BACKGROUNDER: COVID-19 Program

Creating a safe return to work environment; virtual mental health and wellness for Canadians

The Digital Technology Supercluster (Supercluster) is investing $60 million to work with Canadian companies, post-secondary institutions and not-for-profit organizations to improve the health and safety of Canadians by supporting Canada's commitment to address the COVID-19 outbreak while building expertise and capacity to respond to future urgent situations.

The Supercluster's COVID-19 Program confirms our commitment to support 'Team Canada' to address COVID-19. Our Supercluster Members and Associates have collaborated to create over 400 ideas and proposals focused on COVID-19. Organizations involved in these proposals represent a broad cross-section of the Canadian economy including healthcare organizations, software companies, industry associations and tech innovators from sectors as diverse as precision health, manufacturing, and data analytics.

By investing in projects that align with the critical needs identified by the Government of Canada and Provincial governments across the country, the Supercluster supports Canada's Plan to Mobilize Industry to fight COVID-19. We work with our Members and Associates to deliver digital solutions that solve problems created by this, and potentially future pandemics.

Supercluster COVID-19 projects facilitating a safe return to work and community and delivery of virtual health care include:

Confidential Virtual Addiction Treatment for Healthcare Workers
Lead organization: ALAViDA
Partners: B.C. Ministry of Mental Health and Addiction, B.C. Nurses Union, Benefits By Design, Fraser Health Authority, Hospital Employees' Union, Health Sciences Association of B.C., Pacific Blue Cross, Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia

COVID-19 has layered a second public health emergency on top of the ongoing opioid epidemic and healthcare professionals, faced with unprecedented demands, are at an elevated risk for substance use and abuse. This project will provide healthcare workers with access to confidential virtual care and evidence-based treatment options for substance use, regardless of where they live or work and assess the potential for widespread adoption of the program into existing employee benefit plans.

Digital Mental Health Tools for Healthcare Workers Providing COVID-19 Care
Lead organization: Starling Minds
Partners: Genome BC, Starling Minds, University of British Columbia

In the rapidly evolving pandemic caused by COVID-19, healthcare organizations and frontline workers are responding to unprecedented demands. This project will work to build a suite of readily accessible and interactive digital therapy tools to help healthcare organizations deliver personalized mental health care to workers. The project will have an initial focus on helping Canadian healthcare organizations and its 1.7 million frontline workers caring for COVID-19 patients.

Digital Telework for Remote Physical Work
Lead organization: Sanctuary AI
Contributors: AInBC, Expeto, Microsoft, University of British Columbia

Physical interactions in labour intensive environments, such as healthcare, contribute to the spread of COVID-19 amongst healthcare workers and vulnerable populations. This project aims to expand beyond the existing use of video and audio technologies for the virtual work environment and test the use of robots in long-term care and clinic settings using 4G/5G networks and digital medical tools such as digital stethoscopes and biometric monitoring to improve patient care, patient outcomes, and the work environment for healthcare teams.

Early Detection of COVID-19 through Artificial Intelligence
Lead organization: Patriot One
Partners: Cincinnati Reds MLB at Great American Ball Park, Cisco Co-Innovation Centre, Los Angeles Football Club MLS at Banc of California Stadium, University of British Columbia-Okanagan, University of North Dakota

Early detection and mitigation of potential infections is critical to flattening the curve and minimizing future waves of pandemic outbreaks. Current testing requires close contact to measure body temperature on an individual basis. Being able to scan large numbers of people in hospitals, stores and airports will be an important tool to ensure the health of Canadians. This project applies existing security cameras and computer vision technology to develop a passive screening system to identify people with elevated temperatures who are at risk of having COVID-19, protecting the health and safety of Canadians.

Looking Glass: Protecting Canadians in a Return to Community

Lead organization: Kings Distributed Systems

Partners: aiSight, Limestone Analytics, Riskthinking.AI, Distributed Compute Labs, Queen's University

Contributors: AMPD, CENGN, Dymond, Krate Distributed Information Systems, PHEMI Systems, Server Cloud Canada, and multiple municipalities in Ontario, B.C., Newfoundland and Saskatchewan

Clear, evidence-based understanding of the impact of decisions made to protect the health of Canadians is needed to inform good policy making. This project will provide possible benefits and risks based on science-driven modelling to better inform public policy and practice, for government and industry, as physical distancing measures, reopening of schools and businesses, and widespread testing are considered, and the country looks towards a return to work and community.

Making Virtual Care Happen: COVID-19 & the Health Connect App

Lead organizations: Thrive Health, Providence Health Care and Foundry

COVID-19 is rapidly compounding mental health and wellness issues and access to care, particularly for Canada's youth, where 1 in 5 youth are experiencing mental health or substance use challenges, and fewer than 25% are receiving appropriate services. The Health Connect App will expand access to mental health services, substance use and physical health care, walk-in counselling and peer support using virtual tools and intuitive technology.

Stronger Together: Social Infrastructure for Community Health

Lead organization: Curatio Networks

Partners: Age-Well, Cloud DX, On Call Health, Pacific Blue Cross, Simon Fraser University, University of British Columbia, University Hospital Network, Wellness Garage, Zu.com

Hospitals, doctors and community organizations need to support patients who are no longer able to take part in face to face outpatient and support programs due to COVID-19. This project combines remote patient monitoring with a private social network platform to deliver ongoing care for discharged patients who need it. This tool will keep patients healthy at home and socially supported and provide healthcare providers a single, comprehensive solution for remote monitoring and engaging with their patients.

Risk Management Frameworks for Workplace Safety

Lead organization: ecoMine

Partners: Patriot One, University of British Columbia

As Canada and other countries develop strategies for economic recovery and returning to business, the challenge each government and business faces will be how to develop solutions

that can mitigate COVID-19 spread and the risks to a safe return to places of employment. In this COVID-19 Screening Project, ecoMine, a Vancouver-based biochemistry company, will assess the feasibility of its innovative, low-cost, on-the-spot screening technology for the detection of COVID-19. With the support of Patriot One, Canada's leader in visible and invisible threat detection, the ecoMine COVID-19 Screening Project will also develop a roadmap for integrating on-the-spot screening results into secure data architectures, to provide a holistic approach to public health and safety.

Media Contact:
Elysa Darling
elysa@switchboardpr.com
587-890-9833