

**Speaking Notes for the Public Health Agency of  
Canada (PHAC)**  
**for an appearance before  
the Standing Senate Committee on National Finance**

**PHAC Supplementary Estimates (B)**

**March 11, 2020  
Ottawa, Ontario**

## Introduction

Mr. Chair, Honourable Senators, we would like to thank you for inviting us today to present the Supplementary Estimates “B” for fiscal year 2019–2020 for the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Today I am here with:

- Anna Romano, Vice-President, Health Promotion and Chronic Disease Prevention Branch; and
- Dr. Howard Njoo, Deputy Chief Public Health Officer.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss our resource allocation plans with you.

In these Supplementary Estimates (B), the Public Health Agency of Canada is requesting a net increase of \$15.1 million. This amount includes \$13 million in voted authorities and \$1.8 million in transfers.

The Public Health Agency of Canada is seeking funding to support major initiatives, including:

- \$3.9 million to support funding for community projects that address dementia challenges;

- \$2.1 million in funding to strengthen multiculturalism and address the challenges faced by Black Canadians; and
- \$1.2 million in funding to support the Métis Nation in collecting health data and developing a strategy to better clarify its health policies, programs and services.

## **COVID-19**

\$25 million was recently approved to help mitigate emerging financial pressures on the Agency in order to manage the ongoing response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This amount is not included in these estimates. \$25 million was approved for this fiscal year; an additional \$12.5 million was approved for the next fiscal year to manage the most urgent aspects of the COVID-19 outbreak, including support required for Canadians repatriated from Wuhan, Japan's Diamond Princess cruise ship and now the Grand Princess cruise ship in the United States.

The situation related to COVID-19 is evolving rapidly; in Canada and around the world, the number of cases and countries affected continues to increase daily.

The Agency's main focus will be to continue to contain the virus in order to delay the onset of transmission in the community; however, we are preparing for the possibility of a more widespread outbreak.

To manage the situation, the Public Health Agency is working closely with the provinces and territories, as well as international partners (including the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) to ensure a consistent, evidence-based approach to managing this crisis.

At the federal level, we provide national disease monitoring and guidance on public health measures.

Our National Microbiology Laboratory is helping to confirm new cases of COVID-19 and is conducting research to help us better understand the virus.

Last week, the Prime Minister announced the creation of a new Cabinet committee to oversee the federal response to the COVID outbreak. The Agency will keep this committee informed about the situation on a daily basis, allowing us

to respond more quickly to the health implications of the virus.

COVID-19 is a significant public health challenge, and the Agency is acting on all fronts to protect the health, safety and well-being of Canadians.

## **Conclusion**

We would like to thank you for the opportunity to speak about the work we are doing. We would be pleased to answer any questions that members of the Senate Committee may have.