



OFFICE OF THE PARLIAMENTARY BUDGET OFFICER
BUREAU DU DIRECTEUR PARLEMENTAIRE DU BUDGET

November 13, 2020

The Honourable Patty Hajdu
Minister of Health
70 Colombine Driveway, Tunney's Pasture
Ottawa, ON K1A 0K9

hcminister.ministresc@canada.ca

Information Request: IR0551

Dear Minister Hajdu:

As you are likely aware, the Parliamentary Budget Officer (PBO) provides independent and non-partisan analysis to the Senate and to the House of Commons about matters related to the nation's finances and the economy, the estimates, certain other government documents, and the cost of proposals. In carrying out my mandate, I often require information held by government departments and Crown corporations and I am entitled to free and timely access – subject to limited exceptions – to such information under section 79.4 of the *Parliament of Canada Act*.

I am currently undertaking an analysis pursuant to paragraph 79.2(1)(a) of the *Parliament of Canada Act*, which mandates the PBO to prepare reports analyzing the following federal government documents: (i) a budget tabled by or on behalf of the Minister of Finance; (ii) an economic and fiscal update or statement issued by the Minister of Finance; (iii) a fiscal sustainability report issued by the Minister of Finance; (iv) the estimates of the government for a fiscal year.

Since the last information request (IR0486), your department has announced additional measures related to the COVID-19 response. For this analysis, I am requesting data regarding existing and future measures taken by your organization in response to COVID-19. Specifically, for each measure announced, as well as any future measures, I am seeking data on how many individuals/organizations are using the measure and the associated dollar amounts. If any measures include transfer payments, I am also requesting additional details on the use of funds.

This request covers the following measures:

- \$88M to support Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada's enhanced response to the COVID-19 pandemic
 - The number of projects using this measure (under Health Canada)
 - The associated dollar amounts (under Health Canada)
- Funding to Health Canada under the COVID-19 Response Fund
 - The number of beneficiaries
 - The associated dollar amounts
- Funding to Health Canada under the Safe Restart Agreement
 - The number of beneficiaries
 - The associated dollar amounts

- Funding to Health Canada under the Medical research
 - The number of projects using this measure
 - The associated dollar amounts
- Additional funding for virtual care and mental health tools for Canadians
 - The number of organizations and beneficiaries using this measure
 - The associated dollar amounts

We were also informed by the Privy Council Office that they will be transferring funds to your department as part of the COVID-19 Communications and Marketing campaign. Could you please provide data on the dollar amounts used to date?

Ideally, I would like this data to be provided on weekly basis. However, if this is not feasible, please provide as frequently as possible.

In order to provide the analysis to parliamentarians in a timely manner, I ask the information to be provided to my office no later than **November 27, 2020**. If access to the requested information cannot be granted by that date, a response must be provided by you or your deputy minister as soon as possible.

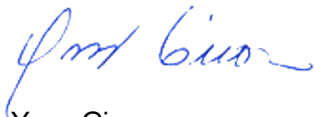
Should you or your staff have any questions about this information request, the analyst responsible, Jill Giswold can be contacted directly at Jill.Giswold@parl.gc.ca, 613-297-3856.

Attached is a reply form. It too should be filled out and returned by November 27, 2020, whether or not you provide access to the requested information. Should you refuse to provide access to the requested information, you or your deputy minister must provide a written justification for the refusal as required under section 79.41 of the *Parliament of Canada Act*.

The response letter will be posted on the PBO website and, therefore, it should not be marked "confidential". As well, the requested information should be attached separately. If this information is confidential, please clearly mark it as such, either on the electronic spreadsheet or the hard copy version.

Providing timely and effective analysis to the Senate and House of Commons and promoting greater budget transparency and accountability are the PBO's primary objectives. The degree to which this is possible depends, to a large extent, on free and timely access to quality information held by government departments. In doing so, you are assisting us in better serving the Senate, the House of Commons, and their members.

Yours sincerely,



Yves Giroux
Parliamentary Budget Officer

c.c.: Antoine Brunelle-Côté, Privy Council Office, Assistant Secretary to the Cabinet,
Liaison Secretariat for Macroeconomic Policy
Stephen Lucas, Deputy Minister, Health Canada

Attachment: Reply form for IR0551