

## Lockington, Elliott (SPAC/PSPC)

---

**From:** MacKnight, Aisling (HC/SC)  
**Sent:** May 6, 2020 8:09 AM  
**To:** Khalil, Samantha; Tojiboeva, Muna  
**Cc:** Bélair, Thierry (HC/SC); Pascuzzo, Matt (HC/SC); Davidson, Cole (HC/SC); Exton, Adam (HC/SC)  
**Subject:** Health lines: May 6

Good morning,

Please see below for our lines:

### COVID-19 – NML INVESTIGATION (NATIONAL POST)

- The National Microbiology Lab routinely shares samples with other public health laboratories—as they do with the NML—to contribute to the advancement of science.
- The NML routinely provides training to international laboratory professionals, and has previously trained scientists from many countries, including China.

*If pressed:*

- There is **no connection** between the National Microbiology Lab and the outbreak of COVID-19

### COVID-19 – HEALTH CANADA APPROVALS OF DEVICES

- Thousands of Canadian businesses applied to produce innovative medical equipment to help combat COVID-19, and Health Canada is thoroughly reviewing the applications.
- We are doing everything we can to ensure a fast and effective made-in-Canada response, and our goal is to process applications for medical device licenses as quickly as possible
- Additional resources have been allocated to accelerate responses, and most applications are processed between 1 and 7 days.

*If pressed:*

- Health Canada officials have been working incredibly hard to ensure a fast and effective made-in-Canada response.
- These applications are being processed between 1 and 7 **calendar** days, compared to the regular service standard of **120** days.
- That being said, this timeframe may be longer if there is missing information or if the department has questions about the application

### COVID-19 – DRUG SHORTAGES

- We understand the serious impact drug shortages can have on patients and their families.
- We are working with provinces, territories, and manufacturers to develop a list of critical drug shortages in Canada
- By working with manufacturers and distributors directly, Health Canada can begin to immediately address these shortages
- We are also working with our international partners to ensure our domestic supply and capacity.

### COVID-19 – DAMAGED PPE

- We need to protect the health and safety of our frontline workers during this pandemic.
- PPE and medical supplies that are received by the government – whether donated or procured by PSPC – are verified by PHAC to ensure they meet appropriate standards for use

- If there are any concerns about the quality of the PPE, they **will not be allocated** to the provinces and territories for healthcare settings. To do so would **put our healthcare workers at risk**.

*If pressed: damaged PPE already received*

- To date, PHAC has received some supplies that do not meet the standards for **healthcare** settings.
- Because PPE is required in a number of settings, if there are products that cannot be used in a **healthcare setting** (i.e. hospital), they can then be assessed for potential use in a **non-healthcare setting**

*If pressed: examples of how many damaged PPE?*

- To date, PHAC has assessed approximately 1 million KN95 masks as not fit for use in healthcare settings.
- These were **not** distributed to provinces and territories for frontline healthcare response, and are being subsequently assessed for use in **non-healthcare** settings.

*If pressed: why damaged PPE is received*

- We are operating in a globally competitive procurement market for PPE and medical supplies, which means we are using new suppliers and manufacturers to meet our demands
- To ensure that all supplies received are fit for use, PHAC verifies the quality of all items received, donated or procured

#### **COVID-19 – DATA MODELLING INITIATIVE**

- As we look to lifting public health measures, our response needs to focus on who in our country is most at risk
- On April 23, the Prime Minister announced **\$10M** for a Canadian data monitoring initiative.
- This initiative will establish a coordinated approach to COVID-19 modeling and access to data sets, through a national network of experts.
- The better we understand the virus, its spread, and its impact on different groups, the better we can fight it and eventually defeat it.

*If pressed on how it will work:*

- We need to invest in research and data, so we can understand how the virus has spread in Canada and how it is affecting vulnerable populations
- At least **one million samples** will be collected and tested **over the next two years**
- Through this large-scale testing, we can track the virus in the **general population and** in specific populations, including health care workers, Indigenous communities, and the elderly.

*If pressed on data collection:*

- Through this large-scale testing, we will be collecting **disaggregated data** that will help us understand the impact of COVID-19 on vulnerable populations

Thanks,  
Ash

**Aisling MacKnight**

Office of the Minister of Health | Cabinet de la Ministre de la Santé  
(613) 327-2803