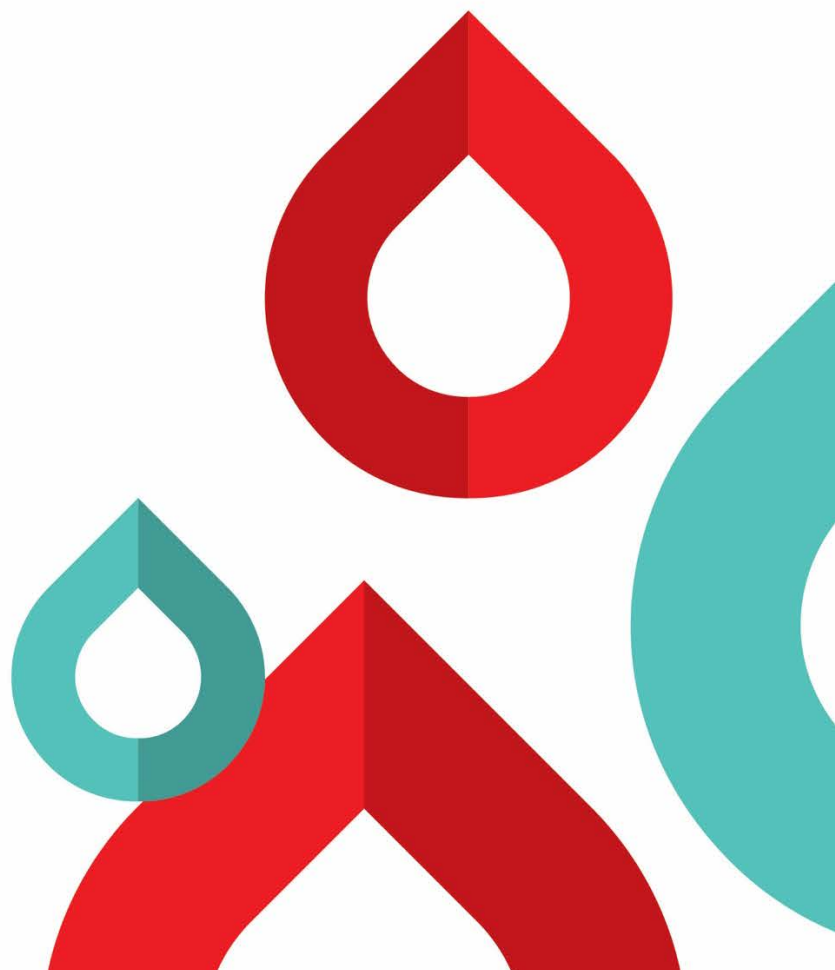


Keeping the promise today and tomorrow

An update to our strategic plan in view of the
COVID-19 pandemic



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Our strategic plan, *Keeping the Promise*, was developed in late 2018, before the COVID-19 pandemic erupted. Like many organizations, Canadian Blood Services continues to take stock of lessons learned during this extraordinary period. While the key focus areas of *Keeping the Promise* continue to guide our work, this supplement articulates adaptations to the plan, developed in view of the experiences of the past 18 months.

Our mission to be **Canada's Biological Lifeline** remains as vital as ever, and the pandemic reinforced the importance of our role in the health-care ecosystem. We continued delivering lifesaving products to patients throughout 2020 and 2021, supported by strong partnerships and the generosity of donors across Canada. While our work carried on uninterrupted, we made rapid changes to many aspects of *how* we operate — from remote work arrangements to supply chain adaptations. These changes highlighted opportunities to intensify our efforts and sharpen our focus on some areas of our strategic plan.

New areas of emphasis

Guided by the insights we have gained since early 2020, now more than ever we are working to:

- Sharpen our *foresight* to anticipate emerging challenges.
- Proactively build long-term *resilience* to withstand future shocks.
- Build the *agility* to respond even more quickly to rapid change and unforeseen events.

To bring these organizational imperatives to life, we will advance three key strategic initiatives in the years ahead. All three topics were mentioned in *Keeping the Promise*, but the pandemic has led us to deepen our focus on each of them.

1. **Automation and digitalization**
2. **The future of work at Canadian Blood Services**
3. **Products and services**

The **donor experience** is an overarching theme, shaping our considerations in these three areas.

Our commitments

As always, safety continues to be our highest priority and is central to everything we do. We will ensure the safety of our transfusion and transplantation products and services, and provide our employees and donors with a safe, inclusive and welcoming environment.

And our deep commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion — already a focus in *Keeping the Promise* — infuses all of the priorities outlined above.

Automation and digitalization

In areas ranging from cybersecurity to data privacy to analytics, Canadian Blood Services has well-established protocols as well as strategies for ongoing, systematic improvement. *Keeping the Promise* reaffirmed our commitment to using automation and digitalization — across our supply chain and in other areas of our work — to streamline processes while maintaining or improving quality and safety. The pandemic further underscored the valuable role automation and digitalization can play in reducing health risks to employees and donors (for example, through contactless interactions) and in increasing data integration across our network of customers and vendors. To realize these benefits, we are accelerating the adoption of digital technologies in key areas. In the years ahead we will:

Future-proof our data governance framework

Having been spurred by the pandemic to consider data governance from new perspectives, we launched a program to identify and advance targeted initiatives aimed at further optimizing the quality, usability and security of our data and at making our processes and infrastructure even more robust and resilient. Excellent data governance increases our agility by ensuring we have the timely, reliable information we need to make data-driven business decisions.

Create a data and analytics strategy and roadmap

The pandemic was a stress test for health-care data systems, exposing gaps and flaws in many organizations' ability to gather, analyze and especially share data. Strong and effective data analytics are already woven into many aspects of how we work. At the same time, the COVID-19 experience spotlighted opportunities for further improvement. We are now creating a new data and analytics strategy and roadmap, defining the capabilities we want to build and improve, and how we will achieve these advances. The purpose of this work is to ensure our systems deliver meaningful insights to our own teams — including through predictive analytics — and that they can be adapted to meet the needs of our partners. Continuous improvement in our analytics capabilities make us better able to anticipate and understand patients' needs and meet those needs more quickly and completely.

Create an enterprise automation strategy and roadmap

We will work to ensure that key areas of our organization are optimally positioned to adopt automation strategies — in areas ranging from machine learning and robotics to digital process and workflow — that deliver enhanced value to the health-care system. As a start, automating transactional and repetitive tasks (for example, using autonomous robots to move samples in the testing lab) will let us focus human efforts on higher-order thinking activities, like how to improve performance, patient outcomes and donor experience. Thoughtfully balancing our use of automation and human resources across our organization, and particularly in our supply chain, will increase our organizational resilience.

The future of work at Canadian Blood Services

For more than a decade leading up to the pandemic, growing internet connectivity enabled increasing numbers of office-based employees to “work from anywhere.” COVID-19 broadened and accelerated this trend, with many employers newly realizing the productivity and employee-wellness benefits of flexible work arrangements. As work flexibility increases, so will the mobility of talent. In this context, employers must prioritize employee experience more than ever to retain and foster strong teams. To meet the long-term talent needs of our organization, we must have the capabilities, leadership culture and work environment to thrive in a post-pandemic world. In the years ahead, we will:

Improve the frontline experience

We will improve the experience of frontline employees by improving the predictability of their work and offering them more opportunities to shape their roles. We will also create new opportunities for team members to connect and communicate meaningfully with colleagues and the organization at large. Increased empowerment and connectedness for our team members will enhance their own experience and help them to support positive donor experiences. Frontline employees make up the largest proportion of our organization and are critical to our success, but because they are dispersed across many sites — and some roles involve little contact with the wider organization — it can be challenging to ensure that everyone feels heard and supported. Addressing this reality and improving the frontline experience will enhance our culture, performance and resilience.

Shift to a flexible and adaptable work environment

Canadian Blood Services includes diverse roles in diverse environments — from donation centres and manufacturing facilities to laboratories and offices. Where feasible, we will move toward a more flexible work environment that gives employees greater choice in when, where and how they work, applying lessons learned from the pandemic and emerging global best practices. Our experience of virtual and hybrid work over the past two years has shown that

employees can be productive and effective outside of the office. Many will want to sustain the more flexible work arrangements adopted in 2020, and our goal is to accommodate this preference where possible.

Create a roadmap to further digitalize the workplace

We will define the actions required to build a more mature digital workplace for all employees — both frontline team members and administrative employees, whether they work on-site or remotely. Digitalizing our workplace will improve our agility by making it easier for team members to perform key tasks from anywhere.

Products and services

Our role is to provide lifesaving products and services for Canadians, and we continually adapt and evolve to meet patients' changing needs while ensuring the highest standards of quality and safety. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, we were advancing a number of major initiatives designed to ensure the resilience of our portfolio of products and services. Two notable examples are our work to increase Canada's plasma self-sufficiency and our development of pathogen inactivation technologies. The pandemic highlighted the need for continued effort and investment in the resilience of our product portfolio. In the years ahead we will:

Re-engineer our product catalogue and adapt our supply chain

We will minimize the impact of any future disruptions to our collection capacity by re-engineering our product portfolio (for example, by increasing the shelf life of products where feasible) and adapting the supply chain accordingly. During the COVID-19 pandemic, our ability to meet the needs of patients never wavered. Through the efforts of our team and supply chain partners — and the continued generosity of donors and their trust in the safety of our donor centres — we weathered the challenge together. If COVID-19 had been a blood-borne pathogen or if our collection capacity had been more constrained, the risk of supply challenges would have been elevated. Drawing lessons from the pandemic and advancing on our continuous-improvement journey, we will continue to increase the resilience of our product catalogue and enhance our ability to navigate future disruptions — ensuring that lifesaving products are always available when patients need them.

Leverage our capabilities to partner with public health and other organizations

The pandemic was a powerful reminder that we are uniquely positioned to support important national initiatives in Canadian health care. Two notable examples: over the past year we supported the COVID-19 convalescent plasma clinical trial and the COVID-19 Immunity Task

Force seroprevalence studies. In the years ahead, we aim to build on relationships developed during the pandemic and seek opportunities to partner with public health on research initiatives, build innovative research infrastructure (for example, a linked donor-recipient repository) and enhance and test our business continuity plans in collaboration with our health-system partners.

Looking ahead

The world has changed since we released *Keeping the Promise*, but our commitments remain the same. The five key focus areas of our 2018 strategy — lifesaving products and services; donor engagement; a secure plasma supply; employee experience; and organizational excellence — continue to guide our actions every day.

In the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, we are advancing our work in these focus areas with an increased emphasis on building the agility, resilience and foresight to anticipate and navigate future threats and challenges. Although its most intense demands on Canadian health-care systems are likely behind us, the COVID-19 pandemic is not over. As we work toward the timely execution of the initiatives outlined in this strategy update, we remain vigilant, ready to adjust and respond to changes in our environment and in the broader health-care system. In collaboration with our team members, volunteers, vendors and health-system partners, we will continue to exercise resilience and agility — ensuring we are always ready to deliver lifesaving products to Canadian patients, where and when they need them.