



National Collaborating Centre  
for Infectious Diseases

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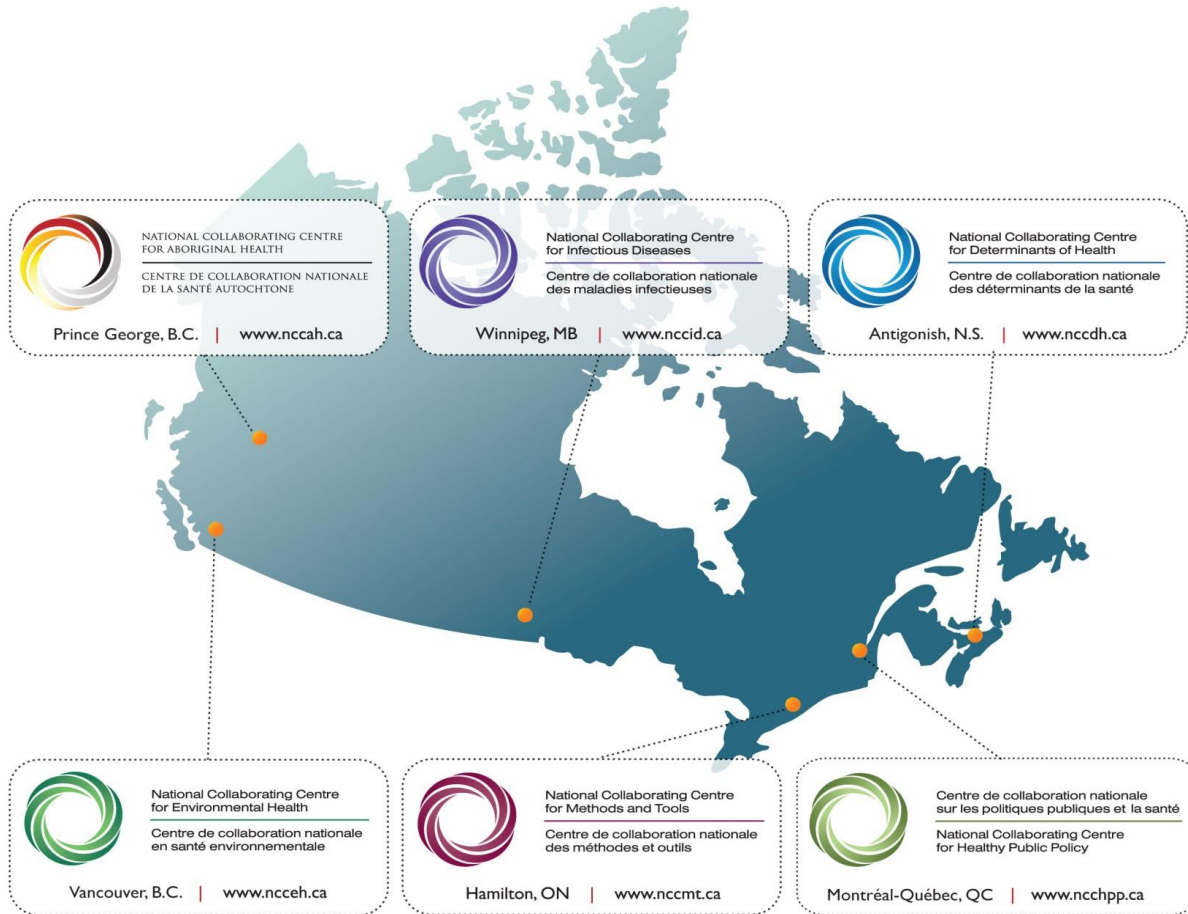
# **Responding to Zika:**

## **A Cross-Jurisdiction Scan of Policies and Provisions for Public Health Surveillance of Emerging Infectious Diseases in Canada**

Canadian Public Health Association Conference 2017

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**[nccid.ca](http://nccid.ca)**



“...identify **knowledge gaps**, **foster networks** and provide the public health system with an array of **evidence-based resources**, **multi-media products**, and **knowledge translation services**”

“...promote the use of scientific research and other knowledge to **strengthen** public health **practices**, **programs** and **policies** in Canada”

# Knowledge Translation in Infectious Diseases

## Persistent Issues



E.g. TB, HIV, Malaria

## Surges



Need to be **Nimble** and **Responsive**



# The Request

An **environmental scan** of the federal, provincial, and territorial (F/P/T) authorities under their legislative and regulatory frameworks to collect, use and disclose personal health information on Zika infections and other emerging infectious diseases

Sent: Wednesday, August 24, 2016 10:52 AM

To: Margaret Haworth-Brockman <Margaret.Haworth-Brockman@umanitoba.ca>

Subject: RE: Environmental scan of PTs authorities under their legislative/regulatory/policy framework to collect, use, disclose personal health information on Zika infections and other emerging infectious diseases (Out of Office)



Poor knowledge translation

# Zika Recap



- Zika virus, primarily vector-borne, mainly via *Aedes* mosquitoes (some sexual transmission)
- Generally mild, non-specific symptoms
- Few outbreaks noted prior to 2015 (Yap, French Polynesia)
- **Summer/Fall 2015** – Brazil reports cases of Zika and unusual increase in cases of microcephaly among newborns (and GBS in adults) – prominence in media
- **2016** - Outbreaks of ZIKV infection in countries around the world (primarily Latin America)
  - Association between Zika and congenital brain abnormalities/neurological disorders established (causation established Sep 2016)
- **Feb 2016** – WHO declares a **Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)**
- **Nov 18, 2016** – WHO declares **end to PHEIC** regarding microcephaly, other neurological disorders and ZIKV (but emphasizes the persistent threat that it poses)



**499 Travel-related and 3 sexually transmitted cases in Canada – PHAC, May 2017**

# Disease Reporting in Canada

## P/T Legislation and Regulations

- **Mandatory** reporting of notifiable diseases
- **Public Health Acts** (in combination with other legislation – e.g. Privacy Acts) outline how reporting of notifiable diseases must take place (who, where, conditions, penalties, etc.) – **notifiable disease list** generally included in accompanying regulations

## National Surveillance of Notifiable Diseases

- **Voluntary reporting** of select notifiable disease surveillance information to Public Health Agency of Canada -> puts together national picture, conducts research, federal response

## International Reporting

- Canada has an **obligation** under the **International Health Regulations** (IHR) to report any event that may constitute a PHEIC to the WHO -> coordinates international response



# Disease Reporting in Canada

## Significant Jurisdictional Variation in:

- a) **What exactly must be reported** (diseases, case definition, degree of certainty required, accompanying information, etc.)
- b) **Who must report the information** (some or all of: physicians, labs, blood services, hospitals, schools, health care institutions, etc.)
- c) **How the information must be reported** (location, authority, method of submission, immediacy, privacy and confidentiality, etc.)



Repository of information on select notifiable disease policies (e.g. lists, case definitions) for all FPT jurisdictions in Canada

# Environmental Scan

## Objectives

1. To **facilitate comparison** of public health policies and authorities related to surveillance of Zika and emerging infectious diseases across jurisdictions.
2. To **display areas of alignment and variation** in policy and provisions across jurisdictions.
3. To help **inform public health decision-making** for surveillance and privacy during international outbreaks and epidemics.

## Approach

- Information collected **iteratively** and **formatively** with expert contacts designated by the Chief Medical Officers of Health in jurisdictions across Canada (11 provinces and territories, 1 federal)
- Consultations conducted in parallel with reviews of jurisdiction-specific legislation
- Multiple rounds of **verification** prior to dissemination of compiled product
- **Future:** analysis -> synthesis -> publication and online interface



# Questions Posed

- Is Zika notifiable/ reportable in your jurisdiction?
- If Zika is notifiable/reportable, under what legislation or policy authority?
- If Zika is not notifiable/reportable, is information: a) being collected on Zika cases, and b) being disclosed to federal authorities (PHAC, NML, HC)? If so, under what legislation or policy authorities?
- How were your data collection protocols developed, approved and implemented (e.g., case definition, information collection and sharing tools, standard procedures)?
- Describe the provisions in your legislative/policy authorities to make emerging infectious diseases or unusual health events reportable?
- Are your legislative/policy authorities under review or being refined with regard to reporting of emerging infectious diseases or unusual health events?
- Does the declaration by WHO under the International Health Regulations (IHR) of a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) make any difference to your authorities to collect and disclose information to federal authorities?
- Data elements collected and disclosed to federal authorities on Zika cases

# Preliminary Themes + Analysis

## Provinces and Territories

- **Significant variation** across jurisdictions in public health legislation structure, phrasing, scope, etc. related to disease surveillance
- **Most** jurisdictions did not have Zika on their legislated list of notifiable diseases, but **considered it reportable** under other legislated provisions.
- **Often** a catch-all clause for “epidemic forms” and “unusual clinical manifestations” of diseases that provides **policy flexibility** to undertake surveillance on emerging infectious diseases
- Some variation in the type and amount of information provided to PHAC by jurisdictions (but all provided some information)
- PTs have **varying capacity** to develop timely processes, policies and mechanisms for surveillance on new and emerging infectious diseases – some would benefit from additional early support on these activities

# Public Health Agency of Canada

- “PHAC does have policy authorities to do surveillance on emerging diseases”
- Provided PTs with “Purposes and Objectives” for national case reporting and enhanced data set on severe sequelae and pregnancy outcomes, including:
  - To meet IHR reporting requirements
  - To maintain situational awareness of the context in Canada
  - To demonstrate action and maintain public confidence
  - To contribute to the international body of knowledge and assist in international investigations
- All jurisdictions provided select case data to PHAC to support these objectives, but did not agree to provide enhanced data elements (no clear public health action)

# Moving Forward in Canada - MLISA

## Multi-lateral Information Sharing Agreement (MLISA)

- A Ministerial-level public health agreement (between F/P/T governments) that sets standards for **what information** is to be **shared**, and how it is to be **used**, **disclosed** and **protected** (specific to IDs and PH events)
- Replacing the existing un-coordinated system of information sharing built on informal relationships and onerous/duplicative information requests
- Structure
  - **Main Agreement** (complete), **Technical Annexes - Common Annexes** (Governance, Data Management, PHEIC, etc.) and **Disease-specific Annexes** (e.g. TB)
- All F/P/T governments have signed/endorsed the Main Agreement as of 2016
  - currently working with jurisdictions on common and technical annexes



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Thank You  
Questions?

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