



January 3, 2025

Dr. Theresa Tam
Chief Public Health Officer of Canada
Public Health Agency of Canada
130 Colonnade Rd
Ottawa, ON, K1A 0K9

RE: CSTM Letter in support of national surveillance programs.

Dear Dr. Tam,

On behalf of the Canadian Society for Transfusion Medicine (CSTM) membership, we are writing today to formally express our concern with announced plans to sunset the Public Health Agency of Canada's Blood Safety Contribution Program by April 1, 2026.

The CSTM is a multidisciplinary society which promotes and supports best practice in transfusion medicine in Canada through education, communication and partnerships.

CSTM believes that Canada's national health body must continue to have ultimate responsibility for the national blood system and for the quality, safety and sufficiency of the supply of blood and blood products. The federal health system should continue to provide effective leadership and governance for a national hemovigilance system and should define the scope and elements of that system. The need for national leadership and coordination is important to ensure consistent implementation across the country.

Canada is one of a number of developed countries that has a national hemovigilance system with a strategy to enhance transfusion safety and monitoring in Canada to protect Canadian patients. We have shared our data and experiences with similar international societies to aid in developing strategies to improve the safety for donors and patients.

Hemovigilance activities need to be adequately resourced to reflect the critical importance of a safe blood supply in Canada. Sustained investment in hemovigilance is essential to protect the health of Canadians and prevent future crises. We should continue to value and honor the lessons learnt from the tainted blood scandal and the findings of 1997 Royal Commission of Inquiry on the Blood System in Canada (led by Justice Krever). To note, in 2020, the Value-for-Money Audit Blood Management and Safety report from the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario reinforced in one of their recommendations that improved tracking, reporting and annual collating of data was required.

Sincerely,
CSTM Board of Directors