

VIRAL INTERRUPTION MEDICINES INITIATIVE (VIMI)

VIMI is a new non-profit whose mission is to **develop the drug treatments urgently needed to fight COVID 19 and the next pandemic**. VIMI aims to develop 10 drugs to put “on the shelf”, poised to be tested in clinical trials as soon as the next pandemic comes.

THE NEED: The scientific community predicted there would be a pandemic like COVID-19 and had the capability to develop the medicine needed. But the lack of a viable business model meant these drugs were never developed. No one will invest in a medicine for a virus that does not exist and therefore may never be sold. **This is a massive market failure** with the cost of immense human suffering and loss of life.

ANNOUNCING VIMI: VIMI will develop **new antiviral medicines for the public good** in association [The Agora Open Science Trust](#), an established Canadian charity. VIMI seeks catalytic funding from Canadian foundations to;

- **Develop 10 “on the shelf” medicines to be ready for the next pandemic**
- **Lead global drug development for the public good using the open science model**

VIMI will operate under **extreme open science principles**. Projects conducted by or funded by VIMI **will not file for patents**, and VIMI **will not seek financial returns**.

This new approach to drug development **enables rapid progress and broad participation** by simplifying up-front negotiations, reducing duplication, and encouraging multiple entities to develop, manufacture, and distribute the drugs. The open sharing of data, tools, and materials has been critical in past development of diagnostic kits, vaccines, and treatments such as SARS-CoV-2.

INVESTMENT REQUIRED:

VIMI is **seeking \$10 M from Canadian foundations to launch** its pandemic drug discovery projects and coalesce the global open source pandemic development community under the Canadian initiative. The funds will be used to hire an Executive Director and a drug discovery leader, create the organizational and governance structure (Board, scientific advisory board), seed two drug discovery projects in Canada, fund-raise, and to hire project managers to drive projects.

Over the next five years VIMI aims to develop up to 10 new medicines through Phase I (safety) clinical trials, **targeting all viruses with pandemic potential**. As soon as the disease emerges, the medicines will be tested in patients. The total investment required will be \$120 M (\$10 M per drug + \$4 M per year operations) to deliver 10 “on the shelf” medicines ready for when the next pandemic occurs. This funding will be sought from large foundations, like the Gates Foundation and Wellcome Trust, which together have invested over \$75M into previous initiatives led by Edwards.

CANADIAN LEADERSHIP: Over the past 20 years, Canada has become the leader of the open science drug development movement. Pioneered by Senior Ashoka Fellow [Dr. Aled Edwards at the Structural Genomics Consortium](#) and active in 3 Canadian organizations, this business model has attracted over \$500M in investment from

industry, government and foundations. The time is right to **leverage this Canadian leadership** and apply it to the quest to develop antiviral drugs for the public good.

As a Canadian non profit VIMI has already been endorsed by global organizations who have confirmed their support, including the Geneva based organization [DNDi](#). This organization has successfully raised funding and delivered 7 life saving drugs for neglected tropical diseases without private sector financing. VIMI has also secured partnerships with universities in the United States and Europe, and a non-profit affiliate called [READDI](#), which was formed to facilitate fund-raising from American philanthropists.

VIMI will ensure Canadian researchers and firms play a central role in global efforts to develop antiviral drugs for the public good. Canada has the opportunity to build on lessons learned from past efforts such as Ebola, where a made in Canada vaccine breakthrough was transferred to US interests. In this case commercial interests corrupted the rapid scaling up of vaccine development resulting in long delays of availability to those in need, and transferring the benefits of European and US approval to a foreign firm.

Canada is well prepared to lead the development of pandemic drug development. The science, the approach and the leadership is ready. The opportunity is now for Canadian philanthropists to catalyze this new model of drug development for the common good, and secure life saving medicines for COVID 19 and future pandemics.

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