

## Building the foundation: Canadian firefighters powering the future of cancer research

Posted June 26, 2025

News & Events



As wildfires continue to devastate large swaths of Canada, conversations about frontline safety and long-term health are once again making headlines. But for those working in fire halls year-round, the risks have never been seasonal. Firefighters face a higher burden of chronic disease, particularly cancer, and are often underrepresented in long-term health research.

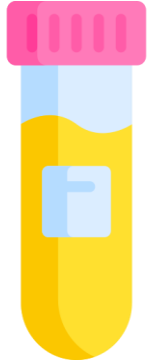
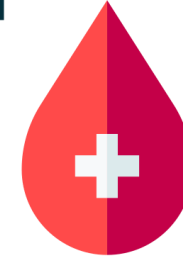
That's why [Healthy Future Sask \(HFS\)](#), Saskatchewan's regional cohort of the Canadian Partnership for Tomorrow's Health (CanPath), launched a focused recruitment effort in partnership with the [Saskatoon Fire Department](#) earlier this year.

Nearly  
**800**  
firefighters  
identified across  
all cohorts

## Firefighter recruitment



~400  
blood samples

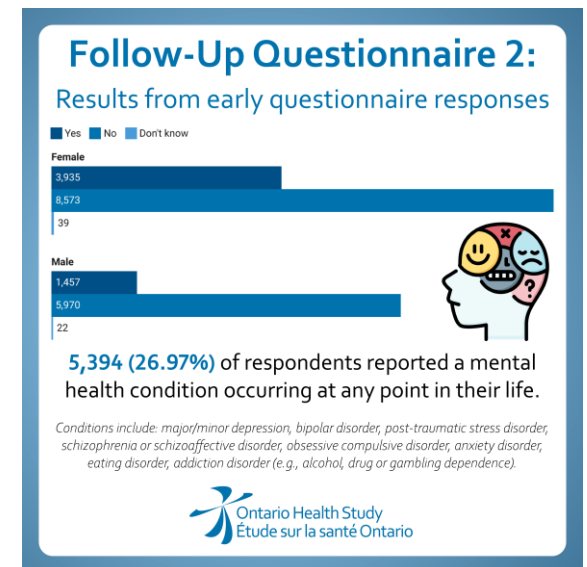
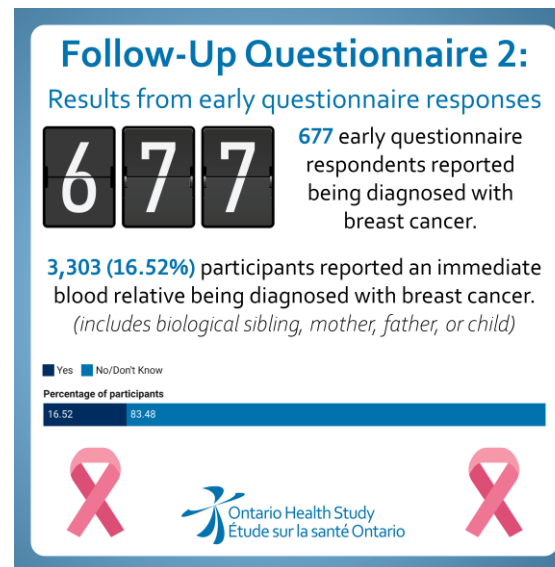
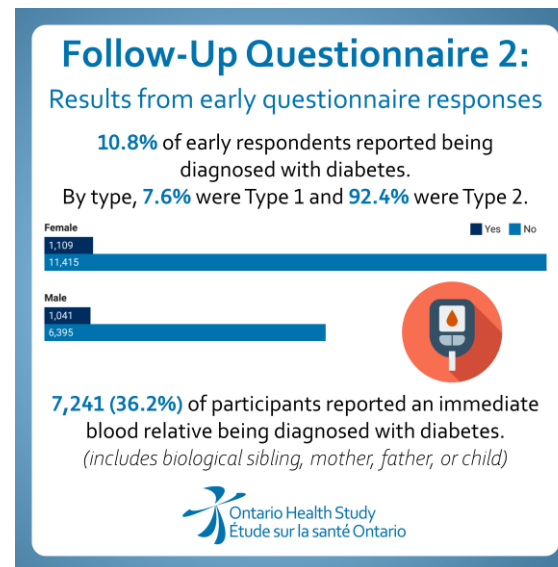
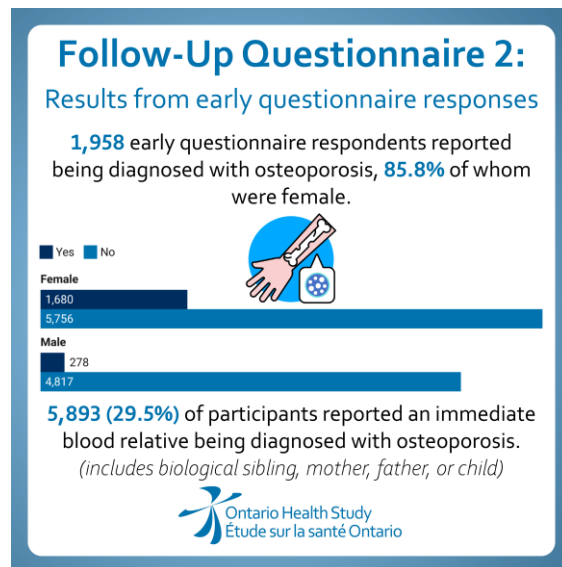


~250  
urine samples

- Saskatchewan supported by a **\$40K Health Canada commitment** to continue expanding firefighter recruitment
- Strengthening evidence on **occupational exposures and cancer risk**, informing prevention and policy

# Follow-up studies - OHS example

- The OHS Follow-Up Questionnaire 2 collects similar data at multiple timepoints, which allows researchers to track how participants' health **changes over time**
- Fills in gaps: **new sections to complete** that focus on your mental health and wellbeing, as well as your access to healthcare
- **27,422 completed questionnaires** as of Nov. 10, 2025. Early results below:



# TRUSTED RESEARCH ENVIRONMENT



Research project  
approved by the CanPath  
Access Committee



## CanPath Data

Questionnaires  
Physical measurements  
CANUE  
CIHI  
Genomics  
Imaging



lifebit

okta

Data required to meet  
study objectives



Analytic Tools  
R, Python, SAS, etc.





# Synthetic Dataset

*Training the next gen of health data users*



**Workshops**

*50+ attendees*



**Hackathons & Competitions**

*200+ attendees*



***What's next?  
Genomic data!***

**CanPath**

# PHAC and CanPath Research Collaboration – Dec. 2024

## Objectives

Examine differences by race and ethnicity in:



Breast cancer screening participation and cancer treatments



Breast cancer risk factors to identify ways to modify risk



Screening, cancer outcomes (e.g., recall, biopsy rates, stage at diagnosis), and cancer treatments



*Designed with resources from Flaticon.com*



# Canadian Alliance for Healthy Hearts & Minds

The Alliance was established and co-led by **Dr. Sonia Anand**, **Dr. Matthias Friedrich** and the late **Dr. Jack Tu**.

- ~**9,700** participants
- Brain, carotid, abdomen, and cardiac MRIs (4 scans/participant)
- **NEW:** Ongoing work to anonymize and sort images to add to the TRE
- **NEW:** Follow up with OHS and CaG



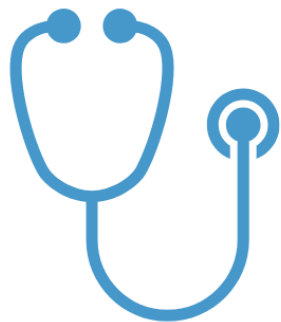
# Collaboration with CIHI



**Inpatient and day surgery records**



**Emergency dept and day surgery data**



**Physician billing claims, incl. diagnoses, services rendered**



**Prescription drug records for those over 65 and other unique subgroups**



**Home care and long-term care data**



**Canada's 1<sup>st</sup> central hub for cohort and administrative data**

# CanPath

# CIHR Planning & Dissemination Grant

*ALIGN: Advancing Longitudinal Initiatives for Generative and Networked health research*



**Uniting teams and 600K+ participants to strengthen collaboration and ensure Canada's health research remains impactful, inclusive and sustainable**

*\$20K from CIHR covers travel, accommodations, and meeting costs*

**CanPath**



# CanPath National Leadership Team



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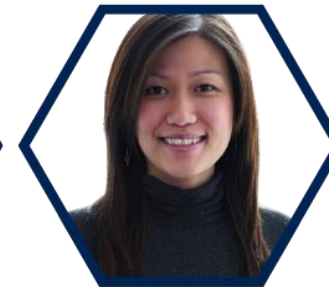
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# CanPath is a partnership between leading health institutes from coast to coast



Hosted by:



In partnership with:



National Funder:



Regional cohorts:



Hosted by:



Regional Funders:





CanPath.ca



**CanPath**

Canadian Partnership  
for Tomorrow's Health