



## The Canadian Nuclear Isotope Council turns two

*Celebrating success and looking for opportunity*

**April 9, 2020:** It's only been two years, but the Canadian Nuclear Isotope Council (CNIC) has quickly emerged as the champion of Canada's involvement in the world's health-care industry through the production of medical and industrial isotopes.

Launched in 2018, the CNIC is an independent organization consisting of representatives from various levels within the Canadian health sector, nuclear industry, isotope supply chain, medical profession, researchers and academics convened specifically to advocate for our country's role in the production of the world's isotope supply. The CNIC serves as a voice in safeguarding the continued availability of isotopes, ensuring our public policies are risk-informed and science-based, and support the highest levels of public health and safety.

Since its inception the CNIC has achieved tremendous growth, expanding from just 15 member organizations to well over 60 members and growing today. Our impact has been acknowledged by multiple levels of government across Canada. Despite this progress, we've only just begun.

Today, our national isotope sector is helping in the fight against COVID-19. As this terrifying pandemic unfolds, Canadian businesses are playing a critical role in helping to support the demands of health-care workers and facilities. Given the high demand for sterile PPE, there's been an increase globally in the use of Cobalt-60 for irradiation which sterilizes medical devices such as sutures, gloves, gowns and syringes. While other sterilization methods take between 7-14 days before products are available for use, irradiation technology powered by cobalt ensures these materials are now being processed within a day.

In fact, the Chinese Ministry of Industry and Information Technology indicated that during the peak of their response to COVID-19 the use of irradiation was increased to ensure that higher volumes of protective clothing could be provided to the front lines as quickly as possible. An estimated 100,000 pieces of protective clothing are now being processed daily – a significant uptick in volume that will save lives.

While this is just one example, Canada's nuclear isotope program has also pioneered a new era in cancer-fighting treatments and research and development using isotopes. Without a champion, however, Canada and its provinces risk ceding that leadership role. That should concern Canadians as no one wants to wake up in a world where patients don't have access to access to the most innovative treatments at an affordable price with built in reliability. That's why 63 per cent of Canadians support the development of a national strategy for isotopes to ensure Canada remains at the forefront of this sector.



There are solutions and one of the foundations upon which the CNIC was created is to work with government in finding them. Leveraging existing infrastructure, creating redundancy in supply, and supporting Canada's isotope industry by developing policies and a strategy that aim to foster competitiveness, supports the promotion and development of isotopes both for export and to be used in fighting cancer. This will not only have a significant positive impact on human health across the globe, but will expand Canada's leadership role globally.

Such investments would exhibit a commitment to Canada's role as a leader in nuclear medicine, and dramatically bolster the country's capacity to innovate while delivering substantial economic and societal benefits to both Canadians and patients around the globe. With the size of the global isotope market projected to grow to more than \$17.1 billion (US) by 2023, Canada stands on the edge of a tremendous opportunity.

It is time for all levels of government to come together and work toward a common goal that helps fight cancer and saves lives. To achieve success, this pivotal sector must be appropriately profiled in the public discourse. Canada's isotope industry stands ready to work to deliver on its vision of growth, prosperity and a brighter future for generations to come.

Sincerely,

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