



CRISIS TO CATALYST. HOW COVID19 TAUGHT US WE NEED TO DO BETTER FOR CANADIANS LIVING WITH CANCER

An urgent plea to decision makers to prioritize cancer care in Canada using COVID19 as a blueprint to reduce the burden of cancer in Canada..

montréal. november 21. 2023 – *the cancer collaborative* announces the release of its white paper, 'Crisis to Catalyst. How COVID19 taught us we need to do better for Canadians living with cancer.' The colab.paper highlights some of the notable achievements made during the COVID19 response in Canada. These lessons serve as a blueprint for revolutionizing cancer care and mitigating the impact of cancer. As the world confronted the unprecedented challenges of the COVID19 crisis, significant lessons were learned and invaluable strategies were implemented to protect public health. The paper highlights seven lessons with consideration of special populations that include mental health, geriatric populations and women's health.

Key recommendations from the paper include

- 1. COLAB(ORATION).** Perhaps one of the most critical lessons to occur during the pandemic was the impact of the collaborations that materialized across several sectors. Collaborations have demonstrated the power of cross sector partnerships in addressing and accelerating complex public health challenges.
- 2. (re)IMAGINING PATIENT PARTNERSHIPS *and care.*** The pandemic's spotlight on health disparities has motivated initiatives to enhance patient partnership models in healthcare, underscoring the pivotal role of primary care physicians as guardians of Canadians' health.
- 3. RESILIENT & SUSTAINABLE HEALTH SYSTEMS.** A lack of investment in health led to our unpreparedness during the pandemic, highlighting the necessity for a resilient and sustainable health system, including its workforce.
- 4. DATA. the foundation for evidence based action.** The real-time collection and analysis of data have played a crucial role in shaping policy decisions, allocating resources, and implementing public health interventions throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This approach enables governments to respond swiftly, utilize predictive models, identify valuable patterns, and continuously inform decision-making and policy development. Recognizing data as the cornerstone, its efficient utilization is paramount for effective cancer control and care.



5. **(DISRUPTIVE) INNOVATION for transforming cancer care.** The pace of innovation in cancer care has been met with a system and processes that are outdated and rigid. Transformation and modernization can happen quickly and effectively but only when the political will to embrace disruption occurs.
6. **ADDRESSING INEQUITIES (social determinants of health).** By addressing inequities we can alleviate the disproportionate burden of cancer on marginalized communities and improve overall health outcomes for all Canadians.
7. **PREVENTION (the best defence).** The pandemic strained health systems, prompting vital prevention measures like social distancing and masks. This underscored the importance of prevention in enhancing health outcomes and reducing costs for treatable illnesses and chronic conditions.

Amongst the many lessons learned during the pandemic, perhaps the most significant takeaway is the inextricable link between health and the economy. Healthcare must be reframed as an investment rather than an expenditure. This paper asks decision makers and policymakers to rethink the value of cancer care in Canada.

"We believe that the lessons we've learned from the pandemic can serve as a catalyst for positive change in cancer care across Canada," said Sabrina Hanna, the lead author of the paper and managing director of the cancer collaborative (colab). "Cancer has been a silent pandemic. By 2040 it is expected to reach pandemic proportions. We must start prioritizing cancer today."

The paper is available for [download](#). We encourage healthcare professionals, policymakers, patient advocacy groups, and the general public to access this valuable resource and join us in asking our governments to do better for Canadians living with Cancer.

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Join the Discussion. stay tuned for a speaker series to further discuss the findings, recommendations and call to actions of the paper and join the conversation by using the #prioritizecancer or #getbetter

about *the cancer collaborative (colab)*.

colab is an advocacy think tank dedicated to driving positive change in cancer care. through evidence based advocacy and multi stakeholder collaboration, *the cancer collaborative* strives to make a meaningful contribution to cancer care.