

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor & Members of City Council
Chambers of Commerce
Media

Date: August 14, 2020

Subject: COVID-19 – Update

SUMMARY

In the last two weeks, we have provided updates on the COVID Alert App, our fight to treat and prevent COVID-19, the Canadian economy, and how we set a flat unemployment rate to help Canadians collect EI. As well, we have launched the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative and the Food Surplus program.

UPDATES

COVID Alert application now available for download:

Although Canada has made tremendous progress since March to slow the spread of COVID-19, we are not out of the woods just yet. As we gradually and safely reopen our economy, we must continue to prioritize the health and safety of Canadians by finding solutions to track and limit further spread of the virus. That is why our government has been working closely with the Province of Ontario to create the COVID Alert App, which was officially launched on Friday by the Prime Minister and the Premier of Ontario, Doug Ford.

The COVID Alert application was designed to notify users of possible exposure to people who have tested positive for COVID-19. It is free, fully voluntary, and uses strong measures to protect any data it collects. Users who test positive for COVID-19 will receive a one-time key from their health authority that they can enter into the app. While Ontario will be the first province to have their health system connected to the app, we are working with other provinces and territories to connect their health systems as well.

Treating and Preventing COVID-19:

Ministers Anand and Bains held a press conference to reveal major next steps in treating and preventing COVID-19 through vaccines and therapies. The announcements include two new agreements with pharmaceutical firms Pfizer and Moderna, a new COVID-19 Vaccine Task Force, and funding of up to \$56 million to support clinical trials for a COVID-related vaccine candidate from Variation Biotechnologies Inc. (VBI) through the Strategic Innovation Fund.



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HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

This will build on the work already started to support COVID-19 research in Canada and will give us a chance to explore every possible option to deliver safe and effective treatments and vaccines against COVID-19 for Canadians as fast as possible.

For more details on the individual announcements, please see the following news release:

<https://eur04.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.canada.ca%2Fen%2Finnovation-science-economic-development%2Fnews%2F2020%2F08%2Fgovernment-of-canada-announces-major-steps-in-treating-and-preventing-covid-19-through-vaccines-and-therapies.html&data=02%7C01%7C%7C98b21c2dc60340039dc308d83f9bb238%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637329285585581646&data=fwvTcOtfjseBFSc%2BPITiL2MT39UPB5ckbv0Sy8btDE%3D&reserved=0>

The Canadian economy created 419K jobs in July:

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, our government has been focused on both short-term and long-term planning to give Canadians the support they need to get through this crisis while setting the stage for a strong and robust economic recovery.

Statistics Canada released updated job numbers, which showed Canada's labour market gaining 419,000 jobs last month. The national unemployment rate was 10.9% in July, down from June's 12.3%, and moving even further away from May's 13.7%. This means that over 1.6 million Canadians have returned to work after losing their jobs at the outset of the pandemic. As our economy slowly starts to reopen, these job numbers are a testament to the hard work and resiliency of Canadians in the face of this pandemic and show that the measures our government have put into place are working.

<https://eur06.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww150.statcan.gc.ca%2Fn1%2Fdaily-quotidien%2F200807%2Fdq200807a-eng.htm%3FHPA%3D1&data=02%7C01%7C%7C804a3a25d5534f4ef15a08d83f9aed3d%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637329282260654049&data=Ryux1La8ZkEXQrTcbWmY4w1HAjFp%2BTkKUC2mWqpVDI%3D&reserved=0>

These job numbers also represent a historic moment for Canadian data collection. For the first time, the Labour Force Survey has collected data disaggregated by race and visible minority status, which helps to create a more complete picture of Canada's economy during this pandemic.

Despite this progress, we know that many Canadians are still facing challenges and uncertainty. As we transition Canadians from the CERB onto Employment Insurance in September with no disruption of their benefits and no increase in employment insurance premiums, our government will continue to be there for Canadians as our economy improves. Together, we will get through this and build a better, fairer, and stronger Canada.

Canada sets flat unemployment rate:

As our national economy begins to safely restart, our government is unwavering in its commitment to ensure that Canadians have access to the support they need during these difficult times.

Since launching the Canada Emergency Response Benefit (CERB), we have been able to support 8.5 million Canadians and their families who have had to stop working due to the pandemic.

At the end of July, we announced that we will be moving as many Canadians as possible from the CERB onto Employment Insurance with no disruption to their benefits and no increase in employment insurance premiums. Yesterday, Minister Qualtrough announced that effective August 9, 2020 a minimum unemployment rate of 13.1% will be applied temporarily for all EI economic regions across Canada.

This will help more Canadians access EI regular benefits and provide eligible Canadians with access to a minimum 26 weeks of benefits.

We recognize that many Canadians still need to access income supports right now, or might need to later, as the economic impacts of COVID-19 continue to be felt across the country. This is the first in a series of steps, to be announced in the coming weeks, that will help eligible Canadians transition from emergency income measures back into the EI system and into the labour force as we work together to best position our country for a strong economic recovery.

For more details on this temporary support, please see the following news release:

<https://nam11.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.canada.ca%2Fen%2Femployment-social-development%2Fnews%2F2020%2F08%2Fgovernment-of-canada-temporarily-sets-a-minimum-unemployment-rate-for-the-employment-insurance-program.html&data=02%7C01%7C%7Cb9c9d9e804ff4187a67b08d83f9ac45f%7C84df9e7fe9f640afb435aaaaaaaaaaaa%7C1%7C0%7C637329281232434469&sdata=dzIWQByHLwrxkXdEMuG0gx98Qz%2FsGGpb8%2FN9GDoK0Ww%3D&reserved=0>

Canada Healthy Communities Initiative (CHCI):

Minister McKenna announced the Canada Healthy Communities Initiative (CHCI), which will provide up to \$31 million in federal funding to support community-led solutions that respond to immediate and ongoing needs arising from COVID-19 over the next two years. The goal is to fund projects that quickly help communities adapt to the new reality of COVID-19.

Projects funded by this initiative will fall under three main themes:

- ✓ Creating safe and vibrant public spaces
- ✓ Improving mobility options
- ✓ Digital solutions

Potential projects could include:

- ✓ Expanding outdoor seating on our main streets
- ✓ Remodeling a playground to allow for proper physical distancing
- ✓ Building multi-modal paths that would allow bikes, scooters, and personal mobility devices to share space with pedestrians and cars
- ✓ Creating digital apps to allow residents to access municipal services remotely

The possibilities are as varied as the spirit, imagination and unique needs of Canada's communities in this extraordinary time!

We expect the application process to open up in the fall.

Surplus Food Rescue Program:

The new \$50M Surplus Food Rescue Program is win-win. On the one hand, we are supporting producers of potatoes, fish and poultry, who lost their key market when restaurants closed., and, on the other, we are helping the thousands of Canadians who have had to turn to a food bank.

The Surplus Food Rescue Program is supporting eight partnerships between over 100 different food companies and not-for-profit groups that will handle the transportation and redistribution of vulnerable Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast. In total, the program will redistribute approximately 12 million kilograms of surplus food to more food insecure families that would otherwise have been wasted.

This announcement builds on our Government's \$100-million in emergency funding to counter food insecurity, which is helping two million Canadians through more than 1,800 local food banks across the country.

May I, once again, express my sincere appreciation to all residents, our front-line workers, essential service providers, government partners at all levels, businesses and students, for your ongoing efforts to help throughout these challenging times. We are in this together! Your daily efforts are ensuring that we will get through this together. If you require any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact our office.

Enjoy your weekend.

Stay safe