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June 1, 2021

Hon. Zach Churchill
Department of Health and Wellness
Barrington Tower
1894 Barrington Street
P.O. Box 488
Halifax, NS
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Dear Minister Churchill:

The global pandemic caused by SARS-CoV-2 has had devastating effects worldwide.

It has also had significant negative right effect here in Northern Nova Scotia and specifically the Amherst, Fort Lawrence area due to Border restrictions that have been in effect from March 23, 2020, to present (excluding July - November 2020 when the Atlantic Bubble was open).

Hundreds of people need to cross the provincial NS NB Border daily or occasionally for work, school, medical care, child custody and other essential reasons.

Those living and working close to the NS NB Border have had significant stressors placed on them exponentially greater than any others in the province of Nova Scotia.

They have been subjected to "Border guards" in each province that have not consistently applied "rules" and have not consistently treated people in a professional manner. Many people have a great deal of anxiety just crossing our provincial borders to get to work and school. This has taken its toll on many, young and old.

Many people have had medical appointments cancelled for basic medical care, diagnostics, treatments, and surgeries. I have no doubt that this has impacted the mortality of many of our residents negatively. The Canada Health Act states portability between provinces and that has been denied to many. There are hundreds of Nova Scotia residents that have been denied access to health care in both of our provinces of NS and NB simply because they cross the provincial border for essential reasons.

Vaccines give us the best hope to fight and win this war against the SARS-CoV-2.

I am requesting that our Federal Government make SARS-CoV-2 Vaccine supply available to Nova Scotia urgently.

I am requesting that COVID-19 vaccination be made an urgent priority and the people of Cumberland, especially those needing to cross the NS NB Border be given their 2nd doses of vaccine in the month of June (provided their 1st dose has been administered more than 3-4 weeks previous).

The Centre for Disease Control recommends:



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If you received the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, you should get your second shot 3 weeks (or 21 days) after your first.

If you received the Moderna COVID-19 Vaccine, you should get your second shot 4 weeks (or 28 days) after your first.

Reference: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/second-shot.html>

The opening of the NS NB Border is a priority for the people living and working near the border.

I am requesting the government of Nova Scotia, including the Premier, Executive Council, and Medical Officer of Health recognize this and take appropriate measures to make this a priority.

Collaboration with our neighbouring provinces is essential for the mental, emotional, social, and physical health of the people in Northern Nova Scotia.

Cumberland County must be prioritized for vaccine administration of second doses due to the significant negative impacts the closure of the NS NB border has had on the residents living and working in this area.

Please see as a reference this document below which is pertaining to Federal borders. Given the strict measures at the NS NB Border, much of the information and strategies can be applied to our provincial borders as well.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/covid19-industry/medical-devices/testing-screening-advisory-panel/reports-summaries/priority-strategies-quarantine-borders.html#a6>

Thank you for your consideration of the people in Cumberland, especially Amherst area, who have not only lost their freedoms, have also lost access to medical care, economic well-being, and family.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Smith-McCrossin

CC: Hon. Patty Hajdu, Federal Minister of Health; Lenore Zann, MP; Chris D'Entremont, MP; Karla McFarlane, Official Opposition Critic for Health and Wellness; Dr. Robert Strang, Chief Medical Officer for NS