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**Sent:** 2020-10-27 8:13 AM  
**To:** gphin / rmisp (PHAC/ASPC)  
**Subject:** GPHIN Daily Report (27 October 2020)  
**Attachments:** GPHIN Daily Report 20201027 SR.docx

Good morning,

Please find below the daily Summary and articles collected by GPHIN for your review and risk assessment.

### GPHIN Daily Report Email Summary

#### Special Section on Coronavirus

##### [Canada \(Update\) - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Outbreak \(Official\)](#)

As of 26 October 2020 at 19:00 EDT, a total of 220,213 cases have been recorded in Canada including 9,973 deaths. The cases are reported in Newfoundland and Labrador (291 confirmed cases, 4 deaths), Prince Edward Island (64 confirmed cases), Nova Scotia (1,101 confirmed cases, 65 deaths), New Brunswick (331 confirmed cases, 6 deaths), Quebec (100,922 confirmed cases, 6,153 deaths), Ontario (71,224 confirmed cases, 3,099 deaths), Manitoba (4,349 confirmed cases, 55 deaths), Saskatchewan (2,783 confirmed cases, 25 deaths), Alberta (25,733 confirmed cases, 307 deaths), British Columbia (13,371 confirmed cases, 259 deaths), Yukon (22 confirmed cases), Northwest Territories (9 confirmed cases), Nunavut (0 confirmed case), and repatriated travellers (13 confirmed cases). A detailed [epidemiological summary](#) is available. The risk will vary between and within communities, but given the increasing number of cases in Canada, the risk to Canadians is considered [high](#).

##### [International \(Update\) - Coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\) Outbreak \(Media\)](#)

As of 27 October 2020, 10:53 GMT, there were 43,851,869 cases of COVID-19 and 1,165,500 deaths reported globally. Top 10 countries with the highest number of cases, by alphabetical order are: Argentina (1,102,301 cases, 29,301 deaths), Brazil (5,411,550 cases, 157,451 deaths); Colombia (1,025,052 cases, 30,348 deaths); France (1,165,278 cases, 35,018 deaths); India (7,946,429 cases, 119,535 deaths); Mexico (895,326 cases, 89,171 deaths); UK (894,690 cases, 44,998 deaths); Russia (1,547,774 cases, 26,589 deaths); Spain (1,156,498 cases, 35,031 deaths); United States (8,962,783 cases, 231,045 deaths).

#### Canada – Coronavirus disease (COVID -19) Outbreaks and Outcomes (Official and Media)

- On 26 October 2020, [Chief Public Health Officer in lieu of an in-person update stated](#) that as the resurgence of COVID-19 activity continues in Canada, the officials [are tracking a range of epidemiological indicators](#) to monitor where the disease is most active, where it is spreading and how it is impacting the health of Canadians and public health, laboratory and healthcare capacity. Outbreaks vary in size from just a few cases to larger clusters occurring in a range of settings including long term care and assisted living facilities, schools, congregate living settings, industrial work settings and large social gatherings. Larger clusters tell us that closed and crowded settings and/or not sufficiently maintaining public health practices, such as physical distancing and mask wearing, can amplify spread of the virus.
- [A Fredericton-based company has filed a patent for a technology that can help provide rapid, early detection of COVID-19 in a community by testing its sewage](#). LuminUltra and researchers at Dalhousie University say their system for rapid, on-site wastewater testing is portable and less costly than traditional laboratory testing. The Netherlands and France used such testing in the early days of the pandemic, and according to non-peer reviewed studies, both countries were able to detect traces of the virus in wastewater before widespread outbreaks were confirmed.
- [British Columbia has endured a “sobering” weekend for COVID-19 – with a record 817 cases](#), two complete school closures, three deaths and an outbreak at the Surrey pretrial centre. There are now 21 active outbreaks in health care facilities, including 19 long-term care facilities. The provincial health officer has issued a public health order that mandates a house party to have no more than six guests, beyond the number of people who usually reside in the home and expects all people to wear masks in indoor public spaces.
- [Some Quebec gym, yoga, dance and martial arts business owners say they intend to reopen their doors on 29 October in defiance of provincial health rules](#). A coalition of fitness businesses is calling on Quebec Premier to lift

restrictions that forced their facilities to close this month amid a second COVID-19 wave. They urged the Premier to consider their plight ahead of an expected announcement on 26 October and said that without evidence they are contributing to outbreaks, they should be allowed to reopen.

- [Public health officials have declared a COVID-19 outbreak at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre](#), where one person has tested positive for the illness. Ottawa Public Health (OPH) said the person who tested positive is not a staff member at the Innes Road jail, but did not confirm whether the person is an inmate.
- [South Bruce Peninsula council has closed down the Wiarton Arena and Sauble Beach Community Centre for the next two weeks to try to stop community spread of the virus](#). The Town Hall in Wiarton has also been closed to the public. Four cases of COVID-19 were detected in the South Bruce Peninsula last week. Four more have been found over the past few days. A presumptive case has also been found in the nearby Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. Public Health officials informed that the South Bruce Peninsula outbreak can be traced back to two dinner parties.
- [On 26 October 2020, the Government of Alberta has launched a new "fee for service" COVID-19 testing option for Albertans who are leaving the country for essential travel](#). People who purchase the testing will receive their results 72 hours before their departure so they are able to provide proof they've tested negative when they arrive at their destination. The tests, which cost \$150, are being provided by Edmonton-based Dynalife Medical Labs. Appointments may be booked online through Dynalife Travel. Other private companies like Ichor Services offer tests for a fee of \$120 and a turnaround time on results that varies between 48 and 72 hours. Beginning the week of 1 November, a new pilot project will also commence at Calgary International Airport and the Coutts border crossing that offers international travellers access to rapid COVID-19 testing. People entering Alberta from outside the country will be able to volunteer to get a rapid test once they arrive and will receive results as quickly as 48 hours. If the rapid testing pilot project goes well, there are plans to expand the program to the Edmonton International Airport and other airports across the country.
- [Opposition parties are poised to approve a parliamentary probe of the Liberal government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic](#) despite growing objections from industry and experts. Pharmaceutical giant Pfizer Canada is the latest to express concerns about the probe, which is the subject of a Conservative motion that will be voted on in the House of Commons on 26 October. The Conservative motion would order the government to turn over to the House of Commons health committee all records on a raft of issues related to the government's handling of the pandemic. That includes the purchase of personal protective equipment, medical devices and pharmaceuticals, and in a letter to Health Canada, Pfizer says it wants to know how its commercial secrets will be protected. Pfizer Canada president specifically mentions a requirement in the motion that the government produce documents related to the production and purchase of a vaccine for COVID-19. Pfizer's concerns about the proposed probe reflect those raised in recent days by other industry players, including Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, which represents thousands of companies in Canada.

#### **United States - Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) - Communication Resources (Official and Media)**

- On 26 October 2020, [the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced the following actions](#) taken in its ongoing response effort to the COVID-19 pandemic: The FDA updated the [Antigen Template for Test Developers](#). This template provides the FDA's current recommendations concerning data and information that should be submitted to the FDA in support of an EUA request for a SARS-CoV-2 antigen test. The update adds recommendations regarding studies to support claims for screening asymptomatic individuals and multiplexed antigen tests. The template reflects the FDA's current thinking on the topic and should be viewed only as recommendations, unless specific regulatory or statutory requirements are cited. The FDA is open to alternative approaches. Testing updates: As of 26 Oct. 284 tests are authorized by FDA under EUAs; these include 221 molecular tests, 56 antibody tests, and 7 antigen tests.
- On 27 October 2020, the [U.S. Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\) will host a webinar on Recommendations for Surgical Mask Premarket Notifications](#), or 510(k)s, as part of the series on Respirators and Other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Health Care Personnel Use during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

#### **[ECDC- Key aspects regarding the introduction and prioritisation of COVID-19 vaccination in the EU/EEA and the UK \(Official\)](#)**

On 26 October 2020, ECDC posted a report entitled "[Key aspects regarding the introduction and prioritisation of COVID-19 vaccination in the EU/EEA and the UK](#)". This document provides an overview of the key aspects related to the initial phases following the introduction of one or more COVID-19 vaccines in the European Union and European Economic Area (EU/EEA) and the United Kingdom (UK). The aim is to support but not define EU policy on COVID-19 vaccination.

#### **International - Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) Outbreak and Outcomes (Official and Media)**

- On 26 October 2020, the [U.S. drug maker Eli Lilly notified that its antibody treatment was ineffective](#) on patients hospitalized with advanced Covid-19 and that a government-sponsored trial would not administer the drug to new participants. The company said that other trials of the treatment, in people who are not as sick or who have been

exposed to the virus, would continue, and that it remained optimistic that the treatment could work if given early in the course of the disease.

- [A Covid test that can provide a result in 12 minutes will be made available at high street pharmacy Boots](#). The nasal swab test, which will cost £120, will be available in selected stores in the [UK](#) to people who are not showing symptoms. The technology has been developed by LumiraDx, which has also struck a deal to provide supplies to the NHS in Scotland. The Lumira tests, due to launch at 50 Boots stores in November, take minutes to give a result, analysing a nose swab sample on the spot, via a small, portable machine. Other rapid tests, which give results within 90 minutes, are also being trialled by the NHS.
- A post Covid-19 complication, multisystem inflammatory syndrome (MIS-C), that was typically seen in kids is now being reported among adults. A 52-year-old woman treated at [Andheri's Kokilaben Hospital, India](#) is likely to be the first confirmed case of the syndrome in the city that can potentially be life-threatening if not identified and treated on time. Since then the hospital has seen five cases of this syndrome, which has been dubbed as MIS-A in adults. Of the five patients, all above 50 years, two are critical. The patients may not test positive for Covid but can have positive antibody reports, showing Covid exposure in the immediate past. Medical literature in the US and Europe have mentioned several confirmed cases in adults," said a medical expert, adding that as they started treating her with high dose steroids and intravenous immunoglobulins, her condition significantly improved within 48 hours. The woman is likely to be discharged on 28 October.
- [China has rolled out mass coronavirus testing for nearly 5 million people and imposed lockdown measures](#) in the prefecture of Kashgar in the far western region of Xinjiang, after a single asymptomatic coronavirus case was reported on 24 October. The testing drive has so far identified 137 additional cases -- and all are asymptomatic, according to Xinjiang's regional health commission. This is the highest daily number of asymptomatic Covid-19 cases reported in China in nearly seven months.

### Studies Related to Coronavirus disease (COVID -19) Outbreak (Media)

- On 26 October 2020, [National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases issued a statement that NIH-Sponsored ACTIV-3 Trial Closes LY-CoV555 Sub-Study](#). The ACTIV-3 clinical trial evaluating the investigational monoclonal antibody LY-CoV555 in hospitalized patients with COVID-19 will not enroll more participants into this sub-study following a recommendation from the independent Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB). The trial is sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). ACTIV-3 is a master protocol designed to allow for the study of multiple investigational agents compared to placebo in adults hospitalized with COVID-19. Participants in the trial are randomly assigned to receive either an experimental agent or a matched placebo. All participants also receive standard care for patients hospitalized with COVID-19, including the antiviral remdesivir.
- [The COVID-19 pandemic started earlier than previously thought in New York City and Long Island](#) by dozens of people infected mostly with strains from Europe. A new analysis also shows that most of the spread was within the community, as opposed to coming from people who had traveled. Led by NYU Grossman School of Medicine researchers, the new study used gene testing to trace the origins of SARS-CoV-2, the pandemic virus, throughout the New York City region in the spring. It showed that the virus first took root in late February, seeded by at least 109 different sources that burst into chains of infection, rather than from a single "patient zero." Notably, the study authors say, more than 40 percent of people who tested positive had no known contact with another infected person before they contracted the virus. The new study was published online on 22 October in the journal *Genome Research*.
- [New research on the impact of COVID-19 suggests that, in the complete absence of stay-at-home orders, the United States could have seen 220 percent higher rates of infection and a 22 percent higher fatality rate](#) than if stay-at-home orders had been implemented nationwide. The study, from researchers at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and published today in [JAMA Network Open](#), analyzed daily state-level positive case rates against the presence or absence of statewide stay-at-home orders, or SAHOs. The team looked at the time period of 1 March to 4 May, 2020, as SAHOs began to be implemented.
- [A study conducted by the London School for Hygiene and Tropical Medicine found](#) that a quarter of those asked had seen more people daily on average than before the rule of six was introduced. Two thirds of the thousands of people they had limited their social movements. Overall the rule of six had "zero effect" on the number of social contacts for the group as a whole, the study found. The 10pm curfew was also judged to be largely redundant by the scientists. While it had made some people reduce their contacts, their efforts had been cancelled out by others increasing theirs. If neither policy is stopping house-to-household mixing, then they are likely failing to slow the pace of the disease's spread. Contrastingly, local lockdowns do seem to have had an impact on people's socialising.
- A UK [study](#) published in *Nature Microbiology* on 26 October examined 65 individuals with polymerase chain reaction (PCR)-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection and 31 seropositive healthcare workers (HCWs). The study authors sampled patients—with symptoms ranging from asymptomatic to critical—for antibody responses in serum collected up to 94 days after symptom onset using enzyme-linked immunoassay. The researchers found that SARS-CoV-2 antibody response is typical of other acute viral infections, with an initial peak antibody

response followed by declining levels. The present study has important implications when considering widespread serological testing and antibody protection against reinfection with SARS-CoV-2, and may suggest that vaccine boosters are required to provide long-lasting protection

- [The Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine](#) is expected to be one of the first from big pharma to secure regulatory approval, along with Pfizer and BioNTech's candidate, as the world tries to plot a path out of the COVID-19 pandemic. One of the world's leading COVID-19 experimental vaccines produces an immune response in both young and old adults, raising hopes of a path out of the gloom and economic destruction wrought by the novel coronavirus. The vaccine, developed by the University of Oxford, also triggers lower adverse responses among the elderly, British drug maker AstraZeneca Plc, which is helping manufacture the vaccine, said on 26 October. It is encouraging to see immunogenicity responses were similar between older and younger adults and that reactogenicity was lower in older adults, where the COVID-19 disease severity is higher," an AstraZeneca spokesman said. The results further build the body of evidence for the safety and immunogenicity of AZD1222, the spokesman said, referring to the technical name of the vaccine.

## Domestic Events of Interest

Nil

## International Events of Interest

### [Singapore - Singapore temporarily halts use of two flu vaccines after South Korea deaths](#) (Media)

Singapore has temporarily halted the use of two influenza vaccines as a precaution after some people who received them in South Korea died, becoming among the first countries to publicly announce a halt of the vaccines usage. No deaths associated with influenza vaccination have been reported in Singapore to date, but the decision to halt the use of SKYCellflu Quadrivalent and VaxigripTetra was precautionary, the health ministry and the Health Sciences Authority (HAS) said in a statement late on 25 October. The HSA is in touch with the South Korean authorities for further information as they investigate to determine if the deaths are related to influenza vaccinations.

### [South Korea - S. Korea urges people to get flu shots, trust its steps on health](#) (Media)

On 26 October 2020, South Korea sought to dispel concerns over the safety of its seasonal influenza vaccine, urging it on citizens in a bid to avert stress on a health system that is already grappling with the coronavirus. Authorities have said they found no direct link between the deaths and the vaccines against flu, which kills at least 3,000 South Koreans each year. There is a need to expand the influenza vaccination this year not only to prevent the flu, but also to ward off concurrent infection and spread of flu and COVID-19.

## Researches, Policies and Guidelines

### [Canada - Hepatitis B: Ontario should vaccinate newborns for hepatitis B, study suggests](#) (Media)

Not all pregnant women are universally screened for hepatitis B virus (HBV) in Ontario, even though this screening is recommended, and the majority of those who test positive do not receive follow-up testing or interventions, leading to infections of newborns, found new research. The results of the research were published in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal). One rationale for not vaccinating at birth is that universal prenatal screening and related interventions prevent transmission from mother to baby, explains a liver specialist at the Toronto Centre for Liver Disease, University Health Network, and the University of Toronto. However, our study shows that screening is imperfect and that children born in Canada are becoming infected with hepatitis B before getting vaccinated as teenagers. That is why we should reconsider our current vaccination strategy in Ontario. The authors recommend that Ontario move to HBV vaccination at birth and improve existing systems to ensure that all women are screened for HBV during pregnancy. If the test is positive, they should receive follow-up to prevent spread and ensure they receive appropriate HPV care.

### [Canada - Addressing the intersection between COVID-19 and young people vaping: timely resources needed - CMAJ](#) (Media)

Recent research shows a strong association between coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) diagnosis and a history of e-cigarette use in young people. Therefore, it is of extreme importance that clinical guidelines and evidence-based tools are created quickly to empower health care professionals and facilitate conversation in clinical encounters on the value of nicotine-free lifestyles for our younger generation, given that both COVID-19 and vaping affect the lungs. The most recent position paper on e-cigarettes, published in the [European Journal of Preventive Cardiology](#), encourages public campaigns to raise awareness of vaping's adverse effects and prevent initiation of vaping, and advises that health professionals inform their patients and the general public about the possible adverse health risks of e-cigarette smoking. In the meantime, Canadian health care professionals should consider using the US National Institute of Drug Abuse Screening to Brief Intervention tool (S2BI) or the Brief Screener for Tobacco, Alcohol, and other Drugs (BSTAD) tool

among adolescent patients. These tools take less than 2 minutes to administer and were validated with adolescent populations. These tools also offer guidance regarding next steps to support pediatric patients.

#### **United States - Sustainability of antibiotic stewardship programs in nursing homes (Study)**

Interviews with staff at nine non-profit nursing homes with active antibiotic stewardship program (ASPs) identified three critical areas needed for sustainability, researchers reported in *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology* on 26 October 2020. The interviews were conducted by researchers with the University of Rochester 5 years after a collaborative project in which staff at nine nursing homes in Monroe County, New York, formed ASPs and implemented stewardship activities to optimize antibiotic use and reduce *C difficile* infection. The purpose of the interviews was to examine the experiences and perceptions of staff at the nursing homes and understand the factors that influence the sustainability of ASPs. Based on these interviews, the authors of the study recommend that nursing homes with ASPs prioritize three critical areas: (1) explicit, ongoing leadership support; (2) partnerships with external stewardship experts; and (3) consistent education and training for staff.

Best Regards | Sincères salutations  
The GPHIN Team / L'équipe du RMISP

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