

CANADIAN MEDICAL FORUM

FORUM MÉDICAL CANADIEN

A forum for consultation, relationship and consensus building, strategy development and joint action

Une tribune de consultation, de relation et de consensualisation, de réflexion stratégique et d'action concertée

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Canadian Federation of Medical Students • Fédération des étudiants en médecine du Canada

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Medical Council of Canada • Conseil médical du Canada

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Canadian Forces Health Services Group • Groupe des Services de santé des Forces canadiennes

HealthCareCAN • SoinsSantéCAN

The Canadian Medical Protective Association • L'association canadienne de protection médicale

February 2021

RE: Canadian Medical Forum supports the COVID-19 vaccines authorized in Canada

The Canadian Medical Forum brings together leaders of Canada's major national medical organizations to discuss issues of priority to physicians, their patients, and the Canadian healthcare system. As such, we are writing today in support of Canada's COVID-19 immunization program and to encourage Canadians to get vaccinated.

The COVID-19 pandemic has killed over 20,000 Canadians in less than a year and is bringing our health care system to the edge of collapse. There is good news on the horizon as the COVID-19 vaccines are starting to be administered around the country.

We must support vaccination to end this pandemic.

Vaccination is a critical component for control of the virus and the best way to protect you, your family and friends from COVID-19. As it becomes available, we collectively endorse vaccination for all eligible individuals including physicians and other health care workers, patients, and the public at large. We encourage anyone who has concerns to speak with their physician or health care provider.

Most importantly, vaccination will help save the lives of our most vulnerable Canadians. But in order to achieve this goal, enough of us need to receive the vaccine, so that transmission of the virus is suppressed and no longer poses a threat to health or our health care system. Until then, we must remain vigilant until this level of immunity is achieved. Even after getting vaccinated, we must continue to follow all existing public health measures, such as physical distancing, hand washing, and mask wearing, until the virus can no longer spread and infect others.

We support and have confidence that Health Canada's rigorous evaluation process will ensure the safety and effectiveness of the COVID-19 vaccines for Canadians. Vaccine producers leveraged decades of prior research, advances in science and technology, and unprecedented levels of global collaboration and funding, to rapidly develop the much-needed COVID-19 vaccines. Although adverse reactions can occur in some individuals, side effects of the vaccine are generally mild to moderate. Canada also has a strong vaccine safety monitoring system in place that proactively engages healthcare professionals, vaccine manufacturers, provinces and territories.

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For physicians, it is vital to stay informed on trial data and available resources to make informed decisions and recommendations for patients. Patients trust their health care providers and leaders, so your voice and example are important. We urge physicians to get vaccinated as soon as you are able. Be prepared to have conversations with your patients and other health care workers so you can address any hesitancy or concerns and inspire their confidence. Recognize the importance of practicing cultural safety, given the disproportionate impact of the pandemic on marginalized communities and how a myriad of factors have created a legacy of mistrust in vaccination programs and the healthcare system.

The arrival of COVID-19 vaccines in Canada is a pivotal moment which offers a safe and effective way to help protect Canadians against COVID-19. We all play a role in reducing the burden on our health care system and saving lives of our fellow Canadians. Getting vaccinated is the best hope we have to move forward.

For additional information on COVID-19 vaccines, please consult the Public Health Agency of Canada website <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/vaccines.html>

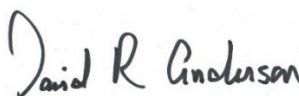
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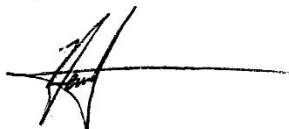
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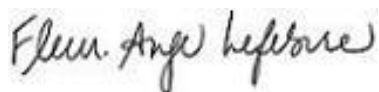
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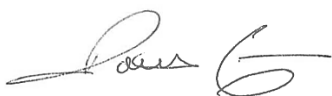
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