



## **CTS and CSRT encouraged by PHAC's recognition of aerosol transmission of COVID-19**

November 18, 2021

**Ottawa, ON** – The Canadian Thoracic Society (CTS) and Canadian Society of Respiratory Therapists (CSRT) are encouraged by the recent statement from Dr. Tam, the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada, acknowledging COVID-19 transmission through aerosols. This recognition comes after extensive advocacy efforts by the CTS and CSRT throughout the pandemic for broader recognition of aerosol transmission to push for improved protocols, guidelines, ventilation, and proper personal protective equipment (PPE).

Throughout the pandemic, there has been conflicting guidance across the country regarding the airborne transmission of COVID-19 as some health authorities had not previously accepted the science. The CTS and CSRT convened national roundtable meetings in May and November to share evidence, to develop strategies to better protect healthcare providers and patients in clinical settings and to build consensus on the issue among various stakeholders in the healthcare field. The CTS and CSRT are hopeful that the recognition of aerosol transmission from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) will be a catalyst for elevated and clearer standards across the country.

"Since the beginning of the pandemic, the CTS took a cautious approach to our own position statements and guidance for members regarding the use of proper N95 masks, time between patients in pulmonary function testing labs, and more. As we learned more about airborne transmission of COVID-19, this additional caution paid off," said Dr. Paul Hernandez, CTS President. "This issue has been a top advocacy priority for the CTS at both the provincial and federal level and we are pleased to continue to work with all levels of government following this statement from Dr. Tam to ensure that Canada utilizes the best evidence-based practices to combat this pandemic."

"Moving forward, we are hopeful that this statement will spur changes to guidelines from health authorities at all levels of government. Even with the positive step of having a sizeable portion of Canadians vaccinated against COVID-19, we must remain vigilant," said Dr. Andrew West, CSRT Chief Executive Officer. "Alongside the recognition of aerosol transmission comes responsibility for health authorities to ensure the use of appropriate PPE, physical distancing and improved ventilation; both to continue combatting COVID-19 and to better prepare for any future public health crises."

This statement from PHAC is a positive step forward towards better aerosol precautions, which will benefit all Canadians and better protect healthcare workers and vulnerable individuals. The CTS and CSRT look forward to continuing to work with the federal government to ensure Canada implements the best evidence-based practices and guidelines, to protect Canadians from COVID-19.

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