



THE HOSPITAL FOR
SICK CHILDREN

President & CEO's Office

Mr John Gilmour
CEO
Canada HealthLabs
120 Adelaide Street West, Suite 2150
Toronto, ON M5H 1T1

Toronto, September 14, 2020

Dear Mr. Gilmour,

I am writing to extend the support from The Hospital for Sick Children to Canada HealthLabs.

The Hospital for Sick Children is a world-class paediatric tertiary care hospital and has played important roles during the current pandemic crisis. We have supported testing and IPAC support of congregate settings of individuals with physical and mental disabilities as well as youth and young family shelters. More recently, we have been supporting schools about health and safety measures to ensure a maximum mitigation risk reduction of transmission and infection with COVID-19. Lastly, a number of our researchers have been collaborating with the University of Toronto on important areas that span from genome sequencing, development of novel testing methodologies as well as development of new vaccines against COVID-19.

But COVID-19 is having a significant effect on our operations. A number of our clinical and non-clinical staff members have been affected by the closure of the borders and have not been able to visit family members, even during extenuating circumstances. Furthermore, as children are now going back to school, we do have a particular interest in exploring surveillance studies for children and school staff as this has a direct effect on our staff members who have children in school.

The potential role of reassurance testing, which will provide for access to testing outside the health system for non-clinical purposes, is immense. The model proposed by Canada HealthLabs will allow for testing that could help reopen borders and for keeping schools open, which will directly benefit thousands of our staff members.

Recent experience with staff members with extenuating family circumstances who did have to travel to Canada and required testing has demonstrated that it is extremely difficult to get testing for that purpose through existing means. While there is potential for new point of care tests, including some being developed by our own faculty, it will take a considerable amount of time and evaluation before they are rapidly available. Similarly, the current shortcoming of testing will directly impact our societal efforts to keep schools open.

The proposed Canada HealthLabs will also provide a significant platform of research, as is being demonstrated through the Border Testing Study at Pearson, led by The University of Toronto. In addition, we see tremendous value of this platform for surveillance testing in schools. In particular, the flow of specimens

Ronald D. Cohn
M.D. FACMG



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that will be generated will be a significant resource for those seeking to evaluate new diagnostic technologies and as you know, and The Hospital for Sick Children is actively working on some new methodologies.

We therefore strongly support the creation of a national network of fast, readily-accessible PCR tests using self-collected samples as well as the integration with novel diagnostic testing methodologies. We firmly believe that while your solution is to be created outside the health care system, given that you are using the same methodologies, it creates an opportunity that can be easily translated into clinically approved settings.

We are pleased to endorse Canada HealthLabs to the Government of Canada.

Please contact me if you require additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ronald D. Cohn".

Ronald D. Cohn, M.D., FACMG

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