



## Pandemic Preparedness Strategic Research Initiative

**The issue:** Influenza causes fever, sore throat, muscle pain and fatigue. Most people recover, but several thousand people worldwide die from the flu every year. New strains of the influenza virus occasionally emerge to cause a pandemic. Most experts agree that the next pandemic is overdue.

An influenza pandemic would have severe health, economic and social consequences. Between 2 - 7.4 million people could die, including up to 58,000 Canadians. The recent emergence of the H5N1 (bird flu) has heightened concerns that an influenza pandemic is close at hand.

**The response:** The Canadian Institutes of Health Research Institute of Infection and Immunity (CIHR-III) created the Pandemic Preparedness Strategic Research Initiative (PPSRI). The PPSRI is supported by the Government of Canada; in May 2006 it announced funding of \$21.5 million over five years to support pandemic influenza research. A PPSRI Task Group, composed of representatives who carry out relevant research as well as members who will use the new research knowledge, guides the activities of the PPSRI.

The Task Group, in consultation with stakeholders, identified four strategic research areas:

- ◆ **Vaccines and immunization programs:** optimize existing vaccination programs and develop new vaccines and technologies
- ◆ **The virus:** better understand the biology of the influenza virus and develop rapid diagnostics
- ◆ **Prevention and treatment:** study modes of transmission, strategies for prevention and optimal use of anti-viral drugs
- ◆ **Ethics, legal and social contract:** conduct research in risk communication, resource allocation and the regulatory approval process

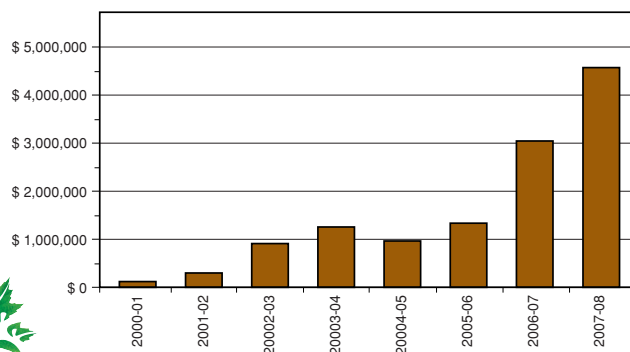
CIHR-III has taken a lead role in partnering with other CIHR Institutes and organizations (see table) to initiate funding opportunities for research in these strategic areas. Research is underway. CIHR and partners are also working to ensure that the research results are communicated to those who will use the new information.

**The impact:** It is anticipated that pandemic research will: help prevent or mitigate a pandemic; develop better ways to control the spread of influenza; and, provide better treatment to affected individuals. PPSRI will also help develop a strong network of researchers, ensuring Canada has the necessary expertise to respond effectively in the event of a pandemic. This expertise can also be used to assist other countries in crisis.

### Partners

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research
- Canada's Research-Based Pharmaceutical Companies (Rx&D) Health Research Foundation
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency
- Canadian Foundation for Infectious Diseases/ Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada
- International Development Research Centre
- Public Health Agency of Canada

### CIHR Funding for Pandemic and Influenza Related Research



CIHR IRSC

Institut des maladies  
infectieuses et immunitaires  
Institute of Infection and Immunity



Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
Instituts de recherche en santé du Canada

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