Ottawa buys 76 mn doses of first made-in-Canada COVID-19 vaccine

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Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced a deal Friday to procure 76 million doses of the first made-in-Canada COVID-19 vaccine candidate, enough for the entire population if it proves effective.

The Can$173 million (US$132 million) Medicago deal comes after Ottawa signed similar agreements with AstraZeneca, Sanofi and GSK, Novavax, Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer and Moderna, bringing its total accessible vaccine doses to 358 million.

There are 38 million Canadians, each of whom could require two doses of any successful vaccine candidate.

"When a vaccine is ready, Canada will be too," Trudeau told a news conference.

Quebec City-based Medicago's vaccine is being developed on the company's unique plant-based production platform.

It is, according to a government statement, "the first domestically developed vaccine candidate the government of Canada has secured."

Pharmaceutical companies would normally submit safety and efficacy data at the end of clinical trials for evaluation by Health Canada, which can take years.

But the government is hoping to get them out to Canadians as quickly as possible, given the deadly threat and dire economic consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak.

As of Friday, more than 210,000 Canadians have been infected and nearly 10,000 have died from the novel coronavirus.

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