

# Evaluation of the Strategic Medical Countermeasures Program

## Summary Report

### Program Overview

The Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Defence posture protects CAF personnel by providing the medical countermeasures (MedCM) (e.g., prophylaxis, post-exposure treatments, diagnostic tools) needed to mitigate the effects of CBRN agents and treat CBRN casualties. The Strategic Medical Countermeasures Program (SMCP) enables this by being responsible for acquiring and maintaining a high readiness strategic stockpile of MedCM to prevent, diagnose and/or treat personnel who become infected, intoxicated, or injured by weaponized agents or naturally occurring diseases.

The creation of SMCP stemmed from the decision to transition the Biological Warfare Threat Medical Countermeasures (BWTMCM) Project to a program. The BWTMCM Project was approved in 2001 to deliver biological warfare MedCM systems, with the understanding that it would be disbanded once the systems were delivered. In 2018, the realization that biological threats would remain led senior management to decide that an ongoing program would be a more effective way to acquire and sustain strategic medical products in comparison to a series of projects. Thus, SMCP was formed in 2019 to consolidate and streamline the BWTMCM Project and other separate procurement and life-cycle management efforts within Canadian Forces Health Services (CFHS) for specialized CBRN, pandemic and Surgeon General restricted medical products.

### Conclusive Assessment: Key Takeaways

SMCP plays a critical role in CAF CBRN defence by acquiring and maintaining a high readiness strategic stockpile of MedCM that are needed to mitigate the effects of CBRN agents and treat CBRN casualties. As CBRN threats are persistent and growing, looking to the future, the need for MedCM may increase as the CAF expands its presence in locations where its members may be exposed to CBRN agents.

However, funding challenges have impacted the program's ability to build the stockpile to directed levels. Improvement opportunities have been identified regarding the alignment of the program's funding model and directed personnel planning numbers. A risk-based, financially supported decision on funding and planning assumptions would enhance SMCP's ability to plan and procure required stockpile items in line with the directed levels.

The evaluation also identified that deficiencies in the areas of timely and reliable intelligence, sufficient infrastructure, and data management have resulted in a greater administrative burden for the program, challenges with obtaining information needed to make informed decisions about the stockpile, and an increased risk to the security of the stockpile. Opportunities to improve the support provided by enablers have been identified.



**Pandemic products** include medical personal protective equipment (e.g., gowns, gloves, N95 masks) and pandemic therapeutics.



**CBRN products** include CBRN medical systems that contain:

- vaccines for pre- or post-exposure prophylaxis (e.g., Anthrax, smallpox); or
- therapeutics (e.g., oral and injectable medications) to treat exposure to harmful agents.



**Operation-specific products** include unlicensed, operationally essential products that are consumed regularly (e.g., vaccines, blood plasma products).



**Diagnostics** include field portable diagnostic equipment and supplies in direct support of CBRN/pandemic MedCM systems.



**Consumables** include medical ancillary items and single use items/equipment (e.g., syringes, intravenous tubing).

The SMCP evaluation covers Fiscal Year (FY) 2019/20 to 2023/24. The evaluation complies with the 2016 Treasury Board Policy on Results. The areas of assessment include:

- the relevance of the program in the current threat environment;
- SMCP's ability to acquire and sustain a high readiness strategic stockpile; and
- support that enablers provided to the program.

## Annex A: Management Action Plan

ADM(RS)	Management Action
<p><b>Recommendation</b></p> <p><b>1. A risk-based, financially supported decision is needed to enable SMCP to plan and procure required stockpile items that align with personnel planning numbers.</b></p>	<p><b>Action 1:</b> Canadian Joint Operations Command (CJOC) and Chief of Military Personnel (CMP) agree on the Assistant Deputy Minister (Review Services) (ADM(RS)) recommendation and will support Department of National Defence/CAF senior decision makers by equipping them with improved risk-based and financially sustainable decision-making tools in relation to SMCP.</p> <p><b>Milestone 1.1</b></p> <p>In FY 2024/25, supported by CMP, CJOC will coordinate the development of a budget proposal concerning the resourcing to sustain the strategic stockpile of MedCM with baseline operating and maintenance funding. The budget proposal will be presented, with impact statements, through the following governance bodies: Defence Capabilities Board, Programme Management Board, Armed Forces Management Board, Cerberus, and the Investment and Resource Management Committee.</p> <p><b>Deliverable:</b> Briefing of SMCP resourcing requirements at the Project Management Board, Armed Forces Management Board, Cerberus, and the Investment and Resource Management Committee by end of FY 2024/25.</p> <p><b>OPI:</b> CJOC  <b>OCI:</b> Chief of Programme, CMP, Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, Strategic Joint Staff</p> <p><b>Target Date:</b> March 31, 2025</p> <p><b>Milestone 1.2</b></p> <p>Review program governance structures to ensure SMCP is aligned with Department of National Defence/CAF policy and expected outcomes.</p> <p><b>Deliverable:</b> Updated and Level 1 Organization–approved accountabilities, responsibilities and authorities and terms of reference for SMCP.</p> <p><b>OPI:</b> CJOC  <b>OCI:</b> CMP, Canadian Special Operations Forces Command, Strategic Joint Staff</p> <p><b>Target Date:</b> July 31, 2026</p>



## Annex A: Management Action Plan

### ADM(RS) Recommendation

**2. Interim solutions are needed to mitigate infrastructure-related risks to stockpile security and readiness.**

### Management Action

**Action 2:** A project to replace the Central Medical Equipment Depot (CMED) has been identified as a priority for CMP for the past few years. However, due to the number of high priority demand items, CMED has not been ranked high enough on the Assistant Deputy Minister (Infrastructure and Environment) (ADM(IE)) priority list to receive any funding. CMED is primarily located in Petawawa with a detachment in Trenton and is listed as #34 on the draft FY 2024/25 Validation Board Consolidated Demand List. As a result, CMP/CFHS/CMED must evaluate alternative infrastructure options for the short, medium and long term to meet the demands of SMCP and the primary lines of effort supported by CMED to provide medical logistics support to CAF operations.

ADM(IE)/Director General Portfolio Requirements/Director Real Property Planning and Programming will continue to support CMP's Options Analysis/Business Case to evaluate several possible interim and long-term solutions, taking into consideration the National Real Property Portfolio Plan and Strategy. To date, CMP's newly established requirements include the 55,000 ft<sup>2</sup> temperature-controlled storage facility, with 40,000 ft<sup>2</sup> allocated for personal protective equipment storage and 15,000 ft<sup>2</sup> for MedCM.

In the short term, ADM(IE) will secure the option of extending the existing Pembroke lease (expiring on May 1, 2025, established to augment CMED Petawawa's storage capacity) under the current delegation of authority for two one-year options. Extending the lease would provide a buffer for occupancy, mitigating operational disruptions as the mid- to long-term plan is executed to fully meet the new requirements. While ADM(IE) explores the need to extend the current Pembroke lease, the objective remains to have the unit relocated to a new facility—per the mid- to long-term plan—by June 1, 2025.

In the mid to long term, to meet CMP's new 55,000 ft<sup>2</sup> storage requirements, ADM(IE) will lease a new facility for 15–20 years with options. ADM(IE) will initiate an expression of interest for the Petawawa area of responsibility (based on knowledge of the existing market, there is an expectation that there would be five returns). Public Services and Procurement Canada will conduct a Market Analysis Report to determine the most cost-effective solution for the Crown.

In the long term, ADM(IE) will continue to contemplate the construction of a Crown-owned facility in Trenton to enhance CAF operational capability, subject to funding availability. It is important to note that the project has moved down the Consolidated Demand List from rank #19 in FY 2022/23 and #17 in FY 2023/24 to #34 in FY 2024/25.

**Deliverable:** This Management Action Plan will be considered closed upon the establishment of a new lease for a 55,000 ft<sup>2</sup> storage facility (15–20 years) and once the contract is officially communicated to the community.

**OPI:** ADM(IE)

**OCI:** N/A

**Target Date:** July 21, 2026

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ADM(RS) Recommendation	Management Action
<p><b>3. Interim measures are needed to ensure the availability of reliable data on stock levels.</b></p>	<p><b>Action 3:</b> On an interim basis, CFHS will establish a warehouse to virtually segregate SMCP materiel in the current SMCP materiel information management system: the Opportunities &amp; Purchasing Exchange Network (O&amp;PEN). The objective of this action is to optimize the use of O&amp;PEN with regards to medical materiel stockpile information management. With the SMCP materiel virtually segregated in O&amp;PEN, SMCP will be able to report on stockpile holdings quickly and accurately, as well as perform audits of materiel movement to and from the stockpile. This interim measure will significantly improve the management of SMCP while CFHS is considered for inclusion in DEFENCEx, the renewal project for the departmental materiel management software.</p> <p><b>Deliverable:</b> Full implementation of SMCP virtual warehouse for inventory management and reporting.</p> <p>CMP will action the following steps to achieve the Management Action Plan deliverable:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The SMCP materiel is virtually segregated in the current management system for medical materiel inventory (O&amp;PEN), and a standardized inventory reporting capability is available.</li> <li>• The following milestones will be established to track progress towards achieving this deliverable:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Create a virtual SMCP warehouse in O&amp;PEN.</li> <li>○ Establish capability in O&amp;PEN to report on inventory by warehouse.</li> <li>○ Trial the virtual movement and reporting of select SMCP stock.</li> <li>○ Complete virtual movement of entire SMCP stockpile to SMCP warehouse.</li> <li>○ Audit and validate virtual stock movement.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>OPI:</b> CMP  <b>OCI:</b> Director General Health Services</p> <p><b>Target Date:</b> March 2026</p> <p><b>Risk Statement:</b> Without reliable and timely inventory data information, tracking the status of the SMCP stockpile is difficult, time consuming and potentially inaccurate. If inventory tracking difficulties are not addressed in the CAF's current or future materiel management initiatives, then stockpile management will remain problematic and will negatively impact stockpile readiness, lifecycle management decisions and program planning activities.</p>