strongly encourage Canada to adopt antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) and resistance as a Canadian government signature initiative at the upcoming G7 Summit in Charlevoix, Quebec (June 8-9, 2018). Antimicrobial stewardship is the concept of promoting appropriate antibiotic prescribing and usage in order to optimize treatment and patient outcomes, and prevent the development of multi-drug resistant organisms.

Antimicrobial resistance has far-reaching implications for humans, animals, healthcare, agriculture, the environment, security, the economy and global trade. The AMR situation is further compounded by the paucity of new antibiotics in the research and development pipeline. The lack of new antibiotics makes it critical for us to preserve the effectiveness of our current antibiotic arsenal.

Canada’s G7 presidency is an opportune time to galvanize global attention to AMS and AMR, agree to specific goals, and leverage resources for antimicrobial stewardship. To date, no single country has spearheaded an initiative around antimicrobial stewardship. Canada can be an international leader in ensuring that the right antibiotic is used at the right dose at the right time, and only when necessary. An initiative announced in 2018 on antimicrobial stewardship, endorsed by G7 Member States, the private sector, civil society, and the donor community, would position Canada as an international leader in this important area.

A global health, development and security threat

AMR poses a significant threat to global development and security. New forms of antimicrobial resistance are continuously emerging. Drug-resistant tuberculosis and gonorrhoea are spreading around the world. Sepsis, a deadly syndrome triggered by infections, is causing millions of deaths and massive health-care costs globally.



Inappropriate use of antibiotics and other antimicrobials is projected to cause 10 million deaths annually and to cost the global economy up to US \$100 trillion by 2050.

Goal 3 of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – which deals with health and well-being – is impossible to achieve without access to effective antimicrobials. Antimicrobials are an essential pillar of a functioning healthcare system. If current trends continue, interventions like surgery, chemotherapy, organ transplantation, and joint replacements will become more difficult or even too dangerous to undertake.

Recognizing the seriousness of the issue, the WHO adopted a Global Action Plan in 2015 and, in September 2016, the UN General Assembly convened a Special Session on AMR (only the fourth time in history that the General Assembly has addressed a health issue). Last May, G20 leaders signed a declaration on global health that included tackling AMR, and previous G7 meetings (including Germany 2015) have also confronted the issue. In July 2017, G20 leaders launched the Global Antimicrobial Resistance Collaboration Hub focused on invigorating health research (with support from Wellcome and the Gates Foundation). While these initiatives are laudable and underscore the global momentum around AMR, insufficient attention and resources have been directed to antimicrobial stewardship. The time is right for Canada to lead in this crucial area.

Promoting stewardship must be at the centre of the global response

AMR develops from misuse and overuse of antimicrobials in medical, veterinary, and agricultural sectors. It is estimated that up to 50% of all antimicrobials consumed in human health care may be used inappropriately and this proportion may be as high as 70% in some areas (e.g., long-term care and community practice). There is also significant overuse of antibiotics in the livestock sector. Contamination of the environment with antibiotics is also a growing concern. At the same time, in many low and medium income countries around the world, there is limited access to badly needed, high-quality therapies to combat infection, resulting in unnecessary deaths.

Treating antimicrobial resistant infections is a tremendous socioeconomic burden on the healthcare system. Antimicrobial stewardship can help reduce these infections and costs.

Antimicrobial stewardship: Canada can lead

Canada is well placed to champion antimicrobial stewardship as a Canadian government signature initiative at the G7 in 2018, working with G7 member states, the private sector, civil society and the donor community.

Canadian hospitals, universities, governments and the private sector have globally-recognized leaders in combatting AMR and advancing antimicrobial stewardship. Canada has some of the best antimicrobial stewardship programs in the world. Canadian research with respect to antimicrobial resistance is among the most innovative in the world, and Canada is also pioneering innovative antimicrobial stewardship research.



Leader francophone au service de ses collectivités
Francophone leader serving its communities

The signatories to this letter represent a wide range of stakeholders from across the country eager to collaborate with the government to use Canada’s G7 presidency opportunity – and key national and global events leading up to it – to support global and domestic initiatives to promote and advance antimicrobial stewardship. Many of the signatories to this letter are already working together to advance antimicrobial stewardship, contributed to the development of [Putting the Pieces Together: A National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Stewardship](#) (released in early 2017), and are also part of an inter-professional network ‘AMS Canada’ – with over 100 members from across the country working to advance antimicrobial stewardship – that is ready and willing to fully support a Canadian government led initiative.

We would also like to acknowledge the important efforts made by the federal government in response to AMR thus far, including its endorsement of WHO’s Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance and, in particular, the recent release of the [Pan-Canadian Framework on Antimicrobial Resistance and Antimicrobial Use](#) providing an overarching policy frame that lays out strategic goals and guiding principles to address AMR in Canada. Investments to support AMR-related innovation and AMS research through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research have been timely and appropriate, as are the recently announced changes to the Food and Drug Regulations which will better protect Canadians against the risk of antimicrobial resistance, by better controlling access to veterinary antimicrobial drugs for food-producing animals.

Canada is also headquarters of the Health Standards Organization (HSO) – an organization poised to meet the needs of governments in the research and development of national and global standards and assessment practices. Through the leadership of its standing Medication Management Technical Committee and its AMR working group, HSO aims to translate scientific and empirical evidence into practical requirements that are available to providers, policy-makers and the public. HSO has issued an Antimicrobial Stewardship Standard which it plans to review and expand by 2018.

Antimicrobial stewardship: A time for action

Leading up to the G7 in 2018 and beyond, we encourage the government of Canada to work with Canadian antimicrobial stewardship leaders, including provinces/territories, the research community, clinicians and key influencers in Canada’s healthcare space, to launch and facilitate a national and global conversation on the need to ensure that antibiotics are used in the best way possible to preserve their effectiveness at home and abroad.

We further encourage the Canadian government to facilitate and create the conditions for the launching of a global initiative on antimicrobial stewardship at Canada’s G7 with governments, the private sector, civil society, and foundations. We believe that this initiative must include agreement on specific goals to promote the judicious use of antimicrobials including careful monitoring of antimicrobial use, such as:

- Promoting and leading the development and adoption of specific measurable targets and standards for the appropriate use of antibiotics;

- Promoting and facilitating a move toward shared data and monitoring of antimicrobial use and resistance globally. Canada could play a role as custodian of a global antimicrobial use data bank;
- Supporting collaborative efforts to learn more about how best to survey and accredit stewardship programs to promote effective practices; and,
- Promoting and funding research on antimicrobial stewardship across the spectrum of healthcare and animal agriculture.

In closing, we hope that you will see this letter as a testimony of our commitment to this issue and our willingness to help the federal government to address the challenges posed by AMR. We hope that you will give serious consideration to our proposal; we look forward to discussing it with you, and would be pleased to work with you and your officials to ensure its success.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. We appreciate all you have done to advance the response to AMR thus far, and look forward to continuing to work with you to advance the health of all Canadians.

Sincerely,



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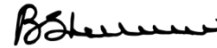
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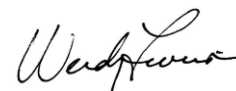
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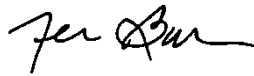
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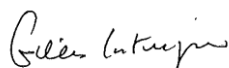
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