

November 17, 2020

Dear Premiers,

On behalf of business leaders, entrepreneurs and employers across Canada, we are writing to stress the need for coherent and consistent direction and guidelines across all levels of government in the fight against COVID-19.

With cases increasing at an alarming rate, we recognize that you face a difficult balancing act between saving lives and saving livelihoods. The challenge for us all is to chart a path forward that protects Canadians' health as well as their economic well-being.

As you work toward making sound choices that balance economic value and public health, we propose five key principles that we believe should guide our collective response. We believe they are vital to ensuring the highest levels of compliance.

- 1. Be consistent, particularly with regard to mask use and social gatherings.** Canadians are receiving far too many conflicting messages. While regional variations in infection rates may call out for different responses, public health officials should strive to be as consistent as possible in the advice they give. Governments should not impose restrictions on low-risk business activity if evidence suggests that community spread is driven by non-compliance with social-gathering guidelines.
- 2. Provide as much detail as possible.** Canadians are much more likely to comply with public health guidance when they understand the details behind those decisions. The more information you can share on a consistent basis about the cause, nature and location of outbreaks, the better.
- 3. Avoid blanket approaches.** Most Canadians and most businesses are following the rules. They should not be punished for the irresponsible actions of a few. Those who endanger others should face consequences, with strong local

enforcement. When restrictions are necessary, they should be applied with care to ensure a level playing field.

4. **Support the hardest hit.** Employees and business owners should not suffer financially when they are denied the ability to work because of pandemic restrictions such as stay-at-home orders and Indigenous community access closures. While the federal and provincial governments have created several helpful business relief programs and more are in development, they are not ready and proportionate to the size of the challenge we are facing during the second wave of COVID-19.
5. **Share best practices.** We will be living with COVID-19 for many months to come and we must strive constantly to improve our management of the pandemic. Governments and public health officials should continue to share best practices and seize every opportunity to harmonize and learn from other jurisdictions and communities.

We are grateful for your leadership and will continue to work with you and your officials to keep Canadians safe.

Sincerely,

Hon. Perrin Beatty, P.C., O.C.
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Canadian Chamber of Commerce

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cc. Canada's chief public health officers