

September 1, 2021

Dear [REDACTED]

Re: You are entitled to part of the information you requested – 2021-01201-HEA

The Department of Health and Wellness received your application for access to information under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the Act) on June 22, 2021.

In your application, you requested a copy of the following records:

All scientific data, correspondence, studies, final briefing notes, risk-benefit analysis that justify and or support the government's actions and decision-making that masking children in schools is necessary to reduce the spread of COVID-19 that are held by Dr. Strang Chief Medical Officer of Health. (Date Range for Record Search: From 02/29/2020 To 06/21/2021)

You are entitled to part of the records requested. However, we have removed some of the information from the records according to subsection 5(2) of the Act. The severed information is exempt from disclosure under the Act for the following reasons:

- Section 14(1): The head of a public body may refuse to disclose to an applicant information that would reveal advice, recommendations or draft regulations developed by or for a public body.
- Section 20(1): The head of a public body shall refuse to disclose personal information to an applicant if the disclosure would be an unreasonable invasion of a third party's personal privacy.

We are refusing access to a portion of the records for the following reason pursuant to subsection 4(2) of the Act:

- The Act does not apply to the following kinds of information in the custody or control of a public body: published information, material available for purchase and material that is a matter of public record.

Information that is not responsive to the scope of your requests has been removed from the records package.

Nova Scotia's Covid -19 response actions have been based on national and international guidance from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the World Health Organization (WHO). As the leading agencies for pandemic response nationally and

internationally, both PHAC and WHO are continuously reviewing the evolving scientific evidence regarding COVID-19 and the effectiveness of various measures. These reviews are used to form their guidance, position statements, and other documents all of which are in the public domain.

The Government of Canada's resources, including COVID-19 guidance documents, are available at <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19.html>. A resource directly related to guidance for schools can be found here: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/guidance-schools-childcare-programs.html>.

The WHO's resources, including COVID-19 technical guidance, are available at <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>.

The Province of Nova Scotia has information regarding a Back to School Plan available here: <https://www.ednet.ns.ca/backtoschool/back-school-plan>.

The Department of Health and Wellness Public Health Branch continues to be in ongoing contact with PHAC and WHO as evidence has evolved throughout the pandemic. This has enabled recommendations on public health measures to be informed by the most up to date evidence.

You have the right to ask for a review of this decision by the Information Access and Privacy Commissioner (formerly the Review Officer). You have 60 days from the date of this letter to exercise this right. If you wish to ask for a review, you may do so on Form 7, a copy of which is attached. Send the completed form to the Information Access and Privacy Commissioner, P.O. Box 181, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2M4.

Please be advised that a de-identified copy of this disclosure letter and the attached response to your FOIPOP application will be made public after 14 days. The package will be posted online at <https://openinformation.novascotia.ca/>. The letter will not include your name, address, or any other personal information that you have supplied while making your application under FOIPOP.

Please contact Melinda Frelick at 902-424-6920 or by e-mail at melinda.frelick@novascotia.ca, if you need further assistance regarding this application.

Sincerely,



Kimberlee Barro
Acting Associate Deputy Minister

Attachment

From: [Davis, Heather](#)
To: [Strang, Robert](#)
Cc: [Cram, Jennifer](#); [Deeks, Shelley](#)
Subject: Re: School Outbreak Summary - April 25
Date: April 25, 2021 9:33:53 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Thanks Rob. I just wanted to share some of the thinking in advance of the recommendations - for further discussion with MOH group and Colleen Ryan in the morning.
 Engaging the EECD Implementation table as well as the child care communication table and potentially CCH are all next steps.
 I'll be in touch again.
 Heather

Heather Davis MD, FRCPC, MPH
 Locum Public Health Physician
Heather.Davis@nshealth.ca
 Cell: (902) 266-3761

On Apr 25, 2021, at 9:13 PM, Strang, Robert <Robert.Strang@novascotia.ca> wrote:

Thank you and when should we expect formal recommendations? Also, has this going to PH/DECE operational table as a draft?

Rob

From: Davis, Heather <Heather.Davis@nshealth.ca>
Sent: April 25, 2021 5:54 PM
To: Cram, Jennifer <Jennifer.Cram@nshealth.ca>; Strang, Robert <Robert.Strang@novascotia.ca>; Deeks, Shelley <Shelley.Deeks@novascotia.ca>
Subject: Re: School Outbreak Summary - April 25

Thank you Jenni. Rob and Shelley - Jenni and I spoke this afternoon and I am gathering a list of considerations related to schools and other child and youth settings. I wanted to give you the heads-up about some of the thinking, in advance of a more formal recommendation.

Heather

Not responsive

Not responsive

PHM Considerations for Child and Youth Settings

14(1)

- Other areas where PHM could be considered:

Not responsive

Not responsive

14(1)

From: Cram, Jennifer
Sent: Sunday, April 25, 2021 4:33:27 PM
To: 'Strang, Robert'; 'Deeks, Shelley'; Davis, Heather
Subject: Fw: School Outbreak Summary - April 25

Please see attached to inform school discussions. I'll send the update tomorrow.

The school case data should be accurate up to 7 am this morning.

Note - the teams are quite behind with entering contacts so the lab data for school contacts isn't accurate.

The daycare cases are also not accurate and should be higher - I'm working with the team to better understand if that's data entry issue or if a daycare case that is also a school case is only getting captured in one place (school).

Rob - I'll send an update of new school cases later today - there 9 or 10 more...

Jenni

NSHA_colour_logo.jpg



Dr. Jennifer Cram MD MPH FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Western Zone
821 St. George Street
Annapolis Royal, NS B0S 1A0

Email: Jennifer.cram@nshealth.ca

From: Fitzgerald, Angela
Sent: Sunday, April 25, 2021 11:08 AM
To: PHProvincialEducationOBT; Cram, Jennifer
Cc: Pothier-Foote, Marsha; Boutilier, Shelley; 'DHW Surveillance'
Subject: School Outbreak Summary - April 25

Good afternoon everyone,

Attached is the summary of school cases and contacts for April 25, 2021 based on what was in Panorama as of this morning.

Highlighted in yellow are: school contacts who need to be linked to the OB so they show up as school cases and clusters that need to be updated to outbreaks.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Angela

<image001.png>

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Withheld

Not responsive

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From: "Davis, Heather" <Heather.Davis@nshealth.ca>

Date: Monday, April 26, 2021 at 1:19 PM

To: "Strang, Robert" <Robert.Strang@novascotia.ca>, "Sommers, Ryan" <Ryan.Sommers@nshealth.ca>

Cc: "Shelley.Deeks@novascotia.ca" <Shelley.Deeks@novascotia.ca>, "Cram, Jennifer" <Jennifer.Cram@nshealth.ca>, "Carew, Maureen" <Maureen.Carew@novascotia.ca>, "Patel, Alkesh" <Alkesh.Patel@novascotia.ca>, "Davis, Heather" <Heather.Davis@novascotia.ca>, "Zygmunt, Austin J" <AustinJ2.Zygmunt@nshealth.ca>

Subject: Re: Need for additional restrictions and changes to LTC

Thank you Rob. ¹⁴⁽¹⁾

¹⁴⁽¹⁾

SBAR to follow. I have a call scheduled with DEECD Child Care contacts in the morning - I have not yet discussed with that group.

Heather

Heather Davis MD, FRCPC, MPH

Locum Public Health Physician

Heather.Davis@nshealth.ca

Cell: (902) 266-3761

From: Strang, Robert <Robert.Strang@novascotia.ca>

Sent: Monday, April 26, 2021 1:45:49 PM

To: Sommers, Ryan

Cc: Deeks, Shelley; Cram, Jennifer; Carew, Maureen; Patel, Alkesh; Davis, Heather; Zygmunt, Austin J

Subject: Re: Need for additional restrictions and changes to LTC

The things Nfld did that we did not on Friday are

- closed schools (we just did in HRCE)
- close community health care providers except MDs 14(1)
- essential shopping only but with a long list of what remained open

So there is not much difference

Rob

Sent from my iPhone

On Apr 26, 2021, at 1:38 PM, Sommers, Ryan <Ryan.Sommers@nshealth.ca> wrote:

I have a feeling we're behind the 8 ball on this one – 14(1)

14(1) – how quickly did NFLD bring in their restrictions to bring their cases down? I have a feeling they ramped up their restrictions faster than what we have done so far....

Dr. Ryan Sommers, MD CCFP FRCPC(PHMP)

NSHA COVID-19 Hub: <https://covid19hub.nshealth.ca/covid-19>

DHW COVID-19: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/>

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From: Robert Strang <Robert.Strang@novascotia.ca>
Date: Monday, April 26, 2021 at 13:29
To: Ryan Sommers <Ryan.Sommers@nshealth.ca>, "Deeks, Shelley" <Shelley.Deeks@novascotia.ca>
Cc: Jennifer Cram <Jennifer.Cram@nshealth.ca>, Maureen Carew <Maureen.Carew@novascotia.ca>, "Patel, Alkesh" <Alkesh.Patel@novascotia.ca>, "Davis, Heather" <Heather.Davis@novascotia.ca>, Austin J Zygmunt <AustinJ2.Zygmunt@nshealth.ca>
Subject: RE: Need for additional restrictions and changes to LTC

Would not expect to see an impact of what we put in effect on Friday in current cases and their behaviours. Need to give what we put in place a week before we judge it is not enough.

Rob

From: Sommers, Ryan <Ryan.Sommers@nshealth.ca>
Sent: April 26, 2021 1:22 PM
To: Strang, Robert <Robert.Strang@novascotia.ca>; Deeks, Shelley <Shelley.Deeks@novascotia.ca>
Cc: Cram, Jennifer <Jennifer.Cram@nshealth.ca>; Carew, Maureen <Maureen.Carew@novascotia.ca>; Patel, Alkesh <Alkesh.Patel@novascotia.ca>; Davis, Heather <Heather.Davis@novascotia.ca>; Zygmunt, Austin J <AustinJ2.Zygmunt@nshealth.ca>
Subject: Need for additional restrictions and changes to LTC
Importance: High

Hey Rob, Shelley

As the situation evolve in HRM / CZ, we wanted to flag some changes to restrictions that may be needed sooner than later

Not responsive

- Masking for those who work in day care settings and those working with pre-primary and school aged kids (Heather has an SBAR about this idea)

Not responsive

14(1)

Also, hospitalizations are going up and especially ICU – I think there are now four cases and some of these individuals were not aware they had COVID-19.

Rob/ Shelley – let us know how we can help support you in these decisions and discussions. I don't think we'll see the data reflecting the worsening community spread for another 2 – 3 days.

Reply back when you get a chance.

Thanks

Cheers

Ryan

Dr. Ryan Sommers, MD CCFP FRCPC(PHPM)

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From: [Strang, Robert](#)
To: [MacInnis, Marla J](#)
Subject: RE: Media Inquiry: Evolving masking recommendations in schools
Date: August 13, 2020 3:34:00 PM

Approved.

Rob

From: MacInnis, Marla J <Marla.MacInnis@novascotia.ca>
Sent: August 13, 2020 11:59 AM
To: Strang, Robert <Robert.Strang@novascotia.ca>
Subject: Media Inquiry: Evolving masking recommendations in schools

Hi Rob – as discussed in the elevator, here is a proposed statement for your review to address 20(1) 20(1) questions about evolving federal mask recommendations in schools:

Proposed Response: Keeping children safe is the most important aspect of the return-to-school plan. The science and evidence that feeds into this plan has and will continue to evolve as we learn more about the virus.

As September approaches, Nova Scotia schools and our children are at the top of our minds. Public health is staying informed of the Public Health Agency of Canada’s evolving direction and recommendations. As well, we are consulting with pediatricians and psychologists at the IWK.

As we have done throughout the pandemic, public health will continue to adjust our guidance based on evidence and our experience with the virus. We will continue to ensure the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development has the most up-to-date information and advice they need to make informed decisions about the upcoming school year.

Marla MacInnis
 Media Relations Advisor, Province of Nova Scotia
 Department of Health and Wellness
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