

StJames, Louise (PHAC/ASPC)

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Sent: 2020-03-20 6:05 PM
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Subject: Daily Briefing to Parliamentarians Call Summary: March 20, 2020

Hi all,

Today's briefing to Parliamentarians on COVID-19 was conducted by Dr. Njoo, along with other officials from Finance, GAC, ESDC, PS, CBSA, ISC and ISED. Dr. Njoo began by giving a brief update from the public health perspective. There are 245,000 global cases. 925 cases and 12 deaths right now in Canada. Self isolation and social distancing will remain key to flattening the curve and reducing the impact of COVID-19 in Canada.

Final number of call participants: 194

Number of questions unanswered: 7

- MP Mike Lake (CPC)
- Senator Pat Duncan (ISG)
- MP Heather McPherson (NDP)
- Senator Mike Duffy (ISG)
- MP Todd Doherty (CPC)
- 2 unnamed people.

Questions asked by Parliamentarians include;

- MP Michael Barrett (CPC; Leeds – Grenville – Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes): How are you supplying CBSA officials with PPE, why is there no enhanced screening and why there is little direction on how to deal with sick travellers.
 - o *CBSA: First time we hear there is a lack of supplies, we did check to make sure that sites have adequate supplies. Will make sure if bathroom cleaning twice a day is good. Temperature checks is not something that has been advised from PHAC. There have been guidelines on PPE given to all CBSA officers, and we are regularly are meeting with the unions.*
 - o *Dr. Njoo: From a Public Health perspective, bathroom cleaning is one measure. You could do it once an hour, but if someone goes in right after then its not effective. Washing hands properly is key, along with not touching your face. SARS taught that temperature checks are useless as people may take anti-pyretic medication, or are asymptomatic. Must inform and educate public that they need to self-isolate and monitor for 14 days.*
- Senator Mary Jane McCallum (ISG): Is the \$100 million fund available to indigenous Canadians by ISC available, and when will it be distributed.
 - o *ISC: Today a community guide was released to chiefs to update pandemic plans . Reach out to HQ or regional offices for more information*
- Senator Diane Griffin (CSG): Will the government permit temporary foreign workers to work this year, and will they be staying in housing that is up to proper health standards to avoid an outbreak.
 - o *ESDC: Temporary foreign workers must abide by health regulations, and they must observe 14 day isolation rules*
- MP Ken Hardie (LPC; Fleetwood – Port Kells): What's being done to support Canadians stuck in Peru and abroad in general where countries have closed borders.
 - o *GAC: Flights are now being sent to Morocco and work is being done to get Canadians home from areas with local movement restrictions.*

- MP Nikki Ahston (NDP; Churchill – Keewatinook Aski): How is the \$305 million in that was announced for indigenous communities going to be spent exactly. What is the government doing to help urban indigenous communities, and young families.
 - o *ISC: Today's community guide is an example of some tangible funding, ISC is also supporting needs for PPE and things like hand sanitizer. Questions of tax benefits will be raised with ESDC.*
- MP Garnett Genuis (CPC; Sherwood Park – Fort Saskatchewan): Will the government be ordering the closure of malls who have tenants who do not want to close their shops.
 - o *Dr. Njoo: Mall closure is a provincial authority issue, ultimately would go through the Premier's office.*
- MP Pierre Poilievre (CPC; Carleton): If someone is ordered into self isolation, but their tests come back negative, must they still go back into isolation. What share of people are testing negative and positive, and is that rate testing higher or lower as compared to previous weeks, and how does that relate to if we are flattening the curve. When the mass self-isolation period ends, what will stop the virus from beginning to spread again.
 - o *Dr. Njoo: If someone has a test negative, then they have another repository infection. However, would defer to local authorities as to whether they should still be isolated or not. All tests results we are seeing today, are people who got sick a week ago. In terms of urgency, social distancing important but we won't see those results for another two-three weeks. We will understand how effective our social distance methods are in a few weeks. Still in containment mode for those who are symptomatic.*
- MP Nelly Shin (CPC; Port Moody - Coquitlam): What is a timeline for bringing home people stuck in Peru, who don't have access to medications.
 - o *GAC: Morocco and Peru are the most concerning countries right now. MPs should be encouraging people to register with GAC for up to date information. We understand the urgency and are working quickly to arrange a flight time to bring those people home.*
- Senator Patti Laboucane-Benson (Non-affiliated): Can someone from ISC connect with Metis-communities in Alberta who are looking for support.
 - o *ISC: Absolutely, contact our office.*
- MP Elizabeth May (GPC; Saanich – Gulf Islands): Is the EI system ready to take care of people who might be falling through the cracks, like mothers being laid off early in this period.
 - o *ESDC: Changes are being made to reduce the impact on Canadians. This specific situation has not been addressed but will be looked into by the department.*
- MP Damian Kurek (CPC; Battle River – Crowfoot): Will funeral homes be provided with the proper PPE supplies they need.
 - o *Dr. Njoo: The issue has been raised at the SAC and inter-provincial meetings. Operations for PPE distribution is an issue for Alberta provincial authorities.*
- MP David Sweet (CPC; Flamborough - Glanbrook): Agriculture communities are getting conflicting info on temporary foreign workers. Minister Blair says 60,000 will be allowed in with a mandate to self isolate, then other officials say that only those from the US will enter. Can there be clarity on this?
 - o *ESDC: This is an AgCan issue. Emergency Response Committee has been established to understand issues being faced and to provide guidance to departmental officials.*
 - o *Dr. Njoo: We will task to IRCC.*
- MP Paul Manly (GPC; Nanaimo - Ladysmith): Should people living with those with compromised immune systems not go to work in order to keep their loved ones safe? Will they be given work exemptions?
 - o *Dr. Njoo: Individuals who live with vulnerable people should take caution. If no one has traveled but they are living with immune compromised people, its key to have good hygiene and social distance and limit outings. But if symptomatic then they should get testing.*
- MP Gord Johns (NDP; Courtenay - Alberni): We need clear guidelines on social distancing from the government, and we need clarity for the \$900 dollars being given for people who are self employed. Are students or seniors who are non-EI eligible going to be taken care of?
 - o *Dr. Njoo: Vulnerable populations are responsible at local and provincial level. In terms of EI an benefits, ESDC is the lead on this. Social distancing is hard to communicate, we are looking at using multiple platforms and channels to broadcast measures such as staying 2 metres apart. A push by government may be necessary, such as closing schools.*

- *ESDC: People want as much clarity as possible, applicants will be taken care of starting in April. ESDC working hard to make sure that everyone is taken care of.*

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.

Best,

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