

## Daily Briefing to Parliamentarians Call Summary: March 30, 2020

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Today's briefing to Parliamentarians on COVID-19 was conducted by Rhonda Kropp, along with other officials from DND, CSC, CP, ISC, CBSA, CRA, ESDC, GAC, ISED, PS, SC, and TC. Ms. Evans began by giving a brief update from the public health perspective. Globally, as of today there over cases. As of noon today there are 6,671 cases in Canada and 66 deaths. In Canada, 220,000 people have been tested.

PHAC, CRA, Canada Post, and Correctional Services Canada all had answers to questions that were previously unanswered from previous calls.

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- Ms. Kropp: Regarding a question on Canadians returning by RV. Asymptomatic people will receive instructions that it is permissible to stay in their RV, as its their first place of isolation and place of residence for some. They must remain within the current parameters of self isolation. Failure to comply with these measures can incur a fine of up to 750,000 or 6 months in prison. PHAC will work with FPTs to verify compliance with the order.
  - CRA: All fax information being transmitted is secure, and the policies for doing this will be sent to parliamentarians within the next few days.
  - CCS: In regards to social distancing in prisons, we have reduced to critical staffing levels, temporary Suspended group programming. We have sent instructions to institutions.
  - Canada Post: In regards to a processing facility in Edmonton, we are in direct contact with the local facility. Social distancing and public health measures are in place, we are absolutely cleaning all touch points and high traffic areas, and making sure our employees are safe.
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Final number of call participants: 195

Number of questions unanswered: 13

Questions asked by Parliamentarians include;

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- Senator Paula Simons (ISG): The price of oil has fallen to below \$4 a barrel. The government has promised help Albertans, what is the timeline for a relief package for Alberta's energy sector.

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- Ms. Kropp: As no one from finance is on the line, we will have to get back on this
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- MP Faycal El-Khoury (LPC; Laval-Les Iles) : Who is able to qualify for the new CERB?
    - ESDC: Anyone who has made \$5,000 in the previous year and has been negatively affected by COVID-19.
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- MP Rachel Harder (CPC; Lethbridge): Have the appropriate steps have been made to ensure flights of TFW will be allowed in to Canada and when will these TFWs be allowed in to Canada?
    - ESDC: We have made a number of policy exemptions for TFWs to allow them into the country, we are still working out the final policies/parameters and balancing these with public health measures. We will continue working with PHAC to ensure health and safety around TFWs.
    - CBSA: Were looking at number of TFWs that have already come in since border measures have been put in place. They are able to board flights to Canada if there are seats available, and we're tracking the number of TFWs coming in on a daily and weekly basis.
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- MP Kelly McCauley (CPC; Edmonton West): Can we get transcripts of these calls so our staff can provide better answers for our constituents?
    - Ms. Kropp: We will consider this request internally.
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- MP Tamara Jansen (CPC; Cloverdale—Langley City): What is the current situation with bringing home Canadians from Nepal? What are the penalties for violating the Quarantine Act?
    - M. Kropp: The max penalty is \$750,000 or 6 months of jail time. If someone causes harm to another it could be a million dollar fine or 3 year prison term.
    - GAC: Working hard on flights from Nepal, were having flights from India and Pakistan right now. Nepal is proving to be a little more complicated, but we will have a solution. Its on the top of our priority list.
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- MP David Sweet (CPC; Flamborough - Glanbrook): Is the establishment of emergency or temporary shelters across the country a purely provincial role? Is there anything the federal government can assist with these?
    - Kropp: This is a P/T responsibility. We are working closely with PTs on the state of the healthcare system to know if and when there us a need for this infrastructure to go up. We're taking notice of what our federal infrastructure could be, such as our mobile labs and our NESS.
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- Alistair MacGregor (NDP; Cowichan-Malahat-Langford): In regards to the recent agreement between the city of Vancouver and federal government regarding harm reduction/safe injection sites, is there a contact within Health Canada who can provide more details on this deal and further help the city battle the opioids crisis?
    - Ms. Kropp: We will pass this request along to Health Canada who will contact your office.
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- MP Paul Manly (GP; Nanaimo-Ladysmith): Can there be a FAQ list published for these calls so we can get a background on the issues that are happening on these calls? There are many people in my constituency who are showing COVID symptoms, but can't get tested. When can we get cheaper and more tests so everyone can get tested? Will friendship centres be treated as first responders and get the appropriate funding and resources?
    - Ms. Kropp: We will take note of the FAQ suggestion, but answers may be out of date very quickly, but we will consider.
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- There are rapid tests kits that are currently being tested and being piloted, we're hoping to have these available as quickly as possible. These will be a game changer, and every effort is being made to have these available as soon as possible. Hopefully our answer will change soon.
  - ISC: As part of the PM's response and, there is an envelope for Indigenous communities, within that is money for urban indigenous groups and centres such as friendship centres. We're working on the process to get this information out and are taking requests from funding for groups. Money has been set aside for women fleeing violence as well.
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- MP Rachel Harder (CPC; Lethbridge): Should employees who were already applying for the previously announced 10% subsidy reapply? How will businesses show 30% loss of revenue to be eligible?
    - ISD: We will need to come back on this.
    - CRA: We will be implementing measures, working out the details on how businesses will apply, but will have to come back on this\*\*
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- MP Nelly Shin (CPC; Port-Moody-Coquitlam): Is there anything specific is being planned for business owners in the hospitality and tourism sector?
    - CRA: Specific measures would come at the direction of the department of finance. These employees in this sector would be eligible for the Wage subsidy.
    - ISD: We will monitor closely as a department, and work with the department of finance to work on solutions.
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- MP Rachel Blaney (NDP; North Island-Powell River): How will seniors funding be divided out? Seniors on reserves are asking if they will get chances to have their social assistance topped up?
    - ISC: There will be increases in assistance funding to meet the increased demand in respect to COVID. Every FN community will receive funding to support distribution of funds for households who are struggling.
    - ESDC: There is \$9 million going to United Way who will distribute funds at a local level, but that will be up to them how it's done.
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- MP Iqra Khalid (LPC; Mississauga – Erin Mills): Is there something at the federal level to help commercial businesses who cannot pay their rent? Can there be exemptions made for restaurants who have lost most revenue under the new economic measures?
    - ISD: We will take this question back.
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- MP Carol Hughes (NDP; Algoma – Manitoulin – Kapuskasing): For a retired person with income, but is working a job, can exceptions be made for them to qualify for the \$2k benefit to pay their bills. For those essential businesses who will continue to work, this will impact their businesses as they will now compete with those who don't have a wage subsidy. In terms of the emergency business account, is requiring having people \$50k necessary to access funding? Can that be taken back?
    - ESDC: We're working hard to put out these questions and answers out in a much more consistent way, and we're working on better communication and implementation on the CRB.
    - CRA: With respect to loans, this might be better to be directed to someone else?
    - Ms. Kropp: We will take note of this question.
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- MP Robert Kitchen (CPC; Souris – Moose Mountain): First, will the CRB be taxed? We've established treatment protocols for hospitals and people sent home. Can you provide these

protocols, and tell us at what stages do people need to be tested again in order to be deemed officially recovered?

- Kropp: There are guidelines for different guidelines setting that are different. Check out our website to see whatever situation your interested in. Additional guidance will be produced over the next few weeks as well within PHAC and through experts in other settings.
- ESDC: It is taxable income, however no withholdings will be taken from individual payments, they will then declare this on their taxes next year.

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***Please note that this report is a working draft and is for internal PHAC use only.*** If you have any questions/comments, please let me know.

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