

ANNOTATED AGENDA

Update re: COVID-19 with MNC, MMF and MNBC

July 21, 2020

11:00am-12:00pm EST (1 hour)

Dial-in Information: 1-877-413-4781 or local 613-960-7510 Conference ID: 9513647

NOTE:

- Purpose of today's call:
 - The Métis National Council (MNC), Manitoba Métis Federation (MMF) and the Métis Nation-British Columbia (MNBC) will meet with Government of Canada officials via teleconference. The last meeting with this group was on June 25, 2020.
 - Federal partners, including PHAC, will share an update on federal actions related to COVID-19 and MNC, MMF and MNBC will share an overview of plans and pressures for their respective nations.

Health Portfolio Participation:

- Kerry Robinson, PHAC
- Tasha Stefanis, HC

Key Messages for PHAC:

(taken from NCFS annotated agenda)

- While the spread of the virus has slowed, the first wave is ongoing. Global transmission continues and therefore it is not possible to eradicate the virus. PHAC is working to ensure that we can cope with or mitigate future increases in infection rates without having to repeat the full lockdown.
- We are actively looking at approaches to border measures, as other countries begin to cautiously open borders to certain countries with low or controlled transmission. Having active discussions with PTs on both approaches to country risk assessments to inform travel advisories for outbound travellers, and considering approaches and measures over time related to inbound travellers looking at options related to countries or classes/categories of travellers.
- For example we have already supported family reunification via our updated orders in council under the Quarantine Act, and are looking at options to expand family reunification. Supporting entry for those with work permits, etc.

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- Actively working on planning for resurgence and readiness for the fall including examining scenarios for the pandemic in Canada, and developing an FPT Public Health Response Plan for Living with COVID-19- integrating planning assumptions, considering epi drivers. This response plan centres on key response components of surveillance, lab testing, public health measures, IPC, clinical guidance, vaccination, border/travel health measures, HC system, communications/outreach and research. Planning for Indigenous communities and high risk congregate settings.
 - Resurgences of cases is a very real possibility—as we are seeing in other parts of the world. Canada has entered an epidemiological phase where new cases arise mostly from localized hot spots and sporadic outbreaks.
 - The evidence demonstrates the continued need for the personal and public health measures to work together to maintain epidemic control and rapidly limit the size and impact of resurgences.
 - While we wait for a vaccine and continue to advance efforts to treat COVID-19, it is important that people do everything under their control to prevent the spread of the virus such as: staying home and away from others if you are ill; washing your hands frequently; covering your cough with a tissue or your sleeve; practising physical distancing; and cleaning and disinfecting surfaces and objects.

Influenza Vaccine Update:

(take from NCSF deck)

- PHAC undertakes an annual influenza awareness and marketing campaign with the objective of increasing influenza vaccination rates and alleviating further pressure on Canada's health care system. The campaign will launch in September/October.
 - Given the overlap between influenza and COVID-19 risk groups, the primary target audiences will be people at higher risk of influenza-related complications. Especially older adults (65 years+), their caregivers/healthcare providers, and people with health conditions.
 - In terms of vaccine supply, each province and territory sets their own influenza vaccination programs, including prioritization, allocation and determining who can administer vaccines. PHAC supports these efforts through bulk purchasing, guidance, and national sharing of strategies. P/Ts have increased their influenza orders substantially for the upcoming influenza season (+21% compared to the same time last year and 13.6M doses compared to 11.2M).
 - The National Advisory Committee on Immunization is developing guidance on the delivery of influenza vaccine in the presence of COVID-19. Guidance will cover all aspects of influenza vaccine delivery such as alternative delivery models (e.g. drive-through clinics, schoolthrough clinics, school-based clinics); IPC measures, PPE needs for workers and vaccines. Guidance is expected later this month.
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- If there is interest among members, we will invite staff from the Centre for Immunization and Respiratory Infectious Diseases to briefly speak to you about this guidance at our August meeting.

Guidance:

- **New guidance** posted on canada.ca since our last meeting.
 - **Care of Residents in Long Term Care Homes: Interim Guidance** (July 14).
- **Upcoming guidance/information for this month** that may be of interest:
 - **National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) Research Priorities for COVID-19 Vaccines to Support Public Health Decisions.**
 - **Modelling Update** - an overview of the methodology of the Public Health Agency of Canada's Susceptible-Exposed-Infectious Removed (SEIR) model and includes a glossary and user guide. This content will not include any specific forecasts for Canada and will be on the National Collaborating Centre on Infectious Diseases (NCCID) website.
 - **Public health management of cases and contacts associated with COVID-19** (Update) guidance created for provincial and territorial public health authorities to support the management of cases and contacts of COVID-19 within their jurisdictions.

Follow-up actions from June 25th meeting

- PHAC did not have any action items from the June 25th meeting.

Other updates from MNC, MMF and MMF

(taken from media scans)

- MNBC's Métis Early Years Program's primary focus over the past few months has been supporting families through COVID-19. The Program was originally developed to help families with children birth to 8 years old build a network of support that provides children with opportunities for early learning and childhood development. Many families have expressed a desire for Métis cultural resources to assist them in learning more about their Métis heritage while at home. As a result, throughout the summer, the Métis Early Years Program will be sending cultural resources and activities to families enrolled in the program to ensure they have the opportunity to share and experience Métis culture together as a family.
 - MMF says Manitoba has left vulnerable foster children out of pandemic response plans, as the province has not provided MMF or other organizations with additional funding.
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The province changed to "single envelope" funding, also known as block funding, last year. Manitoba provides finances up front to child-welfare authorities based on a three-year agreement. The previous system based funding on the number of children in care and the number of days they were in care.

Other key messages - Responsive

New funding (as of May 29, 2020)

The Prime Minister announced new funding to provide critical support to Indigenous families and communities during this crisis, based on needs that have been identified. The funding includes:

- \$285.1 million to support the ongoing public health response to COVID-19 in Indigenous communities. The investment will fund community-led responses to the pandemic, and provide targeted increases in primary health care resources for First Nations communities. In case of outbreaks, this funding can be drawn upon to provide surge capacity and additional support for community-based services in First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.
- \$270 million to supplement the On-Reserve Income Assistance Program to address increased demand on the program, which will help individuals and families meet their essential living expenses. It will also help hire additional staff to better serve First Nations communities and connect individuals to other government programs.
- \$44.8 million over five years to build 12 new shelters, which will help protect and support Indigenous women and girls experiencing and fleeing violence. This funding will help build 10 shelters in First Nations communities on reserve across the country, and two in the territories, to support Indigenous women and children. The government will also provide \$40.8 million to support operational costs for these new shelters over the first five years, and \$10.2 million annually ongoing. Also announcing \$1 million a year ongoing, starting this year, to support engagement with Métis leaders and service providers on shelter provision and community-led violence prevention projects for Métis women, girls, and LGBTQ and two-spirit people.

New funding (as of May 21, 2020)

The Prime Minister announced \$75 million in new funding for Indigenous organizations providing services to Indigenous peoples in urban centres and off reserve. This additional funding will support more community-based projects that address the critical needs of Indigenous populations during this crisis, including food security, mental health support services, and sanitation and protective equipment. It could also help with other needs, such as support for Elders, transportation, and educational materials for Indigenous children and youth.

Funding

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- Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan includes \$305 million for a new, distinctions-based Indigenous Community Support Fund, of which \$30 million has been allocated to the Métis Nation. Funding is to be distributed through ISC's existing mechanisms to facilitate the speed at which funding can be received. The funds could be used for measures including, but not limited to:
 - support for Elders and vulnerable community members
 - measures to address food insecurity
 - educational and other support for children
 - mental health assistance and emergency response services
 - preparedness measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
 - PHAC does not have role in distributing funding to the Métis Nation in response to COVID-19.

Point of care testing (IDPC)

- The Public Health Agency of Canada's National Microbiology Lab (NML) in Winnipeg is performing diagnostic testing for the virus that causes COVID-19.
- The NML is working in close collaboration with provincial and territorial public health laboratories to ensure that persons under investigation for the novel coronavirus are confirmed or ruled out through laboratory testing.
- Multiple provincial public health laboratories can now test for the novel coronavirus with a very high degree of accuracy.
- BC, AB, SK, ON, QC are able to confirm laboratory diagnostics for the virus that causes COVID-19. For all other provinces, their results undergo additional testing at NML because this is a previously unknown virus and it is good practice to use additional tests to provide further confirmation of initial laboratory findings.
- Presumptive positive cases that are identified through provincial/territorial testing are managed from a public health and infection control perspective in the same manner as confirmed cases.
- Provinces and territories are using the testing approach developed and validated by the NML.
- Furthermore, provincial lab results undergo quality assurance testing at the NML.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) (HSIB)

- The Government of Canada is coordinating with provincial and territorial governments to quickly assess and respond to the need for PPE items such as N95 respirators, surgical masks, face shields, nitrile gloves, gowns and other protective clothing, as well as medical supplies such as sanitizer, ventilators, swabs and testing kits.
 - PPE and medical supplies are distributed to the provinces and territories according to an allocation framework agreed upon by federal-provincial-territorial (FPT) Ministers of Health. The allocation framework ensures that Indigenous communities, including the Métis Nation are not excluded from supplies distributed through provinces. (Note: HSIB indicated that the allocation framework is not available to share).
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Mental Health Supports (PHAC/HPCPD/ISC)

- During these difficult times, it is critical that Canadians have access to effective tools to support their mental health and wellbeing, obtain credible and reliable information about mental health and substance use, and access services.
 - The Government of Canada has launched the *Wellness Together Canada* mental health and substance use support portal. It is a central resource for accessing confidential mental health and substance use support with respect to COVID-19. This web-based portal provides Canadians with a virtual network of psycho-social information services and supports, and is available on Canada.ca/coronavirus and the Canada COVID-19 app. The Wellness Together Canada mental health and substance use support portal is meant to support existing provincial and territorial services.
 - Additionally, ISC maintains the Hope for Wellness Help Line, which offers immediate help to all Indigenous peoples across Canada, including Métis citizens. It is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to offer counselling and crisis intervention.
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