



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS

COVID-19

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The Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians (CAEP) Calls for an Immediate National Strategy to Stop the Spread of COVID-19

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Canada's emergency physicians are observing, with growing apprehension, the collective failure of our provincial governments to meaningfully address the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Canada needs a national strategy with clear and consistent direction.

In September of this year, CAEP released a statement "Recommendations for the Canadian Health Care System Regarding COVID-19 and Flu Season." The message expressed our concerns for a second wave and our fears of what a "Twindemic" might mean for Canadians and our health care system. This national health emergency of unprecedented proportions has laid bare some of the inherent jurisdictional difficulties of our federation. It is abundantly clear that the pandemic urgently requires a unified command and control approach from the federal government.

As front-line health care providers, we noted with concern, the apparent lack of national coordination of public health measures, resulting in confusing and differing rules for business closures and public gatherings. Rules vary from region to region and province to province. There must be clarity and federally coordinated messaging with respect to strict and uniform preventive public health actions, including masking, gathering sizes and travel restrictions. The importance of consistent messaging should outweigh jurisdictional concerns. Currently, the federal government is one voice among many. This has led to conflicting and confusing direction to the Canadian public and to health care providers.

CAEP should have a partnership role in a more effective and strategic federal communications strategy. Emergency physicians are on the front lines of the battle and have the public's trust on this issue. We ask that the federal government partner with CAEP and other key medical stakeholders to provide consistent direction, communication, and advice to reduce COVID-19 transmission, while supporting those adversely impacted economically.

The systems across this country cannot remain fragmented. A national strategy is needed for a national emergency. CAEP will be there to answer the call.

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