

## McKenna, Neil

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**From:** Kim, Sabrina

**Sent:** Sunday, May 3, 2020 7:37 AM  
Gordon2, Travis (HC/SC)

**Cc:** Zimmerman, Shannon; Caira, Celine (IC); Harris, Emily (SPAC/PSPC); Murdock, Kelly (SPAC/PSPC); Chan, Marco (IC); MacKnight, Aisling (HC/SC); Bélair, Thierry (HC/SC); Stickney, Matt; Theis, Rick; Khalil, Samantha; Gagnon, Chantal; Simard2, Veronique (IC); Hage-Moussa, Vanessa (IC); Power, Michael (IC); Jagric, Alexander (IC); Lawrence, Alex; Nathoo, Farees; Nowers, Kathryn (HC/SC)

**Subject:** Millions of ineffective tests (Spartan)

Hello - the story is out:

Millions of ineffective tests

Journal de Montréal | Philippe Orfali

Journal de Montréal has learned that Health Canada is suspending the use of millions of Spartan tests, purchased at a high price by Quebec, Ontario and other provinces, because they are ineffective.

Health Canada confirmed late Saturday night that the Spartan Cube, which is designed to rapidly detect COVID-19 using a cotton swab, is far less effective than expected.

"In light of the results of the clinical validation studies, Health Canada is restricting the use of the product for research only until sufficient evidence of performance can be provided and evaluated," a spokesperson told the Journal. Therefore, these tests cannot be used for screening COVID-19 in the population.

\$16 million

In April, François Legault's government purchased 200,000 tests and 100 diagnostic devices from Spartan Bioscience at a cost of \$16 million.

Alberta also spent \$9.5 million on 250 machines and 100,000 cotton swabs, Ontario purchased 900,000 tests, and the federal government and Manitoba also made such purchases.

Thanks to the Cube, the Ottawa-based company promised reliable results in just 30 minutes, without having to move samples to the laboratory, whereas current tests often take more than a day to be completed in a lab.

However, the analyses of the Cube are taking twice as long as expected. And the results are accurate in approximately 50% of cases, far from the 90% hoped for, revealed the work of a pan-Canadian committee of experts.

This "poor" test performance caused quite a stir at the National Microbiology Laboratory (NML). The agency has recommended to Ottawa that it suspend the authorization of the tests, which was granted on April 13, and Health Canada could do so as early as Monday.

The cotton swab

Spartan is feeling the pinch. "Health Canada has informed Spartan that it has received a report from the NML indicating concerns about the efficacy of the cotton swab used for the COVID-19 test. There are no concerns about the analytical performance or the device," the company stated in an email.

"Further discussions are scheduled for Monday to comprehend the breadth and scope of the concerns," added a Spartan spokesperson.

The company intends to work hard to "re-register" the tests as soon as possible. For example, it was suggested that the cartridges may be more effective if a larger sample is taken.

4,000 tests per day

This news comes at a very bad time, when governments have been saying for weeks that lifting lockdowns will especially depend on their capacity to further test the population.