

Khalil, Samantha

From: Davidson, Cole (HC/SC) <cole.davidson@canada.ca>
Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 11:16 AM
To: Khalil, Samantha
Subject: RE: Alert system

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Hey Sam, we just had a briefing with PHAC.

Here's what we know about the alert system change:

- Prior to the change, alerts were approved by GPHIN analysts themselves, based on their own criteria and internal discussions
- Senior management at PHAC became uncomfortable not having situation awareness of the timing and content of alerts
- A new process was put in place requiring approval of all alerts by a VP at PHAC in fall of 2018
- This change was not supported by the GPHIN analysts
- GPHIN analysts stopped focusing on alerts and instead focused on daily situation reports, which includes much of the same information
- From May 2019 until last week, no alerts were issued

PHAC is getting us answers on these questions:

- Who made the decision to change the approvals?
- Why was this change necessary?
- Was MinO briefed on this change? (we don't believe so)
- Were any alerts sent for approval blocked by senior management?
- Why did the alerts nearly stop after the change?

In addition, PHAC will be sharing with us the alert criteria from before the change and after the change.

Regarding the international vs domestic focus, the original focus of GPHIN was international. A domestic focus was added, but it did not replace the international focus. It was in addition. GPHIN remains focused on international threats.

Cole Davidson

Press Secretary and Social Media Advisor | Attaché de presse et conseiller en médias sociaux
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T: 613.957.0200 | C: 613.324.4367

From: Khalil, Samantha <Samantha.Khalil@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>
Sent: 2020-08-13 9:11 AM
To: Davidson, Cole (HC/SC) <cole.davidson@canada.ca>
Subject: RE: Alert system

Thank you Cole. Please let me know what you and Sabina here back from PHAC this morning.

Sam

From: Davidson, Cole (HC/SC) <cole.davidson@canada.ca>

Sent: Thursday, August 13, 2020 8:53 AM

To: Khalil, Samantha <Samantha.Khalil@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>

Subject: RE: Alert system

Sorry for the delay.

The understanding in our office is:

- At some point (looks like fall of 2018), the approval level to issue an alert changed from GPHIN Analyst to PHAC VP
- Likely as a result of this change, GPHIN started issuing situation reports instead of alerts - the approval level for situation reports was still with GPHIN
- From what we know, there was no direction to stop issuing alerts, it just became more difficult so they switched to sitreps

We're working on getting specifics and answers to some questions. Sabina is working on it now.

- When did this change happen?
- Why did this change happen?
- Who made the decision?

Cole Davidson

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-----Original Message-----

From: Davidson, Cole (HC/SC)

Sent: 2020-08-13 8:35 AM

To: 'Khalil, Samantha' <Samantha.Khalil@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>

Subject: RE: Alert system

We're not sure on the answer so I'm waiting on more details from PHAC. Will get back to you ASAP. In the meantime, here are our holding lines:

- Public health intelligence is vital to identifying and monitoring outbreaks.
- From the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Global Public Health Intelligence Network (GPHIN) has been an important source of public health intelligence for PHAC
- In order to identify and monitor outbreaks effectively, PHAC has been updating the GPHIN to better collect and analyze data, using new technology.
- We are doing everything possible to rapidly respond to COVID-19 and keep Canadians safe.

Cole Davidson

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-----Original Message-----

From: Khalil, Samantha <Samantha.Khalil@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>

Sent: 2020-08-13 8:33 AM

To: Davidson, Cole (HC/SC) <cole.davidson@canada.ca>

Subject: Re: Alert system

And can you confirm all the decision are internal to PHAC? I've got a hard deadline of 8:45 now to update my senior team.

Thank you!

On Aug 13, 2020, at 7:46 AM, Davidson, Cole (HC/SC) <cole.davidson@canada.ca> wrote:

I'm on it

Cole Davidson

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On Aug 13, 2020, at 7:41 AM, Khalil, Samantha <Samantha.Khalil@pmo-cpm.gc.ca> wrote:

Over to you!

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Khalil, Samantha" <Samantha.Khalil@pmo-cpm.gc.ca>

Date: August 13, 2020 at 7:38:13 AM EDT

To: Aisling MacKnight <aisling.macknight@canada.ca>

Subject: Alert system

Hi Ash,

Can you send me any background there is on why this was stopped and restarted? As well as your messaging on it.

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-canadas-international-pandemic-alert-back-in-action-more-than-40/>

If I could get it by 8:45 would be ideal.

Thanks