

**NATIONAL EMERGENCY STRATEGIC STOCKPILE (NESS)
MANAGEMENT****SYNOPSIS**

A recent media story highlighted the disposal of approximately 2 million expired masks and 440,000 expired gloves during the closure of the NESS warehouse in Regina in 2019. The masks and gloves had been purchased in 2009 and had passed the limit of five years for their use, as recommended by the manufacturer.

SOMMAIRE

Un récent article de presse a souligné l'élimination d'environ deux millions de masques et 440 000 gants périmés lors de la fermeture de l'entrepôt de la RNSU à Regina en 2019. Les masques et les gants avaient été achetés en 2009 et avaient dépassé la limite de cinq ans pour leur utilisation, comme le recommande le fabricant.

POTENTIAL QUESTIONS

- How can we be sure that the Government of Canada has the right system in place to have the necessary stockpile of health supplies to support Canada in pandemics and other emergencies?
- Why did the Public Health Agency of Canada dispose of N95 masks and gloves in 2019?
- Why did the Public Health Agency of Canada close federal stockpile locations?

QUESTIONS POTENTIELLES

- Comment pouvons-nous être sûrs que le gouvernement du Canada a mis en place un système adéquat pour disposer d'un stock de fournitures médicales nécessaire pour soutenir le Canada en cas de pandémie et d'autres urgences ?
- Pourquoi l'Agence de la santé publique du Canada s'est-elle débarrassée des gants et des masques N95 en 2019 ?
- Pourquoi l'Agence de la santé publique du Canada a-t-elle fermé les sites de réserve fédéraux ?

KEY MESSAGES /MESSAGES CLES

- The Government of Canada is working closely with provinces and territories to procure the necessary health supplies to continue responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The National Emergency Strategic Stockpile (NESS) was initially built on the assumption that provincial, territorial and local governments would be prepared for the most common emergencies. Consequently, it was designed to provide health emergency assets when local and provincial and territorial resources were exhausted.
- Jurisdictions have traditionally sourced Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) directly from known suppliers, and the NESS has historically only carried relatively small amounts.
- With the unprecedented nature of the current pandemic, the NESS quickly stepped into a much more active role in procurement. As we move forward, we will adjust, and lessons learned will inform the future of the NESS.

MESSAGE CLÉ

- Le gouvernement du Canada travaille en étroite collaboration avec les provinces et les territoires afin de procurer les fournitures médicales nécessaires pour continuer de répondre à la pandémie de COVID-19.
- La structure de la Réserve nationale stratégique d'urgence (RNSU) a été initialement construite en partant du principe que les gouvernements provinciaux, territoriaux et locaux seraient prêts à faire face aux urgences les plus courantes. Par conséquent, elle a été conçue pour fournir des actifs d'urgence sanitaire lorsque les ressources locales, provinciales et territoriales ont été épuisées.

- Traditionnellement, les juridictions s'approvisionnent en équipements de protection individuelle directement auprès de fournisseurs connus, et la RNSU conservait toujours des quantités relativement faibles de fournitures.
- Compte tenu de la nature sans précédent de la pandémie actuelle, la RNSU a rapidement joué un rôle beaucoup plus actif dans la passation des marchés et continuera à jouer ce rôle élargi aussi longtemps que nécessaire. Au fur et à mesure que nous avancerons, nous nous adapterons, et les leçons tirées de l'expérience étayeront l'avenir de la RNSU.

IF PRESSED ON INVENTORY MANAGEMENT

- The NESS reviews its stock regularly. Expired, obsolete, or unusable items are disposed of as per Treasury Board policy.
- The Public Health Agency of Canada continues to explore ways to optimize product life cycle management and minimize the disposal of expired stock.

SI L'ON INSISTE SUR LA GESTION DES STOCKS

- La RNSU examine régulièrement son stock. Les articles périmés, obsolètes ou inutilisables sont éliminés conformément à la politique du Conseil du Trésor.
- L'Agence de la santé publique du Canada continue d'explorer les moyens d'optimiser la gestion du cycle de vie des produits et de réduire au minimum l'élimination des stocks périmés.

IF PRESSED ON WAREHOUSE FOOTPRINT

- A decision was made in 2013 to modernize and optimize our warehouse national footprint.
- Currently, the Public Health Agency of Canada has warehouses in six cities.

SI L'ON INSISTE SUR L'EMPREINTE DE L'ENTREPÔT

- Une décision a été prise en 2013 pour moderniser et optimiser l'empreinte nationale de notre entrepôt.
- Actuellement l'Agence de la santé publique du Canada a des entrepôts répartis sur six villes.

IF PRESSED ON STOCKPILING OF PPE AND THE CANADIAN PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLAN

- The Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan is a federal, provincial, and territorial guidance document for the healthcare sector. Its purpose is to assist jurisdictions with their emergency planning.
- The most recent guidance from 2011 recommends that availability of PPE supply should be addressed during pandemic planning, and that stockpiling should be considered.
- Provincial and territorial governments are responsible for ensuring the provision of medications, supplies, and equipment required for provision of pandemic health care services.
- The NESS is intended to provide health emergency assets when local and provincial and territorial resources have been exhausted. It has historically carried only relatively small amounts of PPE.

SI L'ON INSISTE SUR LA CONSTITUTION DE STOCKS D'ÉPI ET SUR LE PLAN CANADIEN DE LUTTE CONTRE LA PANDÉMIE DE GRIPPE

- Le Plan canadien de lutte contre la pandémie d'influenza est

un document d'orientation fédéral, provincial et territorial pour le secteur de la santé. Il vise à aider les gouvernements à préparer leurs plans d'urgence.

- Les orientations les plus récentes datent de 2011. Elles recommandent que la question de la disponibilité et l'approvisionnement en ÉPI soit abordée lors de la planification en cas de pandémie, et que la constitution de stocks devrait être envisagée.
- Les gouvernements provinciaux et territoriaux sont chargés de veiller à la fourniture de médicaments, de fournitures et d'équipements nécessaires à la prestation des services de soins de santé en cas de pandémie.
- La Réserve nationale stratégique d'urgence (RNSU) a été conçue pour assurer l'approvisionnement en fournitures médicales d'urgence lorsque les ressources locales et provinciales et territoriales ont été épuisées. Historiquement, elle n'a contenu que des quantités relativement faibles d'ÉPI.

IF PRESSED ON FUNDING LEVEL

- Since 2012-13, the operating budget of the NESS, including salaries and operating has consistently been around \$3 million annually.
- On top of the NESS core operational budget, there have been investments made for particular initiatives, stocks of supplies and medical countermeasures. Over the last 10 years, these investments have varied year over year, and have amounted to over \$79 million.

SI L'ON INSISTE SUR LE NIVEAU DE FINANCEMENT

- Depuis l'exercice 2012-2013, le budget de fonctionnement de la RNSU, y compris les salaires et le fonctionnement, a toujours été d'environ trois millions de dollars par an.
- En plus du budget opérationnel de base de la RNSU, des investissements ont été réalisés pour des initiatives particulières, des stocks de fournitures et des contre-mesures médicales. Au cours des dix dernières années, ces investissements ont varié d'une année à l'autre et se sont élevés à plus de 79 millions de dollars.

BACKGROUND

Canada's National Emergency Strategic Stockpile (NESS) contains supplies that provinces and territories can request in emergencies, such as infectious disease outbreaks, natural disasters and other public health events, when their own resources are not enough. These supplies include a variety of items such as: medical equipment and supplies; pharmaceuticals; and social service supplies, such as beds and blankets.

NESS Mandate

The fundamental assumption underpinning emergency management is that provincial, territorial and local governments are prepared to a reasonable extent for the most common emergencies.

As such, the federal government's role in stockpiling emergency health assets is twofold:

- It provides surge capacity to provinces and territories at their request when their own resources are not sufficient; and
- It is the sole provider of certain assets required for rare public health emergencies, for example, costly and rarely used vaccines or antidotes.

NESS Funding

Since 2012-13, the annual base funding for the NESS has remained stable and has been approximately \$3 million a year. This funding is included in the overall funding identified for the Health Security Infrastructure program area reported in Public Accounts.

Additional funding has historically been provided to the NESS through internal reallocation decisions and incremental funding decisions where the Public Health Agency of Canada has received funding linked to specific purchases such as a four-year investment in medical countermeasures against smallpox and anthrax that began in 2015-16.

NESS Deployments

Over the past decade, the NESS has deployed assets to assist with a range of events and emergencies, including the 2010 Olympics, 2013 Alberta Floods, Operation Syrian Refugees, the Fort McMurray wildfires, and the 2018 G7 Summit in Quebec. The NESS has also made international donations in support of the West African Ebola Outbreak, Hurricane Harvey, and to China during the current COVID-19 outbreak.

NESS Requests for Assistance

We have so far been able to respond within 24 hours to all requests for assistance from provinces and territories. Requests are assessed in consultation with the provinces and territories and delivery dates and quantities are based on the availability of requested supplies and urgency of the request.

NESS Footprint

NESS facilities consist of a central depot in the National Capital Region and warehouses strategically located across Canada. In recent years, the NESS moved from nine warehouse locations across Canada to six. An independent assessment indicated that the six strategic locations would maintain the NESS' role as timely surge support.

As of 2019, all NESS holdings were consolidated in eight warehouses in six cities. In Spring 2020, two additional warehouses were leased in Ottawa, given the volume of supplies being donated to and purchased by the NESS as part of the federal government's COVID-19 response.

When a warehouse is closed, usable supplies are moved to a new location, while obsolete and expired supplies are disposed of as per Treasury Board policy.

Regina Closure

In 2019, approximately 2 million expired masks and 440,000 expired gloves were disposed of during the closure of the NESS warehouse in Regina. The masks and gloves had been purchased in 2009 and had passed the limit of five years for their use, as recommended by the manufacturer.

Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan PPE Guidance

The **2006 CPIP** stated that *plans are required to allow for a consistent 16-week supply (i.e. two pandemic waves) of both influenza and non-influenza related materials to address sporadic interruptions of supply chains (e.g. resulting from mail and courier disruptions, border closures, supply limitations).*

The **2011 CPIP** indicates that methods to estimate PPE requirements are beyond the scope of the CPIP, and notes that P/T governments are responsible for ensuring the

provision of medications, supplies, and equipment required for provision of pandemic health care services.

PHAC Contact: Laurie Hunter, Director General, 613-868-0792

PHAC Approved by: Sally Thornton, VP-HSIB