

Canada strikes deals for vaccine candidates with Pfizer, Moderna

5 August 2020



Canada has signed agreements with pharmaceutical firms Pfizer and Moderna to supply millions of doses of a COVID-19 vaccine, but the vaccines are still in development while negotiations continue with other potential suppliers

Canada announced Wednesday it has signed two agreements with American pharmaceutical firms Pfizer and Moderna for the delivery of COVID-19 vaccines in 2021.

Millions of doses will be supplied, but the vaccines are still in development while negotiations continue with other potential suppliers, Procurement Minister Anita Anand told a news conference.

They will also still need to obtain Health Canada regulatory approvals before being distributed to Canadians, she said.

The agreement with the American giant Pfizer concerns a vaccine candidate developed in partnership with Germany's BioNTech.

BioNTech and Pfizer reported the first conclusive

trials of the BNT162 mRNA-based vaccine candidate in early July, after testing 45 people. They started large-scale clinical trials at the end of July, with 30,000 volunteers aged 18 to 35.

Moderna is to provide its mRNA-1273 vaccine candidate, which has started to be tested in thousands of Phase 3 clinical trial human participants.

On Tuesday, Canada's chief public health officer, Theresa Tam, warned that a vaccine will be a "very important aspect of the response," but will not bring a swift end to the coronavirus outbreak.

"We're planning, as a public health community, that we're going to have to manage this pandemic certainly over the next year, but certainly it may be planning for the longer term on the next two to three years during which the vaccine may play a role. But we don't know yet," Tam said.

"People might think that if we get a vaccine then everything goes back to normal the way it was before. That's not the case," added her deputy, Howard Njoo.

Canada had more than 118,000 cases of coronavirus and 8,996 patients have died, as of Wednesday.

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APA citation: Canada strikes deals for vaccine candidates with Pfizer, Moderna (2020, August 5)
retrieved 28 April 2021 from
<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-08-canada-vaccine-candidates-pfizer-moderna.html>

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