

To: The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P., Prime Minister of Canada  
The Honourable Dwight Ball, Premier of Newfoundland and Labrador  
The Honourable Caroline Cochrane, Premier of the Northwest Territories  
The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario  
The Honourable Blaine Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick  
The Honourable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia  
The Honourable Jason Kenney, Premier of Alberta  
The Honourable Dennis King, Premier of Prince Edward Island  
The Honourable François Legault, Premier of Québec  
The Honourable Stephen McNeil, Premier of Nova Scotia  
The Honourable Scott Moe, Premier of Saskatchewan  
The Honourable Brian Pallister, Premier of Manitoba  
The Honourable Joe Savikataaq, Premier of Nunavut  
The Honourable Sandy Silver, Premier of Yukon

Date: July 6, 2020

RE: Dealing with COVID-19: A Balanced Response

The undersigned represent current and past leaders in public health, health care systems and academia. We are writing to you with our thoughts regarding a balanced approach to dealing with COVID-19. We strongly believe that population health and equity are important considerations that must be applied to future decisions regarding pandemic management.

The current approach to dealing with COVID-19 carries significant risks to overall population health and threatens to increase inequities across the country. Aiming to prevent or contain every case of COVID-19 is simply no longer sustainable at this stage in the pandemic. We need to accept that COVID-19 will be with us for some time and to find ways to deal with it.

The current and proposed measures for reopening will continue to disproportionately impact lower income groups, Black and other racialized groups, recent immigrants to Canada, Indigenous peoples and other populations. And it risks significantly harming our children, particularly the very young, by affecting their development, with life-long consequences in terms of education, skills development, income and overall health.

Canada must work to minimize the impact of COVID-19 by using measures that are practical, effective and compatible with our values and sense of social justice. We need to focus on preventing deaths and serious illness by protecting the vulnerable while enabling society to function and thrive.

Elimination of COVID-19 is not a practical objective for Canada until we have a vaccine. While there is hope for a vaccine to be developed soon, we must be realistic about the time it will actually take to develop and evaluate it and then deliver an immunization campaign covering the entire population. We cannot sustain universal control measures indefinitely.

We need to accept that there will be cases and outbreaks of COVID-19. We need localized control measures that are risk-based. We should consistently reassess quarantine and isolation periods, recommendations for physical distancing and non-medical masks, and travel restrictions based on current best evidence and levels of risk.

At the same time we must improve infection prevention and control in long-term care and congregate living settings. We should provide support for people living in the community who need to or choose to isolate when the disease is active, as well as those who have been adversely affected by COVID-19, or the consequences of the public health measures.

Canadians have developed a fear of COVID-19. Going forward, they have to be supported in understanding their true level of risk, and learning how to deal with this disease, while getting on with their lives – back to work, back to school, and back to healthy lives and vibrant, active communities across this country.

We acknowledge the heroic work that has been done in recent months by many across all levels of government and the public and private sector, and the sacrifices that Canadians have made to get to this stage. As we look forward, Canada must balance its response to COVID-19.

Sincerely yours,

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**Additional signatories who have agreed to be listed after the posting date**

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