



CANADIAN VETERINARY  
MEDICAL ASSOCIATION  
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE  
DES MÉDECINS VÉTÉRINAIRES

December 10, 2020

The Honourable Patty Hajdu,  
Minister of Health  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, Ontario  
K1A 0A6

Email: [Patty.Hajdu@parl.gc.ca](mailto:Patty.Hajdu@parl.gc.ca)

Dear Minister,

The Canadian Veterinary Medical Association (CVMA) is the national body representing the interests of the veterinary community in Canada. We congratulate you and your colleagues in the Public Health Agency of Canada on the release of Canada's *COVID-19 Immunization Plan: Saving Lives and Livelihood* on December 8, 2020.

As a key stakeholder in animal health, food security, and public health, the CVMA appreciates the complexity of the effort to protect Canadians from COVID-19 through immunization and acknowledges the importance of acting expeditiously to protect vulnerable and high-risk populations with what is expected to be an initially limited supply of vaccines. In this regard, we are pleased to note that Canada's COVID-19 Immunization Plan will rely on expert advice as the basis for federal/provincial/territorial government decisions on priority groups for immunization.

Canadian veterinary practitioners are the only professionals who are qualified to treat and diagnose disease in animals, including zoonotic disease. Soon after the pandemic struck in 2020, veterinary services were deemed essential by provinces and territories through legislation or effectively so through policy. The rationale for these decisions included the knowledge that the work of farm animal practitioners working in tandem with producers directly supports public health, food safety, food security, and animal welfare. Also, companion animal practitioners work to protect the health and welfare of pets and thereby help protect Canadians from diseases such as rabies. An important additional factor in the current situation is that pets are known to support the mental health of their owners during times of stress.

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The CVMA respectfully requests that the essential work of the veterinary practice team be recognized in further FPT deliberations regarding priority groups for immunizations that may take place in the coming weeks and months. We ask that you encourage provinces to consider including veterinary teams in their immunization plans at the earliest opportunity.

The CVMA would be pleased to act as liaison with the provinces and territories on this important matter if you so desire.

Please do not hesitate to contact the CVMA through the office of the CEO – Laura-Anne Rawes, CEO Assistant, [lrawes@cvma-acmv.org](mailto:lrawes@cvma-acmv.org), 613-236-1162, Ext. 111 (office), or 613-668-5450 (mobile).

Sincerely,



Dr. Enid Stiles, DVM  
President

Cc: Iain Stewart  
President of the Public Health Agency of Canada

Dr. Theresa Tam  
Chief Public Health Officer of Canada