



February 1, 2023

Saskatchewan Launches Research Project Towards A Healthier Future

Regina, SK – An opportunity to join the largest health research project in Saskatchewan and leave a lasting legacy for future generations is now open for Saskatchewan residents. The Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (Cancer Agency) is excited to announce the launch of Healthy Future Sask (HFS). This health research project will enable future generations to better understand the cause and prevention of cancer and other chronic diseases.

Hosted and supported by the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency (Cancer Agency), Healthy Future Sask is the regional cohort of a 50-year, pan-Canadian health study called CanPath. Currently, HFS is looking for more than 7,000 residents aged 30 to 74 to participate in the study. This massive collection will form a high-quality, highly-secure data pool that can be used in research studies for decades. In addition, because many of the risk factors for cancer are also risk factors for other diseases, the project will also benefit approved research into the causes of chronic illnesses such as heart and lung disease or diabetes.

"Our province is well known for our kindness, generosity, and willingness to rally together given a chance," said Deb Bulych, president and CEO of the Saskatchewan Cancer Agency. "This research project allows us to come together once again to help create a healthier future for Saskatchewan and all Canadians."

Participation in the HFS research study will take roughly 45 minutes for the initial online questionnaire about health and lifestyle. Once the questionnaire is submitted, a 30-minute visit will be booked at one of our two study centres in Saskatoon and Regina for a blood or saliva sample and other measurements. Plans to expand study centre locations across the province are being discussed. Over the course of the study, participants, who can choose to opt-out at any time, will be contacted to provide updated health and lifestyle information using follow-up questionnaires designed to be snapshots of participants' health over a long time.

"Adding Saskatchewan to this major research project is an opportunity to be part of creating a legacy with wide-ranging impacts for generations to come," said Riaz Alvi, Scientific Director for HFS and Director of Epidemiology for the Cancer Agency. "The information within our cells can be a valuable asset towards scientific and global research while enhancing the research already being done and supported at the Cancer Agency. In addition, this study will allow researchers to use more fulsome data to understand the risks for chronic disease, including cancer."

Privacy will play an important role in Healthy Future Sask. The project will maintain stringent protocols around participant confidentiality and access to information. When biological samples and information are received, HFS will remove the personal identifying information (your name, address, and health card number) and replace it with a unique code. Replacing your personal information with a unique code will allow samples and data to be shared with researchers while maintaining participant confidentiality.

"We are excited to welcome Riaz Alvi and the Healthy Future Sask team to CanPath," says Dr. Philip Awadalla, National Scientific Director of CanPath. "Since CanPath began in 2008, representation across all provinces has been a top priority. Bringing Saskatchewan to the partnership fills a critical gap, and we look forward to sharing learnings from our other regional cohorts to support Healthy Future Sask as they move forward."