



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES
CANADA

Heather McPherson

Member of Parliament
Edmonton Strathcona

August 3, 2021

Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister
Honourable Patty Hajdu, Minister of Health
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Minister Hajdu,

I am writing today with grave concerns for the health and wellbeing of Albertans and to urgently request federal government support to protect Albertans and mitigate the health consequences of the provincial United Conservative government's decisions regarding COVID-19 public health restrictions, testing, and contact tracing.

As of today, there are more than 1.5 million completely unvaccinated Albertans (35% of Alberta's population), including more than 600,000 children under the age of 12. As of the end of July, there were over 1,600 active cases of COVID-19 almost all of which are the Delta variant (92%). In fact, Alberta has the most active cases of COVID-19 in the country right now, accounting for more than a quarter of all cases in Canada.

Despite these alarming numbers, Jason Kenney and the provincial UCP government have decided that COVID is over in Alberta. Kenney's government has cancelled COVID preventative public health measures and, this month, is phasing out quarantine requirements and routine testing and contact tracing.

In just a couple of weeks, students will be returning to Alberta classrooms. I fear this return to in-person learning will spark a deadly fourth wave of COVID-19 in Alberta with obvious implications for other provinces and territories within Canada. As Jason Kenney has demonstrated a complete disregard for the health and wellbeing of Albertans, I am calling on the federal government to intervene in Alberta to help prevent a fourth wave and protect vulnerable Albertans.

Ottawa

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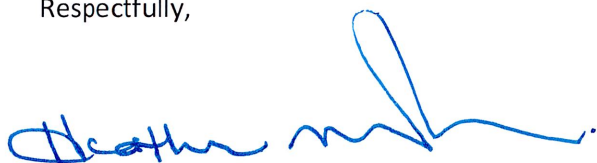
Last year, the federal government's Safe Return to School program helped Canadian schools protect students, teachers, and staff. This year, the need is even greater in Alberta as the case count today is higher in the province than it was a year ago and the Delta variant is dominant. I urge you to renew the Safe Return to School program immediately for Alberta schools.

Last fall, Alberta's post-secondary campuses were closed to in-person learning. Today, students are already returning to campus putting themselves and faculty and staff at risk. I urge you to provide support directly to Alberta's colleges and universities to assist them in upgrading ventilation systems, implementing strong testing protocols, and improving COVID prevention measures.

Finally, Alberta's beleaguered healthcare workers are most vulnerable to a fourth wave of infection, regardless of their vaccination status. They have spent 16 and a half arduous months on the frontline only to have their jobs and economic security threatened by their provincial government. Now they are desperate for help. I urge you to work directly with the unions and advocates representing healthcare workers in Alberta – the Alberta Union of Provincial Employees, United Nurses of Alberta, Health Sciences Association of Alberta, and Alberta Medical Association - to identify and support their needs.

I must press upon you the urgency of these requests. Alberta is without competent provincial leadership and is on the brink of a fourth wave of COVID-19. We need the federal government to act immediately.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Heather McPherson', with a large, stylized flourish extending from the end of the signature.

Heather McPherson
Member of Parliament for Edmonton Strathcona