

## **CAFII ALERTS WEEKLY DIGEST: May 14 TO May 21, 2021**

May 21, 2021

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## DIVERSITY/INCLUSION/FIGHTING SYSTEMIC RACISM NEWS

### Global Affairs Canada Pushing Racist Idea That Hard Work Is Incompatible With Non-Whites

*By Jamil Jivani, National Post, May 18, 2021*

[Jamil Jivani: Global Affairs Canada pushing racist idea that hard work is incompatible with non-whites \(msn.com\)](#)

The push to make racial division a top priority in public life goes by many names: anti-racism, neo-racism, the elect, critical race theory, identity politics, wokeness. It has been hard to pin down precise language to describe what's going on in governments, big businesses, media companies, school boards, and universities. I'd like to suggest a new term: remixed racism.

Remixed racism borrows from the racism of the past and reintroduces it to modern audiences with a new, faux progressive style. Like a top forty single that samples a golden oldie, remixed racism changes the tempo, speeds up the chorus, and maybe even has a rapper spit a hot sixteen bars. But in the end, it has the same foundation.

Canada's federal government has brought remixed racism to Global Affairs Canada under the guise of anti-racism training. Canadian officials in Ottawa are being taught that perfectionism, a sense of urgency, individualism, worship of the written word, and objectivity are characteristics of white supremacy culture. In other words, the Government of Canada is using taxpayer dollars to teach that race and culture are one in the same, and certain ideas associated with hard work, science, and democracy are incompatible with non-white cultures.

Does this racism sound familiar? It should. Social Darwinism was based on similar notions that some races were of a lower "intellectual standard" because of cultural differences. Government of Canada anti-racism training also reflects the paternalism found in colonial writings, such as British politician Thomas Macaulay's 1835 memo titled Minute on Indian Education. This memo argued Indians were in need of white saviours because they were culturally incompatible with science, due to their "monstrous superstitions" and "false history, false astronomy, false medicine."

What exactly does Global Affairs Canada think is going to happen when their diplomats and officials carry this paternalistic attitude with them overseas? Picture Canadian representatives telling the nations of Africa and Asia that the foundational idea of civil rights, individualism, is white supremacy. Or imagine Canada's trading partners being informed that they might be white supremacists if they demonstrate a sense of urgency or fondness for objective reasoning. And what might the world's Christians, Muslims, and Jews who believe in holy scriptures think of the Government of Canada labelling worship of the written word as "white."

Canada's struggle with remixed racism doesn't stop in Ottawa. The City of Hamilton has brought us back to the "anti-miscegenation" era of pre-1967 USA with its decision to distribute COVID-19 vaccines in a manner that would divide families and households by race. On April 24, the city offered vaccine appointments to residents in five postal code areas, but specified that only "Black and other racialized populations/people of colour ages 18+" could receive the vaccine (i.e. no white people). These municipal officials showed absolutely no concern for what their approach would mean for multi-racial families that include white people living in the same home with people of colour. The City of Hamilton's disregard for such families is a remix of Jim Crow-era hostility toward multi-racial families.

The New Yorker is also in on the remixing. Quoting a sociologist from the University of Oklahoma, the magazine's recent attack on Christianity went so far as to argue that "the greatest ethnic dog whistle the right has ever come up with is 'Christian,' because it means 'people like us,' it means white." Subordinating Christianity to racial politics is a familiar theme from the 1800s and prior. Conflating the Christian identity with white identity is something you'd expect from colonial forces and slave owners. It even harkens back to 20th century racism, recalling the scene in The Godfather where mafia bosses argue Black Americans don't have souls. But when you remix it for today's woke audiences, one of the world's largest magazines has no problem peddling prejudice.

Remixed racism is still racism. Resisting this political agenda starts with calling it out for what it is.

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

### Post-Vaccination COVID Numbers Prove The Miracle Is Real, Despite Official Canadian Pessimism

*By Chris Selley, National Post, May 19, 2021*

[Chris Selley: Post-vaccination COVID numbers prove the miracle is real, despite official Canadian pessimism \(msn.com\)](#)

I wonder what locked-down Canadians think when they watch American sporting events these days and see thousands of joyful bums in seats. Some will be jealous, some nervous, some smug in certain knowledge — against all evidence, but never mind that — that the silly Yanks are laying the foundations for their fourth and fifth waves.

Some might just be plain confused.

It's clear enough that the average American perceives pandemic risk quite differently than the average Canadian. But the gap has never been starker. Toronto is seeing about 23 daily cases per 100,000, same as Miami. Ottawa is at just under 10, same as St. Louis. Even the American cities that logged the fewest cases, in some cases fewer than their Canadian counterparts — Seattle, San Francisco, Portland, Oregon — are letting at least a few fans back in the stands for baseball and the NBA playoffs.

Canada is lagging the United States on eradicating this bastard virus, but not by much, and only because we're behind them on vaccines: cases are dropping steadily in Quebec and Saskatchewan; in Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia they're plummeting. This week, Canada will overtake the U.S. in terms of vaccine doses administered per capita. Yet, with the sole exception of Quebec, which has agreed to allow 2,500 fans to attend Canadiens playoff games, Canadian provincial officials seem frightened even to talk about such things. Their eyes bug out, sweat beads on their foreheads; it's like someone offstage is pointing a gun at them.

Ontario's advisory "science table" is suggesting restaurant patios might safely Re-Open ... in July. Last week, Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Theresa Tam went out of her way (and jurisdiction) to suggest Canadians might be able to go camping at some point this summer once 75 per cent of adults have one dose — considerably higher than in peer countries. No one seems especially eager to accelerate the pace of anything, say by requiring proof of vaccination for certain activities — as several American sports venues have done. Instead we hear over and over that vaccines are no guarantee of anything; that we don't know for sure how well they prevent transmission.

That's an important point. It's just strange to harp on about the things vaccines can't do when we're supposedly desperate for everyone to get vaccinated as quickly as possible, and when the things they do are so bloody spectacular.

Perhaps the starkest, simplest representation of the vaccine miracle is to look at the number of people who develop COVID-19, are admitted to hospital, and pass away after receiving one or two doses. The Canadian data on this front, limited though they are, haven't received the attention they deserve.

In a report issued earlier this month, Public Health Ontario found that from December 14 to April 17, 49,368 Ontarians over 60 — more than one in 70 — were diagnosed with COVID-19. Of those, just 916 (1.9 per cent) had received a first dose of vaccine and just 73 (0.1 per cent) had received two doses. As of April 17, 65 per cent of the 60-plus population had received at least one dose. The other unvaccinated 35 per cent, by choice or otherwise, accounted for roughly 98 per cent of the diagnosed cases.

And if you're unlucky enough to catch COVID-19 after your vaccination(s), there's more almost unbelievably good news. Over the course of the pandemic, COVID-19 has sent 45 per cent of those over 80 who catch it to hospital, and killed nine per cent of them. According to Public Health Ontario's data, the number of fully immunized Ontarians of any age who had passed away as of April 17 was precisely zero. Only eight had even been admitted to hospital.

These data are borne out in studies from around the world: the United States, the United Kingdom and here in Canada. On Tuesday, May 18, Manitoba reported the first death of a fully vaccinated person. The province noted that "more than 79,000 individuals ... have received two doses of vaccine." One in 79,000 is damn good odds, I will suggest: All in all, one in 30 Manitobans have had COVID-19, and one in 1,350 have died from it.

Last week, Manitoba released some good-news data to the Winnipeg Free Press: among other things, only four fully vaccinated residents had even been admitted to hospital. University of Manitoba virologist Jason Kindrachuk sounded a welcome note of enthusiasm: “In England today, it was the first time in over a year they’ve had zero (COVID) deaths,” he told the Free Press. “That to me is where you look at the power of vaccination.”

Indeed. Or to the United States, for that matter, precisely because many American jurisdictions are so incautious by Canadian or even British standards. And at some point soon, well before July, I suspect even the most nervous Canadians will be unable to escape noticing that Britain’s pandemic is over, that America’s pandemic is over, that Israel’s pandemic is over. It’s not temporary; it’s not a mirage; it’s exactly the almost supernaturally amazing thing that it looks like. Talking it down, as so many public health officials seem determined to do, is surely the worst thing we could do at this point.

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## Americans Are Living A Post-Vaccination Reality

*By Jackson Proskow, Washington Bureau Chief, Global News, May 17, 2021*

[COMMENTARY: Americans are living a post-vaccination reality \(msn.com\)](#)

For the first time since January 2020, I’ve been invited to a party.

“Please only come if you are fully vaccinated,” reads the invitation, in language that seems to have replaced the more traditional plea to bring snacks or to BYOB.

Naturally, there’s still a lot of trepidation. It almost feels taboo.

A friend, whom I haven’t seen since before the pandemic, has decided to throw a small gathering for other fully vaccinated friends in a few weeks, recognizing that it’s finally safe to expand our social circles again.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control it’s now okay for fully vaccinated people to be indoors or outdoors, at events large or small, without social distancing and without masks.

The reality of the U.S. vaccine program is that most of my friends in their 30s, 40s and beyond are, like me, fully vaccinated. That means it’s been at least two weeks since we received our second dose.

In many places, you no longer need an appointment to get a shot. A brewery in my neighbourhood recently held a drop-in clinic where you could get a dose of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine, along with a free beer. All you had to do was show up.

I’ve struggled with whether to write about this, knowing these realities are a privilege that family and friends in Canada can’t yet experience because of access to vaccines or case-driven restrictions where they live.

You only need to look at the horrors unfolding in India, Nepal and elsewhere to know that the pandemic is nowhere close to over for most of the world, which makes the situation in the U.S. feel particularly jarring.

But vaccination is the way out of this, and so I want to share what happens when it becomes widespread.

Across most of the U.S., the remaining restrictions and capacity limits for businesses are disappearing rapidly.

By early June in Washington, D.C., the final caps on nightclubs and bars will be gone. No 25 per cent occupancy limit, or distanced seating, matching plans in cities and states across the country.

A full-fledged return to normal in the next four weeks is on the table. You will be able to sit at a bar again, or go to a packed concert or cheer in the stands at a football game.

My friends are making summer plans for indoor weddings and flying off to normal-sounding vacations — albeit, without leaving the country.

The party invite I received is far from the exception. There are invitations and e-cards for “vaccine celebrations” for sale online.

In most places, the trend toward the complete removal of restrictions has happened because case numbers have declined substantially, and rapidly, as vaccinations expand.

Most jurisdictions have waited until they feel it’s safe to do so, taking baby steps along the way. This isn’t being driven by pleas for liberty or anti-lockdown tirades, and effectively explains why the CDC waited before updating its mask guidance for the fully vaccinated. Even then, there are plenty of experts who think it’s still too early.

To be clear, there have always been some states with looser restrictions, and there have always been people who’ve defied reality and acted as though there was no pandemic. For that, the U.S. has paid an incredible price in the form of 585,000 dead, and counting.

There are millions more Americans for whom normality will never truly return, having lost a relative, a friend, or a livelihood.

For the first time in the pandemic, Immunity through vaccination is delivering on the promise of true freedom, incomparable to blind pandemic defiance. For the vaccinated, there is now an ability to live life, with minimal risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

Don’t believe me? A panel of vaccinated American epidemiologists recently told Vox that they’re comfortable returning to many pre-COVID-19 activities, and say their confidence will only grow as overall case counts decline.

It’s also not the wild west.



Masks will still be required on planes, trains and busses. It's hard not to think that retailers and various states will be slow to repeal mask requirements, as a way to provide comfort to unvaccinated customers and employees, in an environment in which vaccination is not easily proven.

There are also questions about the possibility of so-called breakthrough cases, in which fully vaccinated people contract the virus, as several New York Yankees players have. In those cases, symptoms seem to remain mild or non-existent, but of course, there are questions about the risk of further transmission.

The CDC has warned that should things suddenly trend in the wrong direction — increased cases, breakthrough variants or evolving science — the masks could come back on, and restrictions could return.

And of course, there are still things that I, as a fully vaccinated person, can't do, like travel easily back to Canada to see family and friends.

There are also things I'm not sure I'm quite ready to do, like eat indoors in a restaurant full of unmasked strangers — show me to the patio for now, please.

That will likely change in the coming months, as personal confidence and science evolve, and as cases continue to decline and more people get vaccinated.

But these early steps forward have shown that the things that felt like they might forever vanish from our grasp are in fact closer than we might realize.

This past weekend, I had what for me has been my most meaningful experience since I became fully vaccinated: I held a friend's pandemic baby for the first time.

So party invites are just the beginning. Across the U.S. there's a sense that, for the first time in more than a year, normal might be possible again.

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## Thanks To The Good Sense Of Canadians, We're About To Out-Vaccinate The Americans

*By The Globe and Mail Editorial Board, May 18, 2021*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-thanks-to-the-good-sense-of-canadians-were-about-to-out-vaccinate-the/>

Later this week, Canada is going to pass the United States on the vaccination league tables. The share of Canadians who have received their first shot will, for the first time, exceed the share of Americans.

The cross-border vaccine gap, once enormous, has been narrowing for weeks. On May 7, just 37 per cent of Canadians had at least one shot, compared with 45 per cent in the U.S. — an eight-percentage-point difference. Ten days later, with Canada's campaign having picked up speed, the tally of Canadians with at least one jab has risen to 45.7 per cent. The U.S. has climbed to only 47.3 per cent.



By the middle of this week, Canada will be ahead of the U.S. Our lead will thereafter widen.

This is a big deal. It's not the end of the race, but it is a sign of how far down the track we are, and how fast we're moving.

None of this would be happening if Canadians weren't stepping forward and eagerly offering up their arms. This is your doing.

The U.S. is proof that simply having a lot of shots isn't enough. The Americans do not lack for vaccine supply; they're practically drowning in the stuff. But in much of the country, there's a serious and growing shortage of willing people.

In Canada, it has so far been an entirely different story. Vaccines remain in extremely high demand, which is why Canada has quickly closed the vaccination gap, despite our southern neighbour's large and early supply advantage.

Canada will hit a vaccine-hesitancy wall eventually, though the signs are that, in most of the country, it will happen later – hopefully far later – than in the U.S.

For example, the City of Toronto reported that, as of Monday morning, 60.1 per cent of adults – about half the city's population – had received at least their first shot. Toronto is asking for more vaccines to be allocated by the province, because many neighbourhoods remain infection hot spots that ought to be given priority – and because, as of Monday, 97 per cent of available vaccine appointments at city-run clinics were already booked for this week, next week and the week after.

That's not ideal, given that hot-spot postal codes in Toronto, Peel Region and other areas of the province should be getting a continuing oversupply of vaccines. Send the fire trucks to where the fire is.

But don't lose sight of that cloud's big silver lining: even though deliveries to Canada increased this month and are still ramping up – a record 4.5 million doses of Pfizer and Moderna are expected this week – Canada's growing supply continues to be outstripped by Canadians' demand.

Despite a vaccine rollout that has had false starts and setbacks, most of our fellow citizens have not been deterred. They see vaccination for what it is: the route back to normal life, for each of us individually and all of us collectively.

The most vaccine-enthusiastic parts of the U.S. look a lot like Canada. In Vermont, the state with the highest vaccine uptake, 65 per cent of residents have received at least one shot. That's slightly higher than the level in Yukon, which is Canada's vaccine leader, thanks to Ottawa having given a large and early allocation to the territories.

But in Mississippi, just 32 per cent of people have received their first shot. That figure has barely budged for weeks, despite lots of shots being available. It's a similar story across much of the U.S. South and West.

As a result, despite the U.S. having a big lead in vaccine supply, a higher percentage of people have received their first shot in Manitoba than in neighbouring North Dakota. Saskatchewan's level of first-shot vaccination has passed Montana, and Alberta is on the verge of doing so.

British Columbia is behind Oregon – one of the U.S. states with relatively high vaccine uptake – but catching up fast. Ontario, once far back of Michigan, has drawn even and is about to pull ahead.

No one should get complacent, because there's still a lot left to be done – on vaccinations, public-health measures and a host of other issues – before COVID-19 is beaten. There's hard work ahead, and we'll have more to say later this week on the many smart steps that need to be taken to get Canada to the finish line.

But this country is, suddenly, a lot closer to the end of the pandemic than to the beginning.

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## Canadians Deserve More Inspiring, Less Tepid Federal Messaging On Vaccines, Restrictions

*Opinion By Rob Breakenridge, Global News, May 15, 2021*

[COMMENTARY: Canadians deserve more inspiring, less tepid federal messaging on vaccines, restrictions \(msn.com\)](#)

Yesterday's announcement of an accelerated shipment of 4.5 million vaccines arriving in Canada this coming week was indeed welcome news. Perhaps federal officials should have just left it at that.

Getting more vaccines here more quickly will certainly help accelerate the rollout and hopefully get us on the path of bringing COVID-19 cases down and keeping them there. Further to that, it's not unreasonable that there would be some federal guidance as to what impact this is all going to have and how life might change for those who are vaccinated.

Unfortunately, the federal messaging on this has been rather tepid and uninspiring. We understandably don't want to oversell and overpromise, but there's a downside to being overly cautious. Canadians are very much suffering from pandemic fatigue, compounded by the rather dispiriting third wave that's pummelled much of the country.

We deserve some hope and optimism, and the experience in countries such as the U.S., U.K., and Israel is proof that there's genuine hope and optimism to sell to Canadians. New data out this week further confirms the efficacy of the vaccines we're relying heavily on, and even further vindicates the first-dose-first, delayed-interval approach that Canada is taking.

Moreover, though, we need to incentivize Canadians to be a part of the vaccine rollout. If there's little promise of meaningful change anytime soon, it's going to be a lot harder to convince sufficient numbers of Canadians to roll up their sleeves and do their part.

Ultimately, provinces will be the ones to make decision on public health measures, and so far the evidence seems to indicate that the provinces have a much better understanding of this.

Saskatchewan Premier Scott Moe took to Twitter to lament the federal guidelines on what summer might look like, instead touting his own province's Re-opening Roadmap which in his words will deliver a "great Saskatchewan summer."

Rhetoric aside, the Saskatchewan plan is much more detailed and much more optimistic than the more vague and half-hearted guidelines proposed yesterday by federal officials. If other provinces are looking to cues to take, let's hope for more Saskatchewan and less Ottawa.

In Alberta, where the third wave has hit perhaps the hardest, the province's vaccine messaging is much more in tune with what Canadians need to be hearing right now. The "Back to Normal" campaign is touting a message of just that: vaccination is our path out of this mess and back to normalcy. Let's not be afraid to say that.

If nothing else, though, the guidelines from the Public Health Agency of Canada are probably preferable to the weird slogan that the prime minister was testing out this past week. Clearly, someone thought that the message of a "one-dose summer" setting up a "two-dose fall" was clever and catchy, but it's really anything but.

Yes, we're on track to have a significant majority of eligible Canadians with a first dose by mid- to late June. That should set us up nicely for a real ramp up in second doses by late July and early August. So, yes, the "one dose summer" slogan isn't incorrect.

But what are Canadians supposed to take from that? What does a "one-dose summer" actually entail? I'm sure the Liberals expected the phrase to generate some excitement and buzz, but more likely to leave people confused and underwhelmed.

It often seems odd the extent to which the federal government talks up the vaccine rollout but then downplays the potential payoff of that rollout. Maybe it would be helpful for them to stick to the former and leave the latter to the provinces.

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## National Post View: Trudeau's Hope For A 'Slightly Better Summer' Is An Insult To Canadians

*By National Post, May 19, 2021*

[NP View: Trudeau's hope for a 'slightly better summer' is an insult to Canadians \(msn.com\)](#)

The Carolina Hurricanes opened their National Hockey League playoff series on Monday, May 17 in front of 12,000 raucous fans at the RBC Centre in Raleigh, North Carolina. Once dubbed "the loudest house in the NHL," it was once again echoing to the noise of fans cheering on their team.

The Toronto Maple Leafs will take to the ice Tuesday to a much different atmosphere. Though canned noise and pre-recorded cheers will avoid the sombre sound of sticks and pucks echoing through deserted halls, the Leafs will face off against the Montreal Canadiens — the first playoff confrontation between two historic rivals in 42 years — in front of empty seats and artificial enthusiasm.

Canadians have paid a heavy price for a year of botched leadership as governments at every level struggled to get a grasp on the COVID crisis. Federal and provincial authorities alike have shown themselves far better at excuses and vapid pronouncements than in adopting appropriate measures to slow the spread of the virus and protect the endangered. It's no excuse that other countries have shown little greater aptitude: third rate is third rate, regardless of where it lives.

We deserve better, and as vaccines bring us closer to the end of the tunnel, it is time for Ottawa, the provinces and the territories to up their game. Now is the time to begin preparing Re-opening plans that will return the country as quickly as possible to as close a semblance of normality as can be managed in a society scarred by months of setbacks.

For a country that likes to see itself as optimistic, Canada is an enormously cautious and risk averse place. That being the case, there is a great danger that our civic leaders will opt for an extended, painful and life-numbing re-entry despite all the lessons we've learned about safe and effective ways of dealing with the virus.

It would be tragic and unnecessary to do so. When Texas Governor Greg Abbott announced in March that he planned to fully Re-Open the state, he was loudly mocked. President Joe Biden accused him of "Neanderthal thinking." More than two months later, baseball teams have been playing to packed houses, college football held its national championship and fans again crowded the course for a PGA golf tournament. On Sunday, May 16, Abbott reported that, for the first time in over a year, there hadn't been a single COVID death in the state in the previous 24 hours, as its seven-day positivity rate reached the lowest point since the pandemic began. Even Biden has quit wearing his mask.

Florida, assailed for its refusal to bow to the most extremist proponents of mass lockdowns, recorded 1,976 new cases on Monday, about even on a per capita basis with Ontario. But whereas Florida Governor Ron DeSantis suspended all local emergency mandates a week ago and went so far as to pledge to pardon anyone convicted of breaking COVID protocols, Ontarians remain hunkered in their homes under an emergency order that bars leaving for any but a small handful of reasons.

That so many openly flaunt the order shows how low respect has fallen for our elected leadership. If federal and provincial authorities hope to regain any of their lost credibility, they should toss aside the political and ideological bickering that has impeded efforts to such a great degree, and put their backs into a Re-opening plan that involves the maximum amount of freedom at the minimum level of intrusiveness needed to maintain a healthy environment.

We know that restaurants, bars, beauty salons, retail outlets and thousands of other businesses can operate safely under appropriate conditions. We know that the vast majority of Canadians respect the law and can be counted on to act responsibly. We know that children can go to school, that fans can watch sporting events, that families can gather and the elderly can enjoy visits.

We are not yet at the level of vaccination that would allow the doors to be thrown open and the pandemic declared over, but we are quickly approaching a point where many of the most egregious restrictions can be loosened or lifted. And people expect them to be.

There is little evidence that Canada's leaders understand this. The best Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is willing to venture is "a slightly better summer" than last year, and only if 75 per cent of the population has received at least one dose, followed by a "two-dose fall," leaving millions wondering if Canada will even begin to resemble its old self before snow flies again.

The United Kingdom lifted the shackles on its weary population after fully vaccinating 30 per cent of them. European countries, many of which rivalled Canada for their mishandling of the crisis, are to meet this week to finalise a plan to allow entry to fully vaccinated people without quarantine or COVID testing. "Green lists" are being assembled of countries whose citizens will be allowed entry, including Australia and New Zealand but not Canada. The prime minister won't even guess as to when our longest and most important border, the one with the U.S., might Re-Open.

It's not good enough. Canadians have been repeatedly let down over a miserable 15 months. Turn off the noise machines in NHL arenas and you get a sense of the feeling in the country itself: where there should be the excitement of summer you get only the silence of disappointment.

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## In Many Countries, Including Canada, Dissatisfaction With Governments' COVID-19 Pandemic Response Is Growing, Study Finds

*By Paul Waldie, Europe Correspondent, The Globe and Mail, May 14, 2021*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-in-many-countries-including-canada-dissatisfaction-with-governments/>

A global study involving more than 540,000 people shows that vaccine hesitancy and concerns about safety have declined steadily over the past year, but people in many countries, including Canada, have become more unhappy with how their governments have handled the COVID-19 pandemic.

Researchers at Imperial College London have been tracking people in 29 countries since April, 2020, to gauge how the public has responded to the virus. The latest findings, released Friday, showed polling results from 14 countries, including Canada, that have been surveyed most regularly.

"This program helps ensure that responses to COVID-19 are successful," said David Nabarro, co-director of the Institute of Global Health Innovation at Imperial. "It recognizes that people are at the heart of every response, changing how they behave to reduce the impact of the virus, and its variants, on their health."

The report found that willingness to get vaccinated has risen in every country except Australia since November, when the first vaccines were approved.

Britain recorded the strongest support for vaccination, at 67 per cent in April, 2021, compared with 54 per cent last November. That's likely a reflection of the country's vaccination program, which has been among the most successful in the world. More than two-thirds of all adults in the U.K. have received at least one dose of vaccine and 18.9 million have had two shots.

In Canada, where the immunization campaign has picked up in recent weeks, the public's willingness to be vaccinated has increased to 60 per cent from 44 per cent last November.

Even in France, where support for vaccination has been among the lowest in the world, the study found that a general willingness to be vaccinated has increased to 39 per cent from 25 per cent last November. Meanwhile, the percentage of people in France who said they would not get vaccinated fell to 45 per cent from 56 per cent in November.

While Australia was the only country to see willingness fall, it dropped only slightly to 51 per cent from 55 per cent.

At the same time, concerns about side effects have decreased in all but two countries – South Korea and Denmark. Fears about side effects increased to 60 per cent in South Korea from 56 per cent in November, and climbed to 45 per cent from 42 per cent in Denmark.

People in Britain were the least concerned, with just 27 per cent saying they feared side effects. That compared with 46 per cent last November. Canadians came in at 42 per cent, down from 53 per cent who were worried in November.

However, the overall trust in COVID-19 vaccines has dropped in five of the 14 countries since the beginning of the year, when reports surfaced about the Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine's links to rare blood clots. The biggest drop in trust came in Denmark, where nearly one-third of those surveyed – 32 per cent – said they did not trust the vaccines. That was up from 22 per cent in January.

Denmark stopped using the AstraZeneca vaccine in April because of concerns about blood clots. The country also recently dropped the Johnson & Johnson vaccine for the same reason.

Distrust in COVID-19 vaccines also increased by smaller amounts in Norway, Italy, Australia and South Korea, the study found. But in Canada, those who said they had little or no trust in vaccines fell to 30 per cent in April from 33 per cent in January. People in Britain had the highest level of trust at 83 per cent, compared with 77 per cent in January.

The study found that despite the successful rollout of vaccines in several countries, most people have a dim view of how their governments have handled the pandemic. In 12 of the 14 countries, the share of people who said their governments had managed the crisis well had decreased since last June.

In Germany, for example, 70 per cent of those surveyed last June said their government was doing a good job. That dropped to just 26 per cent in April. The decline could be a reflection of the slow rollout of the vaccination program in Germany and elsewhere in the European Union.

Among Canadians, approval for the government's management of the pandemic fell to 58 per cent in April from 77 per cent last June. Meanwhile, 38 per cent of Canadians said the government was doing "somewhat badly" or "very badly," compared with 19 per cent last June.

Only respondents in Singapore and Britain said their governments were doing better now than last June. Government approval was highest in Singapore at 88 per cent, compared with 71 per cent last June. Among Britons, approval increased to 45 per cent from 36 per cent.

Most people across all countries had more confidence in their health care systems than in their governments, but that has begun to wane. Since last June, confidence in health care agencies has fallen in 11 of the 14 countries.

Only Singapore, Britain and Sweden saw an increase in those who said they had a lot or a fair amount of confidence in their health care system's ability to cope with COVID-19. Among Canadians, confidence has dropped to 65 per cent from 78 per cent.

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## The Virtues We Need To Reach The COVID-19 Finish Line

*By Marcus Gee, The Globe and Mail, May 14, 2021*

[https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-the-virtues-we-need-to-reach-the-covid-19-finish-line/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Coronavirus%20Update&utm\\_content=2021-5-16\\_19&utm\\_term=Coronavirus%20Update:%20How%20the%20pandemic%20spurred%20fierce%20com petition%20among%20us%20&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&cu\\_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-the-virtues-we-need-to-reach-the-covid-19-finish-line/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Coronavirus%20Update&utm_content=2021-5-16_19&utm_term=Coronavirus%20Update:%20How%20the%20pandemic%20spurred%20fierce%20com petition%20among%20us%20&utm_campaign=newsletter&cu_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb)

Never has the old saw "it's always darkest before the dawn" seemed more apt than in the past few weeks. Fully a year after the pandemic started sweeping the world, a devastating third wave rolled across Canada. New variants of COVID-19 washed in. Intensive-care units filled up. Younger people showed up at hospitals in rising numbers. Exhausted doctors worried anew that they would soon have to decide who would get lifesaving care and who would not. Health authorities tightened lockdowns.

And yet the first rays of the rising sun are clearly visible. The long-promised flood of vaccines is arriving. Another 4.5 million doses are landing in the coming week alone. After months of lagging many other countries, this country has moved way up the charts, both in terms of share of its population vaccinated and pace of vaccination. One reason that some provinces have called a pause on administering the AstraZeneca vaccine over a statistically tiny health risk is that they now have so many doses of the other vaccines that they can pick and choose.

Despite the AZ scare, vaccine hesitancy is falling as more and more people get jabbed. The crowd effect – "If they're getting vaccinated, I guess I can" – is taking hold. Canadians are rushing out to get their shots at pharmacies, hospitals, mass clinics and pop-up locations, then posting joyful vaccine selfies.



In Toronto, where more than half of adult residents have had their first shot, over 300,000 more people became eligible for vaccination on Thursday when those aged 40 to 49 were cleared to get theirs. Many thousands that age and younger have already managed to find a shot through pop-ups and special exemptions for those in COVID-19 hot spots. An ambitious effort to vaccinate people in those areas is paying off. Thanks to mobile vaccine clinics, door-to-door vaccination units and other creative efforts, many of the city's more vulnerable residents are getting their shots.

The vaccination drive and the continuing lockdowns are starting to have the intended effect. The number of patients in intensive care has started to fall from its third-wave peak. So has the number of new COVID-19 cases. In Ontario, the seven-day average is its lowest in more than a month. The rate of positive tests is the lowest in nearly six weeks. In Montreal, which managed largely to avoid the third wave, the number of new daily cases has fallen to 200 – a sixth of the figure at the start of the year.

If the vaccination campaign continues to succeed, Canada should reach the plateau that makes it possible to start easing health rules – 75 per cent of adults with at least one shot, 20 per cent with two – by around the time spring turns officially to summer. The Public Health Agency of Canada says that means the return of things such as picnics and patio dining. Once 75 per cent of people have two shots, indoor sports events, college classes and family gatherings could resume.

Getting there will take patience. Ontario just extended its current lockdown for another two weeks, until at least June 2 – a discouraging, though expected, decision. Toronto cancelled a series of summertime public events. Whether Ontario schools will Re-Open at all this school year remains in question.

It will take some faith, too. These past few weeks have been filled with fear, frustration and anger – much of it aimed at government leaders who are doing the best they can in the midst of a tremendously complex and rapidly changing health emergency. Though it's important to scrutinize how they have handled this crisis and to hold them to account for their failures, the kind of rancour and cynicism we have seen lately helps no one.

If we can muster those virtues – patience, faith – and hold out for a little while longer, the rewards on offer are rich. In England, kids are back at schools, while gyms, libraries and salons are open. In the United States, which had a much worse pandemic than we did but got its vaccination campaign under way faster, health officials have just announced that fully vaccinated people can take off their masks in most situations and go about life much as they did before the pandemic.

It will be a while yet before we achieve that sort of liberation. But it's coming, as sure as the dawn.

## Ontario Unveils 'Slow And Cautious' Re-Opening Plan

By Jeff Gray and Laura Stone, *The Globe and Mail*, May 20, 2021

[https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-ontario-unveils-slow-and-cautious-Re-Opening-plan/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Breaking%20News&utm\\_content=2021-5-20\\_15&utm\\_term=Ontario%20unveils%20%e2%80%99slow%20and%20cautious%e2%80%99%20Re-Opening%20plan&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&cu\\_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-ontario-unveils-slow-and-cautious-Re-Opening-plan/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Breaking%20News&utm_content=2021-5-20_15&utm_term=Ontario%20unveils%20%e2%80%99slow%20and%20cautious%e2%80%99%20Re-Opening%20plan&utm_campaign=newsletter&cu_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb)

The Ontario government has unveiled what it says is a “slow and cautious” plan to Re-Open the province as COVID-19 recedes, allowing a return to outdoor amenities such as golf courses and tennis courts over the upcoming long weekend, but waiting until mid-June before the resumption of restaurant patios and non-essential shopping, with strict capacity limits.

“While we must remain conscious of the continued threat the virus poses, with millions of Ontarians having received at least their first dose of vaccine we can now begin the process of a slow and cautious Re-opening of the province in full consultation with our public health professionals,” Premier Doug Ford said in a press release.

Ontario’s new three-step “Roadmap to Re-Open” sets out clear metrics for vaccination rates that are required for each phase of Re-Opening. After hitting each vaccination benchmark, the province would wait at least 21 days before moving on to the next phase. All phases require hospitalizations, intensive-care occupancy and positivity rates to be declining.

The first step, which the province estimates could begin by June 14, requires 60 per cent of adults to be vaccinated with one dose. Ontario has already hit 57.6 per cent of first doses. This phase focuses on low-risk activities, and would allow outdoor gatherings of up to 10 people, outdoor dining of four people per table, outdoor sports of 10 people, essential retail (such as grocery stores) to operate at 25-per-cent capacity, and non-essential retail to Re-Open to shopping at 15-per-cent capacity. Day camps, campsites, Ontario Parks, and horse and motor racing would also be allowed outdoors, and all construction can open.

The second step, estimated to begin in July, requires 70 per cent of adults to be vaccinated with one dose and 20 per cent to be fully vaccinated. It would allow larger outdoor gatherings of 25 people, larger outdoor religious services, personal care services such as hair and nail salons, outdoor dining for up to six people, overnight camps, amusement and waterparks, fairs and outdoor cinemas.

The third step, estimated in late July or early August, requires 70 to 80 per cent of adults to be vaccinated with one dose and 25 per cent to be fully vaccinated. The final stage would allow for indoor and outdoor gatherings, indoor dining, indoor sports and recreation, and indoor attractions to Re-Open.

Even before the new steps take effect, the government says that starting at 12:01 a.m. Saturday, May 22, outdoor recreation amenities – such as golf course, tennis courts and basketball courts – will be allowed to Re-Open, but with restrictions. The government has faced widespread criticism for its decision to shut down this kind of outdoor recreation, as most public health experts advised it was much safer than indoor activity.

The province's current stay-at-home order, which has left restaurants limited to takeout or delivery and non-essential retailers allowed to offer only curbside pickup and delivery, is set to expire June 2.

Earlier Thursday, the province's independent COVID-19 Science Advisory Table released new modelling showing that case counts would decline much more steeply if the province delays its partial Re-opening until mid-June.

With a partial Re-opening beginning June 16, the projections show daily new infections dipping below 1,000 a day just after June 4, followed by a further decline. But with a partial Re-opening on June 2, the numbers suggest the province would plateau around the 1,000-cases-day level for close to a month before starting to decline again later in June.

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, David Williams, has warned that cases need to go "well below" 1,000 a day, and stay there for a sustained period, before the province could relax restrictions.

Adalsteinn (Steini) Brown, the head of the University of Toronto's school of public health and the co-chair of the science table warned that maintaining some public health measures – amid a steady pace of vaccinations – until mid-June would "help ensure a good summer."

Schools remain closed across the province. Dr. Brown said school Re-Openings could cause a 6 to 11 per cent increase in cases, but that this could be "manageable." He also said outdoor activities should be encouraged, the table says, as done safely they are far less likely to cause the virus to spread.

Dr. Williams said he wanted the province to have schools Re-Opened in June, provided public health units can handle contact tracing of any new cases. He said the exact date would depend on discussions with the Ministry of Education.

The science table projections also show the number of COVID-19 patients in intensive care, now at 721, will continue declining and could sink below 500 a day by early June. But Dr. Brown cautioned these numbers could be overly optimistic, as patients in the third wave have tended to spend longer in intensive care. He also cautioned that the projections do not factor in any new variants that prove more contagious or can evade vaccinations.

## Most Of Quebec Will Be Orange By May 31, Re-Opening Restaurants And Sending Kids Back To School

*By June 28, most of Quebec will be in a 'green zone,' allowing indoor gatherings and team sports*

*By CBC News, May 18, 2021*

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-announcing-lifting-of-measures-1.6030812>

Quebec Premier François Legault says life in the province will return to normal by the end of August but most restrictions will be lifted by the end of June, with a gradual process starting with the lifting of the curfew on May 28.

Eating on patios and decks outside of restaurants will begin when the curfew is lifted, and people will be allowed to gather in groups of eight on private properties, but outdoors only.

The vast majority of the province will be an "orange zone" as of May 31, opening restaurants and sending all kids back to school full time.

As it stands in Quebec, third-year high school students and above have been going to school every other day.

By the end of August, most mask requirements will be lifted.

"This is a big day. A big step," Legault said.

But he said this success relies on everybody to do their part by getting vaccinated. Quebec set a goal of vaccinating 75 per cent of adults by June 24, but now officials expect to reach that goal by June 15, Legault said.

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## COVID-19: Quebec Lays Out Ground Rules For Summer Festivals, Other Cultural Happenings

*By Annabelle Olivier, Global News, May 19, 2021*

[COVID-19: Quebec lays out ground rules for summer festivals, other cultural happenings \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/health/covid-19-quebec-lays-out-ground-rules-for-summer-festivals-other-cultural-happenings)

Summer in the city is looking up for Montreal after Quebec Premier François Legault announced Monday an end to the province's overnight curfew on May 28 and the gradual loosening of COVID-19 restrictions.

Among the many announcements was the Re-opening of stadiums and other entertainment venues across the province and the return of summer festivals.

"All I want to say is 'finally,'" said Culture Minister Nathalie Roy on Tuesday. "Finally we'll be able to reconnect with our artists who give us our summer joie de vivre."

Roy made the comments during a press conference alongside Tourism Minister Caroline Proulx, outlining some of the ground rules for the gradual Re-Opening.

While spectators will be able to enjoy outdoor shows as early as this Friday, May 21, people shouldn't expect business as usual.

Only outdoor shows with pre-assigned seating will be allowed with a maximum capacity of 250 people. Masks will be mandatory with two-metre distancing between members of a different family bubble in red and orange zones. In yellow zones, the distance will be reduced to one metre.

Just a week later, on May 28, big theatres, amphitheatres and stadiums will be allowed to put on shows with pre-assigned seating with a maximum capacity of 2,500. Masks will again be mandatory and spectators will be subdivided into sections or rooms of 250 people each.

Again, social distancing rules will be in effect according to the province's colour-coded alert system.

Each section must be monitored by at least one employee to ensure public health guidelines are being followed. Each section must also be divided from the next by physical barriers and have independent entrances and exits.

Concession stands will be open in yellow and orange zones but there will be people walking around offering food and drinks in order to avoid lineups.

Festivals and other cultural events, with or without assigned seating, are scheduled to make a comeback on June 25.

Again, organizers and spectators alike will have to abide by several rules.

Tourism Minister Caroline Proulx said event promoters or organizers will have to submit a plan that must be approved by regional public health agencies.

Festivals will be limited to 2,500 spectators, with barriers between subsections of 250 people. However, Proulx specified that one festival can have different venues if they're 500 metres apart.

That would allow something like the Montreal International Jazz Festival to hold two outdoor concerts on different streets, each with 2,500 capacity.

Proulx said ticket sales for such events should be done online in order to better control attendance and to serve as a registry in case of a COVID-19 outbreak.

Officials said the rules are subject to the epidemiological situation and could change if the situation worsens.

Alain Mongeau, the founder of electronic music festival Mutek, said he's planning a hybrid model of the event for this year.

Mongeau told Global News he's not bothered by all the new rules, that there's cause for celebration.

"They don't bother us. You have to be very optimistic about the fact that festivals can happen this summer," he said.

"The second thing we could be happy about is the fact that we consider light at the end of the tunnel. We are on the way."

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## Vaccines Are Working. Will Provinces Re-Open Too Soon, Or Have They Finally Learned The Lessons Of COVID-19?

*Opinion By The Globe and Mail Editorial Board, May 12, 2021*

[https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-vaccines-are-working-will-provinces-Re-Open-too-soon-or-have-they/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Globe%20Opinion&utm\\_content=2021-5-13\\_17&utm\\_term=&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&cu\\_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/editorials/article-vaccines-are-working-will-provinces-Re-Open-too-soon-or-have-they/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Globe%20Opinion&utm_content=2021-5-13_17&utm_term=&utm_campaign=newsletter&cu_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb)

Across the country, the numbers are getting better. Some provinces are dealing with spikes in cases, but most are wrestling their third-wave surges under control. The national seven-day average count of new cases has fallen steadily for weeks, and hospitalizations are starting to follow suit or are at least stable.

Meanwhile, the number of people getting a first or (far more rarely) second dose of a vaccine climbs noticeably every day. Ontario, for instance, has now given a first dose to more than half its adult population.

Given the steady rollout of vaccines scheduled for this month and next, and Canadians' commendable eagerness to sign up and line up for a shot, it's reasonable to hope that a modest version of normalcy will return to most of the country this summer.

And yet that's not even the best news. The most promising development so far in May is the evidence that provincial governments may have finally learned their hard-earned lessons and are trying not to repeat their past mistakes – mistakes that could quickly undercut all the current progress in the fight against COVID-19.

In Alberta, which long resisted the need for tough measures and consequently became a North American COVID-19 hot spot, the Kenney government last week moved schooling online and ordered the closing of restaurants and bars – highly contentious decisions in a province with a militant anti-lockdown movement, but the only thing to do.

In Ontario, where the Ford government moved too quickly in March to lift its stay-at-home order in hard-hit Toronto and Peel Region, the province has extended its latest, province-wide stay-at-home order beyond its original May 5 deadline to May 20.

And this week, the province's Chief Medical Officer of Health, David Williams, went further. He said the order will not end on an arbitrary, pre-set date, but will continue until Ontario's daily case count falls well below 1,000. (On Wednesday, Ontario reported 2,320 new cases.)

Dr. Williams didn't give a precise figure for what it would take for him to recommend a re-opening, and the Ford government has said the lockdown will likely continue into June.

Ontario has learned the hard way that it takes more than a downward trend in case counts and hospitalizations to lift restrictions in a sustainable fashion, especially when variants of concern are the dominant source of new infections, as appears to be the case in the province.

Nova Scotia has known this from the start. Along with the other Atlantic provinces, it has kept case counts remarkably low throughout the pandemic by implementing and strictly enforcing border controls, quarantines for travellers and lockdown measures when needed.

For the most part, Nova Scotians have been living a life of relative normalcy. But the province did not hesitate to bring back its strictest measures in late April after a variant of concern caused cases to jump by 63 in a day, a relatively low number by the standards of every province outside the region.

Tough measures work, but they need time and space to do so. Relenting on them too quickly, just because numbers were trending favourably, has been the reason so many provinces have yo-yoed between lockdown and re-opening since the second wave of the pandemic hit last fall.

The lesson that hopefully has been learned in Canada is that winning the fight against the pandemic is not simply a matter of tightening and easing restrictions based on case counts and hospitalizations. Vaccination rates, and the presence of variants of concern in the population, are just as important factors in making such decisions.

In Britain, where a successful vaccination campaign has dramatically reduced case counts, public-health experts are warning that a planned easing of restrictions on May 17 might have to be postponed. Cases involving a new variant of concern first detected in India are doubling every week, and not enough is known about its resistance to vaccines.

Canada is in a good place right now. It's becoming likely that everyone who wants one will have had at least a first dose of vaccine by Canada Day, and that new infections and hospitalizations will be much lower, too.

But these factors cannot be the only ones that determine when the provinces lift restrictions. You can only make the same mistake so often before it starts to look like you don't know what you're doing.



## Trudeau Government Begins Work On Re-opening U.S.-Canada Border

By Kate Bolongaro, Bloomberg News, May 14, 2021

<https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/trudeau-government-begins-work-on-Re-Opening-u-s-canada-border-1.1603901>

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government has begun preliminary internal discussions about re-opening the border with the U.S., even as Canada remains well behind its neighbor in vaccinations.

Senior officials have begun to formally talk about options for how to proceed, three people familiar with the matter said, speaking on the condition they not be identified. One question under consideration is whether to employ a two-track system in which quarantine and testing requirements would be relaxed for vaccinated travelers.

The world's longest international border has been shuttered since March 2020 to most non-essential travel, dramatically reducing land and air traffic between the two countries. The restrictions have hit the nation's tourism and airline sectors particularly hard -- one estimate says the measures cost those industries about C\$20 billion (\$16.5 billion) in revenue last year.

"In the end, it's a political decision, and at what point does the Canadian side -- and it's the Canadian side at this point that's the slowpoke -- decide that they're ready to receive and what categories of people that they'll open up to," Michael Kergin, a former Canadian ambassador to the U.S., said in a phone interview. "A staged Re-opening would be the logical approach."

Any re-opening of the border would be gradual and contingent on declining cases in both countries, the officials said.

The third wave of the pandemic has hit the northern nation harder because of a vaccine rollout that's been slowed by supply issues and shipment delays. Many Canadian provinces remain in extended lockdowns even as the country has ramped up its vaccination campaign.

A Re-opening of the border probably isn't imminent, and the discussions in the government are just getting started, the officials said. According to the Bloomberg Vaccine Tracker, 34.1% of Canadians residents have received one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, and only 2.7% are fully inoculated, compared with 46.6% and 35.8%, respectively, in the U.S.

Trudeau has said that most Canadians aren't likely to be fully vaccinated until September.

### Harmonized

One challenge is coming up with an approach, in coordination with the U.S., to verify vaccination documentation. Trudeau has said Canada is open to vaccine passports, which are electronic documents that would allow countries to verify whether travelers have been inoculated. U.S. President Joe Biden's administration, by contrast, has ruled them out. That will leave companies and other institutions like colleges to determine their own rules.

"It would make sense for us to align with partners around the world on some sort of proof of vaccination or vaccine certification," Trudeau said at a May 4 news conference. "We are looking very carefully at it, hoping to align with allied countries, but I can't speak for the United States and the choices they might make around who to welcome into their country."

Canada has said it's working with the European Union to align their approaches. The EU is already pushing ahead with plans to end internal travel restrictions for vaccinated individuals.

"The problem is we have an asymmetrical situation here," Kergin said, referring to the vaccination disparity between Canada and the U.S.

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## Preliminary Talks On Lifting Canada-U.S. Border Restrictions Underway

*'Hopeful for positive news this summer,' source says*

*By Katie Simpson and Peter Zimonjic, CBC News, May 14, 2021*

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/canada-united-states-border-talks-start-1.6027705>

Preliminary talks on lifting restrictions along the Canada-U.S. border are underway, according to an official with direct knowledge of the file.

CBC News has confirmed initial conversations between Canada and the U.S. are happening at the officials level, meaning the politicians who ultimately will make the decision are not directly involved in those talks yet.

The official said no decisions are expected in the short term, but that there is hope for "positive news as summer progresses," especially in light of the increase in vaccination rates in Canada.

The official also cautioned that crushing the third wave remains the priority at the moment.

CBC News is not naming the official because the individual is not authorized to speak publicly about the matter. Bloomberg News was first to report this development on Friday.

The border has been closed to non-essential travel for purposes such as tourism and recreation since March 2020. The closure agreement between Ottawa and Washington is expected to be renewed on May 21.

The agreement permits entry to individuals for compassionate purposes, such as attending a funeral or applying for refugee status.

People arriving at Canada's land border with the United States are required to take a COVID-19 test when they enter the country and a second test after they have isolated themselves at home for 14 days.

## Ford Asks Trudeau To Tighten Border

On February 22, 2021, the federal government implemented new quarantine measures at airports requiring all air travellers returning from non-essential trips abroad to isolate in a federally mandated facility for up to 72 hours while they await the results of a polymerase chain reaction test, commonly known as a PCR test, for COVID-19.

The three-day mandatory quarantine stay at a federally designated facility can cost as much as \$2,000 per person. In a series of letters to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Ontario Premier Doug Ford has asked for those measures to be extended to the land border between Canada and the U.S.

The federal government has batted away that request, saying that there are 117 points of entry that Canada shares with the U.S. and many of them are far away from hotels.

"The safest and most effective way to manage people who are arriving at our borders by land is by the system that we have put in place," Public Safety Minister Bill Blair told CBC News Network's Power & Politics on Thursday, May 13.

Blair said Canadians returning by land from the U.S. while contained in their cars, with their families, and going directly home after their tests to quarantine for two weeks "is the safest way to manage those people."

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## Calls Grow For Canada, U.S. To Provide 'Vision' On How Border Could Re-Open

*By Rachel D'Amore, Global News, May 20, 2021*

[Calls grow for Canada, U.S. to provide 'vision' on how border could Re-Open \(msn.com\)](#)

Calls are growing to Re-Open the Canada-U.S. border as COVID-19 vaccination rates rise in both countries.

One of the loudest is coming from a U.S. lawmaker -- New York Representative Brian Higgins -- who says it's time that both governments provide a "vision" for how it could be re-opened.

"The frustration has been that both the federal government in Canada and the United States have failed to provide any information beyond the fact that the border is going to be closed another 30 days," said Higgins, who has written to U.S. President Joe Biden on the matter several times.

"Vaccines are a very powerful tool.... I think that needs to be recognized in some way."

There's no question Canada has seen improvements in recent weeks. National case counts, while still high, are gradually declining and some provinces are readying new phased re-opening plans. Vaccination rates have also surged, thanks to a significant and reliable uptick in shipments from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna.

In fact, after months of Canadians peering enviously over the fence at the U.S., Canada is on the cusp of surpassing its neighbour on first-dose coverage. As of publication, about 47.84 per cent of Canada's eligible population had received one shot versus about 47.9 per cent of Americans.

Given the progress on both sides, Higgins believes it's time to rethink the current rules at the border.

"As opposed to announcing another closure, let's say that when 30 to 60 days (passes), we can look at that category of essential travel or to include more travellers, in recognition of the availability of vaccines and the distribution and administration of vaccines," he said.

The Canadian Chamber of Commerce is of the same thinking.

CEO Perrin Beatty says there needs to be more transparency about what criteria the government proposes to use. He says the 14-month closure has created "enormous difficulties" for Canadian businesses, particularly for the tourism sector.

"You can't simply throw on a light switch and suddenly tourism is back on," he told Global News.

"It takes months to put things together, and people need to have at least some sense as to what criteria are going to be used, even if they don't know the exact dates yet."

Canada and the U.S. confirmed on Thursday, May 20 that the border would remain closed to non-essential travel for at least another month. U.S. Homeland Security said it is working closely with Canada and Mexico to "safely ease restrictions as conditions improve."

The conditions just aren't rosy enough for either country, according to Raywat Deonandan, an epidemiologist with the University of Ottawa.

"Opening the border means compromising that strategy of reducing the probability of a non-immune person being exposed to the virus," he said.

"Vaccines aren't perfect. The way you keep them at maximum optimization, especially at this stage, is ensuring the infection rates are very, very low. We're a far cry from there."

At this point, Higgins says some of the protocols are "no longer relevant" given the arrival of vaccines.

"I think the Canadian federal government primarily has failed to recognize the significance of the availability of vaccines. We've been told for 14 months that would be the inflection point, that would be the game-changer," he said.

"It's short-sighted. It does a disservice to the people in the respective countries, and the United States is at fault as well."

Higgins has argued in his letters to Biden that the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is proving his point. In recent days, the CDC has issued bold new guidelines, declaring that fully vaccinated Americans no longer need to wear face masks in nearly all situations, including indoors.

He believes that decision affirms the efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines and suggests it would mean low risk for Canadians when visiting family or property in the U.S.

Canada is not quite ready to release guidelines for vaccinated Canadians. The country's top doctor, Theresa Tam, said it will only happen "when safe" and removing mask recommendations will be last in line.

Deonandan said those things "aren't a priority" for Canada right now -- "we're still far away from two-dose coverage" -- but acknowledges there's still a lot to be worked out.

"We have to remind ourselves we're not the Americans. The American situation is different from ours," he said.

But as more Canadians get vaccinated, Beatty says amendments need to get adjusted and communicated to businesses and stakeholders, particularly when it comes to quarantine rules for travellers.

The government recently agreed to allow Canadian residents to travel to the U.S. for a COVID-19 vaccine and avoid quarantine on return, but Beatty says traveller eligibility could be expanded now and could help facilitate an incremental Re-opening for the border at large.

"It doesn't make sense for snowbirds coming back from Florida over the past few weeks. If your grandmother came back and she was fully vaccinated, does it make sense to force her into a quarantine hotel?" he said.

"These issues have to be resolved. At this point, it's not clear what approach they're going to take."

Providing clarity on what it would take for borders to Re-Open safely would actually be an incentive for Canadians to get vaccinated and help them visualize how to get back to their normal lives sooner, said Beatty.

But the government needs to work closely with businesses to make the re-opening orderly, he said.

"The problem is that even if we get to Canada Day and see these restrictions are gone, we will have still lost the summer tourist season," he said.

"What is critical is that they co-ordinate with business."

## Canada Will Need 75% Vaccination Rate Before U.S. Border Re-Opens, Trudeau Suggests

*By The Canadian Press, May 18, 2021*

<https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/canada-will-need-75percent-vaccination-before-us-border-Re-Opens-trudeau-suggests/ar-BB1gS3QK?li=AAgNb9>

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is suggesting that three-quarters of Canadians will need to be vaccinated against COVID-19 before the Canada-U.S. border can be re-opened.

Trudeau acknowledges that discussions about the border are ongoing, but he's tamping down any expectations that travel restrictions could be lifted soon.

Discretionary travel between Canada and the United States has been prohibited since March 2020, a restriction that will be extended into June before the end of the week.

Trudeau says Canada is still not out of the current third wave of COVID-19 and has much more work to do before it's safe for travel to resume.

That's in contrast with the U.S., where a blistering vaccination pace has prompted public health officials to lift face mask requirements for people who are fully vaccinated.

That has some U.S. lawmakers urging the Biden administration to get serious about drafting a plan to allow travel to and from Canada to resume in time for the July 4 holiday.

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## Destination Canada: Canada-US Border Could Stay Closed Until Fall

*By Jim Byers, Canadian Travel News, May 17, 2021*

<https://canadiantravelnews.ca/2021/05/17/destination-canada-canadian-border-may-stay-closed-until-fall/>

Canada may not see open borders until fall, the head of Destination Canada says.

Speaking at Rendezvous Canada's virtual Inside Track event, the official kick off to four days of meetings between buyers, sellers and the media, Destination Canada president and CEO Marsha Walden noted that Canadian health authorities have said some restrictions could begin to be lifted once 75% of Canadians have a single vaccination and 20% of Canadians have had two doses.

Walden said many parts of Canada might reach that milestone by Canada Day, and that perhaps 75% of Canadians might have both their vaccinations by the fall. If that happens, more restrictions can be lifted.

Destination Canada's own data, which looks at vaccination rates and vaccine rollout dates, along with data from other sources, suggests that "fall is likely the earliest we could see borders start to re-open."

“We’re looking at scenarios where re-openings could be staggered,” she said, “potentially first opening up to the U.S. or the UK or countries in the EU, followed by other countries.”

Walden said Destination Canada’s data is their own and that it isn’t based on Canadian government policy.

She also expressed support for vaccine passports or vaccination certificates, which she said will “impact our sector’s recovery tremendously.”

Walden said Canada’s tourism sector is showing incredible resilience. She noted that Pursuit is building a new hotel in Jasper, and that there’s a new eco-lodge, Klahoose Wilderness Resort, opening this year in Powell River, British Columbia. New hotels also are coming to Toronto and Montreal this year.

She also noted Canada has “best in class” health protocols, which will make people more willing to visit when travel restrictions ease.

“Canada is a country to believe in; one of the strongest country brands on the planet,” Walden continued. “Spectacular national assets and a cultural mosaic of incredible human possibility. A young, vibrant nation that’s beautiful on the outside as well as the inside.”

Beth Potter, president and CEO of the Tourism Industry Association of Canada, said tourism businesses in Canada need to get an idea of when restrictions might be lifted.

“We need time to plan and forecast, time to market, book, retrain and rehire.”

Potter also voiced support for vaccine passports and noted that they’ll need to be standardized across Canada to avoid confusion. She also said Canada can’t be open to only those visitors who are fully vaccinated, which means more testing and contact tracing needs to take place.

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada is front and centre at Rendezvous Canada this year. ITAC president Keith Henry said a study undertaken last year shows that indigenous tourism will be seen more favourably in a post-COVID world. He said they’re still not top of mind for would-be visitors, but that interest in the subject is growing in Europe, Asia and elsewhere.

Henry said ITAC will be rolling out a comprehensive domestic campaign and work with partners to increase knowledge of the many indigenous tourism opportunities to be found in Canada.



## Snowbirds Continue To Evade COVID-19 Hotel Quarantine By Returning To Canada Via Taxis With Workarounds By Travellers, Say Critics

*By Mike Hager and Pratyush Dayal, The Globe and Mail, May 18, 2021*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-snowbirds-continue-to-evade-hotel-quarantine-by-returning-to-canada/>

Ethan Futrelle hasn't had a day off in over a month.

Evergreen Town Car's director of operations has been shuttling British Columbians back home from two Washington State airports so that they can cross the border in his monster SUV and avoid quarantining in a federally approved hotel, as is required of those disembarking on Canadian soil from an international flight. His clients can afford a pricey stint in one of these hotels, but are opting to spend their two weeks of post-holiday isolation in the comfort of their own home.

Evergreen's fleet of six vehicles is bringing 20 to 30 Canadians north each day for a typical trip of US\$275, he said, and is turning down about six people a day who want a ride to the border so they can walk into Canada and get picked up by friends and family.

A handful of other American taxi companies operating just south of B.C. and in New York and Michigan told The Globe and Mail they are enjoying a similar surge in these cross-border trips.

Critics say new statistics paint a picture of an unequal quarantine system full of loopholes that add risk to Canada's fight against COVID-19.

Almost a third of the roughly 300,000 international air travellers who have touched down in the country since new rules were created in the middle of February have been exempted from quarantining at a hotel, according to latest data from the Public Health Agency of Canada. People who qualify for an exemption include those bringing in essential goods or workers, sick people getting non-coronavirus treatment within a day and a half of entering the country, and those who must cross the border daily or weekly for their job.

The agency says a further 798 Canadians have been fined \$3,000 at Vancouver and Toronto's airports for refusing to go to a hotel to await COVID-19 test results, while none has been reportedly issued at the other two designated international airports of Calgary and Montreal. The rules apply to international air travellers regardless of whether they have been vaccinated.

Canada Border Services Agency, or CBSA, says overall measures have reduced non-commercial land crossings by 80 per cent and air entries by 96 per cent since the pandemic started. But the agency's data showed more people started crossing the border by foot in Quebec and Western Canada in March and April, with B.C. and the Prairie checkpoints recording nearly as many or more pedestrians than during those months last year.

The CBSA could not break down how many of nearly 2.5 million crossings over land from the United States this year have been people using a taxi service like the one offered by Mr. Futrelle's company.

"They actually have started asking a couple of weeks ago at the border if they're travelling by land to avoid the hotel quarantine and all of them are giving an emphatic, 'Yes,'" Mr. Futrelle said of the daily interactions he witnesses between Canadian border guards and his passengers.

Improvements to border control systems may be too late to prevent the spikes in infections that have been hammering Ontario, Alberta and other parts of the country. But the existing loopholes might introduce new variants that evade vaccination and exacerbate the anger many feel toward people choosing to vacation abroad amid the pandemic, critics say.

Caroline Colijn, a professor at B.C.'s Simon Fraser University and Canada 150 Research chair in mathematics for evolution, infection and public health, said international travel restrictions matter a lot more in places where the main tool to control the pandemic is keeping all cases out of a territory, such as in Atlantic Canada or island nations such as New Zealand.

But, she said, the rules across most of Canada are introducing risk that could increase as community transmission drops. She said stays at these quarantine hotels were mandated to curb travel, but the snowbirds' common refrain is that they are safer isolating at home.

"It's not enough of a disincentive if the limo is less expensive than the hotel or the fine is just as palatable," Dr. Colijn said.

Plus, she added, monitoring someone quarantining at their home becomes complicated if they have other roommates.

"Right now if there's a household of four and one person travels, we're not asking the other three to isolate," she said, adding a nursing home outbreak in Barrie, Ont., that killed 71 residents was linked back to international travel.

Julien Arino, a professor at the University of Manitoba who specializes in population dynamics in epidemiology, said he assumes that, on average, these international travellers are following the quarantine rules whether in hotels or at home and many may be fully vaccinated – which means very few might be positive. But, he said, the hotel stays of up to 72 hours that cost as much as \$3,000 encourage people to evade this system by crossing via land.

Mr. Futrelle said he has mostly been taking wealthy snowbirds from the small airport in Bellingham, Washington, back to Vancouver or its tony North Shore, but one day last week he picked up someone from Seattle's international airport. This passenger had been visiting a daughter in the Cayman Islands and needed Mr. Futrelle to drop him at the Tsawwassen ferry terminal so he could cross the Georgia Strait and return to his home on Vancouver Island. (B.C. has carved the province into three massive regions to cut down on the spread of COVID-19 by banning non-essential road trips between these zones.)

Mike Farnworth, B.C.'s Solicitor-General and Minister of Public Safety, was asked about this specific example last week in Victoria and said he was concerned and has raised this issue with the federal government. However, he said, the latest statistics he has seen show 92 per cent of people entering Canada have a quarantine plan and "there is a lot of enforcement that is taking place."

Tammy Jarbeau, a spokesperson for Public Health, said in an e-mailed statement that the tickets so far issued have been for arriving in Canada and refusing to quarantine – not agreeing and then breaking the rules later.

Calgary Police Service is able to press charges under the federal Quarantine Act, but spokesperson Leah Brownridge said Public Health takes the lead on these cases and that the agency has only requested help enforcing the rules in one open case.

Blaise Boehmer, spokesperson for Alberta Justice Minister Kaycee Madu, said quarantine is a federal policy and airports are federal jurisdiction. He did not answer the question as to why Alberta is one of only two provinces to not sign onto the federal Contraventions Act, which makes it possible for Public Health officers and local police to issue tickets on the spot if they saw someone breaking the federal rules rather than take the more onerous path of securing a charge.

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## Canadian Bus Companies Have Plans To Fill The Gap Left By Greyhound

*By Don Pittis, CBC News, May 15, 2021*

[Canadian bus companies have plans to fill the gap left by Greyhound \(msn.com\)](#)

Almost every Canadian of a certain age can remember the first long bus ride that took them off on a youthful adventure.

In the case of your correspondent, part of that journey as a tender 17-year-old was on the exotically named Grey Goose Lines, which dropped me on a lonely highway somewhere east of Atikokan, Ontario, for a summer job as a junior forest ranger.

While Greyhound Canada's announcement of its final departure from Southern Ontario and Quebec this week may have come as a shock to people who depend on the service, those in the know say the company's loss may have a silver lining.

Early reports that the 'Hound's disappearance sounds the death knell for an outmoded system of transportation are simply not true, said Terence Johnson, national president of Transport Action Canada.

Buses still matter, for people who don't drive or have access to a car, and to connect communities where airlines are too expensive or non-existent.

Now, Johnson says Greyhound's departure could be the catalyst for a new coast-to-coast bus network formed by an interlocking group of domestic bus companies from both east and west — provided the federal government is ready to help.

"A lot of Canadian companies don't mind seeing the back of Greyhound," said Johnson, who sees the bounce-back following the pandemic as a moment to transform and improve Canada's transportation system.

### **Regional Players Ready**

That transformation may not be immediate. Johnson said there may be a shakeout period as new bus services fill the gap left by the U.S. carrier, at a time when they're already struggling with a crash in traffic due to COVID-19 restrictions.

But these are not inexperienced start-ups. They're established regional players, and when you start looking, there are more of them than you might realize.

Already, companies across the country are looking at how to get a piece of what they see as the lucrative Central Canadian market for both passenger service and parcel delivery.

Just as Grey Goose Lines expanded out of a small start-up in the 1920s in Sperling, Manitoba, before being ultimately swallowed up by Greyhound and closed, there appears to be no shortage of strong regional companies looking take Greyhound's place.

"Rider Express is coming to Ontario and Quebec," says a notice on the company's website posted on the same day Greyhound announced it was pulling out.

"As a truly Canadian company, Rider Express will be able to connect across Canada with a single bus ticket."

### **Success Where Greyhound Failed**

But how could a company that started small in Saskatchewan after the province cancelled the money-losing provincial Saskatchewan Transportation Company in 2017 make money where Greyhound could not?

According to Rider's general manager, Omer Kanca, after years of serving relatively sparsely peopled routes between Vancouver and Winnipeg, the Windsor–Toronto–Montreal corridor will be rich pickings.

"The fact that we achieve ... this in these areas itself proves that our business model is much better than Greyhound's," said Kanca.

In partnership with Ontario Northland bus service based in North Bay, Kanca says Rider will be able to provide integrated service from the West right up to the edge of Atlantic Canada, a system that he is expecting to have running by summer.

"We are ready," said Kanca on the phone Friday. "We have buses waiting to be put in service."

Rider Express is not the only company with its eye on Greyhound's abandoned routes. Insiders say there were many reasons the U.S. company withdrew, but one was that as of July 1, the Ontario government is deregulating bus service in the province's well-travelled southern routes. That would open the way for any company that can get a licence to operate.

### **Competition And Co-Operation**

John Stepovy, director of business development at Edmonton-based Pacific Western Transportation, which operates EBus and Red Arrow on routes in Western Canada, says the company is looking into launching a service in Ontario.

Operating under Alberta's deregulated system since 2011, Pacific Western is prepared to compete. But it also sees value in co-operation with companies that understand their regional markets.

"We're continuing to look for opportunities to expand the service and to work with other regional carriers for connections," said Stepovy.

A system for co-ordinating with strong regional players such as Pacific Western is exactly what Mike Cassidy, the owner of Coach Atlantic Maritime Bus, has in mind.

Cassidy hopes to create a co-ordinated national bus network, with regional bus services across the country and with co-operation from the federal government. Companies already in talks include Pacific Western, Kasper, which operates in Manitoba and Northwestern Ontario, and Cassidy's Coach Atlantic.

"For the last six months ... we've been presenting a coast-to-coast bus coalition where you do not give total responsibility for a trans-Canada bus line to one particular company," said Cassidy.

Part of his plan would see some kind of government subsidies for the capital costs of inter-city buses similar to the money given to urban bus services.

### **Not Just Cherry-Picking**

The idea is not to just cherry pick the lucrative routes but to provide a cost effective service, connecting a backbone cross-country network to regional participants offering routes to small and Indigenous communities.

Using a shared system of software, Cassidy foresees a system where passengers will be able to move seamlessly from carrier to carrier. It would also offer each local operator access to the lucrative package delivery system traditionally run by bus services.

One of the advantages of such a network of parts, says Transport Action's Johnson, is that the system would be less likely to collapse because one company failed. He said Greyhound seemed to think it was too big to fail and deserved federal handouts to keep going.

Johnson, like many others across the country, believes the federal government must be involved to help co-ordinate an inter-provincial transportation service that integrates urban and inter-urban systems to serve all Canadians.

"There is a great deal of finessing of this relationship to make it all work properly for the person who matters, the passenger, the Canadian, who wants to go from Corner Brook to Sudbury to go to university," said Johnson.

"She should be able to buy a ticket and know all those connections are going to work, and it should be easy."

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## Most Canadians Say They Are Unlikely To Travel Outside Of Their Community This Summer: Nanos Survey

*By Sarah Turnbull, CTVNews.ca Producer, May 14, 2021*

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/most-canadians-say-they-are-unlikely-to-travel-outside-of-their-community-this-summer-nanos-survey-1.5428587>

New polling by Nanos Research has found that a strong majority of Canadians won't be travelling outside of their communities this summer, despite the expected easing of public health restrictions and the acceleration of vaccinations.

According to the survey, commissioned by CTV News, nearly 70 per cent of respondents said they were either "unlikely" or "somewhat unlikely" to travel, while 28 per cent said they were "likely" or "somewhat likely." Three per cent were "unsure," even if their community is under a stay-at-home order.

"I think the fact of the matter is that until more Canadians are vaccinated, until we know that the pandemic is under control, a majority of Canadians have resigned themselves to the fact that they won't be travelling very far," said Nik Nanos of Nanos Research in an interview with CTVNews.ca

Respondents from Quebec and Atlantic Canada were more likely to say they would stay put, compared to those in Ontario and the Prairies.

The survey findings come the same day the Public Health Agency of Canada unveiled preliminary guidelines detailing what Canadians can expect the summer and fall to look like beyond the "one-dose summer" and "two-dose fall" Prime Minister Justin Trudeau endorsed earlier this week.

The documents show that if 75 per cent of Canadians eligible for vaccines have had one dose and 20 per cent have had a second dose, summer can include camping, hiking, picnics, and patios, but crowds should still be avoided. By fall, if 75 per cent of those eligible for a vaccine have been fully vaccinated, expect to be able to gather indoors with people outside your household, participate in indoor sports, and attend family gatherings.

The Canadian government hasn't given any specific indication as to when they will lift their national advisory to avoid non-essential travel or when the U.S.-Canada border would fully open up again, only to say any measures will align with vaccination numbers and a steady decline in transmission of the virus.

### Methodology

Nanos conducted an RDD dual frame (land-and cell-lines) hybrid telephone and online random survey of 1,025 Canadians, 18 years of age or older, between April 29th and May 3rd, 2021 as part of an omnibus survey. Participants were randomly recruited by telephone using live agents and administered a survey online. The results were statistically checked and weighted by age and gender using the latest Census information and the sample is geographically stratified to be representative of Canada.

Individuals were randomly called using random digit dialing with a maximum of five call backs.

The margin of error for a random survey of 1,025 Canadians is  $\pm 3.1$  percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

The research was commissioned by CTV News and conducted by Nanos Research.

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## Canada Must Create A Comprehensive Quarantine, Screening System For International Travellers: Experts

*By Les Perreux, The Globe and Mail, May 11, 2021*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/article-canada-must-create-a-comprehensive-quarantine-screening-system-for/>

The Canadian government must create a comprehensive quarantine and screening system for international travellers to help stop the COVID-19 crisis – and to prepare for the next threat, infectious disease specialists say.

Improvements to border control systems may be too late to prevent the spikes in infections hammering Ontario, Alberta and other parts of the country. But the pandemic may yet spawn more waves and new [variants](#) that evade vaccination. And this will almost certainly not be the last pandemic.

What a system for preventing travel-related spread might look like remains a matter of debate among epidemiologists and public-health researchers. But it is almost the consensus view among them that the federal government's current measures are unequal, incoherent and full of loopholes. Ottawa has been slow to adjust to stop the arrival of new variants from global hot spots and has done little to deal with land arrivals. Officials react rather than predict or anticipate new threats.

Kirsten Fiest, a professor of epidemiology at the University of Calgary, said: "We are not in a good place in Canada right now. This ad hoc, reactionary strategy does not resonate as an effective public-health strategy to protect our country."



The use of border controls to stop the spread of the virus became a political hot potato at the start of the pandemic, when Ottawa and some public-health officials considered them counterproductive at best and xenophobic at worst.

More recently, after the federal government accepted that border controls are necessary, provincial governments tightened their own lax controls. (As The Globe and Mail reported on Monday, May 10, domestic travel accounted for more than 60 per cent of flights linked to COVID-19 infections in April.) Ontario Premier Doug Ford and other premiers have repeatedly called on Ottawa to do more on borders, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has insisted that much is already being done.

“Everyone needs to calm down, step back and stop talking about it in partisan terms,” said Kelley Lee, a specialist in the impacts of globalization on population health at Simon Fraser University. “It’s not about shutting off trade or closing off the country. It’s simply border control.”

Since the pandemic began, Canada has added new travel measures almost every month. In early March last year, the government advised against non-essential travel and cruise ship vacations. Later that month, it banned non-essential entry to the country to all but Canadians and permanent residents, with pages of exceptions for essential travel.

Since then, Canada has introduced temperature checks and beefed up fines for failing to comply with quarantine orders. In January, 72-hour quarantine in hotels became mandatory for people arriving on international flights, which are funnelled to Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. Mandatory testing was also imposed for land and air entry. Fourteen-day quarantine at home still applies to all travellers, but critics say it does not include enough supervision or testing.

Travellers have booked at least 49,000 stays at the 72-hour quarantine hotel rooms, but at least 536 people in Toronto and Vancouver have blown off the requirement, willing to risk a \$3,000 fine.

Direct travel from Mexico, the Caribbean, Brazil, the U.K., India and Pakistan was temporarily halted, but that did not stop people from arriving on connecting flights or landing in the United States and crossing by land.

A Globe and Mail analysis of flight data from FlightRadar24 found the number of inbound international flights from January to March, 2021, grew 9 per cent. That’s due in large part to flights from the U.S. – by far Canada’s largest source of inbound international air travel – for which flight volume was up 6 per cent.

The number of flights also grew from some countries registering high levels of variants of concern. In the summer of 2020, just nine direct flights arrived from Brazil; but in early 2021, Canada registered 46 direct flights from the South American country hard-hit by the P.1 variant. Flights from India, which first identified the B.1.617 variant, were up 170 per cent. Meanwhile, flights from Britain, where the B.1.1.7 variant was first identified late last year, were down 10 per cent over the same period.

The Canada Border Services Agency says overall measures have reduced non-commercial land entries by 90 per cent and air entries by 95 per cent since the pandemic started. About 87 per cent of the remaining travellers take about 110,000 weekly trips exempt from testing and quarantine rules; three-quarters of them work transporting goods or people.

The federal testing regime on other travellers captured 2,018 COVID-19 cases from Feb. 22 to April 11, about a quarter of which were variants of concern, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada. Dr. Lee said there is no doubt that the tests captured only a fraction of cases. "The variants of concern didn't swim or fly here on their own, they come through travel," she said. "Their so-called world-class system isn't working."

A half-dozen experts interviewed for this story say a good border control system for new waves of COVID-19 variants or future pandemics would treat all travellers equitably, regardless of whether they enter by land or air. Exceptions for essential travel would only be for truly vital trips and would come with other methods of mitigating risk, such as rapid testing and priority vaccination.

The system would come with a set of coherent rules and benchmarks for when to impose shutdowns.

The government would impose measures such as travel bans or border closures quickly, strictly to limit the introduction of new variants or entirely new dangerous viruses.

But most of the harshest measures would be temporary because their usefulness quickly wanes once viruses break through travel barriers. (And, the specialists say, they almost always break through eventually.)

Colin Furness, an infection control epidemiologist at the University of Toronto, is among the experts calling for the toughest measures. He would like to see an immediate six-week shutdown of most passenger air traffic and non-essential travel at land borders, which would apply to returning Canadians as well. Such steps would deal with the current, third wave and future waves, new variants of concern or new viruses.

"You have to stop flights," Prof. Furness said. "You don't have to do it forever. You don't have to do it for months. Six weeks is not too much to ask to stop importing thousands of cases."

Strict, supervised 14-day quarantine at designated sites could be introduced gradually afterward, Prof. Furness said, as New Zealand and Australia started doing a year ago. Returning Canadians would have to wait their turns for a spot in quarantine, as tens of thousands of Australians are currently doing. Some stranded Australians have complained to the United Nations Human Rights Committee about their treatment.

While his main concern is international travel, Prof. Furness would like to see limits on domestic flights as well when cases spike.

"Interprovincial travel is a bad idea. It's a bad idea because it moves COVID and gives people the idea travel is safe. It's a mistake."

In late March and early April, Canada was still registering almost 6,000 domestic flights a week, according to FlightRadar24. That number is among the lowest since late May last year. Domestic flight volumes peaked in late August, at more than 10,000 a week.

Prof. Lee also favours a strong 14-day quarantine for returning international travellers, adding that electronic bracelets could be used to allow people to do it at home.

Julien Arino, a professor at the University of Manitoba who specializes in population dynamics in epidemiology, argues that less harsh restrictions than those suggested by his colleagues but applied more evenly might be more effective.

Prof. Arino says quarantine is one of the best measures to prevent importing disease, but neither the three-day hotel confinement nor 14-day self-isolation at home is optimal. He says officials should impose a single seven-to-10-day quarantine that would begin and end with tests. It would take place at home with frequent check-ins from public-health officials to ensure compliance – but also to offer support.

A study from the fall of Alberta air travellers by McMaster Health Labs found that almost 95 per cent of cases were uncovered with testing within seven days of arrival.

The \$3,000, 72-hour air traveller hotel stays currently being used only encourage people to evade the system, Prof. Arino says.

“The longer you ask people to stay, the more you know people will avoid it,” he said. “If you make it complex, expensive and too onerous, you are asking people to find ways around it. It’s better to have 80-per-cent compliance with slightly less stringent measures than more people evading strict measures.”

He said the need to get public co-operation is sometimes lost in the search for bulletproof measures. “You want buy-in. This thing is going on a year and a half, and we don’t know when we will get out of it.”

He said his current research studying population and COVID-19 movements suggests border closures help reduce spread – but only for a matter of weeks.

“Once you have imported some cases, the local propagation becomes more important,” Prof. Arino said.

The four Atlantic provinces require a 14-day at-home quarantine for travellers from foreign countries and other provinces. This is often cited as a model for other provinces.

The Atlantic system has worked well to find and limit most outbreaks, said Susan Kirkland, chief of the department of community health and epidemiology at Dalhousie University in Halifax. Nova Scotia often had just a handful of cases per day, almost all among quarantined interprovincial travellers.

“If we hadn’t had those systems, people would have gone about their business and we would have seen exponential growth a lot sooner,” Dr. Kirkland said. “Travel restrictions are effective.”

Even though Nova Scotia's system has been effective, breakthrough cases such as those currently fuelling a wave in the province can happen. "The virus is a global problem and it won't be under control until it is under control worldwide," Dr. Kirkland said.

Most of the experts said travel bans targeting specific countries are largely futile. Temporary bans on direct arrivals from the U.K., Brazil, India, Pakistan and southern hot spots did not capture indirect arrivals. They were also often imposed after the variants were already in Canada.

"We're never ahead of COVID, we're always catching up," Dr. Kirkland said. "Hitting specific countries with massive outbreaks is too little, too late. We need policies around international travel in general, including testing and quarantine, with all the loopholes shored up."

The matter of what to do about truck drivers and air, sea and rail crews in a country reliant on importing food and many other goods poses a stickier problem, all the experts agree. "It's an unavoidable risk, so we have to make sure we understand it and contain it," Prof. Arino said. "We have a huge land border that needs to be crossed. There's no way to interrupt this flow of people. We need the food."

Vital transport workers should be tested frequently and placed at the front of the line for vaccines, most say, including Prof. Lee. "I don't understand why these steps haven't been done. I don't understand why we are always reacting instead of acting preventatively," she said.

Dr. Fiest also doubts the U.S. border could be closed to essential travel or that flights could be grounded for an extended period. "I can understand why some colleagues call for a total shutdown on travel, but it's just not realistic in a country the size of Canada, with the size of our border and how dependent we are on trade," she said. "It's just not feasible."

And all the specialists interviewed for this story and a dozen others who have written on the subject agree on one thing: Ottawa still needs to beef up infectious disease surveillance among people arriving in the country. "There still just isn't enough testing," Dr. Fiest said.

Prof. Lee pointed to the arrival of the B.1.617 variant first associated with India in British Columbia and Ontario, as well as a single case in Quebec last month. Canada also saw cases of the B1351 variant first found in South Africa pop up in northwestern Quebec and New Brunswick.

"How did it happen? Where's the surveillance? Why wasn't it caught at the border?" she said. "The system is failing at the moment."

She said that while different levels of government have had the habit of throwing blame around, the responsibility for monitoring the arrival of new variants and diseases falls on Ottawa.

"This is up to the federal government," Prof. Lee said. "It's the outer wall of the castle."

## Federal, Provincial Privacy Watchdogs Issue Warning About Vaccine Passports

*By Peter Zimonjic, CBC News, May 19, 2021*

[Federal, provincial privacy watchdogs issue warning about vaccine passports \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/story/federal-provincial-privacy-watchdogs-issue-warning-about-vaccine-passports)

Canada's privacy commissioners are issuing a warning about vaccine passports, saying measures must be taken to ensure Canadians' personal information is protected.

"While this may offer substantial public benefit, it is an encroachment on civil liberties that should be taken only after careful consideration," federal, provincial and territorial privacy commissioners and the ombudsperson's offices in Manitoba and New Brunswick said in a media statement today.

Health Minister Patty Hajdu told CBC News last week that her government is talking with G7 allies about implementing a vaccine passport that would allow Canadians to travel internationally again.

On May 13, Quebec started issuing downloadable QR codes that people can keep on their phones to prove they've been vaccinated, but it remains unclear how that digital proof of vaccination will be used.

Quebec Health Minister Christian Dubé said the QR code, which supplements paper vaccination documents already being distributed, is not itself a vaccine passport but is a necessary first step toward implementing such a system.

Quebec is following the example of countries such as Israel and Denmark which have issued digital proof-of-vaccination certificates that people can use to access events and businesses.

The EU is developing its own vaccine passport — the Digital Green Certificate — which will allow citizens of EU member states to prove they have been vaccinated.

The United Kingdom says that it is working on a plan to adapt its National Health Service phone app — which is used to access medical records, book appointments and order prescriptions — to serve as a digital vaccination and testing verification tool.

### Concerns Over Privacy, Security

The privacy commissioners say that if vaccination passports are issued in Canada, steps must be taken to ensure the highest level of privacy protection is maintained so that personal health information is not disclosed.

"Vaccine passports must be developed and implemented in compliance with applicable privacy laws," the statement said.

The privacy commissioners say governments must ensure there is a legal basis to require proof of vaccination. Canadians travelling internationally, for example, may need to carry proof because destination countries require it.

Businesses and governments that plan to require proof of vaccination, the commissioners said, will need to lay the groundwork for that requirement by introducing new laws or amending existing ones.

The commissioners also said that governments should prove that vaccine passports are necessary, either for travel or to access businesses and services.

"So far we have not been presented with evidence of vaccine effectiveness to prevent transmission, although members of the scientific community have indicated that this may be forthcoming," the statement said.

Vaccine passports, the commissioners said, should contain only the information required to prove vaccination and not additional health information that could be compromised. They said that once the pandemic has been declared over, or proof of vaccination proves to no longer be necessary, the passports should be destroyed.

The commissioners also want independent oversight of any vaccine passport program and for Canadians to be told how their information is used and stored.

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## Will The U.S.'s New Mask Policy Prove To Be A Matter Of Foresight Or Folly?

*Opinion by Gary Mason, The Globe and Mail, May 18, 2021*

[https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-will-the-uss-new-mask-policy-prove-to-be-a-matter-of-foresight-or/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Globe%20Opinion&utm\\_content=2021-5-18\\_17&utm\\_term=Will%20the%20U.S.%e2%80%99s%20new%20mask%20policy%20prove%20to%20be%20a%20matter%20of%20foresight%20or%20folly?&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&cu\\_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOjKtb](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/opinion/article-will-the-uss-new-mask-policy-prove-to-be-a-matter-of-foresight-or/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Globe%20Opinion&utm_content=2021-5-18_17&utm_term=Will%20the%20U.S.%e2%80%99s%20new%20mask%20policy%20prove%20to%20be%20a%20matter%20of%20foresight%20or%20folly?&utm_campaign=newsletter&cu_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOjKtb)

Imagine this scenario: it's June, and across the country the number of cases of COVID-19 in Canada continues to drop as more and more people get vaccinated against the disease, with millions receiving their second jab.

One thing would remain the same as it is now, however: nearly everywhere people go, they are required to wear masks.

This would not escape the notice of Canadians, especially since, south of the border, those who have been fully vaccinated have resumed something akin to life as normal. Many stopped wearing masks mid-May, and now can go pretty much anywhere they want without a burdensome face covering. And no doubt this radically different reality between the two countries would not go down well among those living north of the 49th.

This scenario is not far-fetched: the very situation is unfolding as we speak. Anthony Fauci, the top infectious disease expert in the U.S., proclaimed last week – to the shock of many – that it's safe for fully vaccinated Americans to eschew physical distancing and go almost anywhere, indoors and outdoors, without wearing a mask.

What stunned many is that the directive seemed to come out of nowhere. Many were bewildered that U.S. President Joe Biden would have allowed such a momentous development to be announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and not the White House itself. Dr. Fauci has also steered a pretty cautious course when it comes to public health measures related to the pandemic, and this policy decision seems to veer in the complete opposite direction – especially given that, as of Monday, less than 40 per cent of the country was fully vaccinated. Indeed, Canada is expected to surpass the U.S. in terms of percentage of the population with their first shot sometime this week, a gap that should only widen.

It wasn't that long ago Dr. Fauci (and his counterparts around the world) talked about the need for reaching herd immunity before we could live in a post-pandemic world; that requires 70 to 80 per cent of the population being vaccinated. This remains the view of most of Canada's top infectious disease specialists, including our Chief Public Health Officer, Theresa Tam.

But Dr. Fauci's announcement could have widespread consequences.

Right now, everyone is trying to figure out what this new directive means in practical terms. The biggest and most obvious question: how is anyone to know whether a person without a mask on is actually fully vaccinated? Mr. Biden has said he is not in favour of anything that resembles a vaccine passport or vaccine verification, and that's going to be an issue.

Given the significant and enduring resistance to mask-wearing policies in nearly every U.S. state, Dr. Fauci's pronouncement screams "all clear." Once people realize they can go mask-less with no questions asked – well, then, it's over. And as many have flagged in recent days, case numbers could begin to spike again as people take advantage of public health guidance that is based on the honour system.

But what if the incidence of the disease doesn't go up? Dr. Fauci has said that the underlying reason for the CDC's position is the evolution of the science around COVID-19. Even though some people who have been fully vaccinated have still become infected, he said, almost all of them are asymptomatic and the level of virus in them is so low it makes it very unlikely (although not impossible) that they will transmit it to someone else.

If the mask decision spurs more people to get fully vaccinated, he added, then that would be a happy bonus.

But back to Canada.

If the CDC's roll of the dice – as some see it – works, producing no noticeable spike in the disease, and the United States starts to look and sound a lot like the United States of 2019 and earlier, then Dr. Tam, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and provincial leaders across the country are going to be facing some tough questions.



Chief among them: why aren't we adopting the same policy?

It's going to be evident fairly soon whether the CDC's plan is working, or whether it is an ill-conceived gambit that leads to rising case numbers and confrontations between workers in establishments that still require masks and Americans waving Dr. Fauci's directive in their faces, demanding to be allowed in.

The next few weeks should be fascinating. And there will not be a more interested observer than Canada.

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## Are Mask Mandates Extending The Pandemic?

by Gary Leff, *ViewFromTheWing*, May 10, 2021

<https://viewfromthewing.com/are-mask-mandates-extending-the-pandemic/>

I've been very 'pro-mask' throughout the pandemic, arguing that flight attendants should be allowed to wear them back when airlines forbid it and the CDC wasn't yet recommending it. I've even argued that conservatives should favor mask-wearing as a 'conservative alternative to lockdowns'. I applauded JetBlue as the first U.S. airline to require masks for passengers. It helped build confidence to travel, knowing that everybody else on board would be wearing a mask.

However the federal transportation mask mandate is no longer useful, and may be counterproductive – even extending the pandemic in the United States.

Transportation was the focus of the federal mask mandate because it was the area where the government had the strongest legal ground (interstate commerce, although the statutory basis is questionable) not because air travel or even public transportation appears to be a primary vector spreading the virus. Airlines already universally required masks, and banned passengers who refused to wear them. The biggest change the federal rule put in place was creating new mask-wearing exceptions.

However the New York Times shares data that requiring mask-wearing by people who have been vaccinated discourages some people from getting vaccinated.

[L]arge increases in willingness to take vaccines emerged for those who were asked about getting a vaccine if doing so meant they wouldn't need to wear a mask or social-distance in public, compared with a group that was told it would still have to do those things.

Among people most likely to skip vaccines, whether or not they still have to wear a mask makes the difference.

Masks made a ton of sense for travel earlier in the pandemic. They were one additional layer of protection (though to be effective, people should have been wearing better masks and learning to wear them properly).

That was before vaccines were widely available in the United States. Now there's more supply than demand. Anyone 16 and up who wants one can get one, this will expand to 12 year olds in a matter of days and young unvaccinated children are at less risk than vaccinated older adults.

Nearly everyone in the U.S. still at significant risk in the coming weeks has chosen to be at risk. What's more, vaccines don't just protect the vaccinated, they prevent spread. We should probably lift mask mandates anyway including indoor mandates, and inflight is one of the safest indoor congregant settings.

If we lifted mask mandates for the vaccinated, that would encourage vaccination, ending the pandemic sooner in the United States.

Conversely by maintaining mask mandates, even for the vaccinated, we reduce the impetus for some of the remaining unvaccinated to get a shot. That means those people are more likely to get the virus and more likely to spread it, and it has a greater opportunity to continue to mutate. By discouraging vaccination, more people get sick and die from COVID-19.

Of course, we should have tied the recent stimulus checks to vaccination. Payments of over \$1,000 – only to those who get vaccinated – would have been a strong incentive. But that ship has sailed. Continued mask mandates on planes when everyone who wishes to can already largely protect themselves could be making things worse.

I still plan to wear a mask during flu season, but federal mask mandates are no longer needed. If they're going to remain in place for symbolic reasons, the symbolism should be used to encourage vaccination and end the pandemic more quickly, perhaps give out bright wrist bands to those who have been vaccinated which waives the mask requirement.

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## A Quicker Path To Normal: U.K. Re-Opens At 30% Vaccinated While Canada Waits For 75%

*By Sharon Kirkey, National Post, May 18, 2021*

[A quicker path to normal: U.K. Re-Opens at 30% vaccinated while Canada waits for 75% \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/health/a-quicker-path-to-normal-uk-re-opens-at-30-percent-vaccinated-while-canada-waits-for-75-percent-vaccinated-to-re-open/pagewanted)

Across the United Kingdom, where 30 per cent of the population is fully vaccinated against COVID-19, people are free to begin “cuddling cautiously,” pubs are re-opening and millions are socializing again as the country further exits a grim four-month lockdown.

In the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has said the fully vaccinated, roughly 37 per cent of Americans as of Monday, may, with some exceptions, safely drop their masks, stop distancing and gather inside with people with whom they do not live. Fans are distancing at baseball stadiums, Broadway is set for a September re-opening and county fairs across New York State are set to resume this summer.

Canadians, meanwhile, have been told they can look forward to a similar taste of pre-COVID life, though not until 75 per cent of those eligible for vaccines have achieved full vaccination status, meaning two weeks after the final vaccine dose. As of Monday, that figure stood at less than four per cent.

The 75 per cent target is part of “Life after Vaccination” guidance issued by the Public Health Agency of Canada on Friday, May 14, a “roadmap,” as Health Minister Patty Hajdu described it, that some critics say is so scant on detail it could have been sketched out on the back of a cocktail napkin. Others are asking why Canada’s target is so much higher than in other countries.

The guidance came days after Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s confusing “one-dose summer, two-dose fall” messaging. While it might sound catchy “in a weird way,” trying to explain complex problems in a simple slogan can be problematic, says Dr. Gerald Evans, chair of the division of infectious diseases at Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario.

A “one-dose” summer, according to the health agency, in fact doesn’t look much different than last summer with no vaccines, with only camping, hiking, patio dining and small, outdoor picnics in the offing, provided 75 per cent of eligible Canadians have received one dose, and 20 per cent of them a second.

Come fall, if cases are low and two-dose vaccination is high, “then (the government’s emphasis in bold) local public health will be able to lift more measures and you should be able to do more activities indoors with people outside your household,” the public health agency wrote, like attending “colleges, indoor sports, family gatherings.”

Still, restrictions fall squarely in provincial jurisdiction, and the provinces and territories can choose to ignore Ottawa’s bare-bones guidelines.

According to the data Evans has seen, “if we had about 80 per cent of the population with two doses of vaccine into them by September first, we would have virtually a normal looking fall.”

Several provinces are already promising better. Saskatchewan plans to have second doses available to everyone by sometime in mid-July, while Ontario “will work our backs off to have a two dose summer,” Ontario Premier Doug Ford said on Friday, May 14.

The 75 per cent fully vaccinated threshold is based on modelling projections “with lots of different parameters and assumptions to fill in,” Canada’s chief public health officer, Dr. Theresa Tam, said Friday.

“But I think having an aspirational target is really a good thing for everyone to aim for,” she said. The U.K., hit with a devastating third wave, “crushed that curve, that very massive third wave, to very low levels by the time they got to that kind of vaccine coverage.” Canada, by comparison, is just beginning to peak in many provinces and territories, Tam said.

What’s different about this summer, Tam offered, is that one shot of a COVID-19 vaccine should make people feel more confident that they’re better protected, though “you’ve got to get that second dose to provide maximal protection.”

But the lack of clarity has some people attempting their own back-of-the-envelope calculations.

“One I’ve heard a few times already runs like this: ‘Wait a minute. These are the overall thresholds. Can I create a slightly larger ‘bubble’ of trusted family members and friends from two or three households who’ve all had 1 or 2 shots and have minimal outside exposure? Isn’t that equivalent to 100% coverage,’” Dr. David Naylor, co-chair of Canada’s COVID-19 immunity task force, said in an email.

“Those types of questions need to be answered sooner rather than later,” Naylor said.

There is worry now over the infectiousness of the B.1.617 variant that first emerged in India, but the two mRNA vaccines — Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna — seem to offer reasonable protection, Naylor said.

“So the key is to vaccinate as many Canadians as fast as possible,” he said, including catching up with a higher proportion of second doses, “even as we race ahead with first doses,” to chase that 75 per cent threshold for total population coverage.

If restrictions are abandoned entirely before reaching that target, the incentive to get vaccinated may diminish. The U.S. is already butting up against vaccine hesitancy. The number of Americans seeking to be vaccinated dropped by a third in recent weeks, Reuters reports, prompting companies and health authorities to offer booze, baseball tickets and other freebies to persuade people to get their shots.

The U.K. had a raging epidemic, which Canada avoided, before it began vaccinating. “We had a much smaller epidemic. So there are a larger number of people in the U.K. who achieved immunity through natural infection,” said University of Ottawa health policy expert Amir Attaran. There is some preliminary evidence from several small studies that a single jab of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine can launch a rapid immune response in the previously infected.

“In Canada — and this is the good news — rather few people compared to the U.K. achieved immunity through natural infection, so if anything we must outdo the vaccination performance of the U.K. to be in the same place,” Attaran said.

Likewise, the U.S. had a “raging (former U.S. President Donald) Trump epidemic, such that the first dose that many people have received is actually, functionally, more like their second,” he said.

“It’s all about the dual attack mode,” Evans said. “Vaccinate the living daylights out of the population and drive those numbers down and don’t re-emerge from the restrictions until those numbers have dropped to a point where public health says, ‘no problem, we’ve got this under control, we can handle it from here with our outbreak management.’”

## UK Readies For Major Re-Opening But New Variant Sparks Worry

By Jill Lawless, *The Associated Press*, May 16, 2021

[UK readies for major re-opening but new variant sparks worry \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/uk-readies-for-major-re-opening-but-new-variant-sparks-worry)

Travelers in England were packing their bags, bartenders were polishing their glasses and performers were warming up as Britain prepared on Sunday, May 16 for a major step out of lockdown — but with clouds of worry on the horizon.

Excitement at the re-opening of travel and hospitality vied with anxiety that a more contagious virus variant first found in India is spreading fast and could delay further plans to re-open.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson urged Britons to “take this next step with a heavy dose of caution.”

“We are keeping the spread of the variant first identified in India under close observation and taking swift action where infection rates are rising,” he said. “I urge everyone to be cautious and take responsibility when enjoying new freedoms today in order to keep the virus at bay.”

Cases of the variant have more than doubled in a week in the U.K., defying a sharp nation-wide downward trend in infections and deaths won by hard-earned months of restrictions and a rapid vaccination campaign. A surge testing and stepped-up vaccination effort was being conducted in the northern England areas hardest hit by that variant.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock said the variant, formally known as B.1.617.2, is more transmissible than the U.K.’s main strain and “it is likely it will become the dominant variant.”

On Monday, May 17, people in England will be able to eat a restaurant meal indoors, drink inside a pub, go to a museum, hug friends and visit one another’s homes for the first time in months. A ban on overseas holidays is also being lifted, with travel now possible to a short list of countries with low infection rates. Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are following similar but slightly different re-opening paths.

Patrick Dardis, chief executive of brewery and pub chain Young’s, said the indoor opening — which follows the re-opening of outdoor patios and beer gardens last month — is “a big step back on to the path to normality.”

“The weather has been pretty dire, and people are hardy, but we really needed this next step to come,” he said.

But hospitality and entertainment venues say they won’t be able to make money until they can open at full capacity. That’s due to happen on June 21, the date set by the government for lifting its remaining COVID-19 restrictions, including social distancing and mask-wearing rules.

Johnson has said if the new variant causes a big surge in cases, it could scupper that plan.

Britain has recorded almost 128,000 coronavirus deaths, the highest reported toll in Europe. But new infections have plummeted to an average of around 2,000 a day, compared with nearly 70,000 a day during the winter peak, and deaths have fallen to single figures a day.

Almost 70% of British adults have received a first dose of a coronavirus vaccine, and more than 38% have had both doses.

Health officials, backed by the army, are carrying out surge testing in Bolton and Blackburn in northwest England, where cases of the new variant are clustered. Pop-up vaccination sites have been set up to speed the inoculation drive, with authorities aiming to inoculate all members of multi-generational households to stop the variant spreading within families.

Across the country, the government is shortening the gap between doses for people over 50 from 12 to eight weeks in a bid to give them more protection.

Hancock said scientists had a “high degree of confidence” that current vaccines work against the Indian-identified variant.

Critics of Britain's Conservative government say lax border rules allowed the new variant to enter the country. They accuse the government of delaying a ban on visitors from India, which is experiencing a devastating coronavirus outbreak, because it is seeking a trade deal with the vast country.

India was added to the U.K.'s high-risk “red list” on April 23, weeks after neighbors Pakistan and Bangladesh.

“We shouldn’t be in this situation,” said opposition Labour Party lawmaker Yvette Cooper. “This was not inevitable.”

The government denies that its health policies were influenced by political or trade considerations.

Mark Walport, a member of the government’s Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies, said Britain was at a “perilous moment,” and people should be cautious with their new freedoms.

“My advice is that just because you can do something doesn’t necessarily mean you should,” he told Sky News. “As far as possible, socialize outside, maintain social distancing. If you’re going to hug, hug cautiously.”

## As U.K. Eases Travel Restrictions, Criticism For Government's Mixed Signals On Whether Brits Should Go Abroad

*By Paul Waldie, Europe Correspondent, The Globe and Mail, May 19, 2021*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-as-uk-eases-travel-restrictions-criticism-for-governments-mixed/>

People across Britain can go to the pub, take in a movie and attend a soccer match as lockdown restrictions ease. But travelling abroad remains difficult and anyone entering the country faces a multitude of rules and confusing government messages, even as the European Union opens up to fully vaccinated tourists.

The government has been grappling for weeks over how to Re-Open the economy and satisfy the public's desire to travel while also ensuring that new variants of the COVID-19 virus aren't imported. The debate has become more pressing as the number of cases in the U.K. of a variant first detected in India soars to nearly 3,000, up from 1,313 a week ago.

On Monday, the government lifted most lockdown measures and allowed people to travel abroad on holiday for the first time in months. But many travel restrictions also came into effect and the government is under fire for sending mixed-signals about whether people should vacation in dozens of countries including Canada, the United States and popular European destinations such as France and Spain.

While Prime Minister Boris Johnson has insisted that he wants to kick start the travel sector, the government has introduced a complicated traffic light system that categorizes countries as red, amber or green and imposes varying levels of quarantine on travellers regardless of whether they've been vaccinated.

So far only a dozen countries – including Portugal, Australia and Israel – have been designated green, which means arriving passengers must have a negative COVID-19 test but don't have to quarantine. A total of 170 countries, which includes Canada, the U.S. and most of Europe, have been put on the amber list which requires travellers to have a negative test and to self-isolate for up to 11 days at home or a hotel, even if they're fully vaccinated. Anyone travelling into the U.K. from 43 red-list nations, such as India and Turkey, must also test negative and quarantine in a government-approved hotel for ten days at a cost of up to £1,750 per person, or \$2,962, regardless of whether they've been vaccinated.

At the same time, the EU confirmed on Wednesday, May 19 that it's moving ahead with plans to relax travel rules and allow fully-vaccinated visitors into the bloc from any country, so long as they've had two doses of a vaccine approved for use in the EU. It's not clear when the new measure will take effect and it will be up to each of the 27 member nations to implement the rule. Greece, Portugal and Italy have already lifted most travel restrictions on tourists from the U.K., the U.S., Israel and some other countries.



The U.K.'s cautious approach has done little to stop thousands of people from jetting off on vacation. Since Monday, more than 150 flights have departed each day to dozens of amber list countries including France, Spain and Italy. The travel industry has also pushed the government to add more countries to the green list; several cabinet ministers have said they don't want the rules to discourage people from visiting family and friends.

"We don't want to stop travel altogether and the reason, as [the health secretary] Matt Hancock set out, that we have the amber list is there will be reasons why people feel they need to travel either to visit family or indeed to visit friends," George Eustice, the environment secretary, told the BBC on Tuesday.

But many health experts have been alarmed by the surge in travel and the inconsistent messaging. "The aviation industry's current enthusiasm to resume international air travel and overseas holidays, and to expand airports, needs to be checked," two prominent virologists, Deenan Pillay and Jangu Banatvala, wrote in a letter published in the British Medical Journal last week. Until the Britain's vaccination program was completed, they added, "it would be remiss to abandon all attempts to limit new variants being imported into the U.K."

On Wednesday, May 19, Mr. Johnson tried to clarify the situation. "We're trying to move away from endlessly legislating everything and to rely on guidance and asking people to do the right thing," he told the House of Commons. "It is very, very clear, you should not be going to an amber list country, except for some extreme circumstance, such the serious illness of a family member. You should not be going to an amber list country on holiday."

The government is still considering lifting all remaining lockdown rules next month and it has taken comfort from figures that show the pandemic is receding. Britain recorded 2,696 cases of COVID-19 on Wednesday, May 19, down 1 per cent in the last week. Three deaths were also reported which was 23 per cent fewer than a week ago. The number of people in hospital with COVID-19 has also fallen by 10 per cent in the last seven days to 709.

Mr. Hancock, the health secretary, said Wednesday that while the variant first detected in India, known as B.1.617.2, was more transmissible than the mutation that has dominated the U.K., vaccines appeared to be effective. So far 25 people with B.1.617.2 have been hospitalized in Bolton, a city near Manchester that has been hard hit by the variant. Mr. Hancock said most of the patients were unvaccinated and 90 per cent had not received two doses of vaccine.

He added that Britain has also reached a new milestone in its vaccination program. As of Wednesday, May 19, 70 per cent of all adults have received one dose of vaccine and nearly 40 per cent have had two.

## Italy Gambles On Green Pass And Full Vaccination Of Holiday Islands To Lure High-Spending Foreign Tourists

*By Eric Reguly, European Bureau Chief, The Globe and Mail, May 14, 2021*

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-italy-gambles-on-green-pass-and-full-vaccination-of-holiday-islands-to/>

Sergio Maggiulli is in exceedingly good spirits.

The 53-year-old Neapolitan and former nursing-home legal consultant is the owner of a small villa on Ponza, one of four islands in the Pontine archipelago in the Tyrrhenian Sea, about half way between Rome and Naples. He rents out the blue-and-white villa, equipped with a vast terrace overlooking the sea, in the high season and last summer's pandemic made business difficult for him.

This summer, Italy is Re-opening— or plans to, barring a fourth wave — and he can't keep up with the requests. "I am already booked solid from June 20 until early September and I am even getting calls from New Yorkers," he said. "But it's easier for me to go with Italians because I still don't know how easy it will be for foreigners to get to Italy."

Ponza is popular with Roman families, since it's an easy shot from the capital and cheaper than the glitzy islands of Capri and Ischia farther south. The island, covering just 7.3 square kilometres, is known for its dramatic rocky coastline, clear waters, relaxed seafood restaurants — and summer crowds.

The crowds thinned out last summer even though the first known local case of COVID-19 among the 3,000 permanent residents did not come until October.

To help ensure the most popular holiday islands don't face another virus panic, Italy's regional health authorities are planning to vaccinate all of their adult residents by the summer. Doing so will help with their "COVID-free" marketing pitches.

"We are preparing to welcome millions of tourists and [want to] prevent them from going to Spain and Greece," Vincenzo De Luca, Governor of Campania, the region that includes Naples, Capri and Ischia, said in a speech last weekend.

In an interview Thursday, Capri Mayor Marino Lembo said 100 per cent of the island's registered adult residents (about 7,000) had been vaccinated, as well as the hospitality workers who live on the mainland and commute by ferry. "Last summer, we had zero visitors, only Italians," he said. "We lost a lot of business. This summer, we hope the foreigners will come back and we're already getting bookings from Americans."

In 2020, tourist revenue on the island fell by an estimated 70 per cent, according to the Italian hotels association Federalberghi.

Tourism is an essential Italian industry, accounting for about 13 per cent of gross domestic product, double the Canadian level, though not as high as Spain's (14.5 per cent) or Greece's (21 per cent). Italy's new Prime Minister, Mario Draghi, the former president of the European Central Bank, knows that the fragile economy, which contracted by 8.9 per cent last year and remained in negative territory in the first quarter, cannot withstand a second summer devoid of big-spending foreign visitors.

Mr. Draghi is gambling that Italy's rising vaccination rate and remaining restrictions, such as the 10 p.m. curfew, obligatory mask use outdoors and yellow-orange-red regional infection-alert system, will keep the country safe for tourists this summer.

The last Italian summer ended in disaster, when sloppy physical distancing triggered a deadly second wave that pushed the country back into lockdown. One of the main sources of the new infections was the island of Sardinia, whose Costa Smeralda nightclubs and bars were stuffed with partygoers.

Last week, Mr. Draghi said that Italy was ready to "welcome back the world" and promised that a new "green pass" certificate would make travel a breeze for those who have been fully vaccinated or have antibodies from an infection in the previous six months.

After a slow start, Italy is pushing its vaccination campaign hard in a race to outpace the highly contagious new variants before summer arrives. According to the Bloomberg vaccine tracker, the country is administering about 500,000 doses a day. More than 29 per cent of the population has received the first dose and 13 per cent the second dose – both in line with the European Union average, though still well short of Britain's.

For would-be foreign visitors, the discouraging factor is the lack of clarity on when exactly tourism will be open to them, and which countries will be given the early right to bypass the existing, five-day quarantine requirement.

Last week, Tourism Minister Massimo Garavaglia said the green pass would be "valid for everyone, also, and above all, tourists from outside the EU," notably Britain, United States and Israel, where the vaccination rates are high. What was not made clear was whether the quarantine requirement would be lifted for green pass holders this month or sometime in June.

Speaking in parliament earlier this week, Mr. Draghi reiterated his plan to Re-Open Italy to domestic and foreign tourists "as soon as possible." He added that, "With regard to the G7 countries, in particular USA, Japan and Canada, entry without quarantine in the event of a vaccination certificate will be favoured."

## OTHER CAFII MEMBER-RELEVANT INDUSTRY NEWS

### Jeff Bezos's Blue Origin To Open Space Tourism Ticket Sales

*By Eric M. Johnson, Reuters, May 5, 2021*

[https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-jeff-bezoss-blue-origin-to-open-space-tourism-ticket-sales-today/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=Sightseer&utm\\_content=2021-5-9\\_9&utm\\_term=Jeff%20Bezos%e2%80%99s%20Blue%20Origin%20to%20open%20space%20tourism%20ticket%20sales%20today&utm\\_campaign=newsletter&cu\\_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb](https://www.theglobeandmail.com/world/article-jeff-bezoss-blue-origin-to-open-space-tourism-ticket-sales-today/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=Sightseer&utm_content=2021-5-9_9&utm_term=Jeff%20Bezos%e2%80%99s%20Blue%20Origin%20to%20open%20space%20tourism%20ticket%20sales%20today&utm_campaign=newsletter&cu_id=Ts6FwhWx6n2rSHC0x7MiReEeeFJOJkTb)

Blue Origin, billionaire Jeff Bezos' rocket company, said on Wednesday, May 5 that it is targeting July 20 for its first suborbital sightseeing trip on its New Shepard spacecraft, a landmark moment in a competition to usher in a new era of private commercial space travel.

Blue Origin also said it will offer one seat on the first flight to the winning bidder of a five-week online auction, the proceeds of which will be donated to the space firm's foundation.

The New Shepard rocket-and-capsule combo is designed to autonomously fly six passengers more than 100 km above Earth into suborbital space, high enough to experience a few minutes of weightlessness and see the curvature of the planet before the pressurized capsule returns to earth under parachutes.

The capsule features six observation windows Blue Origin says are nearly three times as tall as those on a Boeing 747 jetliner and the largest ever used in space.

"The view will be spectacular," Blue Origin's Director of Astronaut Sales, Ariane Cornell, told a media briefing.

After its first flight in July, Cornell said Blue Origin would have "a couple more" crewed flights before the end of the year. She declined to disclose details of the ticket price, which has been a closely guarded secret inside the company for years.

Reuters reported in 2018 that Blue Origin was planning to charge passengers at least \$200,000 for the ride, based on an appraisal of rival plans from billionaire Richard Branson's Virgin Galactic Holdings Inc and other considerations, though its thinking may have changed.

Wednesday's announcement follows years of testing and development work that has included delays.

Cornell said Blue Origin would "love" to increase the frequency of its tourist space flights and add launch locations, possibly outside the United States, depending on demand. For July's flight, the reusable New Shepard booster will launch and land in West Texas.

Celebrities and the uber-rich appear to be the core market for space tourist jaunts, at least initially. Cornell told reporters the most likely candidates would be "very clear on our radar."

Only 569 people had ever been into space, she said, adding that “we’re about to change that dramatically.”

But she declined to say when – or if – Bezos, a lifelong space enthusiast and currently the world’s richest person, will take a trip on New Shepard.

Virgin Galactic also aims to fly private customers in early 2022, after a first flight with Branson on board later this year.

Its zero-gravity experience is anchored by its SpaceShipTwo plane, and the company has ambitious plans to offer point-to-point travel between far-flung cities at near-space altitudes.

Virgin says it will charge more than \$250,000 for new reservations but has not announced final pricing. Sales will Re-Open following Branson’s flight.

Meanwhile, a college science professor and an aerospace data analyst are among a four-member crew for a launch into orbit planned later this year by Elon Musk’s SpaceX, part of a charity drive billed as the first all-civilian space flight in history.

Blue Origin has fallen far behind SpaceX on orbital transportation, and lost out to SpaceX and United Launch Alliance (ULA) on billions of dollars’ worth of U.S. national security launch contracts which begin in 2022.

But its space tourism announcement provides Bezos, who founded Amazon.com Inc, needed momentum while it protests SpaceX’s \$2.9-billion contract under NASA’s high-profile program to return Americans to the moon in coming years.

Regulatory filings revealed that Bezos sold Amazon shares worth about \$2-billion this week as a part of an arranged trading plan. Bezos, who will step down as CEO in a few months, has been unloading shares of the company he founded and had also said he would sell shares worth \$1-billion to fund Blue Origin projects.

## RESEARCH/THOUGHT LEADERSHIP/TECHNOLOGY NEWS

### Competitor Collaboration Guidelines: Competition Bureau Updates Key Guidance

*William Wu, James B. Musgrove, and Éric Vallières, McMillan LLP, May 10, 2021*

[https://mcmillan.ca/insights/competitor-collaboration-guidelines-competition-bureau-updates-key-guidance/?utm\\_source=email](https://mcmillan.ca/insights/competitor-collaboration-guidelines-competition-bureau-updates-key-guidance/?utm_source=email)

On May 6, 2021, the Competition Bureau (the “Bureau”) released updates to its *Competitor Collaboration Guidelines* (the “CCGs”). The revised CCGs can be found [here](#).

#### Background

The CCGs are a “big deal”. The Competition Bureau puts out a significant volume of guidance, addressing various matters respecting its enforcement approach under the Competition Act (the “Act”). Virtually all guidance from the Bureau is welcome, but not all is of equal importance. The CCGs are right at the top of the importance hierarchy. One reason is that competitor collaboration – in some cases price fixing or cartel conduct – can involve the most serious competition offences. Consequently, the CCGs are of great interest for businesses seeking to collaborate, legitimately, with competitors while avoiding serious competition law offences.

The other reason is that there is limited judicial guidance on this very important topic. The Canadian law was changed very significantly in 2010, to create per se offences with respect to certain types of agreements between competitors (essentially price fixing, market allocation and output restriction agreements), and to remove other types of agreements (such as vertical arrangements) from the ambit of the criminal law. The amendments also created a specific, but not entirely clear, statutory defence to the criminal provisions for some types of joint venture arrangements between competitors. Finally, the 2010 amendments added a new provision (section 90.1) which allows civil challenge to other types of agreements between competitors.

Even the brief overview above demonstrates the complexity of the 2010 Competition Act amendments. There has been very limited jurisprudence since their introduction to provide interpretation.[1] Therefore, guidance respecting the Bureau’s views in this area is particularly valuable. This Bulletin does not summarize the full content of the CCGs. It focuses on the significant changes from the original version published in 2009.

## Implications For Mergers

### (i) Agreements going beyond a pure merger

The updated CCGs stipulate that where parties to a merger enter into an agreement that goes beyond the pure merger arrangement, the Bureau may consider whether it should commence a potential criminal investigation with respect to those aspects of the transaction which go beyond the merger proper. In this regard, the updated CCGs added the following new language:

Where parties enter into any agreement(s) that goes beyond the acquisition, amalgamation or combination agreement, whether within or outside said agreement, the Bureau will consider under which provision(s) of the Act any investigation or inquiry should be pursued. The Bureau may utilize its formal powers under sections 11 and/or 15 of the Act to obtain information and/or records relevant to this determination.

### (ii) Non-compete agreements

The updated CCGs continue to recognize, as did their predecessors, that non-competition agreements associated with merger transactions can serve legitimate purposes, such as ensuring that a purchaser in a merger transaction realizes the full value of a purchased business by not being required to compete against the vendor for customer loyalty, and they provide that non-competition agreements entered into in connection of a merger will generally be examined under the merger provisions of the Act. However, in a change from the original CCGs, the updated CCGs warn of rare instances when a non-competition agreement entered into in connection with a merger may be examined under the criminal cartel provisions as amounting to a market allocation agreement, or under the civil agreement provision if the effect of the non-competition agreement is uncertain in the merger review. The updated CCGs added the language below:

However, in rare instances [non-compete clauses entered into in connection with a merger] may be considered under section 45 of the Act, for example where the non-compete may amount to a market allocation agreement, or under section 90.1 of the Act, for example where the effect of a non-compete agreement is uncertain at the time when the merger is reviewable under section 92 of the Act.

The new language may prove to have a significant chilling effect on what the CCGs themselves acknowledge to be normal, and economically beneficial, non-compete agreements which make possible the transfer of the full value of a business in a merger transaction.

## Sham Agreements

The revised CCGs add a section providing that where the form of any agreement is a sham designed to avoid application of the criminal provisions of the Act, the Bureau will focus on the substance of the agreement or collaboration when determining whether specific conduct should be assessed under the criminal provision. In this regard, the updated CCGs added the following language:



The Bureau is cognizant that parties may attempt to structure or design agreements or collaborations to avoid scrutiny under section 45. Regardless of formality or enforceability, where the Bureau has evidence that a collaboration or agreement is a sham it will consider the arrangement under the most appropriate section of the Act.

Commentators had urged the Bureau, if its concern was to capture transactions which were designed to look like mergers but were in substance conspiracies, to articulate a “sham” exception to its guidance that mergers would not attract criminal prosecution, as an alternative to watering down the clear guidance with respect to mergers provided in the original CCGs. In the event, the Bureau elected to do both.

### **Vertical Agreements And Dual Distribution**

The revised CCGs state that vertical agreements between customers and suppliers will generally be assessed under the reviewable matters provisions and not the criminal provisions of the Act. However, the revised CCGs weaken the guidance, particularly with respect to dual distribution arrangements – which was one of the strongest portions of the original CCGs. They do this by, first, providing that the guidance applies only to “purely” vertical agreements. Second, they provide that vertical arrangements that include an agreement between competitors to fix price, allocate markets or limit the supply of a product will generally be assessed under the criminal provision.

Since section 45 can only apply to horizontal agreements, this addition is likely to cause significant concern and confusion for those engaged in dual distribution arrangements.

### **Broader Concept Of “Competitor” Under The Civil Provision**

The prior CCGs stated that the Bureau would not consider parties to an agreement to be competitors for the purpose of the civil agreement provision (section 90.1) only where they compete in respect of products that are subject to the challenged agreement.

In the revised CCG, the Bureau has broadened its approach to competitors. The Bureau now takes the position that the civil agreement provision can apply to any agreement as long as two or more of the parties to that agreement are competitors or potential competitors with respect to any product, although its primary focus is likely to be with regard to the products subject to the agreement. In addition, the revised CCGs note that a party to an agreement who does not compete with any of the other parties to the agreement could still be subject to the sanction of the civil agreement provision if at least two of the other parties to the agreement are actual or potential competitors.

In this regard, the updated CCGs cite the consent agreements it obtained in the E-books inquiry under section 90.1, in which Apple was considered a party to agreements with publishers for purpose of section 90.1 even though Apple did not compete with the publishers.

## **Broader Potential Challenges To Competitor Agreements And Joint Ventures**

In the revised CCGs, the Bureau appears open to broadening its enforcement approach to the civil agreement provisions of the Act, in addition to the above-noted broadened definition of competitor. Firstly, they note that the Bureau will consider whether the agreement is likely to prevent or lessen competition substantially in any market, not just the product market subject to the agreement. Secondly, the prior CCGs indicated that the Bureau would consider a challenge to the collaboration only if parties were unable independently to carry out the activities which they instead agree to provide via collaboration. They further noted that even if the parties were likely, independently, to carry out the activity, further investigation may be warranted but that the conduct would not necessarily be subject to challenge. That language has been removed from the updated CCGs.

## **Agreements On “Buy Side” And Employment Issues**

In the draft revisions to the CCGs released last summer, there was a suggestion that agreements between firms to buy things or acquire inputs – in particular agreements related to hiring or paying employees – might be subject to the criminal provisions, despite the fact that the wording of the Act does not support that view and that buying groups are often seen as benefitting competition, especially for smaller competitors.

This suggestion provoked some controversy, and in late November 2020, the Bureau released a statement clarifying its view that the criminal cartel provisions of the Act do not apply to no-poach agreements (i.e., agreements between competitors not to hire one another’s employees), wage-fixing agreements, and other forms of “buy-side” agreements. Please see our earlier bulletin for a discussion of the implication of that statement.

Updated CCGs reiterate the Bureau’s clarifying statement from November 2020 that joint purchasing agreements, employee no-poaching and wage-fixing agreements are not prohibited by section 45 but may be subject to review under the reviewable practices provisions of the Act.

This issue remains a controversial one, and may result in legislative change at some point.

## **Guidance Is Good, But Not Determinative**

As we have noted, guidance by the Commissioner of Competition, both with respect to competitor collaborations and more generally, is welcome and important. However, it is not determinative. It may influence but does not bind either the Competition Tribunal or the courts. They have ruled contrary to Competition Bureau guidance on a number of occasions. Nor, do Competition Bureau guidelines bind the Competition Bureau itself, which has occasionally acted contrary to such guidance. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, the Competition Bureau’s guidelines do not bind private plaintiffs, including class action plaintiffs, who may choose to bring actions, alleging breach of the criminal provision of the Act for conduct which the Bureau’s guidance advises does not implicate a criminal violation. So, guidance is welcomed, and clear unambiguous guidance, minimizing use of words such as “generally” and “usually” is particularly welcomed, but it does not and cannot address all concerns. Care is important, particularly when venturing, or joint venturing, close to the line.

## Conclusion

As noted at the outset, the Bureau offers no more important guidance to the legal and business community than that in the CCGs. The issuance of the original CCGs was timely and extremely influential. An update a decade later is appropriate. Similarly, the care which the Bureau has taken in making the changes contained in the revised CCGs is also appropriate, particularly given the limited jurisprudence to date. That said, there are some meaningful changes contained in the updated CCGs and it is important that businesses understand these subtle but important adjustments. They indicate, to some degree, a mildly increased suspicion of business collaborations, and the potential for a somewhat more aggressive enforcement stance in the area. Consequently, particularly when considering joint venture arrangements it will be important to pay close attention to these changes.

Should you have any questions, particularly related to joint ventures or business collaborations amongst competitors, or with respect to dual distribution or similar arrangements, members of McMillan's Competition and Antitrust group would be delighted to assist.

The most significant decision interpreting of the revised provisions is the judgement of the British Columbia Court of Appeal in *Watson v. Bank of America* 2015 BCCA 362, which confirmed that the new section 45 offence does not apply to agreements between firms which are related only vertically in the distribution chain, and further requires that to be an offence, an agreement between competitors needs to be an agreement dealing with the product with respect to which they compete.

## A Cautionary Note

The foregoing provides only an overview and does not constitute legal advice. Readers are cautioned against making any decisions based on this material alone. Rather, specific legal advice should be obtained.

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## UPCOMING WEBINARS AND EVENTS

### The Role Of Big Data and AI In Insurance Pricing: A Collaborative Webinar From An Insurance Policy And Regulatory Perspective

**Date:** Tuesday May 25, 2021

**Time:** 2:00 – 3:00 pm EDT (60 minutes)

Pricing is a foundational but complex aspect of the insurance marketplace. With big data and AI increasingly impacting this area, many policymakers are re-evaluating their legal frameworks for how insurers can price their products. Consumers may know that their data are collected but may not fully understand how this impacts the price they pay for insurance. This non-partisan and non-advocative webinar, presented in collaboration with the Institutes Griffith Insurance Education Foundation, will provide foundational knowledge to help inform these important policy conversations.

- Opening remarks
  - Nevada Insurance Commissioner Barbara Richardson
- Insurance Pricing Basics
  - Dr. Charles Nyce, Florida State University
- Consumer perceptions of personal data use by insurers
  - Dr. Barbara Kiviat, Stanford University
- Q&A
  - Moderated by Frank Paul Tomasello, The Institutes Griffith Foundation

[Register Here](#)

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## 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 au Québec
- Comparative Performance Claims
- 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](#)