

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 9, 2026



As International Long Covid Awareness Day Approaches, Experts Warn Repeated Covid-19 Infections Raise Risk of Heart Attack, Stroke, and Disability — Millions of Canadians Affected

Canadian Covid Society hosts nationwide events March 15 to sound the alarm on cardiovascular risks of Covid-19 reinfection, demands urgent government action

TORONTO, ON — March 9, 2026 — On March 15, International Long Covid Awareness Day, the Canadian Covid Society/Société canadienne de la covid (CCS/SCC) will bring together physicians, researchers, and people living with Long Covid at public events in Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, and Montreal, as we call on governments to act on mounting evidence that [Covid-19 infection increases the risk of heart attack, stroke, arrhythmia, and permanent cardiovascular damage](#). With an estimated 2.1 million Canadians experiencing longer-term post-Covid symptoms as of 2023 (the most recent data available; [StatCan, 2023](#))—and an unknown number of people developing Long Covid since then driving numbers even higher—the CCS/SCC is demanding dedicated Long Covid care, mandatory air cleaning, N95 use in health care settings, and urgent investment in research and treatment.

About the Events

“Under the theme, *Long Covid: Every Heartbeat Counts*, events will feature expert speakers and the perspectives of people living with Long Covid displayed on broken heart graphics—arranged to spell the word HOPE, signifying both the grief of the Long Covid community and the ongoing fight for treatments and cures,” says Adriana Patino, CCS/SCC Long Covid Committee co-chair and Board member.

Buildings and landmarks across Canada will be lit in teal on March 15 and throughout the month in solidarity. Organizations in Australia, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, the U.K., and the U.S. join the campaign, with over 500 landmarks lighting up worldwide.

Experts and Long Covid patients will be on hand for interviews at each event:

Vancouver:

Vancouver Art Gallery grounds, 750 Hornby St. | March 15, 11:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.

Calgary:

RiverWalk Plaza, 618 Confluence Way SE | March 15, 11 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Toronto:

Queen's Park grounds, 111 Wellesley St. W | March 15, 2 – 3 p.m.

Montreal:

Planétarium, 4801 Avenue Pierre-De Coubertin, Room P11 | March 15, 1 – 3 p.m.

Canadians need to know the risks of repeat covid infections

[Research shows that risks are elevated for months and years after an acute Covid-19 infection across a wide range of cardiac conditions.](#) This includes heart attack, stroke, fibrosis, necrosis, pericarditis, myocarditis, hypertension, heart failure, thrombosis, arrhythmia, vascular damage, early vascular aging, dysautonomia (including POTS, or Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome), and more.

“There is now ample evidence that Covid-19 infections and Long Covid increase the risk of cardiovascular conditions and symptoms,” says Patino. “Concerningly, elevated risks are seen across all ages—including children, youth, and adults in their 20s to 40s. These risks are cumulative after each reinfection. It is critical that our health systems better support, educate, and monitor Long Covid patients, and take steps to reduce Covid-19 infections so we can reduce overall risks.”

What the CCS/SCC Is Calling For

Governments and cardiology organizations must act now. The CCS/SCC is calling for dedicated Long Covid care funding, mandatory clinical training for health care professionals, mandatory air cleaning and N95 respirator use in health care settings, and sustained research investment in Long Covid treatments and cardiovascular outcomes.

“We need specific and tailored medical care for people with Long Covid,” says Annie-Claude Trottier, CCS/SCC Long Covid Committee co-chair — and a long covid sufferer herself. “Many patients spend months and even years trying to find relief from their symptoms. We need training for health care professionals, ongoing investment in research, and strong preventative measures, including access to vaccines and treatments, air cleaning, and use of respirator masks in health care settings to protect vulnerable patients.”

About Long Covid

Long Covid is a growing global health crisis. It is a complex condition, affecting people of all ages—including children—and impacting systems across the body, with over 200 symptoms ([source: NIH](#)). Common health issues include chronic debilitating fatigue, gastrointestinal issues, microclots, cardiac/circulatory issues, cognitive impairment, respiratory difficulties, immune dysfunction, and more. [Long Covid is now potentially surpassing asthma as the most common chronic condition in children.](#) For more on Long Covid, see the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine report, [A Long COVID Definition](#).

About the Canadian Covid Society/Société Canadienne de la Covid

The Canadian Covid Society/Société Canadienne de la Covid is a national, volunteer-based non-profit organization with a mission to inform the public about the health consequences of Covid infections, to advocate for science-based measures to reduce the transmission of the virus, and to empower and support people with Long Covid. For more information, visit covidsociety.ca.

MARCH 15 INTERNATIONAL LONG COVID AWARENESS DAY EVENT DETAILS

WHAT:

- *Long Covid: Every Heartbeat Counts* events recognizing those suffering with Long Covid and the experts advocating for change
- Interviews with experts, doctors and patients
- Visuals of broken heart graphics portraying Long Covid experiences, arranged in the word “HOPE”
- Outdoor events, rain or shine!
- HASHTAGS: #LongCovidHeartbeats, #ILCAD2026, #LongCovidAwareness

WHO:

- Canadian Covid Society/Société Canadienne de la Covid
- Guest speakers
- Members of the Long Covid community
- Anyone who wants to support the Long Covid community and advocate for action

WHERE & WHEN:

VANCOUVER

- Vancouver Art Gallery grounds, 750 Hornby St.
- March 15, 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Speakers:

- **Dr. Susan Kuo**, family physician, and member of CCS/SCC Long Covid Committee and Protect Our Province BC
- **Dr. Jane McKay**, internal medicine specialist at the BC-CLMF clinic
- **Leo Ruhl**, Doctoral candidate whose research focuses on the interplay between Long Covid advocates and public health institutions in Canada
- **Dr. Leslie Kasza**, cardiologist treating patients with Long Covid
- **Christopher Drozda**, a person with Long Covid and member of the CCS/SCC Long Covid Committee
- **Kayli Jamieson**, a person with Long Covid and a communications master's student and research fellow at Simon Fraser University's Faculty of Health Science

CALGARY

- RiverWalk Plaza, between the Simmons Factory Warehouse (618 Confluence Way SE) and the Bow River
- March 15th 11 a.m.–12:30 p.m.

Speakers:

- **Dr. Malgorzata (Gosia) Gasperowicz**, developmental biologist and a researcher affiliated with the University of Calgary
- **Dr. David Keegan**, physician and professor at the University of Calgary
- **Rashmin Hira**, PhD candidate researching Long Covid and POTS
- **Karen Lord**, CCS/SCC Long Covid Committee member; reading a statement from Olive B., a person with Long Covid
- **Kerri B.**, a person with Long Covid
- **Mackenzie B. and Kimberly B.**, reading a statement from their sister Nicole, a person with Long Covid

TORONTO

- Queen's Park grounds (directly south of the building), 111 Wellesley St. W
- March 15, 2–3 p.m.

Speakers:

- **Rebecca Lewkowicz**, CCS/SCC Long Covid Committee member, and parent of a child with Long Covid
- **Mary Jo Nabuurs**, Officer & Spokesperson for Ontario School Safety (OSS); volunteer with CCS/SCC, CATC, OHC and WHN; podcast co-host
- **Dr. Angela M. Cheung**, senior scientist at Toronto General Hospital Research Institute, and professor of medicine at the University of Toronto

MONTREAL

- Planétarium, 4801 Avenue Pierre-De Coubertin, Room P11
- March 15, 1–3 p.m.

Speakers:

- **Dr. Thao Huynh**, cardiologist and Long Covid researcher
- **Dr. Caroline Grégoire**, doctor living with Long Covid
- **Clara**, daughter of a person with Long Covid
- **Gabriel Arteau**, person with Long Covid and administrator of the Quebec Long Covid support group
- **Annie-Claude Trottier**, CCS/SCC Long Covid Committee co-chair, and person with Long Covid

MEDIA CONTACTS:

For advance interviews or to connect with event spokespeople, please contact:

- **Cara Smusiak**, media@covidsociety.ca
- **Annie-Claude Trottier**, media@societecovid.ca