

## Exton, Adam (HC/SC)

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**From:** Romanova, Svetlana (PHAC/ASPC) on behalf of gphin / rmisp (PHAC/ASPC)  
**Sent:** 2020-10-01 8:22 AM  
**To:** gphin / rmisp (PHAC/ASPC)  
**Subject:** GPHIN Daily Report (01 October 2020)  
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Good morning,

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

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

As of 30 September 2020 at 19:00 EDT, a total of 158,758 cases have been recorded in Canada including 9,297 deaths. The cases are reported in Newfoundland and Labrador (274 confirmed cases, 3 deaths), Prince Edward Island (59 confirmed cases), Nova Scotia (1,088 confirmed cases, 65 deaths), New Brunswick (200 confirmed cases, 2 deaths), Quebec (74,288 confirmed cases, 5,834 deaths), Ontario (51,710 confirmed cases, 2,848 deaths), Manitoba (1,993 confirmed cases, 20 deaths), Saskatchewan (1,913 confirmed cases, 24 deaths), Alberta (18,062 confirmed cases, 267 deaths), British Columbia (9,138 confirmed cases, 234 deaths), Yukon (15 confirmed cases), Northwest Territories (5 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 01 October 2020, 11:33 GMT, there were 34,203,196 cases of COVID-19 and 1,019,588 deaths reported globally. Top 10 countries with the highest number of cases, by alphabetical order are: Argentina (751,001 cases, 16,937 deaths), Brazil (4,813,586 cases, 143,962 deaths); Colombia (829,679 cases, 25,998 deaths); India (6,312,584 cases, 98,708 deaths); Mexico (743,216 cases, 77,646 deaths); Peru (814,829 cases, 32,463 deaths); Russia (1,185,231 cases, 20,891 deaths); South Africa (674,339 cases, 16,734 deaths); Spain (769,188 cases, 31,791 deaths); United States (7,450,637 cases, 211,778 deaths).

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

- On 30 September 2020, [Canada's Chief Public Health Officer In lieu of an in-person update](#) indicated that the health impacts of the pandemic are far-reaching and go beyond those with COVID-19. Most public health authorities across Canada are reporting significant increases in opioid-related harm, including deaths. For example, from March to July, British Columbia reported 754 deaths from overdose, the highest number ever recorded. Sadly, many other jurisdictions have also reported record numbers of opioid-related harms. Across the country, local health authorities are working with communities to reverse this trend. While distancing, keeping in-person contact bubbles small and other public health measures are effective ways to reduce the spread of COVID-19, they can also increase feelings of isolation and create barriers for people who want and need access to recovery services. A full range of resources can be found through the [Wellness Together Canada](#) mental health and substance use support portal.
- According to the Indigenous Services Minister, [the Indigenous communities have been facing an alarming rise in COVID-19 cases during the last few weeks](#). There have been 673 COVID-19 cases have been reported in First Nations communities in all, and about 130 of them are currently active cases.
- [Health officials in Ontario stated on 30 September that further measures could be coming to fight COVID-19, as neighbouring Quebec prepares to shut down bars, restaurants and most in-home gatherings in its two largest cities](#). New modelling released on 30 September by the Ontario government predicts daily new case counts could reach 1,000 by the first half of October. The province's chief medical officer of health, states further measures to fight the pandemic could be announced as the data is analyzed. The government has already introduced new restrictions in recent days, such as closing strip clubs and limiting hours of operation for bars and restaurants, which are not reflected in the modelling.
- On 30 September 2020, [Health Canada approved a rapid novel coronavirus test](#) that can detect the respiratory illness in as few as 13 minutes. This is the fourth rapid test approved by Health Canada. On 29 September, the federal government also approved the Hyris bCUBE-based test kit, which can provide results in 90 minutes.
- On 30 September 2020, the [Ontario government announced unprecedented investment of a \\$2.8 billion](#) to ensure the province's health care, long-term care and education systems are prepared for the immediate challenges of

the fall, including a second wave of COVID-19 and the upcoming flu season. Keeping Ontarians Safe: Preparing for Future Waves of COVID-19 will enable the province to quickly identify, prevent and respond to surges and waves of the virus to protect the health and safety of all Ontarians. The Keeping Ontarians Safe plan focuses on six key areas to rapidly identify and respond to COVID-19 outbreaks and surges, build health system capacity, and reinforce the province's health care workforce.

- [COVID-19 has left British Columbia nurses emotionally exhausted, anxious and depressed](#). The survey found 41% of nurses are depressed, an increase of 10% from the results from 2019. In addition, nearly as many, 38%, experienced anxiety — also up 10% from 2019. A 10% spike represents an additional 5,000 nurses, given that the workforce is about 50,000 strong. Emotional exhaustion has also crept up since last year, with 60% of those surveyed reporting feeling it. That was up from 56% in 2019. About 86% of nurses affirm they are extremely concerned about bringing COVID-19 home, and 80% think they would contract it on the job. Meanwhile, about half of nurses do not believe their personal protective equipment (PPE) is high quality, and two-in-five believe there isn't enough access to it to perform their work safely. More than half of the nurses surveyed reported inadequate staffing, and one-quarter said they had been told to work despite possible or confirmed exposure to COVID-19.
- On 30 September 2020, [Canada extended a ban on non-essential international entries](#) until the end of October. The extension comes amid a second wave of infections caused in part by the return to school or work of millions of Canadians after summer breaks, according to a Public Safety Minister Twitter post.
- As the number of new COVID-19 cases continues to surge across Ontario, [the head of the Northwestern Health Unit \(NWHU\) believes this part of the province is in a different situation than southern Ontario](#). The NWHU medical officer of health said that the spike in other parts of the province hasn't been experienced in the Kenora and Rainy River districts. It is suggested that the epidemiology is quite different from southern Ontario. There is small number of cases, the community transmission is not seen and there's no outbreaks in any specific settings. It is a different situation from southern Ontario.
- On 29 September 2020, [Canada's Prime Minister announced an additional \\$400 million in international development funding for the remaining 2020](#). This new funding will go to trusted partners on the ground fighting COVID-19, and will enable Canada to support the recovery and resilience of developing countries. It will also address short-term humanitarian and development needs caused by the pandemic and other crises. The ultimate objective is to ensure that the development gains made over the past decade are not lost, and ensure that 2030 Agenda and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are not at risk.
- [Leaders from governments and international organizations will consider specific actions to help countries and people address the devastating financial and socioeconomic impacts caused by COVID-19 at a virtual high-level meeting on 29 September 2020](#). Convened by United Nations Secretary-General together with the Prime Minister of Canada and the Prime Minister of Jamaica, participated in a meeting of Heads of State and Government will reflect the work done over the last five months by finance ministries, the UN and other international organisations and some of the world's leading economists to find the policy options and solutions that can advance comprehensive multilateral response to the devastating social and economic impacts of COVID-19.
- [The Public Health Agency of Canada is looking for help distributing vaccines against COVID-19 across the country, once they are approved](#). The agency is leading the national response to the pandemic, and is responsible for providing Health Canada, the department it falls under, information about vaccines and immunization. It is up to Health Canada to then assess whether vaccines are safe and to approve them. PHAC stated it is specifically interested in companies with experience moving products in climate-controlled conditions, including products that are refrigerated, frozen or "ultra-frozen," meaning temperatures as low as 80 degrees below zero.
- On 30 September 2020, [a new mobile testing site in Winnipeg](#) opened seven days a week. It will allow for additional testing capacity while drive-thru sites are set up across the city. Once the drive-thru are operational, the province will use public health information to determine where the mobile site will be sent. In the event of an outbreak in smaller Manitoba communities, the mobile site can be deployed to help accommodate a spike in cases.

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

- [The Adaptive COVID-19 Treatment Trial 3 \(ACTT-3\), sponsored by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases \(NIAID\), part of the National Institutes of Health \(USA\), will no longer enroll hospitalized participants with severe COVID-19 requiring high-flow oxygen, and will not begin to enroll patients requiring non-invasive or invasive mechanical ventilation](#). This action is being taken after an interim review of safety data by the study's Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB) found an imbalance of serious adverse events among patients on high-flow oxygen/non-invasive mechanical ventilation who received interferon beta-1a versus those who did not receive interferon beta-1a. The DSMB noted no safety concerns among study participants with less severe COVID-19. Therefore, the study will continue to enroll hospitalized patients on low-flow oxygen and those not requiring supplemental oxygen. The DSMB will continue monitoring the trial to ensure participant well-being and

safety, as well as study integrity. ACTT-3 study investigators will enroll approximately 1,000 hospitalized adults with COVID-19 in up to 100 hospitals across the United States and internationally.

- On 30 September 2020, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced the extension of a [No Sail Order](#) for cruise ships through 31 October 2020. [This order continues to suspend passenger operations on cruise ships with the capacity to carry at least 250 passengers in waters subject to U.S. jurisdiction](#). Cumulative surveillance data reported to CDC from 1 March through 29 September 2020, shows at least 3,689 COVID-19 or COVID-like illness cases on cruise ships in U.S. waters, in addition to at least 41 reported deaths.

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

- The head of Iran's national anti-coronavirus task force has informed that [a third wave of COVID-19 has begun on the territory of the Tehran province in Iran](#). A letter to the health minister on behalf of the anti-coronavirus task force in Tehran was sent with the request to reinstate the restrictions related to the virus. This especially includes a return to working from home. In recent days, Iran has documented a new rise in coronavirus cases. The amount of cases begun to increase in September, surpassing 3,000 twice in the past three days.
- [There has been a major coronavirus outbreak at a UK hospital as 82 people test positive](#). Service restrictions have been put in place at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital in Llantrisant after dozens of COVID-19 cases were reported on 30 September. 82 people at the Royal Glamorgan Hospital near Llantrisant have tested positive for coronavirus and a number of patients are expected to be diverted to different sites. The Royal Glamorgan Hospital is in Rhondda Cynon Taf, South Wales, which is currently in local lockdown.
- [A coronavirus super spreader has been blamed for an entire university's outbreak after 32 new infections were linked to a house party in Swansea, United Kingdom](#). All of the university's cases have been traced back to a gathering attended by just one infected person.

#### **[PAHO - Health Ministers commit to maintain, expand sustained actions to fight COVID-19 pandemic \(Official\)](#)**

On 29 September 2020, Health ministers from countries in the Americas committed to maintain and expand sustained actions to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, and asked the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to continue supporting them in their fight to control it. PAHO assumes that the Region will experience recurring epidemic waves and outbreaks interspersed with periods of low-level transmission over the next 24 months, pending development of a safe, efficacious, and equitably accessible COVID-19 vaccine and achievement of appropriate population coverage. The ministers specifically highlighted PAHO's Revolving Fund for Access to Vaccines, and it is Regional Revolving Fund for Strategic Public Health Supplies for improving equitable access to, and appropriate use of, affordable, safe, efficacious and quality vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, biomedical equipment, and personal protective equipment that can improve health outcomes and reduce the impact of the pandemic. An update provided separately by PAHO on the COVID-19 pandemic noted that there were now more than 16.4 million cases reported in the Americas, with more than 550,000 deaths.

#### **[PAHO - People over 60 have been hardest hit by COVID-19 in the Americas \(Official\)](#)**

According to the experts at the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), health systems in the Americas are not adequately responding to the needs of older adults and must be adapted in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Older persons are far more likely to experience severe disease following infection, with those over 80 years old dying at five times the average rate. A United Nations Report "The Impact of COVID-19 on Older Persons" suggests that this may be due to underlying conditions, which affect 66% of those aged 70 and over. This is also the case in the Americas, where most COVID deaths occur in those aged 70 and over, followed by people between the ages of 60-69 years. The year 2020 marks the start of the Decade of Healthy Aging, which highlights the need for governments, civil society, international agencies, the media and others to work together to improve the lives of older people, their families and their communities, and to tackle ageism and stigma. .

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

- Researchers studying Moderna's SARS-CoV-2 mRNA-1273 vaccine report that its safety profile and immune response in older people is comparable to that in the younger population they tested earlier, according to [phase 1 trial results](#) published in the [New England Journal of Medicine \(NEJM\)](#). While the original study pool for the [mRNA-1273 vaccine](#) was for adults ages 18 to 55, the researchers expanded the study to include adults ages 56 to 70 and 71 and older, with 20 participants in each age-group. Adverse effects were generally mild or moderate and most commonly included fatigue, chills, headache, myalgia and pain at the injection site. All but two instance of moderate systemic adverse effects happened after the second injection, and the researchers reported only two cases of severe systemic effects, also after the second injection. One was fever in the 56-to-70-year-old 25-µg dose subgroup, and the other was fatigue in the 71-and-older 100-µg subgroup.
- In a study published in [JAMA Internal Medicine](#), US researchers not involved in the [NEJM](#) study surveyed the 847 trials listed on [clinicaltrials.gov](#) and concluded that older adults at high risk have been excluded from more than 50% of COVID-19 clinic trials and 100% of vaccine trials thus far. The authors looked at direct age cut-offs in

study populations—which affected 195 (23%) of the trials—and indirect exclusions that could have a greater impact on older adults, the most cited being compliance and consent concerns, affecting 213 (25%) of the trials. Other common exclusions included broad nonspecified exclusions, specific comorbidities, and technology requirements. The authors caution that, without more inclusion of older adults, any potential COVID-19 vaccine's effectiveness, use, and adverse effects may not be fully realized or understood.

- According to new research that builds on current understanding of how COVID-19 affects pets, cats could play an important role in the search for a coronavirus vaccine. The new research, published on 29 September 2020 by the [Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#), studied seven cats and three dogs that were injected with the virus and studied by researchers at Colorado State University. Researchers found that, while cats can infect other cats through direct contact, the dogs did not spread the virus amongst each other. Neither the cats nor dogs actually developed clinical symptoms of the COVID-19 at any point in the study. The new findings bolster Canada's current guidelines on pets, which suggest that cats can infect cats but dogs can't infect other dogs. The research also bolsters calls from public health authorities to avoid all contact with pets if you become infected with COVID-19.
- A study published in the [Emerging Infectious Diseases Journal](#) on 30 September 2020 indicated that to investigate potential transmission of severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) during a domestic flight within Australia, researchers performed epidemiologic analyses with whole-genome sequencing. Eleven passengers with PCR-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infection and symptom onset within 48 hours of the flight were considered infectious during travel; nine had recently disembarked from a cruise ship with a retrospectively identified SARS-CoV-2 outbreak. The virus strain of those on the cruise and the flight was linked (A2-RP) and had not been previously identified in Australia. For 11 passengers, none of whom had traveled on the cruise ship, PCR-confirmed SARS-CoV-2 illness developed between 48 hours and 14 days after the flight. Eight cases were considered flight associated with the distinct SARS-CoV-2 A2-RP strain; the remaining three cases (1 with A2-RP) were possibly flight associated. All 11 passengers had been in the same cabin with symptomatic persons who had primary, culture-positive, A2-RP cases. This investigation provides evidence of flight-associated SARS-CoV-2 transmission.
- [Oxford University said on 30 September 2020 it would study whether the world's best-selling prescription medicine, adalimumab, was an effective treatment for COVID-19 patients – the latest effort to repurpose existing drugs as potential coronavirus therapies.](#) Adalimumab, which is sold under the brand name Humira by AbbVie, is a type of anti-inflammatory known as an anti-tumor necrosis factor (anti-TNF) drug. Recent studies have shown that COVID-19 patients already taking anti-TNF drugs for inflammatory bowel disease and inflammatory arthritis are less likely to be admitted to hospital.
- Kontrol Energy Corp., a company that specializes in indoor air quality and its monitoring equipment, [claims to have developed game-changing technology that can detect COVID-19 particles in the air.](#)
- A Phase 1 trial of an investigational mRNA vaccine to prevent SARS-CoV-2 infection has shown that [the vaccine is well-tolerated and generates a strong immune response in older adults.](#) A report published on 29 September 2020 in the *New England Journal of Medicine* describes the findings from the [study](#), which was supported by the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).
- [Russia has completed clinical trials of a second potential vaccine against COVID-19,](#) developed by Siberia's Vector Institute. The institute completed early-stage human trials, known as Phase II, earlier in September.

## Domestic Events of Interest

### [Canada - Committee on the Epidemic of Opioid Overdoses – Latest National Opioid-Related Harms Data \(Official\)](#)

On 30 September 2020, the co-chairs of the federal, provincial and territorial Special Advisory Committee on the Epidemic of Opioid Overdoses - Chief Public Health Officer of Canada and New Brunswick's Chief Medical Officer of Health - issued the statement on the release of [new data on opioid-related harms in Canada](#), from January 1, 2016 to March 31, 2020. New national data shows that between this period, 16,364 people died of an apparent opioid-related overdose in Canada, with 1,018 deaths and 1,067 opioid-related poisoning hospitalizations occurring in the first three months of 2020. Since March 2020, several provinces and territories have reported the highest numbers of opioid-related harms, including deaths, since they began monitoring the crisis. Reducing the stigma associated with substance use, and providing people with services and supports that best meet their needs, and reduce harm is more important now than ever. This includes collaboration across sectors to address the underlying drivers of this crisis - such as mental illness, socioeconomic factors (e.g., housing, employment), social inclusion and access to health services - that put Canadians at increased risk. Canadians can be assured that responding to the overdose crisis remains a top priority for Chief Medical Officers of Health and senior public health officials in governments throughout Canada.

### [Canada- Community group sounding alarm over rising drug overdoses in Sudbury \(Media\)](#)

A grassroots community group says the city is not doing enough to help solve the opioid crisis in Greater Sudbury. It is believed that there have been overdoses and overdose deaths that have gone unreported by the city and the community drug strategy. According to the group's leader there have been five deaths due to drug overdoses in a six-day time

period. Sudbury Police confirms that there have been 67 suspected opiate deaths thus far in 2020, 12 of which were in September.

## **International Events of Interest**

### **[United States - NYC reports 1st West Nile virus death since 2018 \(Media\)](#)**

Six New Yorkers have been diagnosed with West Nile virus infections. All six were admitted to the hospital, five of whom were discharged and one person has died. The decedent was over 65 years old and age is a well-known risk factor for severe West Nile virus outcomes. This is the first death from West Nile virus infection in New York City since 2018.

### **[DR Congo - Ebola virus disease epidemic in Equateur September 29, 2020, report # 93 \(Official\)](#)**

A new case of Ebola virus disease (EVD) was confirmed on September 28 in the health zone of Makanza. Lusengo is the new health zone reporting its first case of Ebola. This brings the number of health zones affected by the disease to 13, out of the 18 in the province. Multidisciplinary response teams will be deployed in the area this on September 30 to support the efforts of local teams. The Makanza health zone borders that of Bomongo, which had already notified two cases of Ebola. This new confirmed case of EVD reveals several challenges to the current response. Samples from this case were collected on September 19, 2020, but test results came out nine days later. The isolation and difficult communication with the village of Lusengo delayed the delivery of samples.

### **[India - Mysterious' disease has taken 13 lives in a Malkangiri village \(Media\)](#)**

After a mysterious disease claimed lives of 13 people within a month at Sodiguda village under Mathili block in Malkangiri, two people have allegedly died of the same disease at Puruna Niliguda under Podia block, it was reported on 28 September. In the last few days, a total of five people have died in the village. With deaths occurring one after another, panic has gripped the tribal pocket. The health officials have been on their toes to ferret out the cause. Villagers report the disease starts with swelling and aching of the body before killing its victims. A team of health officials visited the village and started to ascertain the cause of the disease. A chairperson of the special development council, demanded that the Health Department take necessary step to check the disease.

### **[United Kingdom- HAIRS risk assessment: Usutu virus \(Official\)](#)**

The geographic distribution of Usutu virus has increased since its first incursion into Europe in the early 2000s. In August 2020, Usutu virus RNA was detected in samples from a small number of wild birds in England. This is regarded as the first detection of Usutu virus in wild birds in the UK. This risk assessment was carried out to determine the level of risk Usutu virus presents to the UK population.

## **Researches, Policies and Guidelines**

### **[Canada- OPP identify 34 per cent increase in overdose related deaths for 2019 \(Media\)](#)**

The Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) have released the 2019 Opioids and Overdoses: Impacts and Strategies report, highlighting statistics, trends and impacts in relation to opioids in OPP policed communities. The report contains information outlining opioid seizures, overdoses and relevant strategies as well as a progress report on previous priorities. The OPP have prepared this report in an effort to remain transparent and provide the citizens of Ontario with an accurate depiction of the impacts opioids continue to have within the province. The OPP has identified a 34% increase in overdose-related deaths in 2019 as compared to overdose-related deaths in 2018. Since September 2017, OPP officers have saved 177 lives by administering naloxone; In an effort to promote the Good Samaritan Drug Overdose Act (GSDOA), the OPP conducted a very comprehensive public awareness campaign that spanned the country.

### **[United States - Two novel investigational drugs targeting antibiotic-resistant infections move into advanced development with HHS \(Official\)](#)**

On 30 September 2020, the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) announced advanced funding for two new drug candidates that target bacterial infections. The two drug candidates are VE303, a live biotherapeutic product developed by Vedanta Biosciences that focuses on restoring the normal balance of beneficial bacteria in the digestive tract to prevent recurrence of *Clostridioides difficile*, a bacterial infection associated with antibiotic use. The other is Locus Biosciences' LBP-EC01, which uses CRISPR-Cas3 technology and bacteriophages to treat urinary tract infections caused by *Escherichia coli*, including those that are antibiotic resistant. BARDA, part of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, will provide an initial \$7.36 million and up to \$76.9 million over 9.5 years to Vedanta to support development of VE303 and an initial \$11 million and up to \$77 million to Locus for LBP-EC01. The funding will support phase 2 and phase 3 trials of the drugs. LBP-EC01. The funding will support phase 2 and phase 3 trials of the drugs. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified *C difficile* and antibiotic-resistant *E coli* as serious and urgent health threats.

Best Regards | Sincères salutations

## The GPHIN Team / L'équipe du RMISP

Global Public Health Intelligence Network | Health Security Infrastructure Branch

Public Health Agency of Canada, Government of Canada

[phac.gphin-rmisp.aspc@canada.ca](mailto:phac.gphin-rmisp.aspc@canada.ca)

Réseau mondial d'information en santé publique | Direction Générale de l'infrastructure de sécurité sanitaire

Agence de la santé publique du Canada, Gouvernement du Canada

[phac.gphin-rmisp.aspc@canada.ca](mailto:phac.gphin-rmisp.aspc@canada.ca)