

LETTERS

Canada remains actively engaged in the efforts to fight Ebola

We wish to respond to some of the comments made in your *CMAJ* News article “Ebola needed better coordinated Canadian response.”¹

When Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea experienced the world’s largest outbreak of Ebola, Canada was among the first to respond. In June 2014, a Public Health Agency of Canada mobile lab and team were deployed to the region, working alongside Médecins Sans Frontières to provide rapid diagnostic support to local health care workers. This helped local health care efforts to quickly identify, isolate and care for patients with Ebola. This first pioneering mobile laboratory was quickly joined by two others, which were moved to where they were most needed and staffed by rotating teams of Canadian volunteers.

In November 2014, the Government of Canada launched the “Join the Fight Against Ebola” campaign in partnership with the Canadian Red Cross; the campaign focused on recruiting Canadian medical doctors and nurses, and psychosocial support workers to contribute to the fight against the outbreak. This recruitment campaign was incredibly suc-

cessful, with over double the number of applicants that were needed to volunteer. In addition, we are very proud to note that Canada also deployed 79 Canadian Armed Forces medical and support staff who provided medical care to 90 local and international health care workers at the United Kingdom’s Kerry Town Treatment Unit in Sierra Leone.

The Public Health Agency of Canada also deployed French-speaking emergency management, epidemiology and border health specialists to collaborate with the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention team in Guinea in March 2015. Epidemiologists were also mobilized to work in Sierra Leone to support public health preparedness in countries surrounding those affected by Ebola.

In total, 60 Public Health Agency of Canada specialists and laboratory experts have been deployed to West Africa, and our work in the region continues.

Canada’s approach has been comprehensive, including financial assistance of more than \$110 million, as well as technical and in-kind contributions, such as the donation of Ebola vaccine to the World Health Organization, and is intended to help stop the outbreak, treat the infected, meet the humanitarian needs arising from the crisis and reduce associated threats to health and security for Canadians. We would urge any-

one interested to find out more about Canada’s efforts to fight the outbreak both internationally and at home, by visiting the Canada’s response to Ebola Web page (available at www.healthycanadians.gc.ca/diseases-conditions-maladies-affections/disease-maladie/ebola/response-reponse/index-eng.php).

The lessons we have learned with our international partners have not only served to confirm many of our best practices but also to improve future responses. The challenge and priority in the short term is to sustain international efforts to get to zero cases and to minimize the risk of resurgence. Canada remains actively engaged to support these efforts, and Canadians should be proud of the effort we have contributed to fight Ebola.

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Reference

1. Owens B. Ebola needed better coordinated Canadian response. *CMAJ* 2015;187:E365.