

President's Appearance at OGGO on May 22, 2020 COVID-19

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**1. Opening Remarks for
the Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Health**

**For an appearance before the House of Commons
Standing Committee
on Government Operations and Estimates**

COVID-19

**May 22, 2020
Ottawa, ON**

Introduction

Mr. Chair, Honourable Members, thank you for this opportunity to speak to the Committee today about the Health Portfolio's role in the Government's response to COVID-19.

As always, our focus is on protecting the health and safety of Canadians. During this unprecedented crisis, we must ensure that our health system is fully prepared to care for Canadians.

Purchase and distribution of equipment

To do so effectively, we are collaborating with the provinces and territories to identify their needs and purchase the required equipment, supplies and services.

Canada is taking an aggressive approach to buying, especially when it comes to personal protective equipment for front-line healthcare workers.

This includes:

- ordering in bulk on behalf of provinces and territories,
- supplementing those orders by purchasing everything immediately available that meets requirements, and
- galvanizing Canadian industries to increase domestic manufacturing capacity. These measures are over and above what the provinces and territories are doing to secure their own supplies.

The Government is also coordinating shipments of supplies from other countries. Canada has established on-the-ground support in China for transportation, receiving, storage services and customs clearances.

Canada is receiving shipments, and the Government is working to rapidly allocate personal protective equipment and medical supplies to the provinces and territories, using an approach agreed to by federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) Ministers of Health.

Provinces are proactively allocated 80% of shipments on a per capita basis, while 20% is held back for the National Emergency Strategic Stockpile. This holdback is used to fulfill urgent Requests for Assistance from provinces and territories.

Supporting access to diagnostic test kits and other medical devices

Furthermore, we know that early diagnosis is essential to slowing the spread of COVID-19 in Canada.

That's why in March, I signed an Interim Order to allow expedited access to COVID-19-related medical devices, including diagnostic test kits.

An Interim Order is one of the fastest mechanisms the Government can use to help make health products available to address larger-scale, public health emergencies.

To date, we have authorized 19 tests under this Interim Order – tools that are necessary for our response to this pandemic.

The Interim Order also ensures that other COVID-19-related medical devices are available to treat, mitigate or prevent this disease.

To help do this, the Order allows Health Canada to review approvals granted by other countries when deciding whether to authorize a device for importation or sale.

It also waives all application fees for COVID-19-related medical devices, further removing impediments for manufacturers in this time of public health need.

Conclusion

Mr. Chair, the Health Portfolio, in particular through the dedication of officials at the Public Health Agency of Canada, Health Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, is committed to doing everything it can to protect the health and well-being of all Canadians.

The magnitude of this responsibility has never been more clear. It is essential that we have the medical supplies we need to fight COVID-19.

The Government will continue to do everything it can to ensure our country's response is effective now, and that we are equipped for the future.

Thank you.

2. Anticipatory Questions for Parliamentary Committee Appearances, Minister of Health, OGGO May 2020

PPE

Q1: What actions has the Government of Canada taken to ensure that front-line health care workers receive the personal protective equipment they need?

To increase Canada's collective buying power, the Public Health Agency of Canada is collaborating with provinces and territories to procure PPE and other medical supplies in bulk.

Moreover, the Government of Canada has galvanized the Canadian industry to produce PPE and other medical supplies domestically.

These efforts are further supported with expedited regulatory approvals facilitated by Health Canada; and large-scale logistical expertise from the Canadian Armed Forces.

All PPE and other medical supplies received by the Public Health Agency of Canada undergoes a quality verification process prior to distribution to provinces and territories. Supplies that do not meet the Government of Canada's technical specifications for healthcare settings for COVID-19 are assessed for potential use in non-healthcare settings.

The results of these actions are showing promise. As of May 18, the Public Health Agency of Canada has allocated over 2 million N95 respirators and equivalents (e.g., KN95), 30 million surgical masks, 11 million pairs of nitrile gloves, and 4 million face shields. This is in addition to responding to over 50 requests for assistance from provinces and territories to the National Emergency Strategic Stockpile.

Borders

Q2: What actions has the Government of Canada taken to minimize the risk of importation of COVID-19 from travellers entering Canada from other countries, including essential workers from the United States?

To protect the health and safety of Canadians, we have taken unprecedented action to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

On March 17th, the Government used its authorities under the *Quarantine Act* to put in place a prohibition on foreign nationals entering Canada. On March 20th, land borders were closed to all but essential workers. And on March 25th, the Government put in place a requirement, that all persons entering Canada, whether by air, sea or land, unless they provided an essential service, are required to quarantine for 14 days.

Any traveller arriving in Canada is now required to wear a non-medical mask or face covering upon entry, and while in transit to their place of isolation or quarantine.

We verify compliance with the mandatory isolation order by phone and in person. Canadian law enforcement now has the authority to issue tickets to those who are found in contravention of the mandatory isolation order.

While those who must enter Canada regularly to ensure the flow of goods and essential services are exempt from the quarantine requirements, they must not have any symptoms of COVID-19 when they cross the border, and are encouraged to wear an appropriate non-medical mask or face covering when in public places, and when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Testing

Q3: How is the Government of Canada collaborating with provinces and territories in their efforts to get more Canadians tested for COVID-19?

The Government of Canada is supporting provincial and territorial governments on many fronts to increase testing and support rapid contact tracing to stop the spread of COVID-19. We are filling gaps in real-time as we work to put in place made-in-Canada solutions for the long-term.

By closely collaborating with provincial public health laboratories, we are responding to their real-time requests for assistance, as they encounter often unpredictable challenges. For example, we supplied 1000 point of care tests to Saskatchewan on May12th in response to an outbreak. On May15th, we provided supplies to Quebec to address a gap in their high throughput molecular testing.

Throughout the pandemic, we are increasing provincial laboratory testing supplies by bulk procurement of swabs and testing reagents. We have developed a reagent at the National Microbiology Laboratory and contracted with a New Brunswick company (LuminUltra) to produce the reagent in large quantities for the provinces. Every week, LuminUltra ships reagent for 500,000 tests to laboratories across the country. The National Research Council is also producing reagent to support a specific testing platform used in Ontario and Quebec. Completion of this product, expected by the end of June, will fill another gap in testing supply. Scale up of these production capacities is being considered going forward.

Supplying swabs for taking patient samples for testing has also been affected by global shortages. Aggressive bulk procurement, along with supporting made-in-Canada solutions to swab manufacturing, are designed to fill this gap. We have ordered 12.1 million swabs and are distributing approximately 700,000 weekly to provinces and territories.

Federal innovation programs are supporting Canadian industries in producing swabs and test kits to support ramp up of testing. Through these programs, we are building sustained capacity to meet Canada's testing requirements.

As Canada's regulatory authority for medical devices, Health Canada (under an interim order issued by the Minister of Health on March18th) has expedited its review of

submissions for medical devices used for COVID-19 while ensuring safety and effectiveness.

The National Microbiology Laboratory is working with provincial laboratories to validate new point-of-care tests. These rapid tests, designed for low volume testing, are well-suited for northern and remote communities where transport of patient samples to laboratories in urban centres can mean significant delays in receiving test results.

Finally, serological testing using blood samples rather than the nasal samples required for current tests, will offer even greater ease of testing. These tests detect antibodies to the COVID-19 virus and indicate previous infection. They are not used to make a diagnosis of COVID-19 disease but their value will increase as we learn more about immunity to the virus after infection and recovery. The Government of Canada launched the COVID-19 Immunity Task Force on April 23rd to conduct studies, using serological tests, of how widespread exposure to the virus has been in Canada. Results will support planning vaccination programs and targeting public health measures in provinces and territories.

Vaccines and Therapeutics

Q4: What is the Government of Canada doing ensure that Canadians have access to a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as possible?

While no vaccine currently exists for COVID-19, there are currently several candidate vaccines in research and development. At this time, it is not possible to determine which one(s) will be successful in preventing COVID-19 infection. As such, the Government of Canada is supporting multiple organizations who are working at unprecedented speed to develop candidate vaccines.

The Government's support for vaccine research and development, bio-manufacturing requirements to support large-scale production, enhancing capacity and access for clinical trials, and seeking solutions for domestic capacity will all help to better position Canada to rapidly access a vaccine once it does become available.

The Government of Canada is closely monitoring the vaccine development pipeline, both domestically and internationally, and will work quickly to negotiate purchase agreements with vaccine manufacturer(s) to secure supply for all Canadians as soon as it is feasible.

Unintended Health Consequences Of Public Health Restrictions

Q5: What is the Government of Canada doing to address the unintended broader impacts of the pandemic and related physical distancing restrictions on Canadians, such as lack of activity, increased domestic violence, and mental health?

We must continue to bear in mind both the direct and indirect impacts this virus is having on our collective mental and physical health. Generating the evidence is a necessary first step for developing effective policies, programs and other prevention or mitigation measures. The Public Health Agency of Canada is working with data partners (Statistics Canada and the Canadian Institute for Health Information) to identify what data/analyses can be shared, collected or produced quickly, in order to guide public

health action in the near-term and beyond. While data is still emerging on the ways that Canadians' behaviours may have changed as a result of COVID-19 social isolation measures, it is clear the short and long term impacts will likely differ among populations, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

As a first step, the government's recent investment of \$240.5 million in mental health resources will help Canadians access reliable health information and support access to health services through virtual tools and approaches. This funding will further enable the development and reach of:

- The Canada-COVID-19 mobile app, which provides Canadians with access to a symptom tracker, credible sources of information and resources, and a self-assessment tool;
- The Wellness Together Canada portal, which makes it easy for Canadians to access self-directed tools and find credible information on mental health and substance use. It also connects Canadians to peer support workers, social workers, psychologists and other professionals for confidential chat sessions, phone calls and online counselling, which can be used to help Canadians work through the grief they may be experiencing at the loss of a loved one; and
- Enhanced analytics capacity, which will help gain further insights and understanding into the emergence, spread and public health risks of COVID-19. Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada have put in place contracts with BlueDot Inc. to enhance and expand upon existing expertise in this field.

Health Canada is also currently funding a project (\$2 million / 2 years) with the Canadian Virtual Hospice (CVH) to expand the existing CVH web-based offerings and develop new resources and services to meet the needs of underserved communities including Francophones across Canada, the LGBTQ2 community, and families caring for a dying child. Health Canada is exploring ways to support a variety of populations in the deployment of virtual health services. Discussions are ongoing with provincial and territorial partners on the implementation of these tools.

Recognizing the importance of the role of social determinants on health, the Government of Canada has made a series of investments to address impacts of the pandemic, including:

- \$50M million for Women's Shelters and Sexual Assault Centres;
- \$350 million for the Emergency Community Support Fund to support vulnerable Canadians through charities and non-profit organizations that deliver essential services;
- \$7.5 million for Kids Help Phone to support counselling services for children and youth;
- Income support initiatives including the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy, the Canada Emergency Response Benefit and the Canada Emergency Student Benefit; and
- Additional funding to support people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing, homelessness.

We have also been working with our partners to shift healthy living programs to virtual interventions and adjusting content to reflect the COVID-19 context. Funded projects have started introducing videos and other digital content (e.g. on exercising at home, cooking meals and coping with stress) featuring health professionals, such as nutritionists or counsellors, to continue to engage with individuals, families, workplaces and communities.

Collaboration with Provinces and Territories

Q6: How is the Government of Canada working with provinces and territories to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic?

The Government of Canada continues to work collaboratively with partners at all levels of government to respond to COVID-19.

The Special Advisory Committee (SAC), composed of the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health and senior public health officials from all jurisdictions, has been activated since January 2020 meeting frequently to coordinate federal, provincial and territorial response efforts across Canada.

The Committee focuses on policy and technical public health aspects of the response as per the FPT Public Health Response Plan for Biological Events, informed by lessons learned from past public health responses.

On May 1, 2020, SAC released recommendations on next steps for Canada entitled *Foundations for Living with COVID-19 in Canada: Lifting of Restrictive Public Health Measures*.

The SAC on COVID-19 reports to the Conference of Deputy Ministers of Health and to Health Ministers from all provinces and territories.

Deputy Ministers have also been meeting regularly across jurisdictions on key aspects of the pandemic response, such as provision of personnel protective equipment and supplies, testing and sharing of best practices.

The Federal Minister of Health has been engaging with her provincial/territorial counterparts very regularly through weekly meetings and regular bilateral dialogue to jointly address key issues and mobilize resources to support Canada's response to COVID-19.

International Collaboration

Q7. What are some of the key lessons learned from other countries and how are they being incorporated in the Government's response moving forward?

With the outbreak evolving rapidly around the world, the Government of Canada has and will continue to work closely with our international partners, including the World Health Organization, to protect the health and safety of Canadians.

In particular, Canada's ongoing engagement with country partners has enabled us to learn from others' experiences and best practices to inform and strengthen our domestic response. Existing mechanisms, such as the Global Health Security Initiative, the G7 and the G20, have facilitated such information sharing. For example:

- Through regular engagement with Canada's G7 Health Ministers, Canada gathered information from the United States to inform our sterilization plan for personal protective equipment. We are also engaged in ongoing information exchanges on approaches to serological testing with all G7 countries.
- The United Kingdom's risk communications approach and the importance of transparent communication and public education was also shared early on in G7 discussions as well as key considerations for implementing travel and border measures.
- The issue of repatriation of citizens was first discussed among senior officials through the GHSI network, with Canada learning from the experiences of Japan and the United States.

On May 4th, Canada also joined several countries in co-hosting the launch of the Coronavirus Global Response, pledging over \$850M to support researchers and innovators develop solutions to test, treat and protect people from COVID-19.

Keeping Canadians Informed

Q8. What is the Government of Canada doing to keep Canadians informed on Canada's COVID-19 response efforts and actions they can take to remain healthy and safe.

On March 11, the Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, announced \$50 million in funding for the Public Health Agency of Canada to support ongoing communications to keep Canadians informed and a national public education campaign to encourage the adoption of personal protective behaviours.

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Government of Canada has worked closely with provinces and territories, key partners and stakeholders to provide Canadians and health care professionals with the timely, trusted and evidence-based information they need to protect themselves, their families, their communities and their businesses.

To complement online content, the Government of Canada continues to update the Canada COVID-19 mobile app, which provides users with easy access to up-to-date information about COVID-19, trusted health resources and allows them to track COVID-19 symptoms daily.

The Wellness Together Canada portal for mental health and substance use provides access to credible information and connects them to peer support workers, social workers, psychologists and other professionals for confidential chat sessions or phone calls.

We have also used a wide variety of channels to provide information and updates to Canadians, including:

- the dedicated website Canada.ca/coronavirus and other linked pages on the COVID-19 response, which have had more than 167 million visits since its launch;
- daily briefings to the media;
- a toll-free information line [1-833-784-4397] with interpretation service available in 200+ languages open from 7 a.m. to midnight, 7 days a week;
- regular public advisories to inform Canadians and the media about emerging issues and to dispel misinformation about health products (e.g., natural health products, drugs and medical devices);
- The Get Updates on COVID-19 email subscription service provides subscribers with critical information from the Government of Canada's COVID-19 website related to the pandemic;
- social media;
- TV, radio, print and digital advertising; and
- a nation-wide mail-out sent to all households across the country to reach Canadians who may not have access to or use online technology.

INVESTING IN RESEARCH – DIRECTLY BENEFITS CANADIANS

Question 1: What is the total sum of federal investments, made through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), in support of COVID-19 research?

Answer:

- As the Prime Minister said on May 4th in a meeting with world leaders, Canada is playing its role in ensuring global leadership on scientific research on COVID-19. I am pleased to say that our Government has invested just over \$158 million in COVID-19 research through the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).
- Please allow me to briefly summarize some of the key research activities that CIHR has supported to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on Canadians, our communities and our health systems.
- In March, CIHR moved quickly to mobilize the Canadian research community in response to COVID-19 through an initial rapid research response.
- With an investment of \$42.1 million from CIHR and \$12.1 million from federal and provincial partners, this competition resulted in the funding of 99 research projects on COVID-19.
- With this support, researchers at 36 universities and hospitals across Canada are working with the utmost urgency to develop and evaluate new vaccines, therapies and diagnostics, as well as public health strategies to “flatten the curve” and tackle misinformation, stigma and anxiety.
- CIHR has also provided an additional \$1 million in funding to the Canadian Immunization Research Network to conduct vaccine-related research and clinical trials, and to enhance Canada’s capacity to monitor vaccine safety and effectiveness.
- As you may be aware, on April 23, the Prime Minister announced new funding of \$114.9 million for CIHR, as part of Canada’s national medical research strategy on COVID-19.
- This investment will enable CIHR to support promising COVID-19 projects to move to critical next stages, promote Canadian participation

in domestic and international clinical trials and help us understand and mitigate the mental health and substance use impacts of this crisis.

- I am confident that the research funded through CIHR's Rapid Research Response to COVID-19 represents projects that have the greatest potential to help Canada address this public health crisis.

Question 2: How are some of these research initiatives directly benefitting Canadians?

Answer:

- Ensuring the health and safety of all Canadians is our main concern and we all know that it is through research and innovation that we will be able to tackle this pandemic.
- I am pleased to say that, through the leadership of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (or CIHR), we have been able to rapidly mobilize the research community and fund dozens of research projects on possible treatments, therapeutics, vaccines and more.
- Our government is supporting national and international networks that oversee the development and implementation of clinical trials on vaccines, treatments and therapeutics.
- For instance, CIHR is supporting CATCO, the Canadian arm of the World Health Organization's SOLIDARITY trial. This is a trial that assesses the potential of existing medications for treating COVID-19.
- By participating in such global efforts, Canada can more rapidly determine which existing and pre-approved treatments could be used to treat Canadians now, while we develop a vaccine as a solution.
- During this pandemic, we must not forget that many Canadians struggle with mental health challenges and research can provide solutions to help them during these difficult times.
- CIHR is doing its part to support rapid knowledge synthesis of current evidence on mental health and substance use. Results from this research will provide evidence for decision makers to deliver better health care to Canadians who need them most.

Digital Supports

Question: What has the Government of Canada done to help Canadians access the health care resources they need during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Answer:

- Canadians need ready access to digital tools and resources to help during the COVID-19 pandemic, including education, information, mental health and substance use supports, alerts and screening tools.
- The Government of Canada is working closely with provinces and territories, vendors and stakeholders to make these tools widely available to Canadians and their families.
- On May 3, the Prime Minister announced that the Government of Canada is committing \$240M to help Canadian health systems to accelerate their efforts to meet health care needs through virtual tools and approaches.
- This will enable Canadians to safely engage with their regular health providers through telephone, text or video-conferencing, to have their health needs met. It also means they can continue to access specialist services throughout this time of uncertainty.
- As well, through this investment we have already implemented a suite of digital health tools, including:
 - An online self-assessment tool, which has been accessed by more than 4 million Canadians
 - A mobile app called “Canada COVID-19,” which provides reliable information and resources for Canadians. In addition, on the app, Canadians are encouraged to monitor their health on a regular basis through a daily symptom tracker.
 - *Wellness Together Canada*, a free online portal of virtual mental health and substance use supports available through the Canada COVID-19 app and Canada.ca website.
- We will continue to work with all of our partners to ensure that Canadians have access to up-to-date information, tools and resources on COVID-19.

INTERIM ORDERS FOR HEALTH PRODUCTS AND FOOD

Question:

What has Health Canada done to get products like personal protective equipment and hand sanitizers to market faster to address COVID-19, while protecting the health and safety of Canadians?

Answer:

Health Canada is proactively doing all it can to respond to the pandemic in its role as health product regulator.

To this end, Health Canada is expediting the review and approval of drugs and devices to address COVID-19, while continuing to ensure that these products are safe and effective for Canadians through regulatory measures called Interim Orders. An Interim Order is one of the fastest mechanisms available to address large-scale public health emergencies.

On March 18, I approved an Interim Order to expedite the regulatory review of medical devices, including test kits. To date, more than 170 medical devices have been authorized, including diagnostic devices, personal protective equipment, ventilators, and others.

I also authorized an Interim Order on March 30 to help prevent and alleviate shortages. It permits the import and sale of drugs, medical devices, and other products that are not approved in Canada, subject to certain quality and safety requirements. To date, more than 30 drugs have been made available through this extraordinary measure, helping to maintain key medical supplies.

The Interim Orders are working to help Canadians and health care workers access products that limit the spread of COVID-19, such as hand sanitizers, and disinfectants.

We are also working to ensure that the medical community, the health product industry, and Canadians are informed of these measures in a timely way, by creating new websites dedicated to COVID-19 activities and updating them regularly.

[ONLY FOR USE IF NEW INTERIM ORDER IS SIGNED BY THE MINISTER PRIOR TO APPEARANCE] I have also recently approved another Interim Order that will facilitate the evaluation of Canadian clinical trials for COVID-19 related drugs and medical devices, making it easier for our researchers to support global efforts to find a cure.

The Department continues to monitor COVID-19 treatment developments and research – both domestically and internationally – and is prepared to introduce additional measures as necessary. We are also closely monitoring the safety of all products authorized through the Interim Orders, and will take appropriate action to protect Canadians if needed.

PROTECTING MEAT INSPECTORS AGAINST COVID-19

Question:

What is the Canadian Food Inspection Agency doing to protect inspectors in meat processing plants?

Answer:

- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is committed to protecting the health and safety of its employees while maintaining critical inspection services.
- Masks and face shields are made available to all CFIA meat inspectors who cannot practice physical distancing.
- The Canadian Food Inspection Agency has issued guidance and instructions to its employees relating to prevention and wellness. Employees have been instructed to self-assess their own condition on a daily basis before reporting to work and to be diligent in monitoring their own personal condition in order to minimize any risks to their health and that of others in the establishments they report to.
- When cases of COVID-19 occur in a food processing establishment, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) works with local public health authorities to determine the level of risk of exposure for CFIA

employees, and their need for self-isolation and/or referral to health services for testing.

- The CFIA has been made aware of 38 CFIA employees having tested positive for COVID-19 between March 23 and May 19.
- This number represents illness among all employees (not only inspectors) and is cumulative. The majority of these employees have recovered and returned to work.
- Canadian Food Inspection Agency employees (including inspectors) who are exhibiting any signs or symptoms of illness have been advised to contact their managers and stay home.

RETURN TO NORMAL

Question:

What is the government doing to allow Canadians to return back to normal?

Answer:

Our Government is working in collaboration with provinces and territories on a coordinated approach to gradually restart the economy while protecting the health and safety of all Canadians.

Provinces and territories will each take different steps at different times to ease restrictions, reflecting the specific circumstances in their jurisdiction. Despite our regional differences, all governments are working together in the interest of Canadians.

Background:

- <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/04/28/prime-minister-releases-joint-statement-first-ministers-restarting>
- On April 28th, the federal, provincial and territorial governments released a set of common principles, criteria, and measures to help guide governments as they restart, economic activity, based on a public health approach.

- The four main agreed principles include:
 - 1) Taking a science and evidence-based approach to decision-making;
 - 2) Coordination and collaboration between all jurisdictions;
 - 3) Continued accountability and transparency of all governments; and
 - 4) Flexibility and proportionality as information changes over time.
- This statement also identifies the criteria and measures that need to be in place in order to begin to take steps to restart the economy:
 - COVID-19 transmission is controlled, so new cases are contained at a level that our health care system can manage.
 - Sufficient public health capacity is in place to test, trace, isolate, and control the spread of the virus.
 - Expanded health care capacity exists to support all needs, including COVID-19 and non-COVID-19 patients.
 - Supports are in place for vulnerable groups, communities, and key populations. This includes the protection of seniors, residents of group living facilities, workers in close quarters, homeless people, and Indigenous people and those living in remote locations, health care workers and other essential workers, and inmates.
 - Support and monitoring of workplace protocols are in place to keep Canadians safe at their jobs, and prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19.
 - Restrictions on non-essential travel are eased and managed in a coordinated manner.
 - Communities are supported in managing local disease activity, including in child care, schools, and public transportation, and industry and economic sectors are engaged to support the health of Canadians, reduced viral activity, and protection of the economy as it restarts.

RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN

Question:

The Federal Government held a campaign to recruit volunteers to do contact tracing, case reporting and support to health human resources. The campaign yielded over 53,000 volunteers. How many volunteers have you on-boarded, to do what and in which province?

Answer:

Health Canada supports the provinces and territories as they respond to COVID-19 by establishing an inventory of skilled Canadians to provide surge capacity to provinces and territories in key areas. Lists of volunteers have been shared with provinces and territories. They are responsible for the onboarding of these volunteers to support their needs, where appropriate.

For example, to support the province of Quebec with their challenges with their long-term care facilities, we are working closely with the Canadian Red Cross. With the help of the Public Service Commission, we are currently reaching out to the volunteers in the database to confirm their willingness, availability and credentials to support these efforts. Those volunteers who are screened in are then referred to the Canadian Red Cross who trains them and assigns them to facilities. We have also tapped into our inventory of students to solicit their help. They undergo the same screening criteria as the volunteers before we refer them to the Canadian Red Cross.

If pressed on contact tracing:

To support contact tracing in Ontario, we have mobilized Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada and National Defence employees who are not assigned to critical services to support Public Health Ontario with their contact tracing needs. Ten teams of 25 employees have been trained and can take close to 4,000 a day. The service is available 7 days a week.

3. Committee Member Biographies

Francis Drouin (Vice-Chair)

Liberal Member of Parliament for Glengarry — Prescott — Russell



- First elected to House of Commons on October 20, 2015
- Re-elected in 2019
- Member of the Government Operations and Estimates Committee since January 29, 2016, and the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food

Interest in PSPC portfolio

- Mr. Drouin primarily focused on the interests of his constituency, including Phoenix as a Member of Parliament in the NCR
- Mr. Drouin also maintains an interest in interprovincial crossings and traffic

Other interests and interventions

The member has risen most often in the House of Commons regarding rural economy, supply management and internet access.

Considerations

Mr. Drouin has been quite active on social media promoting government initiatives and information relating to Covid-19. In particular, he has focused on local support initiatives, the dairy industry and the agricultural industry.

Furthermore, he retweeted a call from Canadian Chamber of Commerce President Perrin Beatty asking for manufacturers who can retool to manufacture medical equipment to get in touch with the government to help.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting of April 24, 2020

Mr. Drouin questioned PSPC officials about the relationship between PSPC and the Public Health Agency of Canada as well as the department's relationship with the provinces. In particular, how provincial needs are determined across Canada. Further, he also enquired about how PSPC contracts companies to produce PPE and other supplies.

In his second round, Mr. Drouin discussed some barriers that exist for companies that want to sell medical devices, including the approval process with Health Canada, and the steps they must undertake for them to qualify.

Majid Jowhari
Liberal Member of Parliament for Richmond Hill



- First elected to House of Commons on October 20, 2015
- Re-elected in 2019
- Member of the Government Operations and Estimates Committee and the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology

Interest in PSPC portfolio

- As Mr. Jowhari has been a member of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates since 2017, he is familiar with the mandate of PSPC

Other interests and interventions

Mr. Jowhari introduced a Private Member's Bill in the 42nd Parliament to amend the Criminal Code to require that a presentence report contain information on any aspect of the offender's mental condition that is relevant for sentencing purposes. The bill was adopted by the House of Commons but died on the Order Paper at 1st Reading in the Senate with the dissolution of Parliament.

Considerations

Mr. Jowhari has been active in sharing a wide range of government initiatives related to the Covid-19 crisis, including loans for small businesses, mental health resources, self-isolation measures, and help for seniors.

Irek Kusmierczyk
Liberal Member of Parliament for Windsor – Tecumseh



- First elected to House of Commons in October 2019
- Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Employment, Workforce Development and Disability Inclusion
- Member of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates
- Formerly worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as an Atlantic Council of Canada Fellow
- Previously worked on Species-at-Risk remediation around Ojibway Park as part of the Windsor Essex Parkway Project
- He published a book chapter on cross-border environmental cooperation between local governments around the Great Lakes basin

Interest in PSPC portfolio

- Considering the members' previous work, he may have an interest in green procurement and greening government.

Other interests and interventions

Mr. Kusmierczyk has risen most often in the House of Commons regarding Trade Agreements.

Riding Considerations:

As of April 28, 2020, 43 residents in the greater Windsor area had died of Covid-19.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting of April 24, 2020

Mr. Kusmierczyk questioned the Minister and PSPC officials about the relationship between PSPC and other government departments and governments. Further, he enquired about the Canadian capacity to address the demand for PPE in the context of companies retooling to produce supplies and equipment.

Steven MacKinnon

Liberal Member of Parliament for Gatineau



- First elected to House of Commons on October 20, 2015
- Re-elected in 2019
- Member of the Government Operations and Estimates Committee
- Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Public Services and Procurement since January 2017

Interest in PSPC portfolio

- Mr. MacKinnon is interested in the Phoenix Pay System, prompt payment and interprovincial crossing.

Other interests and interventions

The member appeared in front of the Official Language Committee concerning the role of the Department with the implementation of the Official Language Act.

Considerations

Mr. MacKinnon has been active in sharing a wide range of government measures related to Covid-19, including loans and mental health services.

Patrick Weiler

Liberal Member of Parliament for West Vancouver-Sunshine Coast- Sea to Sky Country



- First elected to the House of Commons in October 2019.
- Member of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates as well as the Standing Committee on Natural Resources
- Member of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

Interest in PSPC Portfolio

- As an environmental and natural resource management lawyer, Mr. Weiler may have a particular interest in greening government initiatives.

Other interests and interventions

The member has risen in the House of Commons most often regarding affordable housing, climate change and global warming.

Considerations

Mr. Weiler has been active on social media posting regular updates and information about Covid-19. He donated his legislated MP pay raise on April 1st to local charities responding to the Covid-19 crisis.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting of April 24, 2020

Mr. Weiler questioned the Minister and PSPC officials on the government's efforts to support Canadian suppliers and individuals that are helping to address the Covid-19 response, whether through providing meals or retooling their businesses to manufacture supplies. Further, the member asked how the department was addressing the backlog of applications to support government efforts to fight this pandemic.

Ziad Aboultaif

Conservative Member of Parliament for Edmonton Manning



- First elected to House of Commons in 2015
- Formerly a member of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development during the 42nd Parliament
- Member of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates
- Holds the Digital Government critic role for the Conservative Party

Interest in PSPC portfolio

- As the critic for Digital Government, Mr. Aboultaif is likely to have a particular interest in the Phoenix pay system backlog and the next generation pay system

Other interests and interventions

During the 42nd Parliament, the member was active in the House of Commons most often regarding the Canada Pension Plan and International trade.

Considerations

Mr. Aboultaif has been active on social media sharing information about the Covid-19 crisis as it relates to the province of Alberta and the city of Edmonton, as well as sharing information on federal government initiatives such as the CERB, and the boost to the Canada Child Care Benefit.

On April 16th, the city of Edmonton extended its state of emergency due to Covid-19 and cancelled all sports leagues until the end of May. Alberta recently expanded testing to all residents and staff of long-term care facilities that see an outbreak of Covid-19.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting of April 24, 2020

Mr. Aboultaif questioned officials on the reports of planes returning from China without cargo, the cost of cancelling cargo jets, and government contracts with airlines for shipping or carrying products.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting on April 30, 2020

Mr. Aboultaif questioned officials regarding the location of the chain supplies of the companies supplying for the government and the PSPC timelines in assessing companies applying to supply the GoC.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting on May 8, 2020

Mr. Aboultaif questioned Minister Duclos regarding the availability of PPE for public servants working with the public. He further asked if he could get the manifest for all the flights bringing in equipment. He also enquired about the procurement of PPE and the contracts, whether they are done with countries, the private sector, or a middle man.

Kelly Block
Member of Parliament for Carlton Trail-Eagle Creek



- First elected to House of Commons in 2008
- Re-elected in 2011 and 2015
- Holds the PSPC critic role for the Conservative Party
- Member of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates
- During the 42nd Parliament, Ms. Block was the Vice-Chair for the Standing Committee on Transport, Infrastructure and Communities, and a Member of the Standing Committee on Natural Resources
- In 2013, she was appointed Parliamentary Secretary for the Minister of Natural Resources

Interest in PSPC portfolio

- During Question Period she has raised questions regarding the increase in cost to Canada Post's postage stamps, and procurement modernization
- As Critic of PSPC, Ms. Block will have a good understanding of PSPC's portfolio.

Other interests and interventions

During the 42nd Parliament Ms. Block rose most often regarding Bill C-49, an Act to amend the Canada Transportation Act and other Acts and the oil and gas industry.

Considerations:

Ms. Block has been active on social media and critical of the government's preparedness for this crisis, including that it was behind in its ability to procure PPE. Ms. Block further authored a post on her website criticizing the government's openness to introducing a law to make it an offence to knowingly spread misinformation online about Covid-19. The member argues that Canada already has laws in place to protect against those making false and dangerous health claims, and that this an attempt to limit free speech. ¹

Interventions at the OGGO meeting of April 24, 2020

Ms. Block questioned the Minister and officials on the oversight of the "made-in-China" supply chain and who is ensuring quality control over the products. Further, she asked about the process of receiving supplies from China and who takes ownership on the ground in Canada.

1

https://www.kellyblockmp.ca/liberals_consider_regulating_speech?fbclid=IwAR01clbVJc54rmDaC8a_TjwwKljkfVtj819hkRmwPru12lvBMhPdOsa7k

Intervention at the COVI meeting on April 29, 2020

Ms. Block raised concerns about a surge in counterfeit PPE coming into Canada. She asked about the companies ordering the counterfeit PPE and the measures taken in order to stop those shipments.

In another intervention, Ms. Block asked about the quantity of PPE produced in Canada and the accessibility to PPE for businesses' employees in order to safely return to work.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting on May 8, 2020

Ms. Block asked about TBS guidelines regarding government contracts and about oversight measures that the comptroller general has implemented to ensure adequate internal controls

for COVID spending. She further inquired about the application of those measures to PPE contracts and raised that a contract has been awarded for a 10-year period, questioning how it fits within the emergency limits in place. She also asked about the possibility of prepayments.

Tom Lukiwski (Chair)

Conservative Member of Parliament for Moose Jaw — Lake Centre —Lanigan



- First elected to House of Commons in 2004
- Re-elected in 2006, 2008, 2011, 2015 and 2019
- Chair of the Government Operations and Estimates Committee since 2016
- Former Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader

Interest in PSPC portfolio

- As the current and former Chair of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates, Mr. Lukiwski will be familiar with the mandate of PSPC

Other interests and interventions

The member has not risen in the current Parliamentary session.

Kelly McCauley
Conservative Member of Parliament for Edmonton West



- First elected to House of Commons on October 20, 2015
- Re-elected in 2019
- Member of the Government Operations and Estimates Committee since January 26, 2016
- Holds one of the PSPC critic roles for the Conservative Party

Interest in PSPC portfolio

- As a current and former critic for PSPC, Mr. McCauley is familiar with the mandate of PSPC. He has shown a particular interest in the integrity regime and defence procurement

Other interests and interventions

The member introduced a Private Members Bill in the 42nd Parliament in order to amend the Income Tax Act to remove the requirement to withdraw minimum amounts from a registered retirement income fund. It also makes a related amendment to another Act. The bill was defeated, as of December 13, 2016

Considerations

Mr. McCauley has been active on social media in calling for the Government to reconvene Parliament to allow it to be held to account, and he has called for support for the oil and gas sector. In an April 16th Facebook post, the member stated that he plans to question the government on contaminated testing kits and why, according to the previous Minister of PSPC, acquiring PPE was “not a priority” for the Liberal government.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting of April 24, 2020

Mr. McCauley had questions for the Minister and officials on the National Emergency stockpile, and when the government began major purchasing of ventilators and PPE. Further, the member had questions about the shipment of masks to Canada that were unusable and the contaminated swabs, including whether or not Canada would be reimbursed for these products.

Intervention at the COVI meeting on April 29, 2020

Mr. McCauley asked about the substandard and contaminated N95 masks from China would be replaced at no further charges. He claimed that if the masks are used for non-medical purposes, they would not be replaced free of charge, and asked what non-medical purposes would there be for the masks.

Julie Vignola (Vice-Chair)

Bloc Québécois Member of Parliament for Beauport—Limoilou



- First elected to House of Commons in October 2019
- Formerly a teacher with a specialization in history, geography and second languages
- Member of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates
- Holds the PSPC critic role for the Bloc Québécois

Interest in PSPC portfolio

- As the critic for the Bloc Québécois, Ms. Vignola will continue to be active on PSPC's file
- In an interview prior to the election, Ms. Vignola commented on the need for green renovations and the ability to offer affordable housing and quality accommodations for elderly who are losing cognitive and physical autonomy

Other interests and interventions

To date, the member has risen most often in the House of Commons with respect to the transfer of civilian members of the RCMP to the Phoenix pay system.

Considerations

In an April 3rd article, Ms. Vignola said that a clothing manufacturer in her riding would be applying to make masks.²

The member has been active in sharing information about the Covid-19 crisis, including government measures and mental health, on her Facebook page.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting of April 24, 2020

Ms. Vignola questioned the Minister and officials on the decision to use Amazon Canada for the distribution of supplies; the situation with respect to the plane leaving China without its cargo; the management of the national emergency stockpile; and whether Canada's dependency on international supplies.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting of April 30, 2020

Ms. Vignola questioned PSPC officials regarding the assistance SMEs would receive from PSPC if they were awarded a contract with the GoC.

Interventions at the OGGO meeting of May 8, 2020

Ms. Vignola asked about the costs of material provided to public servants in order to telework and what will be done of it once they return in the offices. She further asked about shared workspaces and their popularity, and whether these measures would be expanded in the future.

Ms. Vignola also asked what would be done with the numerous government buildings if teleworking was to become the norm and all those spaces were no longer needed.

² <https://monquartier.quebec/2020/covid-19-entreprises-recevront-aides-financieres/>

Matthew Green

New Democratic Party Member of Parliament for Hamilton Centre



- First elected to the House of Commons in October 2019
- Member of the Standing Committee on Government Operations and Estimates and the Standing Committee on Public Accounts
- Prior to election, he was a city councilor in Hamilton, Ontario from 2014 to 2018

Interest in PSPC portfolio

- As a city councilor, Mr. Green had an interest in affordable housing for Hamilton. He may be interested in PSPC's support for the Federal Lands Initiative
- He has risen in the House regarding climate change and global warming and green economy. Therefore he may be interested in green procurement strategies and PSPC's contribution to climate change

Other interests and interventions

The member has risen in the House of Commons most often regarding climate change, indigenous peoples, racial equality and the public service.

Considerations

Mr. Green has been active on social media calling for better protections for renters, students, Indigenous communities, and vulnerable populations.

As of April 18th, Hamilton is reported to have 24 hospital workers infected with Covid-19. The Hamilton General Hospital and the St. Peter's Hospital are both located in Mr. Green's riding.³

Interventions at the OGGO meeting of April 24, 2020

Mr. Green questioned the Minister and officials on the disposal of surplus material in the national emergency stockpile; the possibility of providing pay increases for federally employed cleaners; investing in startups to produce testing supplies; the partnership between the government and Amazon Canada and how we can ensure that Canada's suppliers are maintaining public health safety.

³ <https://www.thespec.com/news/hamilton-region/2020/04/18/hamilton-has-24-hospital-workers-infected-with-covid-19.html>

4. Transcripts of key recent Committee Meetings

- a. HESA April 22, 2020:
 - EN: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-1/HESA/meeting-15/evidence>
- b. OGGO April 24, 2020:
 - EN: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-1/OGGO/meeting-6/evidence>
- c. OGGO May 15, 2020:
 - EN: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-1/OGGO/meeting-12/evidence>
- d. HESA May 19, 2020:
 - EN: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-1/HESA/meeting-21/evidence>
- e. HESA May 20, 2020:
 - EN: <https://www.ourcommons.ca/DocumentViewer/en/43-1/HESA/meeting-22/evidence>

5. Press release - Medicom contract

- EN: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/03/31/prime-minister-announces-new-partnerships-canadian-industries-fight>

6. Press release on domestic industry and PPE

- EN: <https://pm.gc.ca/en/news/news-releases/2020/04/07/prime-minister-announces-production-more-medical-supplies-and#>