

TRANSCRIPTION

BRIEFING

Transcription prepared by Media Q Inc. exclusively for Public Health Agency of Canada

DATE: March 26, 2020 4:30 p.m. ET

LOCATION: Teleconference

PRINCIPALS: Rhonda Crock, Director General, Health Operations Centre

SUBJECT: The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) holds a daily COVID-19 technical briefing for Parliamentarians.

Moderator: Good afternoon and welcome to the technical briefing to Parliamentarians on the government's response to Covid 19. Joining us today are the following departments and agencies: Employment and Social Development Canada, Service Canada, Global Affairs Canada, Canada Border Services Agency, Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, Canada Revenue Agency, Global Affairs Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, Innovation Science and Economic Development, Public Safety Canada, Public Service and Procurement Canada.

Please note callers will be permitted one question. We would ask that you keep the question to 60 seconds as there are many callers on the line who wish to have a chance to ask their question.

Please identify yourself and inform us which riding you represent. I would like to turn the meeting over to Ms. Rhonda Crock (ph), director general Health portfolio operations centre. The line is yours Ms. Crock.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much Louise and good afternoon everybody. Thanks for being here today. As we do every day we'll start with a short update on the current status of Covid 19 globally and in Canada in English and French.

We will then go into the question period. I'll start by noting that globally we have reached approximately 475,000 cases of Covid 19. In Canada we have done 158,000 tests and we have over 3,400 cases. Sadly we also have 35 deaths. We now have a mix of travel related and community spread for Covid 19 in Canada, about an equal mix.

This is being attributed to different community spread including for example in Newfoundland where the number of cases has doubled due to a single funeral, an example of social mixing and spread happening through the community versus travel. We don't have information on all of the cases in Canada.

However for the cases that we do we know that in regards to severity approximately 6% of cases in Canada have required hospitalization, 2% of cases were critical and 1% of those cases for which we have information has unfortunately been fatal. I will pass the floor over to Dr. Ignaz (ph) who will provide the same information in French.

Dr. Ignaz: Thank you Rhonda. Hello. Globally, there are more than 475,000 cases. In Canada, we have 3,409 cases, 35 deaths and 158,000 people who have been tested.

We have a mix of cases from travels and community spread, such as in Newfoundland where the number of cases has doubled because of a single funeral. For cases for which we have information on severity, 6% of these cases are hospitalized, 2% are in critical and 1% have died. Thank you.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much, Anne Marie. We'll turn it over to the first question please for the Moderator.

Operator: Thank you. Please press *1 at this time if you have a question. The first question is from Paula Simons. Please proceed.

Senator Simons: I have a question that I've been asked to ask on behalf of the Mayor of Brooks, Alberta. Brooks and High River Alberta have packing plants that produce the majority of Canada's beef and they are concerned because they're seeing a hugely increased demand for beef in this time of crisis and in a time when beef shipments from Australia and Brazil have been disrupted.

They wanted to know if there is any way they could get more support from the CFIA to extend the hours at which they work. They tell me weekends they can't get CFIA inspectors on site and as a result they're not able to work as many hours as they would like to be able to work to keep up with the demand.

My question is for the representative from Agriculture and Agri-food Canada to see if there can be a flexibility to improve the security of the supply chain by allowing the packing plant to do more work.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much for the question. We don't have CFIA on the call today I'm afraid. We do have Stephen from AAFC. Stephen, perhaps can I pass that question to you?

Stephen at AAFC: The CFIA is currently looking at all the different options they've got to make sure that they can continue to offer the inspection services that are required. That includes bringing people back from retirement and working with provinces as well to have better coordination where that's feasible.

Given a specific question and request you've got, if you are able to forward that on what we can do is make sure that both at the local and national level those specific issues and requests are being looked into.

Operator: The next question is from David Sweet. Please proceed. Your line is open.

David Sweet: Thank you very much, David Sweet, Flamborough Glanbrook. I would like to know I see varying descriptions of self-isolation and self-quarantine in different jurisdictions. I understand they may be different but what is the federal description.

I was under the impression if somebody was self-isolating they can go out for a walk in fresh air to stay healthy as long as they stay two metres from people. But I noticed on social media today there was a police constable who said absolutely not, you have to stay inside your house for 14 days. Could you clarify that please?

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much. I appreciate the question. I know the terminology can be difficult. There are a couple of different pieces at play. One is the definition of isolation which as you know we have an OIC in place that requires all returning travelers to Canada that are symptomatic to go into a mandatory isolation.

That isolation means that those travelers are unable to move forward on a public conveyance and they must stay in the residence in which they are staying during that time be it a hotel or a quarantine site or their home. In an isolation situation it's a very strict isolation in that folks are not supposed to be leaving their home. They should not be going out for walks. They should not be going out and getting groceries.

It's a very serious situation because the risk of spread is higher with somebody who is symptomatic than for somebody who is asymptomatic. Self-isolation refers to situations where we have asymptomatic people. Those people are also asked to follow all of the guidance that's on the Public Health Agency of Canada website regarding keeping a two metre distance, keeping social distancing, all of those good things.

It is advised that those folks do stay within their home if at all possible. However if it's not, time outside in terms of walks, going to get groceries, those types of things we recommend against it but folks can get out and get fresh air should they wish to.

There is a difference between those that are in self-isolation situations in which they are asymptomatic versus an isolation situation which would be the case for someone who has symptoms or someone who has been diagnosed with Covid 19.

I hope that helps to clarify but as you mentioned you will see different recommendations across the jurisdictions. However those would be the federal guidance we have on our website. Thank you very much. I'll go to the next question please Rita.

Operator: Thank you. The next question is from Cathy McLeod. Please proceed.

Cathy McLeod: Thank you. I have a comment and then a question. The comment is typically when our staff calls in the office the number they call, CRA or

others, (unintelligible) it is an MP office calling. I'm hoping we can have a system whereby both the authorizations can be streamlined and that calls aren't refused because many of our staff are working at home.

I guess that's for all the departments in terms of the system. My actual question is in terms of the quarantine process, as an international traveler comes into Canada let's say from Peru to Toronto and if they're asymptomatic as I understand it now they can still get on the domestic flight.

I struggle with that. Number one, could I have clarity that they can still even with the quarantine laws in effect if they're asymptomatic they can get on a domestic flight. Second of all, of course you can't go to the grocery store but you can sit beside someone on an Air Canada flight Toronto to Vancouver. What are we doing in terms of the safety in that particular circumstance?

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much for that question. It's a great question. Under the OIC that went into place at 12:01 midnight yesterday you're absolutely right. Those that land in Canada from an international destination will be screened and they will be screened for symptoms on site.

Those that are asymptomatic will get a set of requirements for what they are supposed to do as will those that are symptomatic and they're different sets of information. As I mentioned those that are symptomatic are not allowed to move forward. They are also not allowed to go on a public conveyance.

We will provide, the federal government will provide transport to get them to either their home or to a hotel that's been designated for them to be at in order for them to do their isolation period. As I mentioned that is strict isolation in which they are not allowed to move around outside of their room or residence.

They are required to stay home. For those that are asymptomatic they are allowed to take a connecting flight to their final destination. The reason for that being the risk of transmission for a person who is asymptomatic is far lower than that for someone who is symptomatic.

Once they arrive at their home location as I mentioned they're in self-isolation. While it's recommended to in an abundance of caution to stay within their home and not go out to the store, they are allowed to go out to the store and go for a walk should they wish to do so because the risk associated with those individuals is lower than it is for symptomatic.

That doesn't mean that the guidance that the Public Health Agency provides for self-isolation and social distancing doesn't apply. For those folks they're still required to keep a two metre distance. Also if they are not feeling well or have a cough that's not related to Covid but related to an allergy or a cold or whatever the case may be, they are advised to wear a mask.

There is a different risk level associated with the asymptomatic and symptomatic and you are correct. They are if they asymptomatic allowed to go forward on public transport and then go into that self-isolation when they get home. Thanks very much. Rita, next question.

Operator: Thank you. The next question is from Tamara Jansen. Please go ahead.

Tamara Jansen: I asked this question yesterday. I don't believe I got much of an answer back. It's in regards to the agro stability situation. We have many seasonal farmers at this point in time who are beginning to have to throw out their crops. The program is currently working on claims from 2018. They're always two years behind.

We're looking for a modified program for specifically Covid 19 affected farmers. Seasonal farmers are most at risk right now. Anyone in the horticulture industry is being hit hard, specifically those producing Easter and spring bedding products especially those larger greenhouses that are working with big box stores. I'm begging someone to get back to me on how we can go ahead and ensure those farmers don't go bankrupt. They do a lot of hiring.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much for the question. I think there was a couple of questions in there, one that I think I may refer to my colleague Stephen at Agriculture and Agri-food Canada, perhaps also to my colleague Chris or Khalid at ESDC to speak about the temporary foreign worker program. Steve, perhaps I can pass it to you first if you don't mind.

Steve at AAFC: We're very aware of the difficulties going on right now particularly for farmers to make sure they can ensure they get a crop in and be able to have the means to get it out as well. We're also aware that the structure of the current business risk management programs does mean that the compensation comes quite a bit after an occurrence.

In this situation there does need to be something done differently. The initial piece that's been put forward by the government is the additional money available through Farm Credit Canada understanding that's a solution that can help in some circumstances but we are looking at other options and to implement other measures that can be put into place to be able to help in this situation and hope to have more information soon.

Khalid at ESDC: Hi. It's Khalid Sharma from ESDC. We know that temporary foreign workers are a very important source of labour for many people in the agriculture sector. We know there's been an announcement that temporary foreign workers will be allowed into Canada.

What we are doing now, we're working very closely with Health authorities and with the sector itself to make sure that we can balance the need for the TFW's to come into Canada so they're able to work but also that we are respecting the proper quarantine requirements in that we know people coming into Canada are not sick and are going to be able to self-isolate for the required period of time. We're hoping to be able to announce some more details in coming days.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much for the question and to my colleague's for their responses. Rita, can we have the next question.

Operator: The next question is from Alexandre Boulerice. Please proceed. The line is yours.

Alexandre Boulerice: Thank you very much. Hello everyone. The issue that I have is regarding the new universal assistance program that was announced yesterday. You spoke of registration through the Canada Revenue Agency's website. Two questions: will there be alternatives for people who do not have access to the internet to be able to apply to receive the \$2,000 per month?

The second thing because it was not clear yesterday. There was information that was a little contradictory. Will people who have access to Employment Insurance also have access to this emergency benefit?

Rhonda Crock: Thank you for the question. I'm going to see if my colleagues from the CRA may be able to address that question for you.

Unidentified Male: Certainly. For those who do not have access to the internet, they will be able to apply through a system an automated telephone system. The second question was whether, if I understood correctly, they have to be eligible for Employment Insurance to get the benefit. Did I understand correctly?

That is the case. There are two paths. There will be support for those who are eligible for Employment Insurance and a second path for those who are not. Both groups will be covered by the new program.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you for the question and the answer. The next question, please.

Operator: We do have a question from a participant. Please proceed, your line is open. Please state your name before asking your question.

Gord Johns: Thank you. It's Gord Johns, MP for Courtenay Alberni. A couple of questions. First I'm wondering what's happening with the homeless, the money to support local communities around addressing the homeless issue around Covid 19. We haven't heard the rollout on that.

Secondly, hearing a lot about fishers wanting to be deemed an essential service so they can go about their business of providing food. Obviously they're very important when it comes to local food security especially with global markets being closed to fisheries. It gives them an opportunity to get their fish to market locally.

What package is going to be there for fishers? We haven't heard anything at all for fishers. We're hearing some supports for agriculture which we're happy to hear and there needs to be more there as well but haven't heard anything for fisheries. Coastal communities are very remote and isolated. This is a very important part of their opportunity to provide food and create income for their communities.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much for the question. I'm going to ask my colleagues at ESDC to reply first and then regarding the definition of essential work as well. I know the provinces and territories are working on that in their own spaces. There's also work being done in the Public Safety space. I'll ask my colleague from Public Safety also to speak to that. First I'll go to our colleagues at ESDC.

Khalid at ESDC: Khalid Sharma again. We know there was additional support announced for the Reaching Home initiative to continue to support people who are experiencing homelessness. I realize we have not had as many details out on that as we've had on some of the other initiatives but the work is continuing. We are in conversation with the provinces and we hope to be able to say more about that very soon.

Rhonda Crock: Thanks for that. Can I ask our colleagues at Public Safety if they have anything to add?

Craig Oldham: I'll add to that, Craig Oldham here from the critical infrastructure directorate at Public Safety. We are working presently on guidance on essential services and functions in Canada which is aimed at providing guidance within all critical infrastructure sectors.

Food in particular is mentioned and that guidance does specifically address the fishery as part of our guidance on what should be considered essential recognizing that a lot of these authorities within what is essential and not essential is at the provincial level but our guidance will include fisheries.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much. Rita, the next question please.

Operator: The next question is from Nelly Shin. Please proceed.

Nelly Shin: My question is concerning a constituent in my riding. I'm in Port Moody Coquitlam. He is ready to manufacture surgical masks. He has presented a budget and has contacted the government using the email for companies repurposing their businesses for these kinds of supplies.

He hasn't heard back from them. His machine is in China and is ready to be shipped over by air but he's getting a bit of a runaround with the airport. Is there a way to expedite this process, a number that we can contact, that I can contact on his behalf or a letter I can write to bring this to the attention of the appropriate channels?

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much for the question. We always appreciate when Canadians and Canadian industry tries to step up in a time of need. Let me see if we can go to our colleagues at Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada or Public Services and Procurement Canada. They may have some guidance on this front.

Patrick at ISED: It's Patrick here at ISED. We have been overwhelmed by the amount of support and offers coming in from Canadian industry. We'd have to take a look at – I would say we try to get in contact with each of the companies who have come back to us. I would say in the several thousand at this point so the response has been overwhelming and positive.

But we are working through the backlog as fast as possible. We've seen several requests coming in with regards to mass manufacturing and stepping up. I can tell you we are also working actively with Global Affairs Canada for when we identify a situation where we have goods stuck abroad to see what we can do to free it up and get it moving.

I do have your riding details. I can take a quick look and have some folks in my team do some digging on that one in particular. I know the Minister's office has been asking for regular updates on this. We'll try to figure it out and make sure that offer is pulled to the front so we can explore it further.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much for that. Is there anything PSPC would like to add?

Unidentified Male: From a PSPC perspective we have been facing challenges in terms of – we know the companies have been facing challenges in terms of being able to export their materials for supply that we have been buying.

We have been working in close collaboration with Global Affairs to be able to expedite that, particularly when it comes to the transfer or the shipping of personal protective equipment.

In terms of manufacturing equipment for a company specifically I'm not aware that we're providing assistance in that. But we would be more than happy to work with our colleagues in ISED and Global Affairs to be able to assist where we can.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much. Rita, can we have the next question please?

Operator:
proceed.

The next question is from Laurel Collins. Please

Laurel Collins: I'm the MP from Victoria and my question is I'm wanting to get more information about eligibility for folks applying to the Canadian emergency response benefit. Folks are asking if they need to have filed their 2019 taxes to apply, before they apply.

How if they're an independent contractor how they're going to need to verify that they were impacted by Covid 19, that they're not getting any income. For people who have applied to EI and are among the million Canadians who are waiting to have their applications processed.

People are wondering if they should be canceling their EI applications since the CERB might provide more help for them. I had a number of people like small family business. They put everything into their business last year, they didn't take any income and now they're struggling to pay fixed contractors they employ and looking at their business going under. They're wondering if they're eligible for this benefit. That's a whole slew but just more information about the eligibility and process.

Rhonda Crock: That's great, very important question. It's about a particular situation. I'm sure there are others on the line who have constituents in similar situations. Can I turn to our colleagues in ESDC to respond to this question?

Khalid Sharma: Hi. It's Khalid Sharma again. Broadly speaking the process for applying for the Canada Emergency Response Benefit is going to be as simple as possible. We are not going to require any evidence from people beyond filing a social insurance number and confirming they meet the eligibility criteria.

There's not going to be a requirement that anyone has filed their taxes or that they need to have a record of employment or medical certificate. None of that will be required. We'll still building the mechanism in collaboration with colleagues at the CRA. We hope that will be up and running in early April.

Broadly speaking to qualify you need to be a resident of Canada over 15 years old and you need to have earned at least \$5,000 either in 2019 for calendar year 2019 or in the 12 months prior to making your application. That income can be earned from a combination of employment, self-employment and parental and maternity benefits.

You also need to be expected to not be receiving any income for at least 14 consecutive days in a 4 week period. As long as you meet these eligibility criteria and you can provide a valid social insurance number, you will qualify for the benefit.

If anyone has already applied for EI they do not need to reapply. The way it will work is that if your eligibility for EI began prior to March 15th which is when the new Canadian

Emergency Response Benefit becomes available your claim will be processed according to the current set of EI rules. If your eligibility began March 15th or later you will be automatically redirected to the Canada Emergency Response Benefit.

The final part of the question had to do with someone who has a family business. We are not defining self-employment for the purpose of this benefit and so if someone has earned at least \$5,000 in salary or some other form of direct benefit from the business they will qualify.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much for the question and for that answer, appreciate it. I know we're at the 5:00 mark but we'll have another few questions please Rita.

Operator: The next question is from Andy McCauley. Please proceed.

Kelly McCauley: Hi. It's Kelly McCauley, Edmonton West. A couple of things. Could we have a serious consideration of extending these calls? These are often the way what appears to be the Opposition MPs are getting information from the government and vitally important.

The second one is we've asked repeatedly for notes from these meetings. Perhaps you could develop a FAQ to hand out to the MPs for all of these so we don't have to waste questions that have been answered repeatedly over the last couple of weeks. Please consider that.

Briefly I'm getting a lot of feedback from the flights, international flights coming into Canada still. Could you explain what's going on with that? For example one of my constituents noticed there was nine flights into Vancouver from Seattle today, one of the epicentres of the outbreak in the States. Could you explain what's going on with our international flights? Surely it can't all be returning Canadians from Seattle.

Rhonda Crock: Sure, absolutely. As you know we have a number of different OICs in place that are both restricting international travel across borders, allowing exemptions related to certain essential workers and for situations that would have a significant economic impact and also returning Canadians.

As you can imagine we continue to have a number of Canadians who are coming back at this point from March break, Canadians who perhaps were on vacation when these changes came into place and had some difficulty getting home. I can't speak to the particular situation that you're flagging within the Vancouver airport.

I can note however that the restrictions that were put in place are certainly being monitored. I might also turn to our colleagues at CBSA who may have additional information to provide.

Calvin Christiansen: Calvin Christiansen, CBSA. I've just tried to pull up a statistical sheet I have on the volumes of returning flights coming to Canada. What we've been looking at is the nationality of the persons on the flights whether they are Canadian or returning residents or whether they're foreign nationals which would include the US.

We've seen a significant decrease in the flights coming into the country over the past couple of weeks. What we're finding with those flights is that the ratio or the number of Canadians per flight versus foreign nationals has been changing over the past couple of days.

Just as an example, on March 25th we had 5,938 air travelers that came in from the US. That's a decrease from last year which was 53,931. Overall we're down 89% in that range of travel. If we look at air travelers international again we're down from 59,000 last year to 14,000 this year per day that is with a 75% decrease.

We are seeing a significant decrease day by day. If I also look back to the air travelers that were US, on March 19th we had 30,000 of them and on March 25th we had 5,900. It is decreasing quite rapidly. Another piece we're looking at as well with regard to people crossing the border is the decrease in traffic that's been happening at our land borders.

What we're finding now is much like we expected. A number of the travelers coming back by land border tend to be Canadians. We still have snowbirds coming back but those numbers are decreasing day over day. What we're seeing now in the land border mode we're down 75% over what we had last year.

There is a reduction. I know there still are certain US flights that are coming in but I can say with confidence there's a significant reduction on them coming in. With regards to Seattle in particular I'm not completely familiar with what's happening with that airport, whether it's becoming a US hub for example with people coming from other parts of the US and then going through Seattle. I would close by saying the numbers are significantly down over last year and day by day they are decreasing.

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much for the question. Regarding your suggestion to extend these calls, first off I want to note how happy we are to hear these are useful calls for the MPs and for Senators. We're delighted to do it. We're delighted to provide the information.

I can commit to taking that suggestion away. We'll speak with our colleagues in the other departments. All of us of course are feeling a bit stretched as all of you are on the phone I'm certain. Let's take that away and see what we're able to do with that suggestion because we certainly appreciate you're finding this useful. Rita, can we have the next question please?

Operator: The next question is from Mike Lake. Please proceed.

Hon. Mike Lake: Thank you. Let me start by thanking everybody for putting in the effort you're putting in. I have some tough questions and I continue to ask them but I do appreciate the effort and energy that's going into this on everybody's side.

I'm going to stay on the same track I've been on. Yesterday in the WHO briefing Dr. Tedros referred to the economic restrictions. Everybody on this call is continually talking about the severe economic situation in Canada.

Dr. Tedros made reference in the context of the need to trace and test and treat and he said "aggressive measures to find, isolate, test, treat and trace are not only the best and fastest way out of extreme social and economic restrictions. They're also the best way to prevent them."

This is a message WHO has been sending over and over again. I'm going to reference my current situation again. Five days after I found out I've been exposed to someone with Covid 19 I finally got tested two days ago and now we're on day two and I haven't heard a result yet.

We're seven days past. A picture has been circulating on the internet with Kamal Khara and myself with David Beasley, two of the three of whom have been tested positive and I'm the one waiting right now. It seems to me that seven days is way too long from the time I'm notified to the time I find out a decision.

My question is this. I have a couple of questions. What is the current inventory of test kits that have not been used yet? Secondly I'm curious what the minimum amount of time from swab to result would be just in terms of the technical ability to test. What would be the minimum amount of time from swab to result, the context being I'm told it will be four days from the time I was tested and swabbed to the time I'm notified of my result?

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much Mr. Lake. I appreciate your persistence with the question. It's an important one and certainly do not mind at all having it posed more than once. A couple of things I'll say on the testing front. There are a few things that have improved over the time we last spoke to you about this question.

One is we've been able to ramp up testing and increase capacity for testing across the country. In the last while the federal government has been working with provinces and territories to increase that capacity and we currently have approximately 33 lab testing facilities performing tests across Canada. You'll probably remember that earlier on we were reliant on the national microbiology laboratory to have this capacity.

We've had a significant increase in transfer of lab capacity over the last few months to ensure there is greater capacity within the jurisdictions to do some of that work. The minimum time for technically for a test, for a swab to a result I'm sorry I'm not able to

provide that. I will say there's a number of issues that are influencing the timeliness of testing.

One is sheer capacity of the system. We can appreciate people are understandably concerned. Many people are going to get tested out of an abundance of caution for their own health and the health of their loved ones. That's very understandable. The second would be depending on where those tests are being done, the tests often need to be shipped.

Sometimes that shipping can take a bit of time to get it from the site where the swab has been taken to the location where it is going to be tested. Depending on the situation there's a number of factors that may come into play. The other thing I'd like to note importantly is that the federal government is putting a great deal of effort into trying to procure a point of care test.

Point of care tests would allow for a much more timely response, an onsite response than would the traditional test we're currently using. There is a lot of desire within the federal provincial territorial government discussions to procure such a test. There is leaps and strides being taken in that regard internationally.

Currently there's different products going through the regulatory process both in the US and in Canada. I'm sure you can appreciate there's a global demand for such products as the concerns that you're raising today Mr. Lake are common to many of our international partners as well. Thank you again for the question on testing. It's one we continue to pay a great deal of attention to and we appreciate you continuing to remind us of its importance. Rita can we have the next question please?

Operator: The next question is from Peter Boehm. Please proceed. Peter Boehm, your line is now open.

Senator Boehm: It's Peter Boehm from the Senate. Can you hear me? Okay thanks. This is probably best directed to CBSA. We're seeing a spike of Canadians returning obviously, Canadian tourists from spring break but also considerable number of non-residents.

The non-residents it's not clear how long they're going to stay. I recall an evacuation I was involved in, in Lebanon in 2006. It's not clear how long they're going to stay but staying longer of course puts a lot of pressure on our system and certainly in terms of the demographic quarterly data that StatsCan provides to the government and to the private sector in terms of planning ahead for EI, for housing, for childcare, all those things.

My question is how is this data being differentiated by CBSA? Is it being passed on to StatsCan because it seems to me that we would all need to know just the number of Canadians who are returning who are also non-residents.

Rhonda Crock:
colleagues at CBSA.

Thank you very much. I will pass that over to our

Calvin Christiansen: Thank you, Calvin Christiansen from the Travellers Branch at CBSA. You raise a very good question. What happens is that when Canadians or permanent residents of Canada return we don't track whether they are living outside of Canada for example. What we do is we identify people by their identification. We identify them by their right to return, right to enter Canada.

Really we don't follow up on whether someone is returning from let's say living away for a couple of years and seemingly coming back for a short period of time. One of the ways we do – we collect some information on people that bring back goods within – returning resident goods, there's an allowance for that. That's actually not tracked in our system.

I don't have a good answer for you on this as far as we're tracking it and identifying it for Stats Canada. It is not something we typically collect or track or provide over to Stats Canada.

Rhonda Crock:
question please.

Thank you very much. Rita we'll take one final

Operator:
proceed.

The next question is from Robert Kitchen. Please

Robert Kitchen: Good afternoon, thank you very much. I'm Robert Kitchen from Souris Moose Mountain which is the southeast corner of Saskatchewan. Two questions really. Number one and you sort of touched on it a bit, it's dealing with Canadians returning to Canada. There seems to be some confusion not only from what you're saying but also from what Dr. Jo said earlier today as well.

What I'm getting at is someone that flies from Florida to Toronto they land in Toronto, they're asymptomatic. But the bottom line is because of flight connections they can't get that same flight to continue on within the next hour or two and maybe they're stuck there for a day or two. My question is are they now quarantined in Toronto or can they get on the plane and fly to Regina where they then can come back to wherever in Saskatchewan?

The concern is whether they're symptomatic or asymptomatic, the reality is if they're asymptomatic now you're putting them sitting next to somebody on a plane without any indication of whether that person is traveling interprovincially or internationally. That's the first one.

The second one is we know that signs and symptoms. We know how to diagnose it. We know how to test for it. However a lot of the stats you give out are recovered stats. These people have recovered. My question to you is can you define to us what

recovered means. What is the prognosis for those people that are recovered and the potential for them to travel or move about within the country?

Rhonda Crock: Thank you very much for the question. I'll deal with the first question first. You defined it quite appropriately. For somebody who in your example is traveling from Florida to Toronto and then they have an onward flight to Regina, that individual if they are symptomatic will not be allowed to board a public conveyance.

If they are asymptomatic they are. They are asked to self-isolate when they get to their final destination but they are also asked to maintain social distancing, the two metre distance in the airport, what have you. They are allowed to go forward on a public conveyance. You've characterized that correctly.

In regards to when somebody is determined to be recovered if you will, the numbers we produce on a daily basis may include, actually includes everybody who has been diagnosed in terms of cases. That doesn't necessarily mean they've recovered. Some of those may be recovered by the time that we produce those numbers but most of them in all likelihood would not because we get the test results fairly quickly.

In terms of defining someone who has recovered at this current point in time it is two negative tests that would ensure that person is determined to be recovered. As the science and evidence around this continues to evolve, that may change but that is currently the situation we're in defining somebody as they are recovered.

Recovered individuals are not continuing to be in isolation. Those individuals when they were ill would have been in that very firm isolation in which case they are not allowed to leave their home, etc. etc. but once they have those two negative cases (sic) they are no longer required to be in isolation. They will still be encouraged like every other Canadian to maintain social distancing, the two metres and appropriate hand hygiene.

With that I'm going to once again thank everybody for all of your questions today and your time. I want to thank my colleagues from the other departments for their time on the call today.

I want folks to know we have heard you in terms of asking for a longer period of time given the utility of these calls. We will take that away and discuss that with our partners to make a determination of where to go next on that. A reminder to keep safe, keep healthy and to wash your hands regularly. Thanks very much everybody.

Operator: Thank you. The conference is now ended. Please disconnect your lines at this time. We thank you for your participation.