Answering the Wake-up Call: CMA’s Public Health Action Plan

Executive Summary

CMA recognizes the need for a public health approach to the SARS outbreak. The SARS epidemic illustrates the many gaps in our preparedness to deal with emerging infectious diseases. The following recommendations are designed to enhance our capacity to deal with future outbreaks.

1. Establish and maintain a national task force to address future infectious disease threats.
2. Develop a national respiratory infection control strategy for health care institutions.
3. Improve public health capacity to detect and control outbreaks.
4. Enhance the strategic reserve framework to deal with infectious disease emergencies.
5. Develop national surveillance systems for infectious diseases.
6. Improve the role of epidemiologists in public health.
7. Improve the public health system to deal with emerging infectious diseases.
8. Enhance the role of organizations such as the Canadian Public Health Association.
9. Implement a national public health preparedness strategy.

The CMA recommends that the federal government develop a national public health strategy that includes the above recommendations.