

Kim, Sabrina

From: MacKnight, Aisling (HC/SC) <aisling.macknight@canada.ca>
Sent: Thursday, July 16, 2020 9:48 AM
To: Khalil, Samantha; Theis, Rick; MacKendrick, Andrew
Cc: Nowers, Kathryn (HC/SC); Pascuzzo, Matt (HC/SC); Davidson, Cole (HC/SC); Exton, Adam (HC/SC); Phillips, Kylie (HC/SC)
Subject: RE: FLAG: BC posting of initial antibody testing

Hello again,

It appears that BC may actually be going out with this **today**. They have an announcement on “serology testing” scheduled for 8:30 am PST.

Details to follow.

Ash

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From: MacKnight, Aisling (HC/SC)
Sent: 2020-07-15 3:51 PM
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Cc: Kathryn Nowers (HC/SC) (kathryn.nowers@canada.ca) <kathryn.nowers@canada.ca>; Pascuzzo, Matt (HC/SC) <matt.pascuzzo@canada.ca>; Cole Davidson (HC/SC) (cole.davidson@canada.ca) <cole.davidson@canada.ca>; Adam Exton (HC/SC) (adam.exton@canada.ca) <adam.exton@canada.ca>; HC|SC (kylie.phillips@canada.ca) <kylie.phillips@canada.ca>
Subject: FLAG: BC posting of initial antibody testing

Hi,

Flagging that our friends in BC will be announcing the results of their **initial sero-prevalence estimates** on **Monday**.

What this is:

- The report is the result of **preliminary antibody testing** in BC.
- You will recall that we currently have **national** testing underway as part of the Immunity Task Force announced in April; this is not that.
 - BC started doing their own antibody testing before we launched the ITF – this report is the initial results of BC's own research
- BC CDC has already published a sneak-peek of their findings [here](#), but the actual government announcement will be on **Monday** (time TBC)

Why this matters:

- This report is the **first estimate** of COVID-19's prevalence in Canada, but limited to BC
- This comes **before** our Immunity Task Force is ready to go out (the ITF is looking at the week of **July 27th**).
- We don't know yet how BC is interpreting the data. However, conclusions in their report are the following:
 1. Less than 1% of British Columbians had been infected with SARS-CoV-2 when first-wave mitigation measures were relaxed in May 2020.

2. The findings indicate successful suppression of community transmission in BC, but also substantial residual susceptibility (i.e., most of the population has never been exposed – though they generally estimate their case numbers to be about 8 times higher than reported).

- **Bottom line:** BC is scooping us with BC-specific data before we can go out with national data, and that can determine the national narrative around PHMs

What BC is releasing vs. what we're releasing:

- As mentioned, this BC release is **limited to BC**. It does not paint a national picture, and as we have seen, the pandemic looks very different in each part of the country
- The BC CDC report is preliminary, but veers very positively towards the action that the province took (introducing PHMs) and the results (decrease and mitigation of outbreaks)
- Further, the BC report is **small**: ~900 samples were used, compared to the 12,000 that the ITF has.
- In comparison, the Task Force announcement would highlight the following:
 - Release of **initial round of results from 12,000 samples** of blood donations to Canadian Blood Services (but not Hema Quebec)
 - It would be a **high-level report**; more data is needed from subsequent CBS testing to provide a demographic breakdown
 - New partnerships with **Ontario and Alberta** that are supporting provincial laboratories in serological studies
 - Highlight their studies on **seniors** and pregnant people (i.e. “can a pregnant person pass COVID-19 to their fetus”)
 - Possible publication of a paper on serology by Dr. Naylor in CMAJ
 - Federal funding to support the Quebec Biobank (funding also from Genome QC and QC Government)
 - This initiative is **not** an Immunity Task Force Initiative per se, but *is* linked to the overall objective of supporting understanding of COVID-19 in populations. The investment would be for banking samples from COVID-19 patients in 8 Quebec hospitals, with samples that will be a national resource for researchers to advance understanding of the genetics of COVID-19
- The Task Force would also speak to their overall work plan including highlighting their work to a capture diversity of samples.

Next steps:

- We are looking to see if we can get embargoed comms products from BC before Monday's announcement, and will provide flags
- This will receive media attention. We will monitor coverage and flag incoming media requests as necessary
- Politically, this will raise flags as to what the ITF is doing and when they will publish the national data. We will be working on KMs with that angle in mind
- All that being said, much of our response will be dictated by how this data is interpreted and how the coverage of the announcement is. As it stands, it is too early to say what the response may be.

Please let us know if you have questions or concerns.

Thanks,
Ash

Aisling MacKnight

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