

Massive surge in COVID infections across Canada as federal Liberal government suspends dispatch of rapid test kits

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Canada is in the grip of a massive COVID-19 surge that is going virtually unreported. According to figures from Tara Moriarty, Associate Professor at the University of Toronto, one in 43 Canadians was infected as of February 26. This equates to almost 900,000 people.

Moriarty is co-founder of COVID-19 Resources Canada, a group of Canadian researchers, clinicians and community members that has provided logistic and scientific support since the start of the pandemic. The group's weekly forecasts and estimates are the only reliable source of information on the pandemic in Canada, which has been ignored and declared over by the corporate-controlled and state-funded media alike.

Moriarty warned in her weekly forecast for February 12 that a surge of infections was imminent. The COVID-19 forecast for Feb 19-25, 2023 stated that the current infection rate is about one in 43 people. Compared to the lowest point of the pandemic in Canada, waste water indicators, infections and Long COVID cases were about eight times higher; hospitalizations were about six times higher; and deaths were about four times higher.

The organization's Hazard Index is calculated from three equally weighted categories: Current infections and spread; health care system impact; and mortality. It rates provinces in categories: Severe; very high; high; elevated; moderate; and low. For February 19, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia were in the "severe" classification, with Nova Scotia experiencing about one in every 31 people infected. Waste water indicators, infections and Long COVID cases were about 11 times higher; hospitalizations were about six times higher; and deaths were about 13 times higher compared to the

lowest point in the pandemic.

By the time of the February 26 report, Canada's overall risk on the scale rose to "very high." Significantly, not a single province or territory fell into the "low" or "moderate" categories, the two lowest on the scale. Only one province, Newfoundland, was categorized as having "elevated" risk.

Based on data gathered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in the United States, Moriarty noted that one in five people now has a health condition that might be related to a previous COVID-19 illness. The official death toll from COVID-19 in Canada is now over 51,000. As of February 25, the seven-day average for deaths was 34 every day.

The response by the ruling elite to the renewed flood of infections is to try and cover it up and remove the limited services they provided earlier in the pandemic. The CBC reported Thursday that the federal Liberal government suspended the shipment of rapid test kits to the provinces at the end of January. This criminal decision, which prevents even the most basic tracing of infections, was taken without any public discussion. Health Canada blandly noted in an email to CTV News that it still has 90 million test kits in its inventory. Eighty thousand of these will expire within six months and over 6 million within the year.

This decision by the federal government is in keeping with the Liberals' embrace of a strategy of "forever COVID." As soon as the infectious Omicron variant emerged in late 2021, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau oversaw the abandonment of almost all public health mitigations. After the fascistic "Freedom" Convoy occupied downtown Ottawa for three weeks and

blocked border crossings with the US in January and February 2022, Trudeau gave the go-ahead for the dismantling of all remaining measures by provincial governments across the country.

Governments and health authorities insist that the population must now learn to “live with the virus.” Vaccination clinics are closing, data collection and reporting are ending and specialized pandemic services are being withdrawn.

The staffing situation in hospitals remains dire. Nurses continue to leave the profession due to burn-out from mandated overtime caused by high vacancy rates. Three years of a pandemic emergency on top of decades of underfunding from all levels of government have placed an unbearable burden on the health care system.

According to the Manitoba Nurses Union, in Winnipeg alone, a city with a population of 750,000, nurses worked nearly 650,000 hours of overtime in 2022. Province-wide, Manitoba nurses logged over 1 million overtime hours in 2022.

With the health care system already overwhelmed and collapsing, governments of all political stripes are winding down specialized services for those seriously affected by the virus and shifting everything to primary care.

In British Columbia, the New Democratic Party government’s Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) announced the closure of its four post-COVID recovery clinics in Vancouver, Victoria and the Fraser Valley. The interdisciplinary program, which also offers educational resources and classes, currently includes doctors, nurses, social workers, and physiotherapists. At the end of March, the four regional clinics will transition to one centralized, virtual program, which will only provide educational resources and self-management tools. The program will no longer offer access to a doctor. Instead, those who were referred to the clinics have been informed that they will have to visit a family doctor or a walk-in clinic.

BC’s NDP health minister, Adrian Dix, claims there is no longer the same demand for the regional clinics as there was two years ago. BC has a notorious record for systematically under-reporting cases and deaths.

Hôtel-Dieu Grace Healthcare in Windsor, Ontario, also offered a COVID Recovery Program until it was scrapped due to lack of funding in July 2022. The

program included consultations with occupational and physiotherapists, and a support group led by a social worker. However, the resources to fund the initiative were all borrowed from existing assets, with no additional support provided by the provincial Tory government. When the hospital could no longer sustain the extra burden, many people were left with nowhere to go for support.

Advocates and those suffering from Long COVID stress that access to doctors specialized in their condition is crucial to recovery because general practitioners are not always knowledgeable about the potential long lasting effects of COVID-19. A major issue for those seeking treatment for Long Covid is the recognition from health care providers that the condition is both real and serious.

The drive to shift the burden of post-COVID care from hospitals and dedicated clinics to a desperately under-resourced health care system underscores the contempt for the lives of working people felt by the political establishment. Telling those recovering from COVID to visit their primary care physician ignores the well-known fact that 6 million adults in the country currently do not have access to a family doctor. That number is only expected to increase as Canada continues to fall behind its peers in the OECD, with the number of doctors per capita already well behind countries such as Germany and France. A recent report by the Royal Bank of Canada predicted that the current shortfall of 17,000 doctors in the country will rise to approximately 44,000 before the end of the decade. This lack of access to doctors creates pressures and outcomes that cascade throughout the entire health care system.



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