

Air Canada Welcomes the Announcement of Alberta COVID-19 Testing Initiative Aimed at Easing Mandatory 14-Day Quarantine

MONTREAL, Oct. 22, 2020 /CNW/ - Air Canada is pleased that the federal government and the Province of Alberta have announced a joint initiative for a pilot project to test international and transborder travellers arriving in Alberta for COVID-19. Air Canada has been a leader and a strong advocate of the use of rapid testing to protect customers and employees. Earlier this year, Air Canada partnered with McMaster HealthLabs (MHL) and the Greater Toronto Airports Authority for a study on testing that continues to yield results that demonstrate the validity of testing as a means to ease travel restrictions and quarantine requirements.

"We know Canadians expect the rich data from these test results to lead to a loosening of the federal government's quarantine requirements immediately, which will allow families to reunite and the economy to resume. Our customer surveys clearly show that Canadians favour safe and science-based alternatives to blanket quarantines. The results from the McMaster study at Toronto-Pearson were instrumental in guiding the federal government and public health agencies to add the easing of quarantine to this latest testing initiative. I have personally heard from numerous business leaders in Canada and from other countries who are very anxious to see the quarantine requirements safely abridged as soon as possible," said Calin Rovinescu, President and Chief Executive Officer at Air Canada.

"The preliminary results from the MHL study provide evidence that testing passengers on arrival into Canada may be an effective way to screen for COVID-19. The data has provided the federal government and the government of Alberta with the confidence to move forward with this new testing initiative. In fact, today Alberta Premier Jason Kenney thanked Air Canada for helping advocate for measures to safely reduce quarantine, which is an encouraging step in the continued push for a secure resumption of air travel. Rapid testing is also a means to enable governments to relax current blanket travel restrictions and quarantines in a measured way while still safeguarding the health and safety of the public," said Dr. Jim Chung, Air Canada's Chief Medical Officer.

Since the Toronto-Pearson study began September 3, MHL has conducted over 28,000 tests of arriving travellers who volunteered to participate. [As our interim report noted](#), more than 99% have tested negative for COVID-19 with less than 1% having indicated COVID-19. For more information on the MHL study see <https://aircanada.mediaroom.com/2020-09-03-McMaster-HealthLabs-Air-Canada-and-Greater-Toronto-Airports-Authority-to-Conduct-a-Voluntary-COVID-19-Study-of-Arriving-International-Travellers>

On October 1, Air Canada announced that it was finalizing an initial order for 25,000 ID NOW rapid COVID-19 test kits from Abbott as part of its ongoing evaluation of COVID-19 testing technology and protocols.

Air Canada has been at the forefront of the airline industry in responding to COVID-19, including being among the first carriers globally to require customer face coverings onboard and the first airline in the Americas to take customers' temperatures prior to boarding. In May it introduced a

comprehensive program, Air Canada CleanCare+, to apply industry leading biosafety measures at each stage of the journey.

Air Canada has undertaken several medical collaborations to further advance biosafety across its business, including with Cleveland Clinic Canada for medical advisory services, Ottawa-based Spartan Bioscience to explore portable COVID-19 testing technology and, since 2019, with Toronto-based BlueDot for real-time infectious disease global monitoring. It continues to explore other potential partnerships with technology and medical companies to further strengthen its biosafety protocols.

About Air Canada

Air Canada is Canada's largest domestic and international airline. Canada's flag carrier is among the 20 largest airlines in the world and in 2019 served over 51 million customers. Air Canada is a founding member of Star Alliance, the world's most comprehensive air transportation network. Air Canada is the only international network carrier in North America to receive a Four-Star ranking according to independent U.K. research firm Skytrax, which also named Air Canada the 2019 Best Airline in North America. For more information, please visit: aircanada.com/media, follow Air Canada on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#), and join Air Canada on [Facebook](#).

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