

COVID-19 Social Impacts Network  
Expert Advisory Committee Meeting  
5 August 2020  
4:00 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.  
Speaking Points for  
Joël Denis, Director General, Public Health Agency of Canada  
Zoom Meeting ID: 983 5164 9566 & Password: 031216

- Hi everyone, it is nice to see you again and I am looking forward to the presentations today.
- Today, I will:
  - speak to some recent epidemiological trends;
  - discuss COVID fatigue, the Vaccine Task Force, and the COVID Alert App; and, [some areas I want to draw your attention to that you may be interested in]
  - highlight recently published public health guidance.

As usual, I will begin with a brief **epidemiological update**. My colleague, Rima Kandar, an Epidemiologist, is also on the line to answer any questions.

- As you may be aware, Canada is reporting just over 117K cases and ranks 22 in the world for total number of cases.
- Globally, the total number of confirmed cases reported is now over 18 million.
- The five countries reporting the highest number of cases are the United States, Brazil, India, Russia, and South Africa.

**Canada's Epi trends for the week of July 22-28:**

- There has been a **3%** increase in weekly cases compared to the previous week. However, the number of new cases is still lower than it was in April and May.
- There is an ongoing trend of increased spread of the virus within **younger Canadians**. Over the past week, **62% that have surfaced were for individuals** under the age of 40.

- At the provincial level:
  - Quebec and Ontario continue to account for the majority of cases (63%).
  - Increases in the weekly number of new cases per day was observed in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and Newfoundland and Labrador.
  - Those who have seen decreases are British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Yukon.
  - Prince Edward Island reported no cases for this week. The Northwest Territories have not reported a new case since April 2020 and Nunavut remains to have no reported cases of COVID-19 since the beginning of this pandemic.
  - British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island reported more recoveries than new cases.
- I am glad to say that there has been a **22%** decrease in the number of deaths reported this week, compared to the week before.
- I am also pleased to say that between the federal National Microbiology Laboratory and Provincial/Territorial Partner Laboratories, Canada has processed over **40K COVID-19 tests per day last week**.

### **COVID-19 Fatigue Among Young Adults**

- A growing number of individuals from the ages 20-39 are accounting for the highest incident rates for COVID-19 cases across all ages during the past two weeks. For example, over 60% of cases reported to PHAC last week were under the ages of 39, with almost 1/3<sup>rd</sup> hospitalized.

### **Vaccine Task Force**

- The Vaccine Task Force - announced by Dr. Tam last week – has been created to provide advice to the Minister of Health and the Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada regarding vaccination. For example, they will provide advice on vaccine candidates and spending.

- The Vaccine Task Force consists of experts that are independent of government and hold experience in areas of vaccination and infectious disease.
- **[If pressed:** The Vaccine Task Force will also advise on Canadian access to international constructs such as the COVAX initiative organized with the WHO to assure access to international vaccine candidates.]

### **Follow up on the Exposure Notification App – COVID Alert**

- Last week a few of you were curious about the delay in the launch of the application as well as whether any anonymized data would be released publically for researchers.
- The COVID Alert application was launched in Ontario on July 31.
- The voluntary app notifies users if they may have been exposed to someone who has tested positive for COVID-19.
- The initial delay of the app was due to allocating sufficient time to user testing and for Apple and Google to conduct a full review.
- In terms of data being released, the app does not track a user's location or collect personally identifiable information. In other words, there is no data to be shared.

### **Guidance**

#### **July 25:**

- **COVID-19 Guidance for post-secondary institutions and boarding schools** taking a risk-based approach and outlining potential indicators to consider while assessing whether to lift or increase restrictions.

#### **July 28:**

- **Overview factsheet of testing and stigma** to provide factual and quick guidance on how to get tested and how to reduce associated stigma to certain population groups.

### **Closing remarks**

- With that, I will open it up to the floor in case anyone has comments or questions. Thank you.