

Scientists, experts, and long haulers call for urgent action on Long COVID

1.4 million Canadians reported living with the debilitating symptoms long after infection

October 20, 2022 – Scientists, clinicians, relevant experts and advocates affected by Long COVID are calling on the federal government to take leadership in the development and funding of an equitable, national action plan to address Long COVID.

Long COVID is a persistent health problem that occurs after the acute stage of COVID infection. Anywhere from [10 to up to 30](#) per cent of people who were infected by the COVID-19 virus are estimated to be suffering from Long COVID. Statistics Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada released the [results of a national survey](#) for Long COVID revealing 1.4 million Canadians report lasting impacts from their initial infection.

Common debilitating symptoms include fatigue, shortness of breath, and cognitive dysfunction. These [symptoms](#) not only negatively impact personal health and well-being, but they also create significant burden to our already over-stretched healthcare systems and come with substantial economic cost. While Canadian specific data is not yet available, [US calculations](#) demonstrate that the annual financial burden of Long COVID could be in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

Immediate leadership from the federal government is required to develop and deploy an equitable national strategy that can mitigate the impacts of Long COVID. This strategy must be pan-Canadian, patient-centred and include: a concise definition of Long COVID, the collection of essential data, increased funding for multidisciplinary research, a national network of health practitioners, a policy framework, and a communications strategy.

QUOTES

“Long COVID is a multi-system, multi-symptomatic condition, and therefore, understanding and treating it will require multidisciplinary research and care. Canada excels in collaborative research and is well positioned to bring leadership on the global stage. However, we need a national action plan and substantial, sustained investments from the federal government. The situation is urgent, and we cannot wait any longer to act.”

- Inez Jabalpurwala, Global Director, VINEx & Executive Leader, Brain Health Nexus

“People are hurting. Those without tight-knit social networks, those without substantial emergency savings, and those without private health insurance. We are too sick to work, and we are living paycheque to paycheque. Canadians are being left behind. We need help and can no longer afford to wait for it.”

- Susie Goulding, Founder, COVID Long-Haulers Support Group Canada, long hauler

“Canada must act now in a strategic manner to help ease the burden of Long COVID on our healthcare systems, on our economy and on the lives of those who are struggling. We need to do the research needed to better understand this disease and to develop the treatments that will ensure that all Canadians have rapid access to high quality care as soon as possible.

- Dr. Stan Kutcher, Independent Senator for Nova Scotia

For more information:

Matthieu Santerre
VINEx (Viral Neuro Exploration)
matthieu@vinex.ca

Lauren Stokes
Office of Senator Stan Kutcher
Lauren.Stokes@sen.parl.gc.ca

Amanda Fruci
AF Communications
Amanda@afcommunications.ca