

FOR URGENT RELEASE

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Civic Association of Iranian Canadians (Civic IC)

Statement on the Impact of COVID-19 on Canadian Citizens

The outbreak of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is of global concern. In addition to China, where the disease was first reported, Italy, South Korea and Iran have also been identified as global 'hot spots'. In Canada, several cases of COVID-19 have been traced to individuals with a recent travel history in Iran or links to those with recent travel to Iran.

Through consultation with members of the Iranian-Canadian community in the lower mainland, we have identified two main concerns in the Iranian Canadian community that **require urgent attention:**

- 1.** Canadians in Iran are increasingly unable to make arrangements to return to Canada. International airlines have cancelled flights to and from Iran, and travel by bus or car across a border can also be dangerous. The Canadian government issued a travel advisory for Iran on February 24, advising against non-essential travel by commercial means. Though the federal government has assisted in the repatriation of [more than 500 Canadian residents and their families from other regions affected by the virus](#), there are no plans to repatriate Canadian residents from Iran, nor consular services available in Iran. Members of the Iranian Canadian community are deeply concerned about the welfare of their family members and other loved ones in Iran.
- 2.** Canadians who have recently returned from Iran have reported that they were not tested for Coronavirus upon their arrival. There are concerns that the [measures currently implemented at Canadian airports](#) are not adequate or sufficiently rigorous. Currently, individuals traveling from Hubei, China or Iran are not tested for coronavirus or quarantined unless they show "signs or symptoms of illness." This is extremely concerning as those infected with coronavirus may have **no** obvious symptoms or may not experience symptoms for up to 14 days. In the meantime, they may unknowingly spread the infection to others. As a precaution, some of these individuals are currently self-quarantining.

In light of these concerns, we petition the Canadian government to make arrangements for the repatriation of Canadians currently stuck in Iran, and to heighten screening measures for individuals returning to Canada from global 'hot spots' such as Iran, South Korea and Italy, regardless of whether they show "signs or symptoms".

We thank the Canadian government for their current efforts, and all in the medical community currently involved in containing and treating this infection.

For questions, comments or concerns please contact Kei Esmailpour at (604)-788-7766.