

## CAFII ALERTS WEEKLY DIGEST: June 4 TO June 11, 2021

June 11, 2021

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## DIVERSITY/INCLUSION/FIGHTING SYSTEMIC RACISM NEWS

### Why Some Are Calling For The Cancellation Of Canada Day This Year

By Jackie Dunham, CTV News, June 9, 2021

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/why-some-are-calling-for-the-cancellation-of-canada-day-this-year-1.5462653>

In light of the recent discovery of what is believed to be the remains of 215 Indigenous children at the site of a former residential school in B.C., some are renewing calls for Canada Day to be cancelled this year.

On social media, the hashtag #CancelCanadaDay has gained traction in recent days and several rallies organized by the Indigenous protest movement Idle No More have been planned for July 1 in Vancouver, Edmonton, Winnipeg, and in parts of Ontario.

Dakota Bear, an Indigenous hip-hop artist and Idle No More activist who is organizing the rally in Vancouver, said the discovery of the children's remains at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in late May has reminded the country that Indigenous Peoples are still in mourning.

"For us, July 1, there's nothing for us to celebrate," he told CTV's Your Morning on Wednesday. "We have a lot of healing to do, together, everyone that lives on these lands."

According to the Idle No More website, the rallies will be an opportunity for people to come together to "honour all of the lives lost to the Canadian State – Indigenous lives, Black Lives, Migrant lives, Women and Trans and 2Spirit lives."

Bear said there are still so many issues affecting Indigenous communities that need to be addressed before they can celebrate, including the lack of infrastructure for safe drinking water, missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, proper housing, youth suicides, and the effects of the residential school system.

The activist said Canada was built on 500 years of genocide and that genocide continues to this day as cited in the report by the national inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQIA people.

"The systems that we're facing, and the oppression that we're faced [with] through these systems is ongoing, and it's costing Indigenous lives," he said.

"For Canada to become what it is today, we had to go through and continue to go through that genocide. So we have to acknowledge that history. But to move forward, there's so much work to do before the celebration comes. I feel like we're skipping ahead."

In order to address these problems, Bear said people have to come together as a collective to educate people on what has happened and is happening to Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

“The truth is coming to light,” he said. “The information is more readily available and I think that people are starting to digest that information.”

And while Bear said they won't be commemorating the founding of Canada on July 1, he said they will be celebrating in their own way.

“We do have a lot to celebrate. There's a lot of resilience within our communities and we're still here. So we need to acknowledge that as well,” he said.

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## The 'Problem' Woman Of Colour Is A Troubling Trope

*By Kimiya Shokoohi, Special To The Globe and Mail, June 6, 2021. Kimiya Shokoohi is a writer and filmmaker based in Greater Vancouver.*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/careers/article-the-problem-woman-of-colour-is-a-troubling-trope/>

Throughout her more than 11 years in the hospitality industry, Vancouver-born, Tunisian-Chinese chef Karima Chellouf has drawn criticism for refusing to follow the leadership of abusive bosses and to work in hostile environments.

There were incidents when European colleagues in Canadian kitchens remarked on her mixed heritage. Other times, supervisors asserted their position and authority rather than working to understand the concerns of a direct report. Chellouf recalls an incident when a chef began yelling at her when she raised the issue of a colleague sharing photos of themselves in brown face on Halloween.

“When a person says you don't fit the culture – who is the culture for?” Chellouf says. “If a person doesn't want to hire me because I refuse to accept abuse, that job wasn't for me.”

Chellouf's story is a prime example of what women of colour frequently face in professional environments – where being outspoken leads to one being deemed the “problem.” The experience often goes as follows.

A woman of colour enters an organization excited and ready for the role. She feels welcomed and needed by white leadership at first. As time passes, aggressions begin to grow against her. Sometimes they arise as a result of racist subconscious biases, other times there is malicious intent.

She flags the issue with human resources and tries to make allies across departments. Within her team, her concerns are minimized, ignored, gaslit and abandoned. The woman of colour is targeted as the problem. She exits the organization.

This kind of scenario occurs so frequently that the Montreal-based Centre for Community Organizations, which goes by the acronym COCo, published a visual tool in 2018 to explain it and help organizations prevent it from happening.

“We found that when we looked at the data, it mapped consistently,” said Emily Yee Clare, one of the researchers with the centre. “There were a lot of stories of people needing to leave for their well-being and safety.”

Thirty percent of women of colour in the Canadian non-profit sector left a job because of the work environment, the centre found. Elsewhere, visible minorities continue to be underrepresented in leadership with just one in 10 executives belonging to a minority group, according to the 2016 census.

That’s a notable concern, given that more than one-fifth of Canada’s total population in 2016 was foreign born.

The promotion of meaningful multiculturalism must come from the top down.

“Safety means being able to show up fully as yourself,” Yee Clare said, adding that tokenized employees usually have to wear cultural masks. Even then, they are on the outs when white colleagues bond and corral around their cultural references. “To be seen is to be heard and it’s a hard ephemeral experience.”

When these scenarios arise, the “problem” women trope can often be used to shift the onus of responsibility back onto minorities. Individuals are deemed the “wrong fit” and accused of claiming “victim mentality” when they are vocal about violent and abusive behaviour.

Associate professor Izumi Sakamoto at the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work at the University of Toronto has been researching the experience of immigrants and other marginalized communities for more than 20 years. Part of her work is mobilizing employers to consider diverse hires. Almost across the board, such issues arise because people and systems haven’t been put in place to create balance in the social and cultural dynamics of the company, she said.

Sakamoto challenges the negative tropes that follow minority hires and questions why “fitting in” has been made a priority in work culture at all.

“If you’re a charismatic leader, no one is going to ask you if you’re fitting in,” she said. “Did Trump fit into anything?”

For Chellouf, speaking out against a disparaging culture that has become an embedded part of many kitchens was a step against the forces that labelled her as problematic and insubordinate.

She has since gone on to teach and speak about food and kitchen culture, and in 2018 she started her own business to reclaim control of her career.

“I’m talented but got in trouble often because I refused to accept abuse,” Chellouf said. “My friends and I built a community about food outside of that.”

## American Airlines CEO Attends Southwest Flight Attendant's Wedding After Their Conversation About Race In America Went Viral

By Cailey Rizzo, Travel + Leisure, June 10, 2021

[American Airlines CEO Attends Southwest Flight Attendant's Wedding After Their Conversation About Race in America Went Viral \(msn.com\)](#)

One year after their conversation on race relations in America went viral, Southwest flight attendant JacqueRae Sullivan (nee Hill) and American Airlines CEO Doug Parker reunited at her wedding over Memorial Day weekend.

On May 29, 2020, a few days after the death of George Floyd, JacqueRae Hill - who is black - was driving to work in Dallas, Texas, and feeling heavy-hearted about the tragic incident.

"I have been so sad every day and I just want to understand and be understood so we can begin to fix it," she wrote in a Facebook post at the time, according to People.

Onboard the flight that she was then a crewmember on, she noticed a white passenger reading "White Fragility," a book by Robin DiAngelo. When she finished service, Hill sat down next to the passenger and asked him about the book. The two started talking about race relations and the man said, "It's our fault. We have to start these conversations."

Hill was overcome with emotion and started crying. "I know he didn't know what to do," she told CNN last year. "I know I startled him. I was embarrassed. I didn't expect that. It was just a genuine moment for me, and we talked for 10 minutes."

The man introduced himself as Doug Parker, the CEO of American Airlines. (He was onboard Southwest because his own airline's flights onboard that route were sold out, USA Today reported.)

Coincidentally, Hill told him that her mother, Patti Anderson, was a flight attendant with his airline.

Before getting off the plane, Parker wrote a note to Hill, thanking her for the conversation and giving her his email address to stay in touch and continue the conversation.

And stay in touch they did. Over Memorial Day Weekend, which marked exactly one year since they had met, Parker attended Hill's wedding to Rashard Sullivan. Both Parker and (now-)Sullivan posted on Instagram about the reunion.

"She started a courageous conversation with me about race in America and it's one I'll never forget," Parker wrote on Instagram. "She continues to be a light that guides me as we work to tear down barriers that create systemic racism."

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE, RESILIENCE AND RECOVERY NEWS

### Fully Vaccinated Canadian Travellers Can Soon Return Home Without 14-Day Quarantine: Ottawa

*By Steven Chase and Marieke Walsh, The Globe and Mail, June 9, 2021*

By early July, fully vaccinated Canadians and permanent residents who return home from travelling will be able to skip mandatory 14-day quarantine, as long as they test negative for COVID-19, the federal government announced on Wednesday, June 9.

Health Minister Patty Hajdu said rising vaccination rates and lower case counts are behind the planned easing of border restrictions. Dominic Leblanc, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, cautioned these changes will only be implemented if new COVID-19 case counts keep dropping and vaccination efforts “continue to go well.”

The government said, however, that only vaccines approved in Canada will be accepted when determining whether an incoming traveller counts as fully vaccinated. This list currently includes the vaccines made by AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer and Moderna.

The approved list does not include Russian- or Chinese-made vaccines used elsewhere in the world, but Ottawa said it will continue evaluating other vaccines for possible approval.

Under the envisioned changes, returning travellers would be required to present a negative COVID-19 screening test taken prior to their return trip and also submit to a COVID-19 test upon arrival back in Canada.

The ministers did not provide a specific date for these new rules but only said early July.

The changes unveiled Wednesday would mean qualifying return travellers can self-isolate at home until their COVID test comes back. Once the traveller received confirmation that their return COVID test was negative, they would no longer be under isolation restrictions.

Only about eight per cent of Canadians are fully vaccinated now – while 63 per cent have received one dose – but the number of double-dosed individuals is expected to rise quickly. Canada is expecting to have received 45 million to 46 million doses in total by the end of June. That’s enough to give all eligible Canadians their first shot and cover second shots for about one-third.

This would represent the first phase of easing of COVID-19-related travel restrictions in Canada.

Canadians or permanent residents who are non-essential travellers are currently required to quarantine for 14 days upon their return in Canada. Travellers also face several testing requirements before and after travelling, and people who arrive by air have to stay at a quarantine hotel for up to three days. People who enter Canada by land are not required to go to a government-sanctioned hotel.

At least 25 countries, including France, Spain and Denmark have announced border re-opening plans for vaccinated travellers from some countries. This list also includes jurisdictions in the Caribbean, such as the Bahamas or British Virgin Islands, and some in Central or South America, such as Belize, Guatemala and Ecuador. In many cases, countries require a negative COVID-19 test and official proof of vaccination and some allow unvaccinated travellers provided they test negative for COVID-19.

Provinces in Canada are divided over exactly when to relax travel restrictions and the Ontario government has recently blamed Ottawa for not doing enough to stop COVID-19 cases from entering Canada via “porous borders.”

It remains unclear how travellers entering Canada would prove that they were fully vaccinated.

The Canadian government is planning a phased approach to relaxing travel restrictions. Non-essential travel has been restricted for more than one year, including a ban on direct flights from other countries including Britain – now lifted – and another on direct flights from India and Pakistan.

American political and business leaders are increasing their pressure on Canada to provide a clear plan and timeline for normalizing travel across the Canada-U.S. border.

New York Congressman Brian Higgins, who is co-chair of the Northern Border Caucus and the Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary Group, said in a statement Tuesday that “it is clearly the beginning of the end” of the border shutdown.

“In conversations with government leaders on both sides of the border, we are learning plans are moving forward to provide for expanded crossing allowances. Action is long overdue,” he said in a statement.

A federally appointed panel recommended in a report, released on May 27, that Ottawa phase out quarantine hotels, end the quarantine requirement for fully vaccinated travellers and significantly shorten it for those who are partly vaccinated. The panel still recommended testing for all travellers, no matter their vaccination status.

Ottawa, at the time, said it would review the recommendations and consult with provinces and territories, but it gave no timeline for a change in policies and did not commit to enacting the expert advice.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Retail Council of Canada, the Business Council of Canada and Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, among others, are urging Ottawa and Washington to agree on mutually recognized credentials that travellers can present to demonstrate they are fully vaccinated – commonly referred to as a vaccine passport or digital vaccine certificate – and hammer out a plan to lay out clear guidelines for all forms of transport.

Perrin Beatty, president of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, predicts vaccination credentials will be a permanent feature of international travel and has said Ottawa needs to put together national standards for generating and updating this certificate.



Recent polling suggested many Canadians are still hesitant about opening the Canada-U.S. border. A survey by Leger and the Association for Canadian Studies in early June found that 64 per cent of Canadian respondents oppose re-opening the Canada-U.S. border this summer to allow American tourists into this country. Thirty-six per cent of those polled supported the idea. The study was conducted June 4 to June 6 and surveyed more than 1,500 adults in Canada.

Mayors of U.S. border towns have been particularly vocal in urging for a return to normal.

Christopher Rosenquest, mayor of Plattsburgh, N.Y., about 100 kilometres south of Montreal, said he can understand why Canadians may be apprehensive about opening the border. But his response to that concern is U.S. data showing low COVID-19 case rates.

"We do have a strong vaccination record here," he said, adding that the U.S. should be sharing doses with Canadians. "Our tourism relies heavily on the Canadian dollar," he said.

Read Story (Subscription Required): <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-fully-vaccinated-canadian-travellers-can-soon-return-home-without-14/>

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## New York Congressman Says Biden, Trudeau To Talk Plan For Canada-U.S. Border At G7

*By James McCarten, The Canadian Press, June 10, 2021*

[New York congressman says Biden, Trudeau to talk plan for Canada-U.S. border at G7 \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/new-york-congressman-says-biden-trudeau-to-talk-plan-for-canada-u.s.-border-at-g7)

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and President Joe Biden will discuss plans to re-open the Canada-U.S. border when they meet on the margins of the G7 summit, a New York congressman said on Thursday, June 10 amid ongoing pressure to further ease travel restrictions.

The White House said the pair, who are in the United Kingdom for the three-day summit that gets underway Friday, June 11 will discuss the matter before the weekend, Representative Brian Higgins told a panel discussion hosted by the Tourism Industry Association of Canada.

"I have confirmed from the White House last night that U.S. President Biden and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau are going to meet either later (Thursday) or (Friday) on this issue," said Higgins, who has been one of the most vocal American champions of re-opening the border.

"In the end, these are the only two decision-makers that matter. They can make a game-changing decision; this could be an inflection point."

Alongside Higgins on the panel was Liberal MP Wayne Easter, a fellow co-chair of the bilateral committee known as the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group and himself a recent champion of accelerating efforts to relax the limits on travel at the shared border.

On Wednesday, June 9, the federal Liberal government said that by early July, Canadian citizens, permanent residents and essential workers who have had a full course of a COVID-19 vaccine will no longer be automatically required to spend 14 days quarantining upon their arrival in Canada.

Eligible travellers will be tested when they arrive and able to leave isolation once their test comes back negative. The government will also exempt eligible and fully vaccinated travellers from having to spend their first three days in a federally approved hotel.

None of that goes far enough, Easter said: "In my view, we have to go farther than who is currently permitted."

Fully vaccinated seasonal residents — U.S. citizens who own property in Canada — should be allowed in, given the role they play in the regional economy and the local community, he said.

"They can come in a safe fashion, they can add to our economy, they're going to renovate their seasonal residences, and they will do it in a safe fashion. So I do think that we that we have to get there."

Easter acknowledged that there are those in Canada who remain worried about the prospects of U.S. residents being allowed to travel north, given how widely COVID-19 was able to spread south of the border throughout last year.

And he conceded that while such fear served an important purpose at the height of the pandemic by helping to enforce mobility restrictions and keep the virus from spreading, it's time to move on.

"It was useful in the beginning in terms of getting people to stay home, wear masks, social distance, etc. But we really did make people fearful," Easter said.

He said he knew that when he and Higgins issued a call in March for a plan to re-open the border, that it might not go over well with constituents in his Prince Edward Island riding.

"I think I said to Brian, 'Look, my phone will light up in my office because I'm going to catch hell from people who are saying, you can't open that border; we're fearful of letting Americans in here,'" Easter said.

"But you do have to provoke the debate."

A new online poll from Leger and the Association for Canadian Studies, conducted last weekend with 1,539 Canadian participants, found 66 per cent of respondents wanted the border re-opened in order to allow travel to resume in both directions.

An additional 31 per cent said they wanted it re-opened solely so they could travel to the U.S., while only three per cent of respondents said they wanted it open to allow U.S. residents to travel to Canada.

Asked what they hope to do in the U.S. once travel resumes, 25 per cent said visit family and friends, 20 per cent cited cultural attractions, 18 per cent said they plan to go to the beach, and 16 per cent cited the chance to go cross-border shopping.

Polling industry experts say online surveys cannot be assigned a margin of error because they do not randomly sample the population.

Canada's tourism sector is in danger of losing operators if the travel restrictions eat into another all-important summer travel season, said Beth Potter, the president and CEO of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada.

Travellers, business and pleasure alike, need to at least be able to start making plans, which they are unable to do without some sense of when the restrictions will finally start to lift.

"There is this sense of unending, 'We don't know,'" said Potter, who urged the government to either provide a timeline for ending the travel limits or keep in place the federal aid programs and wage subsidies that have allowed tourism operators to stay afloat.

"What we are trying to get to with this conversation is that the 'never-ending maybe' is too much," she said. "We need a plan, and we need a plan now."

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## Canadian And U.S. Politicians Fed Up With Trudeau's Hesitancy To Re-Open Border

*Infected internationals? Come on in! Vaccinated, virus-free Americans? Stay out!*

By Warren Kinsella, Toronto Sun, June 5, 2021

<https://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/kinsella-canadian-and-u-s-politicians-fed-up-with-trudeaus-hesitancy-to-re-open-border>

Does this make sense to you?

Over the past 14 days, 48 international flights landed in Canada carrying passengers who had COVID-19.

But after 14 months, our border with the United States remains tightly closed — despite the fact that 140 million Americans are now fully vaccinated, and despite the fact that the U.S. is now opening up.

Infected internationals? Come on in! Vaccinated, virus-free Americans? Stay out!

None of that makes any sense, of course. Even for the government of Justin Trudeau, it is deeply, deeply unintelligent.

And you can't blame any of it on the provinces, either, as Trudeau's TruAnon cultists are wont to do. Jurisdiction over international borders, and international airports, lies wholly with Ottawa. You know, the government of the aforementioned Justin Trudeau.

Keeping the border shut was and is Trudeau's decision. And it's not just nasty Toronto Sun columnists who want that changed. It's people who would traditionally be considered Trudeau allies, too.

There's members of his own Liberal caucus, for example. This week, Toronto MP Nate Erskine-Smith and veteran Grit and former minister Wayne Easter joined to demand that the border be opened up.

Said Easter, to CBC: "So much matters on that border. There's Americans (who) have land in Canada. There's family connections across the border. And we have a trade agreement where we are trying to create an economy in North America that competes with the rest of the world, so that border has to function well."

Easter and Erskine-Smith were joined by Brian Higgins, a member of the U.S. House of Representatives who represents a New York district that borders Canada. A Democrat, no less — no nasty, Trudeau-baiting Republican is he.

Trudeau has shown "a lack of leadership," Higgins said this week, taking off the diplomatic gloves — and zeroing in on Trudeau's promise to have 75% of Canadians fully vaccinated before restrictions get eased.

Said the Democrat Higgins, who co-chairs the Canada-U.S. Inter-Parliamentary Group: "The Canadian prime minister can talk all he wants about reaching 75% fully vaccinated — it's probably not going to happen. What you're saying is that the border is never going to open ... I guess when people don't know what to do, they do nothing ... To me, it's unacceptable."

Higgins, Easter and Erskine-Smith aren't alone in feeling exasperated. Chuck Schumer — the top Democrat in the U.S. Senate and arguably now one of the most powerful politicians in the States (along with President Joe Biden, Vice-President Kamala Harris and House of Representatives leader Nancy Pelosi), also believes it's time to look at opening up the border.

Said Schumer, a month ago: "While at the beginning — and in the height — of the pandemic it was understandable for such drastic measures to be taken, we know much more about the virus than we knew in March of last year and are making strong gains against it. Since vaccination rates have risen, overall rates are steadily falling, and New York is ready to re-open, based on the data, it is time to take the first steps towards re-opening the northern border to non-essential travel."

Schumer — not one to trifle with — didn't mince words: "We can't wait any longer. The monthly extensions ... have no rhyme or reason, they confuse people, they don't let people plan, they frustrate thousands of western New Yorkers and Southern Ontarians, who depend on the border crossing."

Ouch. Your policy has "no rhyme or reason," Justin Trudeau. So says a U.S. Senator you cannot afford to alienate. Your approach is "frustrating" and "confusing."

And, when you consider that Justin Trudeau's regime continues to welcome COVID-infected international flyers at our airports — but bars perfectly healthy Americans tourists and businesspeople — it just doesn't make sense anymore.

It did at the start, as Chuck Schumer says. But not now.

Open the border, Justin Trudeau. (Oh, and stop importing COVID cases at our airports.)

## U.S. Legislation Seeks To Up Pressure For Canadian Border Re-Opening

*Legislation latest sign of mounting frustration in the U.S. with continued closures*

*By Alexander Panetta, CBC News, June 9, 2021*

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/world/us-congress-border-bill-1.6059041>

### What's New

A Bill introduced in the United States Congress aims to create pressure to re-open the Canada-U.S. border to international travel.

A Republican lawmaker from New York state who introduced the Bill in the House of Representatives this week says he wants answers on what conversations are happening behind the scenes.

He says he's frustrated by the lack of clarity over the Canada-U.S. process.

The Bill would require a report to be produced within 30 days of enactment by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Department of State and the Centers for Disease Control.

The report would have to include details on U.S. communications with the Canadian government on the re-opening of the border.

It would require details to be revealed on what the U.S. government has done to re-open travel with Canada; to allow exemptions for families, property owners and boaters; and to open the U.S. border unilaterally if Canada refuses to participate.

"[Sixteen] months of indefinite, arbitrary closures are unacceptable," the Bill's sponsor, Representative Chris Jacobs, said in a statement.

"Enough is enough, the president and his cabinet owe Congress, separated families, business owners and homeowners answers — this legislation is designed to get them."

### What's The Context

We reported this week that political frustration is mounting in the U.S., where 53 per cent of adults are fully vaccinated; normal activities are resuming, with sports, bars and music venues filling; and COVID-19 cases are dropping.

Lawmakers in the U.S. say people should be able to travel to see their loved ones and enter their properties across the border, and those growing demands are bipartisan.

Some powerful members of Congress from New York have pushed the issue — including Democratic Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, Republican House conference chair Elise Stefanik, and a member of the important House ways and means committee, Democrat Brian Higgins.

Vaccination rates remain low in many U.S. states, especially more conservative southern states.

But that's not true of the northern border states — including the states that are the main sources of U.S. travel to Canada. Take New York state, for instance.

There, 70 per cent of adults have had one dose, which is slightly higher than Canada's rate; and 60 per cent are fully vaccinated — which is eight times higher than Canada's rate.

### What's Next

Canada is announcing a multi-phase plan for re-opening, as we reported earlier this week. It will begin with fully vaccinated Canadians being able to avoid quarantine upon returning home.

Canada's travel rules for non-Canadians will not loosen for at least a few more weeks; those details have yet to be confirmed.

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## Changes To Canada-U. S. Border Restrictions Could Be Announced As Soon As Friday, June 11

*By Stephanie Levitz, Ottawa Bureau, Toronto Star, June 8, 2021*

An announcement could come as soon as Friday, June 11 on how fully vaccinated people can more easily travel between Canada and the U.S as the first step in a plan to re-open the border. Less than eight per cent of the Canadian population is at that mark, and although about 42 per cent of Americans have had both shots, the announcement is unlikely to mean hordes of tourists can come roaring across the border this weekend. Instead, multiple sources told the Star, the announcement will signal the start of what will be a long process of gradually peeling back every single layer of public health protection at the border, which has been closed to most for nearly 15 months. Making the announcement by Friday, June 11 would give 10 days for the first of any changes to roll out. It would also come while Justin Trudeau is in the U.K. for the G7 summit, where the manner in which global economies will gear up post-pandemic is the main topic. With U.S. President Joe Biden in attendance, a chance to make a feel-good announcement on the border could be a win for both countries. While talks with the provinces are important, a lack of unified opposition to re-opening means the Trudeau Liberals won't work too hard to find consensus, said a senior government official, granted anonymity because they weren't authorized to publicly discuss the border plan. "We're not waiting on approval from the provinces."

Read Story (Subscription Required): <https://www.thestar.com/politics/federal/2021/06/08/canada-us-border-restrictions-will-be-loosened-first-for-those-who-are-fully-vaccinated-justin-trudeau-says.html>

## COVID-19 Travel Rules Could Be Relaxed For 'Fully Vaccinated' Canadians: Trudeau

By Amanda Connolly, Global News, June 8, 2021

[COVID-19 travel rules could be relaxed for 'fully vaccinated' Canadians: Trudeau \(msn.com\)](#)

The federal government will focus on "fully vaccinated" Canadians when the time comes to begin relaxing travel and other restrictions put in place to fight the COVID-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said on Tuesday, June 8.

His comments came as the government faces continued questions over whether quarantine hotels for incoming travellers are working as intended and at what point the growing number of partially and fully vaccinated Canadians might be able to begin travelling and living more normally.

"I understand how eager people are to put the pandemic behind us and be able to travel once again.... We see the number of cases dropping, we see the situation improving tremendously," said Trudeau.

"We'll have more announcements to make on measures that may be eased for those who've had both doses in the weeks to come.... Easing of restrictions will be focused on Canadians who are fully vaccinated."

Countries around the world shut down their borders last year as the novel coronavirus spread.

The Canadian government barred non-essential foreign nationals and warned Canadians against non-essential travel outside the country in March 2020. Officials later adjusted the rules to require negative COVID-19 PCR tests prior to and after arrival, a period of mandatory quarantine and fines for ignoring it, and limits on which airports could accept incoming international arrivals.

In February 2021, the government also announced travellers arriving in the country would have to quarantine at their own expense in a government-authorized hotel. Only after receiving a negative COVID-19 test could they continue their total 14-day quarantine at home.

The move was billed as an attempt to stem the risk of infected travellers amid months of reports of Canadians returning to the country and ignoring quarantine rules at their residences. It also came as increasing cases of variants of concern fuelled the rise of a third wave in many regions.

Canadians who can afford to pay a fine -- initially \$3,000, now \$5,000 -- have been able to ignore the quarantine hotel requirement. Data from the Public Health Agency of Canada suggests less than one per cent of those fined for refusing the hotel quarantine tested positive for COVID-19.

Those tests were done on the day of arrival and eight days after arrival.

But as vaccination rates continue to ramp up among Canadians, the effectiveness and need for the hotel quarantine is being increasingly questioned amid concerns over the impact of border shutdowns on tourism industry members.

The Tourism Industry Association of Canada on Wednesday called on the federal government to open the Canada-U.S. border before the summer tourism season is lost.

"With vaccinations rising and case numbers going down, we must now pivot to more forward-thinking policies, and talk about safely re-opening the border, ending the extreme financial crush that has flattened the tourism industry and devastated the tourism economy in Canada," Beth Potter, president and CEO of the industry group, said in a statement.

"As Canada and the U.S. return to normal, we must prepare to open the border quickly and safely, and restart our tourism economy."

Potter said it's crucial for the government to provide guidance for the tourism industry and that with vaccination rates rising, the time has come to consider how to begin re-opening the border.

A federal advisory panel recommended late last month that the government consider scrapping the program, given it is not equally applied to those arriving by air and by land, and suggested those who are fully vaccinated should not have to take pre- or post-arrival tests, or do the 14-day quarantine.

Dr. Zain Chagla, an infectious disease specialist with McMaster University, said the suggestion comes as evidence suggests it is "unlikely" that someone fully vaccinated against COVID-19 will spread the virus.

"There is definitely a need to really rethink the system. They certainly worked in the context when we had no vaccines, when there was no solution to protecting the community from quarantine requirements outside of putting people at these facilities," he said.

Chagla said he expects to see vaccination status playing a growing role in any conversations around how to re-open borders as safely as possible, in terms of both the spread of COVID-19 on the ground in other countries and the types of vaccines being used around the world.

While the vaccines being used in Canada, the U.S., the U.K. and the European Union have been rigorously tested with all clinical data available for scientific review, that's not the case with some of the other vaccines, such as the candidate from Russia.

There have been questions about how effective that vaccine is and questions about the integrity of the clinical data behind it given a lack of transparency from Russian officials about the development process.

Chagla said there may be a place for quarantine requirements to remain for travellers who say they are fully vaccinated but have received vaccines not approved in Canada.

"There probably does need to be a distinction of people that were vaccinated on Canadian soil or in the U.S., where more things have been very aggressive and validated," he said, noting the same applies to those in the U.K. and E.U.

"But when you start getting to places in the world where vaccine supplies have been suboptimal, where they're not WHO-approved vaccines to date, even in those cases where there's been some mixing and matching of vaccine protocols ... it does get a little bit dicey in that context."



With yellow fever vaccines, for example, Chagla noted anyone without proper vaccination records can be either denied entry to a country upon arrival or required to be vaccinated on site at the airport.

"There's going to have to be some standard of what a vaccinated individual is."

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## Federal Quarantine Changes Do Nothing to Boost Canadian Tourism, Critics Charge

By Jim Byers, *Canadian Travel News*, June 9, 2021

<https://canadiantravelnews.ca/2021/06/09/quarantine-changes-do-nothing-for-canadian-tourism-critics-say/>

Canadian travellers are a happy bunch today now that the controversial hotel quarantine program appears to be going out the window. But tourism officials, by and large, are panning the move as useless or even potentially harmful to Canadian tourism businesses.

It's great that fully vaccinated Canadians will be able to skip mandatory 14-day quarantines and expensive hotel quarantine programs, but the real issue for the Canadian tourism and travel industry is that those programs remain in place for would-be visitors who are needed to spend money at Canadian hotels, restaurants and attractions.

Greg Klassen, partner at Twenty31 consulting in Vancouver and a veteran of the Canadian travel industry, said the rules will "make it much easier for any pent-up tourism dollars to fly out of the country."

"Right now, the US is quickly moving back to business as usual, so for those Canadians missing Disney and those Broadway shows, it just might be easier to travel to New York, Florida or California than it will to Nova Scotia, and without that significant disincentive for quarantine on return, it just might happen," he said.

Canada's aviation industry and its airports desperately need travellers, so some move is welcome, he said. "But there will be much relief when this program is extended to non-Canadians."

"The news of new border measures for fully vaccinated Canadians and permanent residents is a move in the right direction," said the Canadian Airports Council. "Canada's airports are disappointed the new measures were not extended to all vaccinated travellers and that there is still no plan for a restart of travel.

"Canada urgently needs a plan to end hotel quarantines, end the funneling of international flights to just four airports, detailed engagement on how travellers will (be) treated based on vaccination level, progress on digital health certificates, and a shift in messaging that Canadians can travel."

“Easing quarantine restrictions for fully vaccinated Canadians is an initial step in the right direction for the safe restart of our economy, but it falls far short of the recommendations provided by Health Canada’s Expert Advisory Panel report released on May 27,” said Mike McNaney, President and CEO of the National Airlines Council of Canada, which represents Canada’s largest airlines.

McNaney noted that a recent Health Canada Advisory Panel report called for a variety of changes to travel and border measures including elimination of quarantine for fully vaccinated travellers, elimination of hotel quarantine for all travellers, reduction of quarantine for partially vaccinated and unvaccinated travellers, and the use of rapid antigen testing.

“Today’s announcement by federal ministers did not address any of those measures nor provide a timeframe in which the government will move forward on the recommendations,” he said.

“Let’s just say that it is a small step in the right direction,” said Frederic Dimanche, Director, Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management at Ryerson University in Toronto. “The government was under pressure with the quarantine hotels being largely unpopular and, according to the numbers, not very effective. That’s good news for Canadians and permanent residents, but it falls short of the expectations tourism professionals have.

“This will not help the travel and tourism sector restart in Canada. If anything, it will lead a small percentage of the population (the vaccinated ones) to consider going abroad for business, pleasure, or to visit friends and relatives (which may mean lower travel expenses in Canada), and it won’t help inbound travel,” Dimanche said.

“The hotel quarantine program was the largest barrier to vaccinated Canadians resuming their travel plans abroad and as such, this is great news for the Canadian trade who plan outbound trips,” said Jason Sarracini, COO of OST.travel and Founder of Landsby.ca. “With that said, it doesn’t help the Canadian tourism industry who need Canadians to explore domestically and discover the incredible experiences we have in Canada. The next step is to open up inter-provincial travel so Canadians can enjoy their own country this summer.”

Chris Bloore, president and CEO of the Tourism Industry Association of Ontario, said he welcomed the announcement.

“This is a sensible and welcome decision that follows on from the advice of the federal government’s own Expert Advisory Panel on COVID-19,” he said. “Hopefully this is the beginning of the federal government’s changing border policy to recognize the significant progress that has been made in vaccinations and fighting the pandemic.”

## Canada Takes Cautious Step Toward Lifting Border Restrictions, Businesses Fret

*By Steve Scherer and David Ljunggren, Reuters, June 9, 2021*

[Canada takes cautious step toward lifting border restrictions, businesses fret \(msn.com\)](#)

Canada on Wednesday, June 9 took a cautious first step toward easing COVID-19 border restrictions, saying it was prepared to relax quarantine protocols for fully vaccinated citizens returning home starting in early July.

Canada's air and land borders have allowed for only essential travel since March of last year, and people returning home are required to quarantine for 14 days. If they arrive by air, they also must stay in a designated hotel until they receive a negative COVID-19 test.

"The first step ... is to allow fully vaccinated individuals currently permitted to enter Canada to do so without the requirement to stay in government-authorized accommodation," Health Minister Patty Hajdu told reporters on Wednesday, June 9.

The easing of restrictions will hinge on COVID-19 case numbers and vaccinations, she said.

Canadian businesses, especially airlines and those that depend on tourism, have been lobbying the Liberal government to relax restrictions. Hajdu made it clear that Ottawa would act slowly.

Asked about calls from businesses to lift restrictions starting on June 22, Hajdu said: "We do want to be cautious and careful on these next steps to be sure that we are not putting that recovery in jeopardy."

The Canadian Airports Council said it was "disappointed the new measures were not extended to all vaccinated travellers and that there is still no plan for a restart of travel" while the Chamber of Commerce said much work remained.

The opposition Conservatives, almost neck and neck in polls with the Liberals ahead of an election expected this year, demanded an end to the quarantine program and said "Canadians can't afford more pandemic mismanagement from (Prime Minister) Justin Trudeau."

By June 21, Canada is due to decide whether to extend land border restrictions with the United States. The measures do not affect trade.

Hajdu said Canada would take a "phased approach towards adjusting current border measures."

It is still unclear when the border rules might change for foreign travelers.

There will be as many as seven phases, with borders not fully open until some 75% of Canadians are fully vaccinated, a source familiar with the matter said.

Canada is working on a certificate that can be presented at the border as proof of vaccination, Intergovernmental Affairs Minister Dominic LeBlanc told reporters.

Even if fully vaccinated, Canadians will be required to take a COVID-19 test before departure and upon arrival, and then quarantine until they receive a negative result, Hajdu said

Some 70% of eligible Canadians have received a first vaccination dose, Procurement Minister Anita Anand said, while about 10% are fully vaccinated.

Canada is due to get millions of doses of both the Pfizer/BioNTech and Moderna vaccines in June. This includes seven million doses of the Moderna vaccine, with some coming for the first time from the United States.

On Tuesday, June 8, the Biden administration said it was forming an expert working group with Canada to determine how best to safely restart travel.

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## Canada Eyeing June 22 To Begin Loosening Restrictions At U.S. Border

*As vaccination rates rise, both national governments are under intensifying pressure to produce a re-opening plan.*

*By Andy Blatchford, Politico, June 7, 2021*

<https://www.politico.com/news/2021/06/07/canada-us-border-restrictions-492111>

The mayors of Canadian border cities say Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government has signaled it could start easing COVID-19 restrictions at the Canada-U.S. frontier on June 22 if the country's vaccination campaign stays on its current trajectory.

Jim Diodati, mayor of Niagara Falls, Ontario, told Politico that Public Safety Minister Bill Blair delivered the message during a recent virtual meeting of border mayors from the province.

"He didn't put it in stone but he suggested that [June 22] is the date they're looking at," Diodati said on Monday, June 7 of the May 28 meeting with Blair, who is Trudeau's cabinet minister responsible for the border. "We're hoping to get some more confirmation this week."

Canada-U.S. land crossings were shuttered March 2020 to non-essential travel in an effort to slow COVID-19's spread.

But as vaccination rates rise, both national governments are under intensifying pressure to produce a re-opening plan as a way to help struggling tourism industries and families who have been separated for more than a year. On the U.S. side, there have been calls for the Biden administration to start loosening measures at the American border without Canada, if necessary.

Since the border measures were first imposed, the countries have been renewing a bilateral, month-to-month arrangement to keep them in place. The next agreement is set to expire June 21.

Trudeau has said that before the country begins to ease public health restrictions — including those at the border — at least 75 percent of Canada’s population should have their first COVID vaccine doses and 20 percent should be fully vaccinated.

As of May 29, more than 68 percent of Canadian adults had received at least one dose, while more than 7 percent were fully vaccinated.

“The federal government’s nervous,” said Diodati, whose city relies heavily on American tourists. “They don’t want to make a mistake or misstep. We get that.”

Windsor, Ontario Mayor Drew Dilkens, whose city is across the river from Detroit, also participated in the meeting with Blair. He told Politico on Monday, June 7 that Blair explained to the mayors that Canada was on track to hit Trudeau’s vaccination threshold by June 21.

“It’s their belief and their projections that we can reach that target by June 21,” Dilkens said. “He said they’re looking for a phased and logical staged re-opening.”

Both Dilkens and Diodati said Blair told the mayors that Canada was on pace to have 75 percent of its population fully vaccinated by July 21.

Dilkens added that Blair said Canada is “looking for symmetry, co-ordination and collaboration at the border.”

“From Bill Blair’s mouth to my ears, they think the U.S. could go this alone,” Dilkens said. “If the U.S. goes this alone and they’re wide open, in the first few hours you will have thousands of Canadians from my community alone that will be crossing.”

The concern with an asymmetrical re-opening is that Canadians who cross into the U.S. may still be subject to strict measures — including 14-day quarantines — upon their return.

Both mayors said that Blair spoke about the possibility of two general streams of travelers: those who are partially vaccinated and those who are fully vaccinated. Dilkens said one example noted that travelers with only partial vaccination would face more restrictions.

The prime minister offered new details earlier on Monday, June 7 about Canada’s thoughts about the border.

“We are looking at how we’re going to start welcoming up tourists in a phased way as the numbers come down in Canada, as the numbers start to come down in the United States and elsewhere around the world,” Trudeau told a virtual event hosted by the St. John’s Board of Trade.

He added that Canada needs to make sure travelers are fully vaccinated before they enter the country. Trudeau also noted the concerns around the variants that are still creating challenges in places such as India and the United Kingdom.

“We don’t want to risk further outbreaks — a fourth wave would be devastating, not just to the economy but to morale.”

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## Canada Eyeing Multi-Stage Approach To Re-Opening The Border To Travellers

*By Alexander Panetta and Sophia Harris, CBC News, June 7, 2021*

[Canada eyeing multi-stage approach to re-opening the border to travellers \(msn.com\)](#)

Canadian officials are looking at a multi-phase approach to re-opening the border with the U.S. that would begin with allowing fully vaccinated travellers to enter starting this summer.

The pace of Canada-U.S. discussions about re-opening has intensified lately, as more people in both countries are vaccinated and as frustration grows on the American side over the continued border closure.

The broad themes of those conversations were described to CBC News by several border town mayors who have been consulted on the talks, and by one federal official.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau revealed two key elements of the likely re-opening plan in public remarks on Monday, June 7: that the re-opening will happen in stages and that the first travellers entering Canada will have to be fully vaccinated.

"We are looking at how we're going to start welcoming up tourists in a phased way as the numbers come down in Canada, as the numbers start to come down in the United States and elsewhere around the world," Trudeau said in remarks reported by The Canadian Press.

### **What's Still Being Worked Out**

Several aspects of the re-opening plan remain up in the air.

The first is the re-opening date itself: Public Safety Minister Bill Blair told a group of border mayors in a meeting last month that it was uncertain whether the first phase could happen in late June, when the current border restrictions expire.

An official aware of the Canada-U.S. talks, who asked to remain anonymous, said he doubts a June re-opening is likely and suggested July would be a likelier starting date for the first phase.

Other technical details still have to be worked out, such as the form proof of vaccination would take. The same official said that proof would require, at a minimum, a vaccination card and perhaps another form of evidence.

That leads to another significant possibility — an asymmetrical re-opening of the Canada-U.S. border, with each country applying different rules.

## **Different Countries, Different Rules?**

Take proof of vaccination, for example — as with several other aspects of the pandemic, it's become a politically charged and partisan issue in the U.S.

Some Republican governors have passed laws preventing demands for proof of vaccination on their territory. President Joe Biden has said he will not create a federal vaccine passport.

The official familiar with the talks says there's a chance the countries might have different border standards regarding vaccination.

The possibility of different rules came up in a consultation session late last month between Blair and Ontario border town mayors.

One municipal mayor said she hopes the travel standards will be as simple and as similar as possible in both countries.

Bernadette Clement, mayor of Cornwall, Ontario, said she hopes to avoid a patchwork that creates confusion and backlogs at the border.

### **Mayor At Blair Meeting: 'I Want A Plan'**

She said she told Blair that, above all else, and after 15 months of confusion for communities like hers, she wants to see a roadmap for re-opening.

"I want a plan. I want to see a plan," she said in an interview.

"These conversations every month are exhausting. Some people will like the plan, some people will dislike the plan. But let's at least get a plan out there so that we can start talking with our own communities about something concrete ... put in some timeline."

Another participant in the meeting said Blair left open the possibility of a late June start to the re-opening but was not definitive.

Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkins said the Minister said there were ongoing discussions with the U.S., including with Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas.

American officials have denied reports that they plan to unilaterally re-open their side of the border on June 21 whether Canada agrees or not.

### **Americans Increasingly Annoyed**

But it is clear that American politicians are increasingly annoyed with the slower approach preferred by Ottawa.

That growing frustration is bipartisan.

Top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer has called for a re-opening. New York Democrat Brian Higgins says it's not right to allow travel for NHL players and not for people separated from their loved ones.

A senior Republican has accused the Trudeau government of foot-dragging. In a letter to Mayorkas, congresswoman Elise Stefanik dubbed the current measures logic-defying.

She called it unfair that Canadians can fly into the U.S. and get vaccinated, while fully vaccinated Americans who own homes in Canada can't even go see their homes.

Without a deal by June 21, she said, the U.S. should just start re-opening alone and allow Canadians with property, boats and business interests to enter or use U.S. airports for overseas travel.

Former New Jersey governor Chris Christie has blasted Canada's approach in different recent interviews on CNN and Fox News.

He called it "ridiculous" and "wrong" for Canadians to get vaccinated in the States and receive vaccine shipments from the U.S. while barring Americans from entering Canada.

"How about Prime Minister Trudeau, being a good neighbour and a good friend to us, opening up his border to people who are vaccinated?" Christie told CNN last month.

"It's wrong for him not to do it. And it sends the wrong signal for President Biden to sit by and allow that to happen is wrong, too."

He accused Biden of weakness in not publicly calling out Canada's refusal to relax travel rules.

Canada now has a higher percentage of its population with a single vaccine dose than does the U.S., but the share of the U.S. population that's fully vaccinated is nearly six times higher.

With 43 per cent of the total U.S. population and 53 per cent of American adults fully vaccinated, life has been returning to normal in the U.S., with workplaces, bars, restaurants, sporting events and concert halls increasingly full.



## Canada Plans To Ease COVID-19 Border Restrictions For Fully Vaccinated Travellers Only

*By Steven Chase, The Globe and Mail, June 8, 2021*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-canada-plans-to-ease-border-restrictions-for-vaccinated-travelers-only/>

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says the eventual easing of Canadian border restrictions such as hotel quarantine requirements will be focused on travellers who are fully vaccinated but he won't provide a timeline for unwinding these pandemic measures.

"The steps that will be taken to ease border measures at the right time will be science-based and will be based on the fact that when people have [received] both doses of the vaccine, they are more highly protected and less at risk of transmitting COVID-19 and finding themselves in our health-care system," he told reporters at an Ottawa news conference on Tuesday, June 8.

Mr. Trudeau earlier this week signaled Ottawa is looking at taking a phased approach to welcoming back international visitors as pandemic restrictions loosen, focusing on case counts globally as part of decision-making.

Non-essential travel has been restricted for more than one year including bans at times on direct flights from other countries including the U.K. and India. Further measures were added earlier in 2021 including mandatory hotel quarantines.

Trudeau said he expects high interest from overseas travellers to visit Canada as those restrictions eventually ease because of vaccination uptake rates and case counts that are better than peer countries.

He told reporters that science shows the importance of a second dose and that using that as a re-opening guide also has the effect of providing an incentive that encourages Canadians to get their second shot.

Mr. Trudeau was asked to comment on a statement from the mayor of Niagara Falls, Ontario that he's been told by Public Safety Minister Bill Blair that the gradual re-opening of the border will start June 22 for those who are double-vaccinated if vaccination rates continue to climb.

The prime minister would not confirm or deny this is the plan. "We have no announcements to make today. The 21st of every month is the date on which the measures we've had for many months between Canada and the United States get rolled over, or not."

Mr. Trudeau said Canada is still working with epidemiological experts and the United States on a plan. "When there are announcements to make, you can be sure we will be making them."

Recent polling suggests many Canadians are still hesitant about opening the Canada-U.S. border. A survey by Leger and the Association for Canadian Studies in early June found 64 per cent of Canadian respondents oppose re-opening the Canada-U.S. border this summer to allow American tourists into this country. Thirty-six percent of those polled supported the idea. The study was conducted June 4 to June 6 and surveyed more 1,500 adults in Canada.

On Tuesday, June 8, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and Canada's most prominent business groups issued a joint statement calling on Canada and the United States to ease travel restrictions to and from the United States starting June 22, saying vaccination campaigns have progressed to the point where measures should be relaxed. The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Retail Council of Canada, the Business Council of Canada and Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, among others, urged Ottawa to allow fully-vaccinated travelers to cross the shared border without the need to quarantine after arrival or present a negative COVID-19 test.

"Treating somebody who's been fully vaccinated the same way as somebody coming from a COVID hotspot who's not had a vaccination is simply unsustainable," Canadian Chamber of Commerce President Perrin Beatty said. "In the U.S., they are moving to normalcy exceptionally rapidly with the anomaly of course being the border with Canada."

He warned Canada is in danger of suffering enduring losses of U.S. tourist business, noting because of Canada's travel restrictions, U.S. lawmakers passed temporary legislation so that cruise ships bound for Alaska can bypass Canadian ports of call – such as Vancouver, Victoria or Prince Rupert – while pandemic measures remain in place. "There is a very real possibility that we will permanently lose that business even though ... requirements are that everybody on board those cruises has to be vaccinated," Mr. Beatty said.

The groups also urged Ottawa and Washington to agree on mutually recognized credentials travelers can present to demonstrate they are fully vaccinated - commonly referred to as a vaccine passport or digital vaccine certificate – and hammer out a plan to lay out clear guidelines for all forms of transport.

Mr. Beatty predicts vaccination credentials will be a permanent feature of international travel and said Canada needs to hammer out national standards for generating and updating this certificate. "Either we develop standards in Canada or they will be developed in foreign countries and Canadians will simply have to adopt foreign systems."

Provincial governments, however, continue to voice heightened concern about the risk from travel. Earlier this month, Ontario again asked the federal government to strengthen border enforcement, saying more infectious COVID-19 variants are threatening the province's re-opening plan.

## Border Security Workers To Hold Strike Votes Next Week, Jeopardizing Border Re-Opening

By Tara Deschamps, *The Canadian Press*, June 10, 2021

[Border security workers to hold strike votes next week, jeopardizing border re-opening \(msn.com\)](#)

Some 9,000 Canadian Border Service Agency workers are preparing for strike votes starting next week, even as Canada-U.S. border re-opening talks get underway.

The Public Service Alliance of Canada union said on Thursday, June 10 that its 5,500 border services officers, 2,000 headquarters staff and other workers at Canada Post facilities and in inland enforcement jobs will begin strike votes on June 16, which will then continue throughout the month.

The workers, employed by the CBSA and Treasury Board, have been without a contract for nearly three years and say talks broke off between the two sides in December.

The union and the employers have been unable to agree on better protections for staff that the union argues would bring them in line with other law enforcement personnel across Canada and address a "toxic" workplace culture.

"CBSA employees have been on the front lines of the pandemic since day one; keeping our borders safe, screening travellers for COVID-19 and clearing vital vaccine shipments," said PSAC's national president, Chris Aylward, in a release.

"Our members have stepped up for Canadians, but now it's time for the government to step up for them."

PSAC's strike talk comes as New York congressman Brian Higgins said on Thursday, June 10 that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and U.S. President Joe Biden will discuss plans to re-open the Canada-U.S. border at the G7 summit this week.

The border has been closed to non-essential travel since March 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic began and officials scrambled to lock down their countries and stop the spread of the virus through travel.

As vaccination efforts have increased significantly since then, politicians including Higgins have been pushing for the border to re-open.

The latest border closure will remain in place until June 21.

As the deadline nears, PSAC and the alliance's Customs and Immigration Union have been urging the government to resolve the issues that could push their members to strike.

The unions said they met with Trudeau and Public Safety Minister Bill Blair, urging them to return to the table with a new mandate to avoid a labour dispute that could impact travellers at the border.

“We’re ready and willing to return to the table to negotiate a fair contract that recognizes our commitment to Canadians,” said CIU national president Jean-Pierre Fortin in a statement.

“But we’re fed up with the disrespect our members have been shown by the employer.”

When asked about the matter, Blair's office directed questions to the CBSA, which did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

As the two parties try to resolve their issues, they are waiting to receive recommendations from a public interest commission they appeared before in May to present arguments around compensation.

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## Vaccination Status Cards May Be The Ticket To Re-Opening The Canada-U.S. Border

*By Nicole Bogart, CTV News, June 9, 2021*

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/health/coronavirus/vaccination-status-cards-may-be-the-ticket-to-re-opening-the-canada-u-s-border-1.5462599>

As pressure mounts on the Canadian government to re-open the land border with the U.S., experts say incentivizing Canadians to become fully vaccinated by providing greater freedoms and less restrictions to those who are is a good place to start.

“We know from evidence and experience from around the world that two weeks beyond a full vaccination status, the risk of transmitting this virus is next to zero,” Dr. Abdu Sharkawy, infectious disease expert, told CTV’s Your Morning on Wednesday, June 9.

“So, we’ve got to create an opportunity that not only incentivizes becoming fully vaccinated, but then allows different forms of commerce, recreation, and doing things like visiting with family.”

Sharkawy pointed to Manitoba’s strategy of issuing an immunization card to fully vaccinated residents as an example of what could work across the country.

Announced on Tuesday, June 8, the immunization card will allow Manitobans to travel within Canada without having to self-isolate for two weeks after they return, if they've been fully vaccinated, and not have to self-isolate if deemed a close contact of a COVID-19 case.

“Manitoba is doing the right thing right now, in terms of providing greater freedoms and less restrictions for those that are fully vaccinated,” he said.

“That, in combination with looking at case rates and seeing if there are any spikes of transmission within communities, plays a role in the border re-opening and who can cross that border.”

For fully-vaccinated people, the risk of contracting COVID-19, often referred to as "breakthrough infections," remains extremely low, although cases have been reported in the U.S. According to the World Health Organization, it's not yet clear how much vaccines reduce transmission of the virus from a vaccinated person to others.

Sharkawy notes that it takes two weeks to gain full immunity from a second dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and those who have received their second dose should still continue to practice good public health measures.

The current non-essential travel restrictions with the U.S. have been in place since March, 2020 and are set to expire on June 21. The provision exempts the flow of trade and commerce, but American politicians are calling for the border to fully re-open by July 4.

On Tuesday, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said anyone coming to Canada would need to be fully vaccinated before arriving to prevent a fourth wave of COVID-19, adding that the government is looking at ways to start welcoming back visitors from the U.S. and elsewhere around the world.

"We're not going to get ahead of ourselves," Trudeau said during a virtual appearance at an event hosted by the St. John's Board of Trade. "We are looking at how we're going to start welcoming up tourists in a phased way as the numbers come down in Canada, as the numbers start to come down in the United States and elsewhere around the world."

On Wednesday, June 9, CTV News confirmed that Canadians who fly into the country and have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 will no longer be forced to stay in quarantine hotels. The federal government will officially announce this change to its pandemic border measures later on Wednesday, sources said.

Asked whether the projection of a summer border re-opening is too soon, Sharkawy said, "I don't think so," noting that Canada's vaccination rate continues to rise.

"We're getting very close to a situation where enough people are becoming fully vaccinated and outdoor activities will reduce the amount of spread," he said. "I think this is certainly an opportunity to at least phase-in the opening of the U.S.-Canadian border."

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## Manitoba Unveils Immunization Cards For Fully Vaccinated People

By Devon McKendrick, CTV News, June 8, 2021

<https://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/manitoba-unveils-immunization-cards-for-fully-vaccinated-people-1.5460924>

The Manitoba government is unveiling a new way for Manitobans to prove they have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

On Tuesday, June 8, Premier Brian Pallister announced immunization cards will be available to Manitobans two weeks after they have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine.

On top of the cards, the province announced fully immunized Manitobans will not have to self-isolate for two weeks when returning from interprovincial travel, and will not have to self-isolate if deemed a close contact of a COVID-19 case.

With the cards, Manitobans will also be able to visit family members who are in hospitals, personal care homes, and other health-care facilities.

Pallister added families that have children under the age of 12, but both parents are fully vaccinated, will be exempt from the isolation requirements.

"So if you're looking to take a couple of noisy little kids on a car trip, you can come back home and you won't have to isolate," said Pallister.

To receive an immunization card, people must have a Manitoba health card, they must have received two doses of the COVID-19 vaccine and they must wait 14 days after getting their second dose.

There will be digital and physical copies of the card and Pallister said it will not contain any personal information other than a first and last name. The card will have a QR code that, when scanned, will show that the person has been fully vaccinated.

The premier also noted he has been reassured that the cards won't be able to be duplicated.

"The privacy issues, the protections that are in this card, are going to be very real for people," he said.

The digital card will be available automatically after signing up online and then a physical copy can be requested after completing the registration.

Pallister said there is a chance these cards could be used for other things such as going to provincially owned facilities.

"I think what we all hope is that this is a temporary measure made necessary by the absence of the sufficient numbers of people who have got their vaccine," said Pallister, "The sooner we get to that level, the better for everyone."

He also mentioned talks have happened with other provinces to see how the card can also be used across the country to prove people are fully vaccinated.

He said nothing has been confirmed yet, but work is being done to ensure Manitobans can give proof in other provinces and vice versa.

## Race Is On For Canada To Vaccinate Its Way Out Of Potential Fourth Wave Driven By Delta Variant

*By Sharon Kirkey, National Post, June 10, 2021*

[Race is on for Canada to vaccinate its way out of potential fourth wave driven by Delta variant \(msn.com\)](#)

Loved ones are hugging again inside Ontario's long-term care homes, Quebec has blessed mask-free, outdoor proms for July and, outside of Manitoba, COVID-19 is dwindling.

Canada's COVID odyssey is drawing closer to its end. The wild card hovering on the horizon, however, is Delta, the variant behind runaway infections in India and that is now "essentially across Canada," according to the country's chief public health officer.

In fact, Delta is not yet widespread, but will be as soon as borders open and travel resumes, said University of Ottawa virologist Dr. Marc-André Langlois, lead of Canada's Coronavirus Variants Rapid Response Network.

"Right now, most Delta cases are caught at border entry points and there has been relatively few cases within the country," he said.

In the United Kingdom, Delta has surpassed Alpha, formerly known as the U.K. variant first identified in England, and risks upending the nation's full re-opening, slotted for June 21. It's almost certain that Delta will overtake Alpha in Canada, "once lockdown and sanitary measures are eased," Langlois said.

It's also well within the realm of possibility that Canada could see another pandemic wave, possibly by the end of summer, Langlois said, one that "will affect severely those not vaccinated, and mildly those vaccinated once."

Double-vaccination offers upwards of nearly 90 per cent protection against Delta, but a single shot, less so. "This is why there is a race against the clock for national double-vaccine coverage," Langlois said.

It's also why some believe provinces should be aiming for 90 per cent vaccine coverage for a safe re-opening, not the 75 per cent threshold initially set by federal health leaders. "I think having 90 per cent of our population with two doses would put us in a really strong position," said Simon Fraser University epidemiologist and COVID modeller Caroline Colijn.

"We don't know how transmissible any of these variants are really going to look in a fully re-opened population," said Colijn, "because none of them have ever seen a fully re-opened population, really. So, we don't know. Do we need 95 per cent protection, or 95 per cent immunized? Do we need 85 per cent? What do we really need?"

If Delta is several-fold more transmissible than “regular” COVID, the original variants from Wuhan, and it seems pretty clear that it is, then “we’re going to need 80 plus per cent of our population immune, which means more than that immunized,” Colijn said. The authorized vaccines are “awesome and wonderful and great and innovative,” she said, but they’re not perfect.

While there are still many uncertainties, “our best guess would be that if we just went for it, and re-opened with only 75 per cent of eligible people vaccinated, that’s not enough. We would see so many infections in the rest,” she said, meaning the unvaccinated, and the vaccinated for whom the vaccine didn’t quite take. Children under 12 aren’t yet eligible for vaccination, and some people can’t be vaccinated for medical reasons. Potentially, a third of the population would still be vulnerable. If every one person infected with Delta could spread the infection to four or five others, “that’s when we would start talking about waves, and fourth waves,” Colijn said.

Although people speak about waves, “really, the waves have just been, we’ve turned on and off our control measures, and then the cases have risen and fallen, and we’ve gone, ‘Oh, look, a wave.’ But it’s not. It’s been completely predictable,” said Colijn, who holds a Canada 150 Research Chair in mathematics for evolution, infection and public health.

“Now it’s getting a little less predictable because we don’t really know in a Canadian re-opened population how transmissible these variants are. But we think it’s going to be not great.”

According to Langlois, as of Tuesday, June 8, federal data showed 1,350 cases of Delta in Canada, and 204,140 cases of Alpha. (The World Health Organization last week renamed variants after letters of the Greek alphabet, to avoid stigmatizing countries.)

Early evidence suggests that, three weeks after the first dose of either Pfizer-BioNTech or AstraZeneca, both provide 33 per cent protection against symptomatic infections with the Delta variant. The second dose of Pfizer, however, boosts that to 88 per cent, while a double dose of AstraZeneca provides 60 per cent protection.

Delta is thought to be at least 40 per cent more transmissible than Alpha, which is roughly 60 per cent more transmissible than the older strains.

Higher infectivity means Delta could “rip through unvaccinated populations if life returns to normal in a fortnight,” Peter Openshaw, a professor of experimental medicine at Imperial College London told the Financial Times.

It also may cause more severe disease. Early evidence from England and Scotland suggests there may be an increased risk of hospitalization compared to Alpha cases, with some areas showing hospital admissions increasing, though the national trend still isn’t clear, reports Public Health England.

Dr. Peter Jüni believes Delta will eventually supplant Alpha in Ontario, but the fact that it is currently summertime in Canada, combined with efforts to push first and second vaccine doses out faster, particularly in hot spots, means “we’ll most likely get this under control.”



On Monday, June 7, Ontario health officials said vaccinations so far appear to have tempered the spread of Delta, which has been circulating fairly widely since mid-May in parts of Toronto and the Peel Region, and is now “pretty much in every health unit” in the province.

But come fall, once people start to move inside again, “if we have unvaccinated, or partially vaccinated pockets, if there are dense networks out there of people who are vaccine hesitant, the risk that they will eventually get infected between October and April 2022 is very high,” said Jüni, scientific director of Ontario’s COVID-19 science advisory table.

“That’s the challenge here.”

The more a virus moves from person to person, the more opportunity it has to mutate and acquire different behaviours, said Jason Kindrachuk, Canada Research Chair in emerging viruses at the University of Manitoba. “It’s a constant battle against this virus,” he said.

“We won’t see that high exponential growth right off the bat — it’s probably going to take some time to build up some momentum in the population and kind of start moving through those people that don’t have immunity or protection against it,” Kindrachuk said.

“I think we’re all hoping (Delta) will be less severe, but we still need to try and reduce transmission,” he said. “We need to be thinking about second doses, you’re starting to see provinces picking that up. It’s a bit of a race. And I think we’re going to see how well we do very quickly.”

No province has set 90 per cent as the target threshold for vaccination. Colijn, of Simon Fraser University, doesn’t think 75 per cent is hugely off the mark. “I think it’s probably a great starting point for starting to re-open,” she said. “But I don’t think it’s going to get us there in terms of a completely fully back to normal life.

“I can’t say to you, ‘Yep, 90 per cent, then we’ll be able to just party like there’s no tomorrow,’ because there is tons of uncertainty there. But it is likely to give us resilience to transmission to the extent that we could hopefully establish a mostly normal life,” Colijn said.

Polls suggest 85 per cent of Canadians are willing to be vaccinated. “Ninety per cent isn’t that far off, and every five per cent makes a huge difference.”

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## Fully Vaccinated Travellers? Welcome To Canada. Everyone Else? Quarantine

*By The Globe and Mail Editorial Board, June 4, 2021*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-fully-vaccinated-travellers-welcome-to-canada-everyone-else-quarantine/>

Last November, as the pandemic’s second wave began to rise, Ottawa gathered an expert panel to advise on virus testing and screening.

The panel has reported on the best ways to deploy testing, on testing in long-term care homes, and how to test and screen for the virus in schools. Last week, its report on calibrating testing and quarantine at the border landed.

Public attention zoomed in on the panel's call to scrap the three-day hotel quarantine required of overseas travellers arriving by air.

The mismanaged program, put in place in February after a year of Ottawa sitting on its hands, has never lived up to its billing.

The panel highlighted various problems – including the gaping hole that allows people to skip out by paying a fine, and the fact that its three-day duration is shorter than the virus's incubation period. The panel instead recommended “a strong focus on adherence to quarantine” outside of a required hotel stay.

This wasn't a call to stop worrying about the import of the virus and variants across the border. Quite the contrary.

As Canada edges toward all kinds of re-openings in the coming months, it's important that they be done right. When it comes to the border, the panel's key message was the need for different rules for people who are vaccinated, and those who are not. It's all about managing risk.

Similar to the United States and the European Union, the panel recommended that vaccinated travellers – not all travellers – be exempted from quarantine. They would be tested on arrival, for surveillance purposes, but that's it. The panel called for a system to verify the vaccination status of arrivals – perhaps something like the EU's digital green certificate, which will be in use as of July 1.

What was missed in the coverage of the call to scrap the hotel quarantine is the fact that the panel underlined the necessity of continued quarantine rules for unvaccinated travellers.

The panel did not propose that the unvaccinated be rewarded with a lightly enforced, on-your-honour home quarantine, or no quarantine at all.

As rules are eased for those who are vaccinated, they will for a time have to remain for those who are not. The goal should be making travel easier for the vaccinated – and more onerous, or at least as onerous as Ottawa originally promised, for the unvaccinated.

This is the approach taken by places such as the Yukon – and soon, in provinces such as Newfoundland and Labrador. Fully vaccinated arrivals will be rewarded with exemptions from quarantine. Unvaccinated people will have to quarantine. The choice is yours.

The reality is that border rules will need to be in place for some time, because of variants of concern. Ottawa has repeatedly pointed to the fact that only 1.6 per cent of arrivals by air since late February tested positive for the virus.

That looks low – but as the panel noted, this rate is of people in general, not those who were sick or in contact with someone who was. It's blanket testing – and in that context, the number is high. The panel said this underscores the ongoing importance of testing on arrival to watch out for variants of concern.

As cases in Canada fall, and with a large majority of Canadians having their first jab, there's a good feeling that the pandemic is, finally, being beaten back. But one needs to only look at Britain about potential future risks. There, mass vaccination helped drive cases to low levels. In recent days, however, they have ticked up – fuelled by the Delta variant, first associated with India. It has become the dominant form of the virus in Britain, and cases are quickly climbing. What looked like victory is not yet that, and there is a need to keep a careful guard up.

Ottawa made the right move on Thursday, June 3 by toughening its hotel quarantine system, and not scrapping it. As of June 4, the fine for evading the system will jump to \$5,000, from \$3,000. The feds may not have always run the hotel quarantine program well, but the basic concept of supervised quarantine is solid. And the \$3,000 fine was low enough that, from mid-April to late May, 1,091 people chose to cough up the money rather than follow the rules.

For now, Canada has to stay vigilant at the border. That means easing restrictions on fully vaccinated travellers, while tightening the rules for those who are not.

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## Canada Could Break The Pandemic By Mid-Summer. We Just Need More Vaccines

*By The Globe and Mail Editorial Board, June 5, 2021*

[https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-the-difference-between-winning-and-won-to-end-the-COVID-19-pandemic-by/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Globe%20Opinion&utm\\_content=2021-6-5\\_17&utm\\_term=&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&cu\\_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-the-difference-between-winning-and-won-to-end-the-COVID-19-pandemic-by/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Globe%20Opinion&utm_content=2021-6-5_17&utm_term=&utm_campaign=newsletter&cu_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb)

Given the steady fall in COVID-19 cases, and the steady ramp up in vaccinations – as of Thursday, June 3, nearly 68 per cent of Canadians aged 12 or over had received at least one shot – this country has reason to breathe a collective sigh of relief.

Canada is on the verge of closing out the deadly, dreary reality of the past 15 months. For the first time in a long time, we're not just enduring COVID-19; we're actually winning.

But "winning," the present tense of the verb, is not the same thing as "won," past tense. The former must precede the latter; the latter is not guaranteed by the former. (For more lessons in conjugation, consult the Toronto Maple Leafs.)

There are still obstacles standing between here and the post-pandemic future. The brake on the speed at which we can put COVID-19 behind is the pace of vaccinations. And unfortunately, Canadians' healthy vaccine appetite continues to outpace Canada's vaccine supply.

Canadians are doing their part, by lining up to receive shots as quickly as they land on our shores. And the Trudeau government, to its credit, has done a solid job of acquiring vaccines. Despite stumbles and setbacks earlier this year, Canada as of June 1 had received 28 million doses from Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca.

But Canada needs still more shots, and it needs them now.

Having enough vaccine to double-dose every willing Canadian by September would be good. Getting the job done by mid-summer would be better.

To get to a 90-per-cent vaccination rate among eligible Canadians, with two shots each, this country needs 60 million doses. Canada is scheduled to get its 40 millionth dose by the end of June, and hit 50 million by the end of July.

If Ottawa can acquire an extra 10 million doses over the next four weeks, this country will have what it takes to hit the 90-per-cent target in late July, or early August. That would be the best performance in the developed world, by a wide margin.

However, Canada still has no domestic vaccine production. So it all comes down to haggling with foreign producers, and governments, notably the one in Washington.

On Thursday, June 3, U.S. President Joe Biden, whose country is sitting on a huge stockpile of vaccines and an even bigger production capacity, announced that the U.S. will finally be sending more of that supply to the rest of the world. The plan is to ship 80 million doses overseas by the end of June.

According to the Biden administration, of the first 25 million doses, 19 million will go to the developing world. The other six million will go to a group Canada is part of – but it's a big group. Members include Mexico, South Korea, the West Bank and Gaza, Ukraine, Kosovo, Haiti, Georgia, Egypt, Jordan, India, Iraq, Yemen, United Nations workers and Canada.

Don't expect Canada to be entitled to much.

However, the Biden administration this week also opened the door for exports from three manufacturers, each with vaccines not approved in the United States. Two of those vaccines, from Sanofi and Novavax, are still in the testing stage. It could be months until they're ready to go.

The other vaccine is AstraZeneca.

Ottawa should be trying to secure millions of these shots – but a dispiriting back and forth among Health Canada, the provinces and the federal advisory body known as NACI has undermined confidence in this vaccine.

Canada is supposed to receive another million AstraZeneca doses in June – even as provinces begin planning to give second shots of low-supply Pfizer or Moderna to hundreds of thousands of people who received a first shot of AstraZeneca.

One way or the other, Canada will finish the vaccination campaign by fall – but sooner would be better. Only Ottawa has the power to make that happen.

The Trudeau government is under pressure to donate some of Canada's supply to the developing world – to effectively slow Canada's vaccine rollout, and give more to countries with less than us. We'd suggest a different approach: Focus entirely on getting all Canadians vaccinated, as soon as possible. Then donate the bulk of Canada's outstanding orders and options – Ottawa contracted for more than 400 million doses – to needy countries.

It could be the biggest and most impactful foreign aid plan in Canadian history. Just take care of Canadians first.

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## CDC Lowers Travel Risk Levels For 110 Countries, And US State Department Will Too

*By Gary Leff, ViewFromTheWing, June 8, 2021*

<https://viewfromthewing.com/cdc-lowers-travel-risk-levels-for-110-countries-and-us-state-department-will-too/>

In April, the U.S. State Department issued 'Do Not Travel' warnings for 80% of the world's countries due to coronavirus risk. They suddenly discovered the pandemic more than three months into 2021.

What happened then is that they conformed their travel warnings to the U.S. Centers For Disease Control (CDC)'s guidance, but the CDC guidance itself made little sense, failing to account for up-to-date levels of virus transmission or the kinds of environments Americans would be exposed to on the ground. They even issued their highest warning level for travel to... Antarctica.

This week the CDC discovered vaccines and updated its risk levels for 110 countries:

- France, South Africa, Canada, Mexico, Russia, Spain, Turkey, Ukraine, and Italy are now Level 3.
- Lowest-risk countries in the CDC analysis include Singapore, Israel, South Korea, Iceland, Belize and Albania.

The CDC has also reduced its own risk from level 4 to level 3, and the State Department says it's updating its travel advisories to correspond with CDC guidance.

The CDC uses reported cases to determine risk level, despite wildly varying levels of testing across countries. However, they've achieved the reduction in risk level not because of fewer reported cases, but because they've changed their methodology:

The agency said the new criteria for a Level 4 "avoid all travel" recommendation has changed from 100 COVID-19 cases per 100,000 to 500 cases per 100,000.

While some argue that a reassessment of risk levels by the federal government is an important step towards normalcy, Americans have largely ignored these warnings. US travel to Mexico is at an all-time peak, and the credibility of elites is not. Still, it's likely important for companies – which are increasingly woke in their politics but conservative in their risk-tolerance – to be willing to send travelers back out on the road.

The U.S. government acknowledges it is 'discussing' the absurdity of travel bans on non-residents coming to the United States who have been in places such as China, the U.K. and Ireland, and Schengen Europe in the past 14 days – when travel warning levels are reducing or low, and when other countries have far greater levels of virus and do not face travel bans.

Asked why the United States is maintaining the warnings even though some countries now have low infection rates subject to the restrictions, while others with high rates are exempt, CDC Director Rochelle Wallensky said on Tuesday, June 8 that the issue is subject to "an interagency conversation, and we are looking at the data in real time as to how we should move forward with that."

In this case 'real time' appears to refer to it being a current discussion as opposed to a fast one, since the data on this has been clear for a year in some cases. Indeed the U.S., U.K., Canada, Mexico and Europe are forming a 'working group' to talk about lifting travel restrictions.

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## Less Than 1% Of People Who Skipped COVID-19 Hotels Tested Positive For Virus: Public Health Agency of Canada

*By Hannah Jackson, Global News, June 6, 2021*

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7924423/COVID-hotels-positive-tests/>

Less than one per cent of travellers who have received a fine for failing to go to a COVID-19 quarantine hotel have tested positive for the virus, the Public Health Agency of Canada says.

In an email to Global News, PHAC said as of May 26, of the 1,130 travellers that have received a fine for not going to one of the government authorized accommodation (GAA) sites — known as quarantine hotels — fewer than 10 have tested positive for the virus on either their day one or day eight test.

That means less than 0.88 per cent tested positive for the novel coronavirus on either test.

In February, the federal government implemented more stringent rules for travellers returning to Canada.

Currently, anyone who enters Canada by air has to stay at a GAA for three days, and must provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken 72-hours before their departure.

Travellers must foot the bill for a stay at a GAA, which could cost as much as \$2,000.

They must also undergo a 14-day mandatory quarantine.

Travellers who enter Canada through the land border are not required to stay at a GAA, but must quarantine for 14 days, and take a test for COVID-19 on day one and day eight of their quarantine.

The Public Health Agency of Canada said it "ensures all travellers arriving by air have a government authorized accommodation (GAA) reservation," and "follows-up with all travellers that have a reservation but fail to check-in to their hotel."

PHAC said it also seeks support from police "for enforcement of non-compliance, as appropriate."

The federal government has, for months, been urging Canadians to avoid all non-essential travel.

However, according to data released by the Canada Border Services Agency, between March 21, 2020 and May 30, 2021, a total of 13,287,143 travellers entered the country.

Of those, 10,671,487 entered by land, while 2,615,656 arrived by air.

PHAC said it ensures travellers are compliant with the Quarantine Act, "regardless of their mode of entry," adding that the agency makes over 20,000 verification calls, and over 4,000 in-person compliance verification visits daily.

The agency said it tracks travellers arriving by air and land that have not completed their testing "regardless of the reason," in order to "bring them into compliance with the testing requirements."

PHAC added, though, that it does not track the reason provided for not having completed the test.

Are GAAs still necessary?

Last month, an expert advisory panel issued new recommendations to the federal government.

The panel said the current requirement that all air travellers must quarantine in a GAA "should be discontinued."

In the report, the advisory panel said the GAAs were "expensive" and "inconsistent" with the incubation period of the virus. The report also noted that the stay was not equally applied to travellers over land or air, and people could potentially bypass it by paying a fine.

The panel also made a number of recommendations based on the vaccination status of travellers, with more stringent measures advised for those who have not received their shot, but that would see restrictions eased for those who are vaccinated.

Dr. Isaac Bogoch, an infectious diseases faculty member at the University of Toronto — who was also a member of the expert advisory panel — told Global News that it's "either time or will very soon be time to have our border policy evolve to keep up with the growing number of Canadians that are vaccinated."

Bogoch said ultimately it is up to the federal government to decide when to make changes to the measures at the border, but said he hopes they are made sooner, rather than later.

"We have more and more Canadians with a first (vaccine) dose; more and more Canadians with the second dose and cases plummeting in Canada," he said.

According to Vaccine Tracker Canada by Sunday afternoon, 61.12 per cent of the Canadian population had received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, while 7.38 per cent were fully vaccinated.

Bogoch said "obviously" we can't "just flip a switch and go back to what things were like in 2019."

"But if you look at the proposed suggestions for updated policy, I think it really fills a gap during an interim period where COVID is still a public health risk, but more and more Canadians are having a first and second dose," he said.

Bogoch said Canada "can't throw caution to the wind," the policies in place now can be adapted to reflect the current risk.

"And that current risk is still shrinking in Canada because of the vaccine rollout and because the cases are coming down right now," he said. "So you can adapt the policy to address, and I don't think you need to have quarantine hotels anymore, for example."

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## Planning To Travel This Summer? Here's What You Should Know

*By Saba Aziz, Global News, June 6, 2021*

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/lifestyle/travel/news/planning-to-travel-this-summer-here-s-what-you-should-know/ar-AAKXot?ocid=msedgdp>

A "one-dose summer" — as touted by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau — is in the cards for Canada, with more than half the Canadian population having received at least a single shot of the COVID-19 vaccine.

As provinces look ahead to easing COVID-19 restrictions over the coming months, summertime travel is possible, but the demand is low, travel experts say.

"There is no panic to get anything booked for the summer," said Richard Vanderlubbe, president of Tripcentral.ca.

A travel advisory is still in effect, with the government urging against non-essential trips. On top of that, the feds have imposed a raft of measures for anyone entering the country.

Currently, international flights are only landing at four Canadian airports — Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver and Calgary. Cruise trips in the country are banned.

So, if you are looking to travel this summer, here are some things to consider before you book that trip within Canada or overseas.



Provincial health authorities have advised against non-essential travel amid the pandemic and imposed their own set of restrictions.

As of April 19, Ontario has closed its land borders to Quebec and Manitoba — with some exemptions — but trains and flights are permitted to enter.

In Nova Scotia, you are legally required to self-isolate for 14 days, even if you've tested negative for COVID-19 or get the vaccine, if you have travelled from outside the province.

But Saskatchewan and Alberta don't have any travel restrictions in place.

Prince Edward Island has said that starting June 27, the province will no longer require pre-travel approval for Atlantic Canadian travellers. Beginning August 8, people travelling within Atlantic Canada who are fully or partially vaccinated will still be required to test but will not need to self-isolate.

Newfoundland and Labrador is aiming to ease border restrictions and welcome travellers from the rest of Canada as early as July 1.

Although land travel between provinces is banned in certain regions, Canadians can still hop on a plane and fly from Vancouver to Charlottetown.

“Domestically, (there is) no issue flying from one province to the other,” said Martin Firestone, a travel insurance broker in Toronto.

There are some limited flights from Canada to the United States, Europe, Asia, Mexico and the Caribbean, but travellers are subject to restrictions – from testing to quarantine upon arrival.

If you're flying to the U.S., proof of a negative COVID-19 test result no more than three days prior to departure is required.

Canadians can travel to several countries in Europe, but they will need a negative test and have to self-isolate upon arrival, depending on the destination.

Starting July 2, Air Canada will begin operating COVID-19-tested flights to Rome, Italy, without the need for quarantine on arrival.

Passengers arriving in the United Kingdom must also show proof of a negative COVID-19 test.

In all cases, travellers are advised to check the testing and quarantine protocol for the country they're going to before they book their trips.

Then there are other layers of measures for the journey back to the country.

Under Canada's current travel restrictions, passengers are required to show a negative COVID-19 test result taken within 72 hours prior to boarding a plane.

They are also tested upon arrival and have to quarantine at a government-authorized hotel for three days while they await their test result. Travellers are then required to complete the remainder of the mandatory 14-day quarantine at home after the hotel stopover.

“There's lots of places that people can travel if they're willing to tolerate all that,” said Vanderlubbe.

As part of a deal with the federal government, Air Canada and Transat are giving refunds to travellers whose flights were cancelled due to the pandemic.

Under the agreement, refunds will be available for flights scheduled on or after February 1, 2020, that were cancelled by either the customer or the airline.

Air Canada, WestJet and Air Transat are waiving change or cancellation fees for travellers booking flights by early summer.

Firestone said while many carriers and sun destinations are offering enriched plans with cancellation options, bookings for Airbnb, resorts and hotels can be less flexible.

Voluntary changes by customers can be subject to cancellation penalties and different rules about refunds, Vanderlubbe cautioned.

“Sometimes it's better to pay a little bit more and have more flexibility for changes because the restrictions could change,” he told Global News.

Travel insurance generally does not cover any pre-existing conditions. And because of the level three travel advisory in place, you will not be able to claim any COVID-19-related expenses through that insurance plan, Vanderlubbe and Firestone said.

“COVID still remains a known cause and known condition, and that will be excluded from purposes of a claim,” said Firestone.

But the medical insurance you purchase will cover any other conditions and illnesses that are not pre-existing, Vanderlubbe explained.

Separately, travel insurance companies also offer COVID-19 medical coverage outside of Canada, which is sold as a different product.

According to Firestone, additional coverage for COVID-19 could range from \$100 to \$500 depending on the insurer.

If a traveller contracts COVID-19 while on the trip, the COVID-19 insurance will cover emergency medical and related quarantine expenses. But mandatory testing is not included. Neither are the costs incurred when quarantined back in Canada.

The Canadian government previously said it's talking with international partners about the development of COVID-19 vaccination certificate systems for travel.

While there is no definitive answer on whether Canada will mandate COVID-19 vaccination certificates, Trudeau has said they are “naturally to be expected” as part of the pandemic.

However, the feds still have not laid out any concrete details on what the government is doing to prepare for such passports for Canadians who have been vaccinated.

Meanwhile, other countries are already using vaccine passports. An EU Digital COVID Certificate is being accepted in seven European countries ahead of a full launch for all 27 member states on July 1.

The U.K. is also planning to use a mobile app that will allow its population to travel internationally this summer.

In Canada, insurance company Manulife is offering reward points to clients who receive a COVID-19 shot. And according to a Globe and Mail report, the company has also increased out-of-country medical coverage for COVID-19 for travellers who are fully vaccinated.

Going forward, your vaccination status could influence your international travel plans, both Vanderlubbe and Firestone said, as passports will likely be imposed on Canadians internationally.

“The certificate and passport will be essential for anybody planning on travelling,” Firestone said. “I think the airlines will require it, the countries you’re going to will require it.

“Now it appears the insurers will be requiring it, so that's the future.”

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## Europe Is Open For Travel. But Tourists Must Navigate Each Country’s COVID-19 Rules

*By The Associated Press, June 10, 2021*

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7937351/europe-travel-COVID-vaccine-passport-rules/>

Europe is opening up to Americans, Canadians and other visitors after more than a year of COVID-induced restrictions, in hope of luring back tourists — and their dollars — to the continent’s trattorias, vistas and cultural treasures. But travelers will need patience to figure out who’s allowed into which country, how and when.

As the European Union’s doors re-open one by one to the outside world for the first time since March 2020, tourists will discover a patchwork of systems instead of a single border-free leisure zone, because national governments have resisted surrendering control over their frontiers amid the pandemic. And post-Brexit Britain is going its own way altogether.

Meanwhile, the welcoming mood isn’t always mutual. U.S. borders, for example, remain largely closed to non-Americans.

Here's a look at current entry rules in some popular European tourist destinations. One caveat: While these are the regulations as written by governments, travelers may meet hiccups as airlines or railway officials try to make sense of them.

## France

If you're vaccinated, come to France. But only if you got one of the four EU-approved vaccines: Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson. That works for Americans — as long as they can produce official proof of vaccination — but not for large swaths of the world such as China and Russia where other vaccines are used.

France's borders officially re-opened on Wednesday, June 9. Vaccinated visitors from outside Europe and a few "green" countries will still be asked for a negative PCR test no older than 72 hours, or a negative antigen test of no more than 48 hours. Unvaccinated children will be allowed in with vaccinated adults, but will have to show a negative test from age 11.

Tourists are banned from 16 countries wrestling with virus surges and worrisome variants that are on a red list that includes India, South Africa and Brazil.

Non-vaccinated visitors from "orange list" countries — including the U.S. and Britain — can't come for tourism either, only for specific, imperative reasons.

## Italy

Americans — the second-biggest group of foreign tourists to Italy — have been welcome since mid-May. However, they need to self-isolate upon arrival for 10 days unless they arrive on so-called "COVID-tested flights." That means passengers are tested before and after the flight and must fill out documents about their whereabouts to facilitate contact tracing if required.

"COVID-tested" flights from the U.S. started in December and have also been operating since May from Canada, Japan and the United Arab Emirates.

Italy also started allowing tourists from Britain and Israel last month, meaning they no longer need an "essential" reason to visit and don't have to self-isolate, providing they present proof of a negative COVID test taken no more than 48 hours prior to arrival.

The same rules apply to travelers from EU countries and those on "COVID-tested" flights from the U.S., Canada, Japan and the United Arab Emirates.

## Greece

Tourism-reliant Greece started opening to American travelers back in April, and now visitors from China, Britain and 20 other countries are also allowed to visit for non-essential travel.

All must provide a vaccination certificate or a negative PCR test and fill in a passenger locator form on their plans in Greece. This directive expires on June 14, but could be extended.

Athens long pressed for a common EU approach, but didn't wait for one to materialize. On June 1, Greece, Germany and five other bloc members introduced a COVID certificate system for travelers, weeks ahead of the July 1 rollout of the program across the 27-nation bloc.

## **Spain**

Spain kicked off its summer tourism season on Monday, June 7 by welcoming vaccinated visitors from the U.S. and most countries, as well as European visitors who can prove they are not infected.

Americans and most other non-Europeans need an official vaccine certificate by a health authority. Spain accepts those who were inoculated with the four EU-approved vaccines as well as two Chinese vaccines authorized by the World Health Organization — as long as visitors are fully vaccinated at least two weeks before the trip.

Arrivals from Brazil, South Africa and India are banned at the moment because of high infection rates there, and non-vaccinated Americans and many other non-EU nationalities cannot come to Spain for tourism for now.

But there are exemptions for countries considered at low risk, such as citizens from Britain, who can arrive without any health documents at all. EU citizens need to provide proof of vaccination, a certificate showing they recently recovered from COVID-19, or a negative antigen or PCR test taken within 48 hours of arrival.

## **Britain**

There are few, if any, American tourists in the U.K. at present. Britain has a traffic-light system for assessing countries by risk, and the U.S. along with most European nations is on the “amber” list, meaning everyone arriving has to self-isolate at home or in the place they are staying for 10 days.

U.K. and U.S. airlines and airport operators are pushing for a travel corridor to allow tourism to resume, and Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to raise the issue when he meets President Joe Biden at a G-7 summit in England this week.

Meanwhile, anyone traveling between Britain and continental Europe, be warned: In addition to the isolation requirement for those arriving or returning to U.K. shores, rising concern about the delta variant of the virus has prompted some other countries to introduce special restrictions for those arriving from Britain.

## **European Union**

The 27-nation EU has no unified COVID tourism or border policy, but has been working for months on a joint digital travel certificate for those vaccinated, freshly tested, or recently recovered from the virus. EU lawmakers endorsed the plan on Wednesday, June 9.

The free certificates, which will contain a QR code with advanced security features, will allow people to move between European countries without having to quarantine or undergo extra coronavirus tests upon arrival.

Several EU countries have already begun using the system, including Spain, Germany, Greece, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Poland. The rest are expected to start using it on July 1.

It's mainly meant for EU citizens but Americans and others can obtain the certificate too — if they can convince authorities in an EU country they're entering that they qualify for one. And the lack of an official U.S. vaccination certification system may complicate matters.

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## Two Passengers Aboard Mediterranean Cruise Test Positive For COVID-19

*Passengers on MSC ships are not required to be vaccinated, but they have to undergo several tests — including a test midway through the cruise*

*By Hannah Sampson, Washington Post, June 10, 2021*

<https://nationalpost.com/news/world/two-passengers-aboard-mediterranean-cruise-test-positive-for-COVID-19>

Two passengers tested positive for COVID-19 during routine checks aboard a Mediterranean cruise this week, MSC Cruises said.

The passengers, who were asymptomatic, got their positive test results on Monday, according to MSC Cruises spokesman Luca Biondolillo. They were not traveling together on the MSC Seaside. Biondolillo said the individuals and their traveling groups, as well as close contacts, were immediately isolated, and no one aside from the original two passengers tested positive.

According to the Times of Malta, the vessel was not allowed to make a regular call in Malta's Valletta cruise port Monday. Instead, Biondolillo said, the ship made a "technical call" — where passengers don't disembark — and then resumed its regular schedule with a stop in Sicily.

Both passengers and their parties left the ship in Siracusa, on the island of Sicily, and were taken home "by protected MSC Cruises transport" Tuesday, the cruise company said. The ship continued its normal schedule after the Siracusa stop.

"All of this took place in line with the protocol and in coordination with the local health authorities," Biondolillo said in an email Wednesday.

Passengers on MSC ships are not required to be vaccinated, but they have to undergo several tests: two to three days before leaving for a cruise, just before getting on the ship and midway through the cruise, Biondolillo said.

"If anything, this is another demonstration that the protocol works," he said.

The company started sailing in the Mediterranean in August 2020 and has seen “a handful such cases” since, Biondolillo said, adding that “many thousands” of passengers have sailed safely.

Cruise ships have slowly started service again around the world, but still have not resumed in the United States since the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shut the industry down last March. The agency is not requiring cruise ships to sail with vaccinated passengers, but will allow those with at least 95 percent of vaccinated crew and guests to skip test cruises meant to show how they will deal with COVID-19 risks.

The first cruise from U.S. shores with paying passengers is scheduled to set sail later this month. The Celebrity Cruises ship will require everyone 16 and older to be fully vaccinated — a condition that comes into conflict with a Florida law that says businesses can't ask for proof of vaccination status.

MSC Cruises, which is headquartered in Geneva, announced this week that it plans to start short cruises on MSC Meraviglia from Miami to the Bahamas on Aug. 2. The company recently got approval from the CDC to conduct a test cruise on that vessel.

The company said it will “welcome both vaccinated and non-vaccinated guests,” with those who are not vaccinated subject to additional testing and restrictions. Rubén Rodríguez, president of MSC Cruises USA, said in a statement that he expects the majority of passengers will be vaccinated.

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## U.K.-U.S. Travel Corridor Is ‘Imperative,’ Business Chief Says

*By Joe Mayes, Bloomberg, June 4, 2021*

<https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-06-04/u-k-u-s-travel-corridor-is-imperative-business-chief-says>

The U.K. and U.S. should urgently implement reciprocal quarantine-free travel to boost the economic recovery from the pandemic, according to a prominent British business leader.

“Opening up the U.S. corridor is imperative as soon as possible,” said Karan Bilimoria, president of the Confederation of British Industry, which represents 190,000 businesses in the U.K. The rapid vaccine rollout in both countries means “it should happen as soon as we can,” he said in an interview on Friday, June 4.

U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to discuss the issue with U.S. President Joe Biden at the G-7 summit in Cornwall, England next week, and officials on both sides of the Atlantic have been in talks. Yet the U.K tightened its border rules this week by imposing quarantine on travelers from Portugal, disrupting holidaymakers' plans and slamming the travel industry.

More than half of Britain's adult population has now received two doses of a coronavirus vaccine, while about 40% of the population in the U.S. is fully vaccinated. Nevertheless, the U.K. continues to be cautious on travel due to fears that new COVID-19 mutations could prove resistant to vaccines.

At the same time, the British government is under significant pressure from the airline industry to ease travel restrictions after more than a year of COVID-19 rules has brought the sector to its knees. Shares in companies such as EasyJet Plc, Ryanair Holdings Plc, and British Airways parent IAG SA plunged on Thursday in response to the latest quarantine rules for Portugal.

A travel corridor would make a “huge difference” to companies on both sides of the Atlantic and the British government should use the wide availability of lateral flow coronavirus tests -- which have a quick turnaround time -- to facilitate travel, Bilimoria said.

“Let’s use those tests when it comes to travel to make it more affordable,” he said, suggesting a positive test could be followed up with a more rigorous PCR test, which take longer to process. “We are in a position to be able to do that.”

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## Pressure Mounts For COVID-19 Vaccine Passport In Canada

By Pat Foran, CTV News, June 3, 2021

<https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/mobile/pressure-mounts-for-COVID-19-vaccine-passport-in-canada-1.5455424>

Canada's largest insurance company Manulife announced this week it's increasing out of country medical benefits for anyone who has been fully vaccinated.

The problem? Canada still doesn't have any kind of vaccination passport or standardized document to show who has been vaccinated and who hasn't.

Martin Firestone with Travel Secure Inc. said many other countries have them in place and that “we are running terribly behind.”

A Leger survey released last month found the majority of Canadians are in favour of having some kind of document that shows if you've been fully vaccinated.

The survey asked if vaccine passports should be required for public gatherings, sporting events, restaurants and businesses and 61 per cent of Canadians supported the idea.

When asked about traveling domestically and internationally, 79 per cent of Canadians were in support of some type of vaccine passport.

Jason Allsopp, Vice-President of Leger said that, “at the end of the day Canadians are very strong on their support for a vaccine passport, certainly in relation to travel.”

Some type of vaccination documentation is already being used by the European Union, China and Israel. The United States does not have vaccination passports, but instead uses vaccination cards that Americans can use to show they are fully vaccinated.



Firestone says Manulife has increased out of country medical benefits from \$1 million to \$5 million for anyone who has been fully vaccinated, but he says there is currently no standard vaccination certificate to use as proof.

Firestone believes Canada needs to hurry up and get it done.

"You will need this to get on an airplane, to get into a country, to show to an insurance company that you are fully vaccinated and that you want the limits they are putting on the policy for you," said Firestone.

The federal government has said it is working on some type of vaccination travel document. Firestone said he believes many Canadians won't travel until they have one.

If Canada does develop a vaccination passport of some kind, it's not clear how it would work. It could be a vaccination certificate, a bar code on your phone or even a stamp on your regular passport.

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## People Who've Had COVID-19 Vaccines Should Get A State-Issued 'Driver's License' To Party, Top Bioethicist Says

*By Hillary Brueck, Business Insider, June 4, 2021*

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/health/medical/people-who-ve-had-COVID-19-vaccines-should-get-a-state-issued-driver-s-license-to-party-top-bioethicist-says/ar-AAKHG52?ocid=msedgdhp>

Dr. Ezekiel Emanuel is ready to step out and party - well, almost.

The chair of the department of medical ethics and health policy at the University of Pennsylvania hasn't been to the theater in over a year and he says he's "dying to go." He's also planning to travel to Switzerland this summer.

But first, he has to sort out a big open question - both for himself, and for anyone he's going to share some air with.

"How am I supposed to prove that I've been vaccinated?" he asks. "What I have now is a CDC cardboard piece of paper, right? It's ridiculous."

Emanuel says it shouldn't be so hard for authorities to develop a reliable, relatively fraud-proof and secure driver's license-style verification system for gauging COVID-19 immunity status. Ideally, such a system could replace the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's white vaccine cards, which are both easy to fabricate and too big to fit in standard wallets.

## **A Vaccine License From The DMV?**

Ezekiel, a former White House health policy advisor, imagines a world where "I could just have a QR code, and show it, and it would flash green," offering permission to do all sorts of indoor activities in a secure, encrypted, and private way. It sounds like the kind of thing the DMV could pop onto a credit card-sized ID and print out.

"So, perhaps the DMV should have been in control of this?" I asked him, as I imagined the ensuing bureaucratic headaches.

"Look, you're laughing, but ... we know how to print those things," he said.

The idea of COVID-19 immunity licensure is something he's been considering since at least May 2020, when he wrote a viewpoint submitted to the medical journal JAMA on the subject.

"People must be allowed to pursue their life plans unless doing so is incompatible with public health," he said at the time. "In the absence of licensing, businesses and individuals may instead elect to use unregulated evidence of immunity, such as test results, or to use assumptions about immunity or vulnerability that are likely to be arbitrary and biased."

At a time when herd immunity is far from accomplished in the US, licensure is the kind of safeguard that could allow people to do more together, without as much risk of getting sick.

"I want to know that everyone at work who's going to be in a closed room with me is going to be vaccinated," Emanuel said. "I'd love to go to the theater, but I also would love to go to the theater safely and knowing that everyone in the theater is vaccinated - you're not allowed in the theater unless you're vaccinated, or had COVID."

Some US universities and hospital systems (like his) have started mandating COVID-19 vaccination for students and staff, but it is far from the norm for businesses or events nation-wide yet. No US states have any requirement for hospital staff to be COVID-19 vaccinated, but that could change if and when vaccines receive a full Food and Drug Administration approval. Already, a majority of healthcare workers nation-wide are required to get annual flu shots.

"If anything, this vaccine is better, safer, and forestalls a worse disease than the influenza vaccine, and yet fewer are mandating it," Emanuel said. "I think that's unethical."

## **Unvaccinated People Could Still Be Accommodated**

Much like the DMV does for driver's licenses, COVID licenses could come with different designations and exemptions.

In fact, digital immunity cards that are similar to what Emanuel imagines already exist in some places.

New York has an "Excelsior Pass" app that operates with a QR code. It shows proof of vaccination or negative test results, which can be scanned like a boarding pass at businesses or venues (it's already being used at the Barclays Center and Madison Square Garden in New York City.)

The European Union has a "Digital COVID Certificate," which allows people to travel more freely by showing a QR code proving they've either been vaccinated, gotten a negative test result, or recovered from the virus. The new system is up and running in seven EU countries so far.

There might need to be different kinds of licensure for people with natural immunity from infection (versus vaccination), and special dispensations for immuno-compromised individuals who don't benefit from vaccines in the same way as others do, Ezekiel said. The unvaccinated need not be categorically excluded.

"You wear an N95 mask, or, we accommodate you in working from home. I mean, look, we have laws that mean you have to make reasonable accommodations for people," he said. "These aren't new problems."

Even if there was a clear, secure system for keeping track of immunity, there's still one big mystery left to settle. Scientists haven't yet figured out how, exactly, immunity to the coronavirus works. They don't know when a COVID-19 license might expire, or how will we know if it has.

"We're uncertain what the expiration date is, right? All the more reason to have it electronically, where we can change them," Emanuel said.

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## G7 Nations Agree To 'Mutual Recognition' Of Vaccine Passports

*By Anna Breuer, Frequent Business Traveler, June 6, 2021*

<http://www.frequentbusinesstraveler.com/2021/06/g7-nations-agree-to-mutual-recognition-of-vaccine-passports/>

Health ministers from the G7 nations agreed Friday to devise a means for the "mutual acceptance" of vaccine passports to help restore global travel and commerce, days after the EU said that its digital COVID-19 vaccination certificate would be open to certain non-EU international travelers including those from the United States, subject to individual states' acceptance of proof of vaccinations, recovery from COVID, or a negative test result.

The move is expected to help expedite a recovery in the travel sector.

"The usage of vaccination certificates should be based on the latest scientific evidence and the current epidemiological situation," the group said in a communiqué following the meeting.

The group, which included U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, UK Health Minister Matt Hancock, and German Bundesgesundheitsminister Jans Spahn and their peers from Canada, France, Italy, and Japan, said they were committed to working “towards a process of mutual acceptance of COVID-19 certificates.”

The group said that international standards and recommended practices must be set “for the creation, use and mutual recognition of testing and vaccination certificates... that rely on safe, effective and rigorously reviewed vaccines”.

The agreement was reached after a two-day summit in Oxford that was part of the G7 meeting.

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## Global Airline Body Says 'Travel Pass' App To Go Live In Weeks

*By Alexander Cornwell, Reuters, June 10, 2021*

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/world/global-airline-body-says-travel-pass-app-to-go-live-in-weeks/ar-AAKTHzT?ocid=msedgdhp&pc=U531>

The head of global airline body International Air Transport Association (IATA) said on Thursday, June 10 that a digital travel pass for COVID-19 test results and vaccine certifications would go live in the coming weeks following a testing phase.

The mobile application, which has been tested by some airlines, was originally designed to facilitate passenger screening at the airport check-in and aircraft boarding stages.

However, IATA says it has since modified the app for when passengers are also checked by immigration officers on arrival.

“(The) feedback (has) been very positive. We expect to go live out of the testing mode in the next couple of weeks,” IATA Director General Willie Walsh told reporters during an online media briefing.

Around 60,000 people have been registered to test the system, he said.

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## EU Plans Digital ID Wallet For Bloc's Post-Pandemic Life

*By Kelvin Chan, The Associated Press, June 3, 2021*

<https://ca.finance.yahoo.com/news/eu-plans-digital-id-wallet-133255619.html>

The European Union unveiled plans Thursday for a digital ID wallet that residents could use to access services across the 27-nation bloc, part of a post-pandemic recovery strategy that involves accelerating the shift to an online world.

The European Digital Identity Wallet proposed by the EU's executive commission is a smartphone app that would let users store electronic forms of identification and other official documents, such as driver's licenses, prescriptions and school diplomas.

The bloc's 450 million residents would be able to use the wallet to access public or private services both online and offline while maintaining control of their personal data.

Officials envision the wallet allowing a customer renting a car at an airport, for example, to complete the necessary ID checks and documents digitally and thereby skip the usual wait at an agency counter. Nightclub-goers could show the app to security guards at the door to prove their ages.

Other potential uses include opening bank accounts, signing apartment leases and enrolling in universities outside an individual's home country.

The digital wallet "will enable us to do in any member state as we do at home without any extra cost and fewer hurdles," Margrethe Vestager, the European Commission's executive vice president for digital, said. "And do this in a way that is secure and transparent."

All EU residents would be entitled to an e-wallet, but they won't be mandatory, according to the EU Commission.

But dominant online platforms would be required to accept the wallet, a provision that aligns with the commission's goal of reining in big tech companies and their control of personal data.

Vestager said people would be able to use their EU digital wallets to access Google or Facebook instead of their "platform-specific" accounts.

"Because of that, you can decide how much data you want to share - only enough to identify yourself," the commissioner said from Brussels during a virtual media briefing.

Digital is a key part of the EU's post-COVID 19 recovery package: A 750 billion-euro (\$915 billion) stimulus fund includes benchmarks for member countries to spend one-fifth of the money on digital projects such as digitizing public administration.

Some EU countries already have their own national digital ID systems, and the wallet Brussels is developing would work with them.

The commission plans to discuss the wallet with the EU's 27 member countries and aims to get them to agree on technical details by fall 2022 so pilot projects can begin.

## Here's How The G7 Can Strengthen The World's Defence Against Global Health Threats

*Opinion by Paul Martin, Former Prime Minister of Canada, June 7, 2021*

[https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-heres-how-the-g7-can-strengthen-the-worlds-defence-against-global/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Globe%20Opinion&utm\\_content=2021-6-9\\_17&utm\\_term=Here%e2%80%99s%20how%20the%20G7%20can%20strengthen%20the%20world%e2%80%99s%20defence%20against%20global%20health%20threats&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&cu\\_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-heres-how-the-g7-can-strengthen-the-worlds-defence-against-global/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Globe%20Opinion&utm_content=2021-6-9_17&utm_term=Here%e2%80%99s%20how%20the%20G7%20can%20strengthen%20the%20world%e2%80%99s%20defence%20against%20global%20health%20threats&utm_campaign=newsletter&cu_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb)

As the nations of the world focus on vaccinating their citizens against COVID-19, we must think deeply about how to protect ourselves in the future.

COVID-19 has wreaked havoc on virtually every aspect of our collective lives. Health care systems have been overwhelmed, economies have been struggling and sustainable development goals have been set back. Not a single country has been immune from the pandemic, but its consequences for the world's poor have been devastating.

Rebounding from the effects of the virus would be challenging enough, but the looming prospect of future pandemics makes it even more imperative that we come together with a robust global response – and that we do so now.

That challenge begins with vaccine equity. Nearly 90 per cent of the vaccines administered have been in G20 countries. This is a grave moral failure, as well as an almost assured recipe for an ongoing threat. Countries that do not have access to adequate supplies of vaccines can become breeding grounds for new variants, posing a risk to all of us.

Unequal vaccine distribution is also a severe threat to the health of the global economy. If we've learned one lesson from this experience, it is that public health precedes economic well-being. Without the former, the latter is unachievable.

It will take much to face up to the damage done, strengthen public health and better prepare us for future pandemics. But the answer is to be found in strengthened multilateralism, realistic funding for the World Health Organization (WHO) and augmented global health research.

While we all believe in national sovereignty, we must recognize that collective action will be required if we are to deal with problems that are beyond the capacity of any one country, no matter how powerful. Strong multilateral institutions are needed now more than ever.

We need the WHO to be for ministers of health what the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is for ministers of finance: a no-holds-barred, multilateral organization with the means to identify, counter and prevent crises.

The good news is that the WHO already exists. The problem is that, as the Independent Panel for Pandemic Preparedness and Response recently stated, we have let it become badly under-resourced.

Compare the WHO with its peers. The IMF, upon which we rely for global economic action, funds roughly 80 per cent of its operations from guaranteed country dues. In contrast, only 18 per cent of the WHO's annual budget is procured from assessed contributions, with the remaining funding being voluntary. This means that, on an annual basis, the bulk of the WHO's funding is a question mark.

We simply cannot prepare properly for future pandemics when budgets are less than 20 per cent assured. Certainly, it isn't conducive to the long-term planning that we so desperately need to protect the well-being of the world's population. Quite simply, underfunding the WHO jeopardizes global health.

At the upcoming G7 summit, there are plans to strengthen funding for global public health and, in particular, boost support for the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A). These investments are needed badly and these priorities should be confirmed.

But we need to take additional action by better financing the WHO itself. To start, the ratio of assessed to voluntary contributions provided by member states should be reversed – from 20/80 to 80/20 – and the overall budget of the WHO should be increased. These financial reforms would put the WHO on a more even footing with other international institutions such as the IMF, and strengthen the world's ability to withstand future global health threats.

Increased funding will also support efforts to bolster the WHO's role as a leader in connecting and co-ordinating national research bodies and other international institutions dedicated to understanding pandemics. The recently announced WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence in Berlin is an example of how we must network research facilities, expertise and knowledge from around the world in order to ensure we are able to better detect, investigate and respond to emerging public health threats.

As the G20 prepares for its own leaders' summit in October, this should be a prime focus. The G20 is a diverse and representative body of developed and developing countries alike, drawn from a plethora of regions. It has the capacity to ignite the country-by-country support that is needed for a strengthened WHO.

As home to the very first director-general of the WHO, Canada should be a natural champion for this kind of co-ordinated, international response. It presents a chance for us to instill new meaning and new muscularity into an updated 21st-century vision of multilateralism.

There is only one way forward: countries must recognize how much they gain from acting together. Canada can lead the way.

## Risk Of COVID Is Now Very Low — It's Time To Stop Living In Fear: Doctor

*Opinion By Marty Makary, MD, MPH, New York Post, May 21, 2021*

<https://nypost-com.cdn.ampproject.org/c/s/nypost.com/2021/05/21/risk-of-COVID-is-now-very-low-its-time-to-stop-living-in-fear-doctor/amp/>

COVID cases are collapsing in front of our eyes. Daily cases are now one-tenth the number of daily flu cases in the middle of a mild flu season, with a now-identical case fatality rate. That's because the few Americans testing positive are often young, feel fine, and underwent testing as a screening requirement for playing sports or attending gatherings.

The US positive rate is now at a record low, below 3%. Projections for the coming weeks and months are even more favorable. That's because roughly 80% to 85% of adults are now immune — more than 6 in 10 adults are now vaccinated and more than half of unvaccinated adults have natural immunity from prior infection. In public health, when a virus has trouble jumping around because more than 8 in 10 adults in a community are blocking its transmission, we call that herd immunity.

Yet some people want the pandemic to stretch out longer, insisting on a futile goal of absolute risk eradication.

Posturing to be on the side of science, they ignore the science on the effectiveness of vaccinations and natural immunity and dangle variant fears. They wear masks after being fully vaccinated even though there has never been a documented case of a fully vaccinated person who is asymptomatic transmitting the virus.

They've paralyzed the nation with fear.

Some point to the New York Yankees as an example of the risk of a breakthrough infection. Indeed, one player of the 50 vaccinated players tested had COVID symptoms, representing the rare instance of a breakthrough infection. But his immune system worked. It resulted in the infection being very mild. Vaccines are highly efficacious in preventing the infection, and nearly perfect in preventing COVID death.

Of the other seven players who likely tested positive, none had symptoms. Their immune systems worked to ward off the virus when it landed on the mucosal membrane of their noses. Just because a PCR test, which can detect as few as 10 molecules of virus particles, reveals evidence of a remnant virus does not mean there is any health concern.

Our battle is not against positive tests, it's in preventing serious illness and death.

San Francisco General Hospital now has zero COVID patients in the hospital and the city reported two new positive COVID tests Wednesday. Is San Francisco still in a state of emergency? If so, it may never end. Seasonal flu would trigger the same health emergency criteria in perpetuity. Mayor Bill de Blasio says New York City will "fully re-open" on July 1 — but why wait until summer is half over?



At some point we have to live our lives. That time is now.

The fear-mongering will likely ramp up in the months ahead with warnings of new variants, and medical pundits fixated on “what ifs” over good news. They’ve already started. The CDC director, Rochelle Walensky, recently reported on the good news of rapidly declining case counts in the US. Then she added that variants “are a wild card that could reverse this progress we have made.”

Why would any doctors say that right now? It’s unproven, theoretical, and unlikely. It would be like discharging a patient home from the hospital after a long successful battle with cancer and telling them to remember that there is a small chance that their cancer could come back.

Medical and political leaders should show strong leadership and give balanced, science-based projections of what to expect in the future. The public has made tremendous personal sacrifices. Right now, Americans need hope.

Blaring non-stop warnings by our public health officials about variants is irresponsible. Here are the medical facts. We have seen hundreds of variants and none have ever evaded the power of vaccines to prevent death or hospitalization. The idea that vaccinated immunity may be fragile is a far-reaching hypothesis with no clinical data whatsoever to support it.

Variant fears have also entered politics. As revealed by the New York Post, the American Federation of Teachers got the CDC to add language to the agency’s draft school guidance saying plans to re-open are conditional on the risk of new variants.

Schools should be fully open now. We’ve done far too much damage to a generation of children over infinitesimally small risks. Unwarranted fear of variants cannot be used as an excuse to continue propagating this harm.

The truth is this summer will be spectacular. Americans will remember the fullness of life and reconnect with people and activities that they miss. There will be little to no COVID news this summer.

But with little to talk about, I anticipate that the mainstream media will continue to find whatever warnings they can. The buildup will create anxiety over a hypothetical scenario, and that fear could result in pre-emptive closures and restrictions.

Many people say they do not feel comfortable traveling for work-related reasons such as attending national conferences this fall. That’s based entirely on perception and not on science. The overly restrictive CDC guidance on travel does not help.

Too often, Americans see the COVID threat as binary — acting as if the threat is equally dire for everyone, or that it’s nonexistent. Unfortunately, this distorted risk perception is blocking parents from watching their kids play sports, preventing families from being with their loved ones in the hospital, and depriving Americans of the dignity of participating in milestone life events, such as weddings and funerals.

We need to get over the fear. We need leaders to lift restrictions, and scientists to talk realistically about risk. We need to get back to living.

For many wealthy Americans, the COVID state of emergency has been good to them. But for the half of Americans who live paycheck to paycheck, they have had a much different pandemic experience — one defined by financial risk and kids at home who are struggling. Given the low, manageable, and declining public health threat of COVID in many regions of the country, let's let Americans assess their own personal risk and stop depriving them of their livelihoods.

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## Wave Of Bankruptcies In Tourism, Travel And Hospitality Coming, Warns Canadian Chamber Of Commerce

*By Mark Rendell, The Globe and Mail, June 10, 2021*

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is warning there could be a wave of bankruptcies among heavily indebted companies in the tourism, travel and hospitality sectors after government support programs wind down in the coming months. Even with vaccination rates increasing and lockdown restrictions easing over the summer, many companies in high-contact industries will struggle with reduced cash flow and high debt levels well into 2022, the business group said on Thursday, June 10 in a document aimed at providing advice to policy-makers. The Chamber is calling for an extension to the federal government's Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS) and Canada Emergency Rent Subsidy (CERS) until next spring for companies in hard-hit industries. Mark Agnew, the Chamber's vice-president of policy said that governments also need to lay out clear guidelines for what companies can ask of employees and customers about vaccinations. "We have a concern that a lot of our members are going to be inadvertently walking themselves into legal landmines, left, right and centre, if they start asking either patrons or their employees about vaccination status," Mr. Agnew said. "It is absolutely critical for governments to get out in front of this and provide very clear guidance to companies on what they can and cannot do," he said.

Read Story (Subscription Required): <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-wave-of-bankruptcies-coming-warns-chamber-of-commerce/>

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## Airline Trade Groups Urge Canada To Put Border Re-Opening Plans In Motion By June 21

*By Bailey Schulz, USA Today, June 4, 2021*

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/travel/airline-news/2021/06/04/when-will-canadian-border-open-airlines-urge-trudeau-to-start-planning/7548682002/>

Airline trade groups are pushing the Canadian government to open their air border to more U.S. travelers.

The National Airlines Council of Canada and Airlines for America, trade associations representing airlines in Canada and the U.S., sent a letter on Friday, June 4 urging Justin Trudeau's administration to "swiftly" lay out a clear roadmap for a safe re-opening of air travel between the neighboring countries.

"Safely re-opening trans-border air travel between Canada and the U.S. is essential for both nation's economic recovery from the pandemic," the letter reads, adding that air travel enabled \$718 billion worth of trade between the countries in 2019.

### **When Will The Canadian Border Open For Tourism?**

The letter asks for a plan to be completed and announced by June 21, when the current Canadian border measures are set to potentially be renewed.

The U.S.' northern border was initially closed to leisure travelers in March 2020, with only trade and essential travel allowed. Nearly 15 months later, those traveling from the U.S. to Canada must still prove that they are crossing the border for essential reasons, and are required to test for COVID-19 in advance and quarantine upon arrival.

The trade associations' letter follows last week's release of the latest report from Health Canada's COVID-19 Testing and Screening Expert Advisory Panel, which called for changes to the country's border and travel policy.

The report was prepared by experts in epidemiology, virology and advanced data analytics, and argued that border measures "must evolve" to reflect the growing number of vaccinated people. The group recommended allowing fully-vaccinated travelers to avoid testing and quarantining, ending hotel quarantines and reducing the length of quarantines for those not fully vaccinated.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation last month that he would prefer to wait until 75% of the country is vaccinated before fully re-opening the border.

As of Friday, June 4, 56.8% of the Canadian population had received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and 5.7% had been fully vaccinated, according to the Canadian government's website. In the U.S., 51% of the total population had received at least one dose and 41% had been fully vaccinated, according to data compiled by USA TODAY.

But the advisory panel also noted that Canada is in the third wave of COVID-19, and believes "this must be taken into consideration when phasing out current border measures."

Other countries have forged ahead with airline recovery plans in recent months.

The United Kingdom, which began emerging from its latest lockdown last month, still requires Americans to quarantine for 10 days. Prime Minister Boris Johnson said in April that his country would experiment with vaccine passports but first for its own residents. At the time, the Biden administration said the U.S. government won't be issuing them. The airlines wish it would, however.

Meanwhile, various members of the European Union – including France – are adjusting their travel restrictions to allow fully-vaccinated Americans to enter without requiring quarantine.

“As vaccination rates increase exponentially in both Canada and the U.S., and provincial governments release their restart plans, now is the time for the (Canadian) federal government to engage immediately with airlines to deliver a clear roadmap and timeline to re-open the air border,” Friday’s letter says.

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## Air Canada To Recall Over 2,600 Employees As Travel Demand Increase Expected

*By The Canadian Press, June 10, 2021*

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7939123/air-canada-employee-recall/>

Air Canada says it will recall more than 2,600 employees as it prepares for an increase in demand for flights.

The airline says the employees being recalled will include various roles, including flight attendants, and will be brought back in stages in June and July.

Air Canada spokesman Peter Fitzpatrick says the airline moved to recall the workers because it is seeing vaccinations increase, COVID-19 cases decline and governments ease restrictions.

He says the recall is part of its efforts to rebuild the airline’s network and meet the expected demand for travel.

Air Canada laid off tens of thousands of workers as the pandemic swept Canada, including 16,500 last March when the crisis began.

In April, the airline reached an agreement with Ottawa for a \$5.9-billion aid package.

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## Two Airlines Now Flying Regularly Out Of Waterloo Airport

*By Catherine Thompson, Waterloo Region Record, June 8, 2021*

[https://www.therecord.com/news/waterloo-region/2021/05/26/two-airlines-now-flying-regularly-out-of-waterloo-airport.html?source=newsletter&utm\\_content=a02&utm\\_source=ts\\_nl&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_email=6D73923380F292A40DC042B455F0FDE3&utm\\_campaign=wrha\\_100345](https://www.therecord.com/news/waterloo-region/2021/05/26/two-airlines-now-flying-regularly-out-of-waterloo-airport.html?source=newsletter&utm_content=a02&utm_source=ts_nl&utm_medium=email&utm_email=6D73923380F292A40DC042B455F0FDE3&utm_campaign=wrha_100345)

Despite the ongoing pandemic, travel options for Waterloo Region residents have expanded, as a second airline has begun non-stop flights out of the airport.

WestJet has been the only commercial airline flying out of Region of Waterloo International Airport, with four flights a week to Calgary in June, rising to daily flights next month.

But in May, Edmonton-based super low-cost Flair Airlines began non-stop service to Edmonton, Calgary, Halifax and Vancouver. Flights to Victoria and Winnipeg start in July.

“Canadians want to and need to connect with their family and friends. As regions start to lift restrictions and vaccination rates climb, we are definitely seeing a desire from people to travel,” said Jamina Kotak, Flair’s chief of staff.

“Flair is on a mission to liberate the lives of Canadians by providing affordable air travel that connects them to the people and experiences they love,” she said.

Kotak wouldn’t say how many Flair passengers are now flying out of Waterloo Region’s airport, or whether those numbers are meeting the company’s expectations.

“We await government announcements and, like many, are navigating to travel resuming when restrictions lift and vaccination rates climb,” she said.

“Flair has been a wonderful partner so far and we are very pleased with how things are going so far,” said airport manager Chris Wood. “We expect the passenger volumes to grow once non-essential travel is encouraged and the pandemic restrictions are lifted.”

The airline says there’s a big demand for affordable air travel in Canada.

It has been adding destinations and now flies to 19 cities across the country. It is also expanding its fleet, adding the first of 13 Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft on Thursday, supplementing its current fleet of Boeing 737 800 planes. Another 12 MAX 8 planes are on order in 2021 and 2022. The planes can carry 189 people.

Flair announced in February it would begin flying out of the airport this spring. The region, which runs the airport, hailed the announcement as a game-changer, saying more flights will help local businesses attract skilled employees, enhance tourism and create jobs.

The airport has seen several airlines come and go over the years: American Airlines flew weekly to Chicago from 2012 to 2016; FlyGTA offered weekday flights to Toronto Island from 2017 until March 2020; Bearskin Airlines flew to Ottawa from 2007 to 2014.

## Swoop's Winter Flight Schedule Just Dropped & Domestic Tickets Start At \$40

*By Helena Hanson, Narcity, June 10, 2021*

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/senate-scandals/swoops-winter-flight-schedule-just-dropped-and-domestic-tickets-start-at-dollar40/vi-AAKVdit>

Low-cost Canadian airline Swoop has just dropped its international and domestic flight schedules ahead of the winter 2021 season.

On June 10, the airline announced an expanded winter schedule, which includes non-stop domestic services and the re-introduction of flights to destinations in the United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean.

The international schedule includes flights to "sun and fun destinations," including Las Vegas, Montego Bay in Jamaica, and Cancun, Puerto Vallarta and Mazatlán in Mexico.

The domestic list features winter services to destinations across Canada, with prices starting from \$40 for a one-way ticket, according to a press release from the company.

Despite the good deals, it's worth keeping in mind that Canada still has some pretty strict travel restrictions in place, especially for Canadian travellers who are not yet fully vaccinated.

Although the federal government has suggested that travel could restart by summer 2021, officials continue to advise against non-essential travel both within Canada and abroad.

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## Ryanair CEO Sees Unrestricted UK-European Travel From July

*By Sarah Young and Andy Bruce, Reuters, June 4, 2021*

[Ryanair CEO sees unrestricted UK-European travel from July \(msn.com\)](#)

The chief executive of airline Ryanair expects there to be unrestricted movement between Europe and Britain from July onwards, taking an optimistic position despite Britain's move to further limit travel on Thursday, June 3.

"When people are travelling in July and August, there will be no restrictions on travel to and from, between, the UK and Europe, because of the success of vaccines and the fact that the vaccines are effective against this variant," Ryanair chief executive Michael O'Leary told the BBC on Friday, June 4.

Britain removed Portugal from its quarantine-free travel list on Thursday, June 3, essentially shutting down Britain's international leisure market just weeks after it re-opened.

## Airlines Press U.S. On Refusal To Lift COVID-19 Travel Restrictions

*By David Shepardson, Reuters, June 4, 2021*

[Airlines press U.S. on refusal to lift COVID-19 travel restrictions \(msn.com\)](#)

Major airlines are pressing the United States government on its decision not to move quickly to relax COVID-19 restrictions that block travelers who have been in much of Europe and elsewhere, even as other countries began to ease restrictions.

On Monday, June 7, the heads of several major airlines as well as the chief executives of Heathrow Airport and industry group the U.S. Travel Association will hold a virtual news conference to push for removal of travel restrictions between the United States and the United Kingdom. On hand will be the CEOs of American Airlines, IAG unit British Airways, Delta Air Lines, United Airlines and JetBlue Airways Corp.

The airline CEOs on May 11 had called for a summit between U.S. officials, UK officials, and airlines to discuss how to "expeditiously re-open transatlantic travel."

Since March 2020, the United States has barred nearly all non-U.S. citizens who have been in the UK within the last 14 days from entering the country. Most U.S. travelers visiting the UK must quarantine for 10 days upon arrival.

Airline and administration officials say no change is expected in the near term but add it is possible the restrictions could be removed as early as July 4 or thereabouts, but they caution no decisions have been made.

On Friday, June 4, France said vaccinated Americans starting on June 9 will be able to travel to the country. United said it would resume Paris flights from Washington in July and Delta said it was adding flights to France as well.

At a press event at Washington National Airport on Friday, June 4, American Airlines President Robert Isom said, "We know there is tremendous pent-up demand for service."

Isom said the airline has "a lot of capacity to be ready to go" for European travel. Asked if July 4 would be too late for European summer travel, Isom said: "We're going to take it whenever it comes."

Airline officials had held out hope earlier that by late May, the United States would have lifted travel restrictions on the United Kingdom and Ireland, where new COVID-19 cases have plummeted.

The travel restrictions also apply to most non-U.S. citizens in Brazil, South Africa, India and Iran.

The Biden administration held a call with British officials on Thursday, June 3, people briefed on the matter said, but the White House gave no indication it is planning to lift restrictions.

The White House, which is focused on boosting U.S. vaccination rates and reducing COVID-19 cases, declined to comment on Friday, June 4.

President Joe Biden is certain to face questions about the issue from foreign leaders when he travels to Europe next week.

"We certainly understand the desire of many Europeans to travel to the United States and vice versa," White House spokeswoman Jen Psaki said on May 21. "We can't respond to public pressure or even emotion. We have to rely on the guidance of our health and medical experts."

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## United Airlines Could Soon Fly New York To London In Under 4 Hours Thanks To Supersonic Planes

*By Alison Fox, Travel + Leisure, June 4, 2021*

[United Customers Could Soon Fly to London in Under 4 Hours Thanks to Futuristic New Planes \(msn.com\)](#)

United Airlines customers could soon fly from New York to London in just three and a half hours thanks to the airline's investment in supersonic planes.

The carrier this week agreed to purchase 15 Boom Supersonic 'Overture' planes capable of flying twice as fast as today's fastest airliners — as long as they meet the carrier's safety and sustainability standards — the company shared with Travel + Leisure. As part of the agreement, United has the option to buy 35 additional planes.

The super-fast, futuristic planes would be capable of flying from Newark to Frankfurt, for example, in four hours (a trip that normally takes over 7 hours) and San Francisco to Tokyo in only six hours (the route currently clocks in at over 10 hours), according to United.

"United continues on its trajectory to build a more innovative, sustainable airline and today's advancements in technology are making it more viable for that to include supersonic planes. Boom's vision for the future of commercial aviation, combined with the industry's most robust route network in the world, will give business and leisure travelers access to a stellar flight experience," United CEO Scott Kirby said in a statement. "Our mission has always been about connecting people and now working with Boom, we'll be able to do that on an even greater scale."

The planes are not only fast, they're efficient. The supersonic aircraft is expected to be net-zero carbon and fly on 100% sustainable aviation fuel, according to United.

And comfort won't be forgotten with in-seat entertainment screens and contactless technology built in, the airline noted.

"United and Boom share a common purpose — to unite the world safely and sustainably," Blake Scholl, Boom Supersonic founder and CEO, said in a statement. "At speeds twice as fast, United passengers will experience all the advantages of life lived in person, from deeper, more productive business relationships to longer, more relaxing vacations to far-off destinations."



The supersonic aircraft is expected to take its first flights in 2026 and carry passengers in 2029.

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## OTHER CAFII MEMBER-RELEVANT NEWS/ISSUES

### Relaunch Of HBC Rewards Credit Card Meets Resistance From Wary Customers

*By Susan Krashinsky and James Bradshaw, The Globe and Mail, June 6, 2021*

When Tracey Hamilton received word that her Hudson's Bay credit card would be discontinued as the retailer switched to new provider Neo Financial, she went online to see about getting a new card. But when she saw that the application asked her for a selfie, as well as for an image of government identification such as a passport or driver's licence, she began to worry about data security. Neo specified the information would be stored for 90 days, then deleted. "That doesn't sit right with me," said Ms. Hamilton, 58, who has had a Bay card since her early 20s. She decided against applying. "[Neo is] a pretty new company, I don't know them. ... It's a lot to ask for." HBC chose Neo, a Calgary-based banking start-up, to offer its store-branded credit cards in February after long-time partner Capital One Financial Corp. withdrew from the relationship. For Neo, it was a major opportunity to build its client base by tapping into one of Canada's largest loyalty programs, with 7.5 million active members – and nearly two million Hudson's Bay credit card holders. But amid the switch, some cardholders took to social media to voice their displeasure. The hesitation of some card members such as Ms. Hamilton illustrates the sometimes awkward transition from loyalty programs built over decades with paper applications at department store counters, to a digital-first model. That generational shift has collided with the COVID-19 pandemic, which compelled customers to embrace digital shopping and payments but also cut off much of the in-person support many of them still rely on.

Read Story (Subscription Required): [https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-relaunch-of-hbc-rewards-credit-card-meets-resistance-from-wary/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Top%20Business%20Headlines&utm\\_content=2021-6-9\\_17&utm\\_term=Relaunch%20of%20HBC%20rewards%20credit%20card%20meets%20resistance%20from%20wary%20customers&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&cu\\_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeFJOJkTb](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-relaunch-of-hbc-rewards-credit-card-meets-resistance-from-wary/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Top%20Business%20Headlines&utm_content=2021-6-9_17&utm_term=Relaunch%20of%20HBC%20rewards%20credit%20card%20meets%20resistance%20from%20wary%20customers&utm_campaign=newsletter&cu_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeFJOJkTb)

## UN Secretary-General Encourages Climate Change Action From Insurance Sector

*By Terry, Gangcuangco, Insurance Business Canada, June 9, 2021*

[https://www.insurancebusinessmag.com/ca/news/environmental/un-secretarygeneral-encourages-action-from-insurance-sector-257357.aspx?utm\\_source=GA&utm\\_medium=20210609&utm\\_campaign=IBCW-MorningBriefing-20210609&utm\\_content=9B8F63D4-69B1-4D0C-AE64-59C8BBAFABC8&tu=9B8F63D4-69B1-4D0C-AE64-59C8BBAFABC8](https://www.insurancebusinessmag.com/ca/news/environmental/un-secretarygeneral-encourages-action-from-insurance-sector-257357.aspx?utm_source=GA&utm_medium=20210609&utm_campaign=IBCW-MorningBriefing-20210609&utm_content=9B8F63D4-69B1-4D0C-AE64-59C8BBAFABC8&tu=9B8F63D4-69B1-4D0C-AE64-59C8BBAFABC8)

“Your industry needs to follow suit.”

That was the assertion made by UN Secretary-General António Guterres in his closing remarks to the virtual Insurance Development Forum on June 8. Guterres was referring to what insurance companies should do in the “race against time” to adapt to a rapidly changing climate.

In the UN Secretary-General’s view, global carbon neutrality must be achieved within the next three decades, global finance has to be aligned behind the Paris Agreement, and a breakthrough on adaptation needs to be delivered to protect the world from climate impacts.

“As insurers and as investors, the insurance sector has a key role to play,” stated Guterres in his speech. “Every country, city, financial institution, and company needs to adopt plans for transitioning to net-zero emissions by 2050. That means taking decisive action now.

“Insurance companies control over US\$35 trillion of assets under management. I encourage the insurance industry to align its portfolios and investments with net zero by 2050. Your investments should not be contributing to climate pollution but should be directed towards climate solutions. Invest in renewables, low- and zero-carbon transport, and climate-resilient infrastructure.”

He continued: “Almost 20 insurance companies, as asset owners, have joined the Net Zero Asset Owner Alliance that was convened in 2019. The Alliance is the gold standard in terms of setting credible and transparent targets and timelines to back the net-zero pledges that members have made. I encourage more to join these collective efforts and ensure asset owners send a strong signal across the investment chain.

“We need net-zero commitments to cover your underwriting portfolios, and this should include the underwriting of coal – and all fossil fuels. COP-26 (Conference of the Parties) must signal the end of coal. I support the G7 commitment to end all public international support for coal by the end of this year. Your industry needs to follow suit.”

Guterres stressed that, with climate and disaster risks continuing to be on the rise, more has to be done faster.

Commenting on Guterres' remarks, Insure Our Future co-ordinator Peter Bosshard asserted: "[The] call to action from the UN Secretary-General and the recent 1.5°C report by the International Energy Agency leave insurance companies no hiding place. They have to accept the scientific evidence and immediately stop insuring coal, new oil and new gas projects, or abdicate their pretensions of climate leadership.

"Laggards like AIG, Lloyd's of London, and Tokio Marine should immediately end all insurance support for coal, and supposed insurance industry leaders like Allianz, AXA, and Zurich should end their insurance for new oil and gas projects before COP-26 in Glasgow."

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## Do You Need Health And Dental Insurance In Retirement?

By Kathy Kerr, *Special To The Globe and Mail, May 31, 2021*

[https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/article-do-you-need-health-and-dental-insurance-in-retirement/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Health%20&%20Wellness&utm\\_content=2021-6-7\\_16&utm\\_term=Do%20you%20need%20health%20and%20dental%20insurance%20in%20retirement?&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&cu\\_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeFJOJkTb](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/article-do-you-need-health-and-dental-insurance-in-retirement/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Health%20&%20Wellness&utm_content=2021-6-7_16&utm_term=Do%20you%20need%20health%20and%20dental%20insurance%20in%20retirement?&utm_campaign=newsletter&cu_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeFJOJkTb)

The cost of extended health and dental insurance can shock retirees who have cruised through working life with an employer benefit plan.

Even for those who didn't have work plans, mounting drug and dental bills are a heads up to reconsider the insurance question.

About 2.2 million Canadians over 65 years old have supplementary health insurance coverage for drugs/dental through individual or group benefit plans, according to the Canadian Health and Life Insurance Association.

Still, there are millions left wondering if health and dental insurance are really necessary in retirement – and what options are out there.

Like most retirement planning questions, there's no one-size-fits-all answer, says Ayana Forward, a fee-only certified planner with Retirement in View in Ottawa.

It depends on your health, your finances, what your provincial plan covers and if you can carry over coverage from your job.

"You have to do a cost-benefit analysis. Some people might need a lot of drug coverage. Some people might need a lot of physio," she says.

### Find Out What Your Provincial Plan Covers

Some provinces offer drug coverage, particularly for seniors, but it doesn't cover all drugs. Private dental coverage doesn't cover big-ticket items until a year or two into the policy and often has a cap on claims. It's also usually bundled in with extended health insurance, rather than offered separately.

“It’s a bit of getting creative around how much do you really need. How do you avoid something catastrophic?” Ms. Forward says.

Some people decide to self-insure by setting up a bank account specifically for paying out-of-pocket health and dental expenses, which means being pro-active, she says.

“Check what you’re spending on an annual basis. It changes year by year, so go back a few years.”

For those who decide to get health and dental insurance, the premiums can be claimed at tax time for a credit, so there’s a bit of relief there, Ms. Forward says.

Even for those going without extended health and dental, Ms. Forward advises that travel health insurance is a must.

“What if you’d been in Spain or the States and got COVID? You could be in serious financial trouble.”

She suggests seniors check their auto insurance policy to see if they need to boost the accident benefits. That may not increase premiums much, but it offers some peace of mind in case a vehicle accident results in a serious injury.

### **Check With Your Employer**

Carla Zanotto, an insurance specialist with Integral Financial Services Inc. in Surrey, B.C., says if an employer is offering a retirement health and dental plan, it will often have a lower price than the retiree can get as an individual. But fewer companies are offering those post-employment benefits today.

If retirees don’t have that option, they should go shopping for their own plans within 60 days of the expiration of work coverage, she says.

“As long as you come to me within 60 days of losing that coverage you had from work, I can get you coverage without medical questions,” Ms. Zanotto says.

That can save on premium costs and can be important if the retiree is on medication that a new insurer might otherwise exclude from coverage.

Ms. Zanotto typically offers clients a spreadsheet of coverage details and quotes from three companies to choose from.

Retirees should also check insurance offers from unions, professional organizations or organizations they may belong to such as the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP), which may cover their needs with a lower premium than brokers or companies can offer to individuals.

She recently had a client retiring from the film industry who was seeking advice about whether to buy her own insurance or take a plan offered by her union. They discovered the union plan was better than what she could find on the open market.

Some extended health plans include travel, Ms. Zanotto says. People can consider building more days into the plan than are routinely covered if they regularly travel outside Canada.

If retirees count on buying trip-by-trip medical travel coverage, they may be disqualified because of their answers to the medical questionnaire, she adds. It's another reason to have it included in an extended health plan which doesn't require requalification for each trip.

There is no disability insurance for retired people, but retirees with critical illness included in an extended health policy may be able to claim that if they suffer from major health events such as stroke, heart attack and cancer, Ms. Zanotto adds.

### **Coverage Can Evolve**

The Canadian health system is very good, but there have been significant changes in recent years that affect costs, says Darren Ulmer of Regina-based Darren Ulmer Financial and Insurance Services Inc., a Sun Life financial adviser and a health specialist.

He says provincial plans covered drugs administered while the patient was in hospital. "Now the emphasis is on recovery at home. Everybody thought that was a great idea until they realized that now they were on the hook for all of those drugs (taken outside the hospital)," says Mr. Ulmer, a cancer survivor.

"Most provincial drug plans will cap the cost of the drugs over the age of 65, but there are many drugs that are not on the national formulary [the list of prescribed drugs]. If you're on a drug that isn't in that formulary, it can be catastrophic to come up with \$3,000 to \$4,000 a month extra above your planned living expenses."

Seniors may also consider long-term care insurance or retirement health-assist insurance.

"It's a type of dignity insurance that provides you with an uncapped benefit for the balance of your life providing you with a monthly benefit ... that's not taxable," Mr. Ulmer says. "It will top up your retirement income anywhere from \$500 a week to \$2,000 a week at the point in time that you qualify because you'll require assistance with the activities of daily living."

The claimant's family doctor certifies if the claimant has reached the need for that assistance and at what level, Mr. Ulmer says.

"You don't want to be 70 years old and thinking about this type of coverage. We typically talk to our clients in their 50s and 60s, so they've already built it into their retirement financial planning," he adds.

"The younger you are and the less medication you're on, the easier it is to get any of this type of coverage."

## RESEARCH/THOUGHT LEADERSHIP/TECHNOLOGY/DIGITIZATION NEWS

### Companies Outperform On Digitization, Prepare For Further Growth

*Canadian biz foresees M&A activity, an EY survey said*

*By Investment Executive Staff, June 9, 2021*

[https://www.investmentexecutive.com/news/research-and-markets/companies-outperform-on-digitization-prepare-for-further-growth/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=nl&utm\\_content=investmentexecutive&utm\\_campaign=INT-EN](https://www.investmentexecutive.com/news/research-and-markets/companies-outperform-on-digitization-prepare-for-further-growth/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=nl&utm_content=investmentexecutive&utm_campaign=INT-EN)

While the pandemic struck businesses in such sectors as travel, tourism and entertainment particularly hard, a majority of businesses polled earlier this year had a positive earnings outlook and saw themselves poised for growth, aided by their outperformance on digital capabilities.

EY's Global Capital Confidence Barometer, conducted from November 2020 to January 2021, found that 90% of Canadian executives surveyed said they experienced significant declines in revenue and profitability because of the pandemic; however, 77% expected revenues to return to pre-pandemic levels this year, and 87% anticipated profitability returning by 2022.

Despite the pandemic's challenges, Canadian businesses also identified a silver lining: more than three-quarters (78%) said they outperformed on digital transformation in the past year.

"From remote working — which has enabled collaboration without business travel — to the rapid ramp-up of e-commerce capabilities, Canadian companies realized early that there were digital opportunities amid adversity," the survey said.

Digital capabilities will remain a top priority for firms ahead, with 68% of Canadian companies planning to increase strategic focus and investment in their digital agendas.

"Investments in digital may have been a reactive trigger to the pandemic, but moving forward, executives are looking to drive opportunistic investments to create more flexible operating models and greater cost efficiencies," said Doug Jenkinson, partner, strategy and transactions at EY Canada, in a release.

As a result of businesses' resilience as well as low interest rates, 53% of Canadian companies plan to actively pursue mergers and acquisitions in the next 12 months, the survey said.

At the same time, 79% of Canadian executives said their companies either failed to complete or cancelled a planned acquisition in the past year, suggesting companies are taking a prudent approach to M&A. Jenkinson cautioned, however, against a wait-and-see approach.

"Target assets with the right competencies and synergistic qualities are hard to find," he said.

"Companies that actively pursue M&A to accelerate growth will increase their chances of outperforming their competitors as we look towards economic recovery."

Canada hit an all-time high in M&A activity in the first quarter, investment bank Crosbie & Co. said on Wednesday, June 9.

The EY survey also uncovered an area in which firms need to improve to take advantage of the recovery ahead. About one-third of executives (32%) said their firms underperformed in workforce management. However, the majority (78%) said the pandemic has now increased their strategic focus and investment in employees.

“As Canadian executives examine lessons learned from the pandemic and prepare their path forward, they must put humans at the centre of their focus, apply technology with speed and innovate at scale in order to succeed,” Jenkinson said.

“Canadian companies that do can do more than prosper — they can make bold moves and create exponential value that lasts.”

**About EY’s global survey:** *From November 2020 to January 2021, Thought Leadership Consulting surveyed on behalf of EY a panel of more than 2,400 executives in 52 countries; 82% were CEOs, CFOs and other C-suite-level executives. Financial services was among the sectors represented.*

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## UPCOMING WEBINARS AND EVENTS

### Web Seminar: McMillan LLP On Advertising In The Virtual World

**Date:** Thursday June 17, 2021

**Time:** 12:00 pm – 1:30 pm EDT (90 minutes)

Join members of McMillan LLP’s Marketing and Advertising Group on Thursday, June 17, 2021 at 12 pm ET as we discuss current trends in marketing and advertising in an increasingly virtual world, and during the ongoing global pandemic. Topics include: Digital Enforcement in a Virtual World; Under the Influencer; Advertising Issues in Québec; Comparative Performance Claims; and Ad Standards Disputes - How to Win.

[Register Here](#)

## Web Seminar: Future of Insurance Canada 2021 By Reuters Events

**Date:** August 24-25, 2021

**Time:** (TBD)

Insurers have been masters of resilience for years but now is the time to use these skills to go from simply surviving to thriving, by reinventing insurance as we know it.

This is the time to seize opportunities.

Now, more than ever, we must urgently transform products and services, tackle emerging risks, and strategize for success in a dramatically changed, digital landscape.

Which is why Reuters Events is bringing The Future of Insurance Canada 2021 (August 24-25) combined with the inaugural Connected Claims Canada (August 26). This is your chance to join insurance industry titans as we explore future-setting trends and practical case studies that will reinvent insurance.

[Pre-order information pack here](#)

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## Web Seminar: Connected Claims Canada 2021 By Reuters Events

**Date:** August 26, 2021

**Time:** (TBD)

Reuters Events is excited to announce that the largest claims innovation and technology event in the world is finally coming to Canada.

Connected Claims Canada will take place in August 26th and will be hosted alongside the most influential event for the Canadian insurance industry, the Future of Insurance Canada (August 24-25).

When digital is no longer a competitive advantage but a requirement to do business, transforming claims is the most successful strategy to reduce costs and create an omni-channel, Amazon-like customer experience.

Join Connected Claims Canada to discover the strategies to deliver an unforgettable customer experience, no matter the channel or the complexity of the claim

This is the time to seize opportunities.

[Pre-order information pack here](#)