

## Release notice

# *The Chief Public Health Officer of Canada's Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2020*

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On October 28, Dr. Theresa Tam, the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada (CPHO), released her 2020 annual report on the state of public health in Canada, entitled *From risk to resilience: An equity approach to COVID-19*. The report describes COVID-19's broader consequences and is a call to incorporate a health equity approach into pandemic preparedness, response and recovery.

The report reviews the unprecedented impacts the pandemic posed to Canadian society. It shows that the pandemic unfolded differently across the country from January to the end of August 2020 and that the severity of outcomes was influenced by factors such as age, underlying medical conditions and inequities. The report highlights how some individuals and groups, such as long-term care home residents, workers in essential services, groups working and living in confined spaces and those who face systemic marginalization, faced disproportionately higher rates of illness and mortality during the first part of the pandemic.

Driven by the evidence identified in the report, the CPHO calls for action in three key areas to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 and strengthen our nation's preparedness for future public health emergencies:

- 1. Sustained leadership, engagement and governance** at all levels for structural change across the health, social and economic sectors. Practically, this means that pandemic plans need to be multi-sectoral and that progress on collaborative actions is measured and adjusted until inequities are eliminated.
- 2. Harnessing the power of social cohesion** as a key ingredient to controlling and minimizing the negative impacts of this pandemic. Communities and countries that have strong norms of taking care of each other can better prevent and control resurgences.
- 3. Strengthening public health capacity** to ensure that Canada has a health system that is able to surge and adapt during a crisis while maintaining capacity to address ongoing critical issues. A robust and agile public health system that has the necessary workforce and tools is critical in tackling emergencies and inequities.

For the full report, see [canada.ca/CPHOreport](https://canada.ca/CPHOreport), and for up-to-date information on COVID-19, consult [canada.ca/COVID-19](https://canada.ca/COVID-19).

