

# MILLIONS MISSING CANADA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

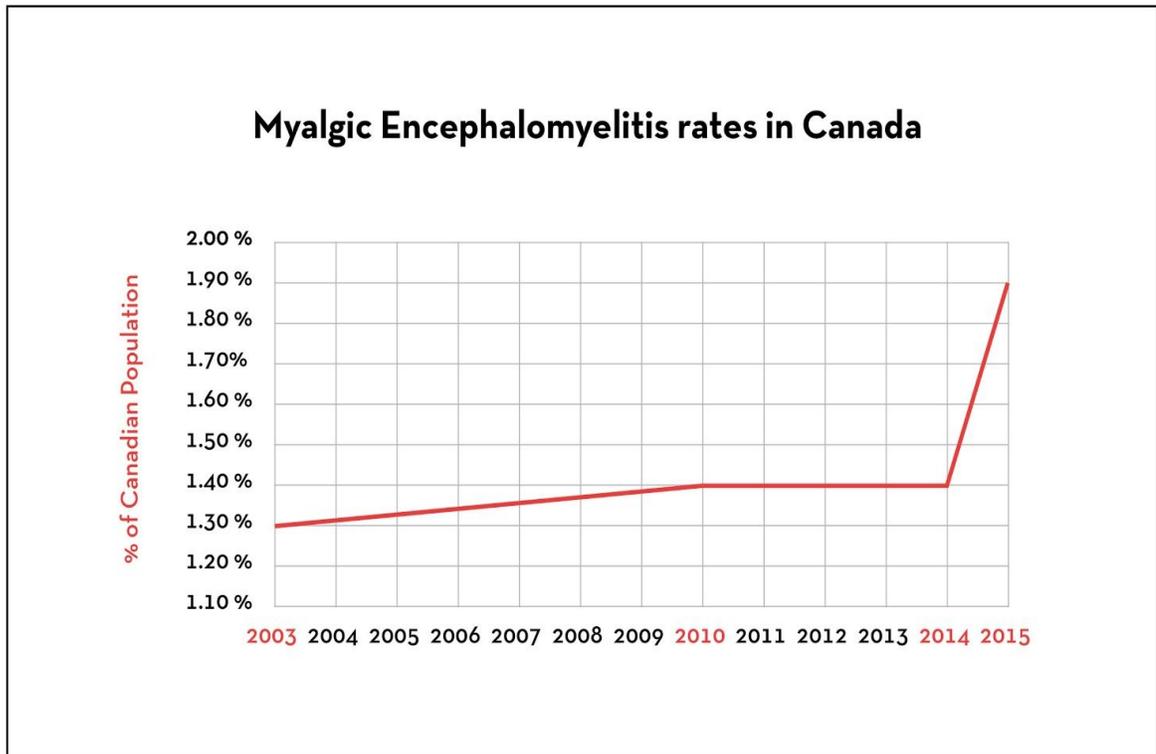
## **EPIDEMIC OF NEURO-IMMUNE DISEASE MYALGIC ENCEPHALOMYELITIS - HEALTH CANADA FAILS TO RESPOND TO UNRELEASED 2015 DATA**

Millions Missing Canada collaborates with BC physician and  
Hemispherx Biopharma to bring medication to ill Canadians

[Patients launch](#) “Open Letter” petition to Health Minister Philpott for  
funding, research and treatment

Toronto, Canada, August 8, 2017 - Unreleased data from the 2015 Canadian  
Community Health Survey indicates ~560,000 Canadians have been diagnosed  
with the complex neuro-immune disease, myalgic encephalomyelitis (ME),  
representing an apparent 37.6% increase in ME prevalence over the previous  
year. Millions Missing Canada received a copy of an email thread where  
Statistics Canada confirms the 2015 data, which has yet to be released to the

public. An email on July 28th to the Public Health Agency of Canada about the alarming data has yet to receive a meaningful reply.



Data from Canadian Community Health Surveys 2003, 2010, 2014, 2015

Myalgic encephalomyelitis, or ME, is a mostly disabling multi-system disease that occurs in sporadic and epidemic forms. Canada has the highest ME rates in the world and the previous recorded ME epidemic in Canada was in 1984 as part of a North American epidemic. Myalgic encephalomyelitis epidemics tend to peak in the north temperate hemisphere during the period of July to November. About 25% of Canadians with ME are so ill they are house bound or bedridden. The very severely ill cannot stand, sit up, walk or talk, cannot tolerate sound, light, or

visitors and require 24 hour nursing care. In the most severely affected a feeding tube is required.

Today, Millions Missing Canada, a patient group, and U.S. based [Hemispherx Biopharma](#), the makers of the medication Ampligen, announce a collaboration with ME physician Dr Ian Hyams of Vancouver, British Columbia, to bring Ampligen to Canadians with ME. Millions Missing Canada advocates for equitable health care and access to appropriate treatment and the approximately \$88 million missing from Canadian ME research annually. Ampligen is the only medication for ME currently accessed in other countries.

<b>\$158.58</b>		<b>\$0.11</b>
	<b>vs.</b>	
Average per patient CIHR funding for four major chronic diseases <sup>1</sup> .		Per patient CIHR funding for ME/CFS

<sup>1</sup> 2015 CIHR research funding average for Multiple Sclerosis, Parkinson's Disease, Epilepsy,

Dr Hyams, who has treated ME patients with Ampligen in other countries said, "The time has come for physicians in Canada to realize that Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME) is a severely disabling disease for many, causing an increase in patients going on disability. I have personally witnessed as a physician treating these disorders for the last 25 years, the major impact that Ampligen has had in rebuilding quality of life in severely afflicted patients, and often resulting in patients being able to go back to work. It is a honour for me to

be involved in the process, of introducing this valuable drug to Canada, which will hopefully lead to many patients in need, receiving this treatment.” A Canadian with ME, who requested anonymity, received Ampligen in another country and wrote to Millions Missing Canada, “I was completely bed bound and requiring 24 hour nursing before my treatment with Ampligen. On Ampligen, I was back to full time study and also able to exercise.”

Millions Missing Canada patient advocate Barbara Fifield expressed frustration and bewilderment with Minister Philpott,

**“Our cries have been falling on deaf ears.**

**We have been neglected and left to languish in our beds for decades while our Health Minister has done nothing to intercede to alleviate our immeasurable and endless suffering. Action is long overdue and interventions are urgently needed.”**

From Health Canada’s own data, Canadians with ME have the lowest quality of life and score the worse on all metrics: lowest research funding by far, highest unmet health care needs, lowest income, and highest food insecurity. Millions Missing Canada has started a petition for signatures to their Open Letter to Health Minister Philpott seeking an emergency response to the ME epidemic, research and treatment funding, and the fast tracking of approval of Ampligen.

Ampligen, an interferon inducer and activator of innate and adaptive immunity, has shown great promise, particularly for those who have been ill for less than 8

years. The clinical efficacy of Ampligen has been demonstrated in clinical trials that were double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, and conducted at multiple sites. Post-hoc analysis has identified those patients most likely to respond and provide a foundation for clinical research to expand the indication to all patients with severe ME. “We are pleased to work with Millions Missing Canada on this very important issue,” said Thomas K. Equels, CEO and President of Hemispherx. “By working together we hope to be better able to achieve the goal of providing an effective therapy for the hundreds of thousands of people who suffer from ME. This unmet medical need must be addressed. Hemispherx and Millions Missing Canada will follow the model that Hemispherx used to obtain approval in Argentina by seeking a Canadian Pharmaceutical Partner who will file for regulatory approval in Canada.”

Hemispherx’s Ampligen data shows a greater than 50% efficacy on activities of daily living such as carrying one bag of groceries, typing on a computer for 30 minutes, or hammering a nail. Patients with ME experienced an improved quality of life, greater mobility, as well as medically significant improvements in exercise tolerance, and reduced dependence on other pharmaceuticals. It is noteworthy that the incidence of clinical toxicity to Ampligen is very low, that there are very few side effects that are mostly transient, and that it appears to inhibit disease deterioration in those who fail to show improvement.

Millions Missing Canada is asking the public to support their efforts by signing a [petition](#) asking Minister Philpott to initiate an emergency response, implement \$88 million in ME research funding, and fast track access to the medication Ampligen.

A list of [Key Questions](#) for Health Minister Philpott and references, government data, and researcher and patient quotes

[Millions Missing Canada](#) advocates for equitable research funding and treatment access for Canadians living with myalgic encephalomyelitis. Also find us at [Facebook: Millions Missing Canada](#).

*\*Chronic Fatigue Syndrome - a misnomer, burdened with a negative psychological connotation, is often conflated with the World Health Organization term 'myalgic encephalomyelitis', describing the muscle pain and inflammation of the brain and spinal cord.*

**STOP THE HARM.  
FUND THE RESEARCH.  
START THE TREATMENT.**