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From: CLRInfo
Sent: April 9, 2020 9:15 AM
To: Ken McCormack
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Subject: COVID 19 Update: April 9

Importance: High

CLR Members,

Federal Announcement

The federal government has released its projections for Canadians under the COVID-19 pandemic and the results are not encouraging. The Public Health Agency estimates that in the long term as our country fights this virus, 22,000-50,000 deaths are projected in Canada with 5-10% of the population expected to be infected. Grim estimates that only emphasize how important it is to continue to follow social distancing guidelines and self-isolating as much as possible.

In the short term, even with controls in place, the government estimates 500-700 deaths and 22,580-31,850 infections in Canada by April 16 (up from 462 deaths and 19,805 infections reported as of today, April 9).

The federal Jobs Report that was just released for March showed that the unemployment rate rose to 7.8% with more than 1 million jobs lost. This is more than a 2% increase from February. Of these jobs, 474,000 were full time jobs. Part time jobs and those jobs with limited hours make up the difference. On top of this, hours have been cut back on a further 2.1 million jobs resulting in a total 3.1 million jobs impacted by wage loss. Since March 15, 4.5 million Canadians have applied for the Canadian Emergency Response Benefits (CERB) program.

In his daily address, the Prime Minister committed that as more information is learned regarding impacts, the government will continue to expand the three point economic plan to help businesses and workers. In light of these numbers, news reports claim that we should expect that the federal government will make further allowances under the announced wage subsidy. Conversations are still ongoing with the opposition parties, so there is still no word on if and when that proposed wage subsidy will be enacted in legislation. At this point, the Conservatives are trying to get the Prime Minister to call all of parliament back in person, and are saying that it would be a condition of any support from them. Arguments are being made on both sides as to whether the Conservatives are being unreasonable, or whether the Prime Minister is being stubborn by insisting the debate can happen virtually and government can continue to operate without all of parliament meeting in person and being offside with social distancing guidelines. Overall, there seems to be general support from all parties to the proposed legislation, with small improvements possible through the debate that is on the table now.

The Prime Minister emphasized the need to continue to be diligent in practicing social distancing and self-isolation to keep the numbers of infected and deaths as low as possible. He stressed that the outbreak happened later in Canada than other countries and as a result, health officials believe that if guidelines are followed, there is a chance to keep the numbers lower than what other countries have been experiencing. He believes that our opportunity to fight this is greater than in many other countries.

Experts estimate that we may reach the top of the curve in late spring with the end of the first outbreak happening in the summer. The Prime Minister repeated what so many others have been saying, that this is the new normal until a vaccine is developed. Even after we pass this first wave, other waves will be coming but the health communities and governments of the world will learn more over time and tools will be available to respond and make the impacts less, and perhaps deal with impacts on a more localized basis.

Many, including our federal government are telling the public to consider this a 12-18 month pandemic. That said, as more is learned, no one can really say how long exactly this will truly last.

I wish there was better news to report on this, but it could be some time before we get good news with respect to this pandemic. PLEASE continue to do all you can to help limit the spread of the virus. Follow the PHO guidelines and self-isolate as much as you can. Practice good social distancing and make sure that job sites meet or exceed the guidelines for safe work sites.

On this, the anniversary of the battle at Vimy Ridge, we should be reflecting on how fortunate our generation truly is. Thanks to the sacrifices of a previous generation we enjoy the freedoms we have. To borrow from a quote I heard recently, our government asked our grandfathers to go overseas and die for our country. All our government is asking us to do is to stay home and live. That is not a direct quote and I apologize to the author of the original quote, but the sentiment is no less clear. In the face of the pandemic we are facing, please take a moment today to reflect on our blessings too.

Stay safe and keep well. As always the staff of the CLR are here to assist you if you need us.

Sincerely,

Ken McCormack | President & CEO

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