

ANNOTATED AGENDA

COVID-19 Stakeholders Teleconference: CPHO Health Professional Forum – Biweekly Update

Friday, September 18th, 2020

11:00 am – 12:00 pm EST (1 hour)

Dial-in Information: 1-877-413-4781 or 613-960-7510 Conference ID: 5192446

Purpose of today's call:

- To provide key updates (Kerry Robinson)
 - SAC Updates
 - Risk Communications Aimed at Youth
 - Testing Approaches
 - School Re-opening and Outbreaks
- To hear from the COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force (Joanne Langley, Co-chair of the VTF)
- To hear about the NACI recommendations for immunization strategies (Matthew Tunis)

Guidance:

- Updated: Public health management of cases and contacts
- New: Canadian Biosafety Guidelines: Classrooms

Forward agenda:

- Vaccine Confidence
- HCW Mental Health and Wellness – Roundtable-style with Forum Members
- PPE Modelling (Jo Voisin)
- Airborne Transmission (deferred item)
- NACI Recommendations (post-publication)

INTRODUCTION – Forum Secretariat (Ray Clark)

Welcome and Roll Call

PHAC SITUATIONAL BRIEFING/UPDATE – Kerry Robinson (5-10 minutes)

1. Domestic Update (September 18) For Reference

- 140,867 cases (*responsive only: 9,200 deaths*).
- 88% of people have now recovered.
- Labs across Canada have tested 6,422,073 people for COVID-19 to date. On average, 47,807 people were tested daily over last week with 1.4% testing positive.

From Sept 15 and 17 Presser and Statement:

- The ongoing increase in new cases being reported daily continues to give cause for concern.
- Multiple reported outbreaks have been linked to single gatherings such as private social events and celebrations and community events held indoors where public health guidelines, such as physical distancing and wearing of masks, were not followed continue to increase the risk for COVID-19 spread getting out of hand.
- With continued circulation of the virus, and with people beginning to move indoors due to the transition to colder weather, the situation could change quickly and we could lose the ability to keep COVID-19 cases at manageable levels.

2. Areas of Collaboration: Special Advisory Committee

- As we move into the Fall, informed by the FPT Public Health Response Plan for Ongoing Management of COVID-19 (which was presented at our Aug 26th meeting), the Special Advisory Committee has identified the following areas for continued coordination and collaboration across levels of government:
 - **Surveillance/data:** expand our data, collect new data to address gaps (e.g., race/ethnicity and outbreak reporting).
 - Monitoring school outbreaks carefully, and developing national guidance on school outbreak investigations to support consistent data collection/analysis.
 - **Capacity:** ensuring sufficient public health and health human resources and sufficient supplies for PPE, testing, etc.
 - **Communication:** value of common messages and sharing on how to use behavioural insights to support more effective public messaging at a time when there is fatigue with COVID information and measures, and we transition indoors and into respiratory illness season.

- **Supporting vulnerable populations:** In order not to repeat our experience of morbidity and mortality of a few months ago, we need to build in strong measures to protect those at higher risk and shore up capacity, and address inequities. This may be our biggest challenge.

3. Update: Risk Communication Aimed at Youth

- Given we have continued to see cases grow among younger adults across the country over many weeks, with people under 40 years of age accounting for over 62% of new cases, PHAC has launched a communications campaign to target youth & young adults, using appropriate behavioural/risk communications strategies.
 - The multi-tiered campaign runs from August until the end of September 2020 and includes:
 - Two short videos that show the unintended consequences of ignoring current public health advice in favour of socializing.
 - Series of youth testimonials that feature Canadian youth who have contracted COVID-19.
 - These videos will appear on APEX mobile (gaming), Twitch (streaming site), Native touch, YouTube, Spotify, Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest, Instagram.
 - Snapchat custom and semi-custom filters that feature a variety of face masks and COVID-19 related messaging to engage youth audiences; and
 - A planned set of sponsored Tweets, interactive Twitter cards and potential series of BuzzFeed quizzes aimed at youth.
 - Also working on messages on youth mental health that address back to school mental health tips (e.g., take breaks from social media and the news; think of the positive things that happen each day; do things you enjoy, start a hobby or learn a new skill, and talk to a trusted adult and ask for help if emotions become overwhelming).

Testing Approaches

- SAC is continuing to advance work on testing in the context of demand for testing, results of asymptomatic testing in low prevalence settings and emerging technology.
 - The most recent guidance (National laboratory testing indication guidance for COVID-19) was developed to facilitate national consistency in testing approaches across jurisdictions, while recognizing differing levels of COVID-19 activity, epidemiology of outbreaks and the respective laboratory testing systems in F/P/T jurisdictions in Canada.

- Several jurisdictions have since undertaken asymptomatic pilot tests and studies and there is limited public health utility and case finding with broad asymptomatic testing, and some risk of false positives [also can potentially put pressure on reagent/swab supplies and HR capacity].
- SAC is working on updating national testing indication guidance for PCR testing and also developing new interim guidance on rapid antigen testing technology
- Once this work is complete, we can invite our NML colleagues to present on emerging testing technology and how they can be integrated into a comprehensive approach to testing, if this is of interest to members.

School Re-opening & Outbreaks (from SAC Sept 3)

- At SAC, we are sharing information and approaches to support jurisdictions in addressing respiratory illness and COVID-19 in schools
 - This includes discussions on symptom screening/management of respiratory illness in school settings, outbreak definitions and management, and testing approaches in the context of schools.
 - PHAC is currently developing outbreak investigation guidance for school settings [publication date TBD], and which PTs which be valuable to support consistent data collection and knowledge generation on transmission in school settings.

FOR REFERENCE

Updated Guidance (posted on Canada.ca):

- Public health management of cases and contacts associated with COVID-19

Upcoming Webinars (shared through SH weekly email):

- Seasonal Influenza 2020-2021 Recommendations in the Context of COVID-19 hosted by National Collaborating Centre For Infectious Diseases
 - **Monday, September 21, 2020 12:00 – 2:00pm (EST)**

Newly Published:

- Canadian Biosafety Guideline: Biosafety in the Elementary, Intermediate, and Secondary School Classroom

Guest Speakers

- This meeting we have two guest speakers:
 - **COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force:** Joanne Langley, Co-chair of the VTF
 - **NACI Recommendations for Immunization Strategies:** Matthew Tunis

COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force (25 minutes)

- FOR YOUR AWARENESS: 15-minute presentation from Joanne followed by 10 minutes of questions
- **Purpose:** This is an informational presentation so that Forum members can learn more about the mandate VTF and scope of its work to date.
- **Outcomes for Forum Members:** Increased understanding; Secretariat asked Forum members if they were interested in hearing from the VTF and we received positive responses.

NACI Recommendations for Immunization Strategies (10-15 minutes)

- FOR YOUR AWARENESS: 10 to 15-minute presentation from Matthew followed by questions
- **Purpose:** This is an informational presentation so that Forum members hear about NACI's role in developing COVID vaccine recommendations and the process of their development. Matthew has proposed to return at a following meeting to speak to the recommendations direction once they are published.
- **Outcomes for Forum Members:** Greater understanding, (e.g., CPhA expressed the desire to know more about how these recommendations are created)

Questions/Issues from Members

- **SOGC** – Any updates on **airborne transmission**?
 - Status: This is an area of active discussion at SAC, therefore we can speak to this item at a future meeting.

Questions for Members

- Please continue to send any feedback, questions or comments to the secretariat. If there are further items that the Forum should consider for Forward Planning, please send them to the Secretariat.

WRAP-UP AND NEXT STEPS – Forum Secretariat (Ray Clark)

- Forward agenda:
 - Vaccine Confidence
 - HCW Mental Health and Wellness – members are invited to share any initiatives and surveys that have done or are planning to help inform this discussion
 - PPE Modelling (HC)
 - Airborne Transmission
 - NACI Recommendations (post-publication)