Court File No: CV-22-00682682-0000

ONTARIO
SUPERIOR COURT OF JUSTICE

BETWEEN:

RANDY HILLIER

Applicant

- and -

HIS MAJESTY THE KING
IN RIGHT OF THE PROVINCE OF ONTARIO
Respondent

EXAMINATION FOR DISCOVERY OF JOEL KETTNER Held via Arbitration Place Virtual on Friday, May 5, 2023, at 10:04 a.m.

APPEARANCES:

Ryan Cookson Savitri Gordian Sayeh Hassan Counsel for the Respondent

Counsel for the Applicant

Chris Fleury Darren Leung Henna Parmar

ALSO PRESENT:

Raven Schofield

Commissioner of Oaths

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## Court File No./N° du dossier du greffe : CV-22-00682682-0000

EXAMINATION FOR DISCOVERY OF JOEL KETTNER

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## LIST OF EXHIBITS

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- 1 Arbitration Place Virtual
- 2 --- Upon resuming on Friday, May 5, 2023, at 10:04
- a.m.
- 4 MS. SCHOFIELD: Good morning, Dr.
- 5 Kettner. My name is Raven Schofield. I'm an
- 6 associate general counsel with Arbitration Place,
- 7 and I'm here to affirm you before you give your
- 8 testimony today.
- 9 Are you able to hear me okay?
- 10 THE WITNESS: Yes.
- MS. SCHOFIELD: Okay, great.
- 12 Dr. Kettner, do you solemnly
- 13 affirm the testimony you're about to give today
- 14 will be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
- 15 the truth?
- 16 THE WITNESS: To the best of my
- 17 ability, yes, I do.
- 18 AFFIRMED: JOEL KETTNER
- 19 EXAMINATION BY MR. COOKSON:
- 20 1. Q. Thank you and good morning,
- 21 Dr. Kettner. My name is Ryan Cookson, I'm one of
- 22 the counsel for the Province of Ontario in this
- 23 matter. I'm going to be asking you a few questions
- 24 about your Affidavit and the report you submitted.
- 25 Before I begin, I believe you have been cross-

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- 1 examined before in a court proceeding, is that
- 2 right?
- A. Yes.
- 4 2. Q. So you're somewhat familiar
- 5 with this process, is that fair?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 3. Q. Okay. Just to remind you, in
- 8 this case we are recording this cross-examination
- 9 so it can be transcribed. So in response to your
- 10 questions, please try to speak clearly for the
- 11 benefit of the Court Reporter, and I will attempt
- 12 to do the same. So you swore an Affidavit in this
- 13 proceeding on September 7th, 2022, is that right?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 4. Q. And do you have a copy of
- 16 that Affidavit in front of you?
- 17 A. I do.
- 18 5. Q. And I believe attached as
- 19 Exhibit C to that Affidavit is a copy of your
- 20 expert report, is that right?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 6. Q. And you also swore another
- 23 Affidavit on December 15th, 2022, is that right?
- 24 A. I can't remember exactly the
- 25 date, but I'm going to say yes in the confidence

- 1 that you're providing me with the correct
- 2 information.
- 3 7. Q. Yes. There was a reply
- 4 Affidavit that you swore, correct?
- 5 A. Sounds right.
- 6 8. Q. Sounds right, okay. Do you
- 7 have that Affidavit in front of you?
- 8 A. I do not.
- 9 9. Q. Okay. I don't actually think
- 10 we'll need to turn to it, so if that comes up we'll
- 11 address it in time. The first place I'd like to
- 12 turn to is Exhibit A of your Affidavit, which I
- 13 believe is your CV. And if you'll just give me a
- 14 moment, I'm going to pull up the part that I want
- 15 to refer to. I'm going to go to page 33 of that
- 16 document. And would it be easier if I shared my
- 17 screen to refer to the exact page or would you
- 18 prefer to follow along with a paper document?
- 19 A. I do not have it in front of
- 20 me, so that's probably a good idea -- or, you could
- 21 just read to me what the relevance of the question
- 22 is.
- 23 10. Q. Sure. Why don't I share my
- 24 screen just for the benefit of everybody, including
- 25 your counsel. Do you see the document in front of

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- 1 you?
- 2 A. I do.
- 3 11. Q. And here there's a heading
- 4 called, "Court Affidavits and Expert Reports," do
- 5 you see that?
- 6 A. Yes.
- 7 12. Q. And I believe many, if not
- 8 all, of the court Affidavits and expert reports
- 9 that you list here relate to COVID-19, is that
- 10 right?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 13. Q. And I'd just like to go
- 13 through them briefly. The first case is Mercer v.
- 14 Government of Yukon. I believe this case involved
- 15 a challenge to an order of the Yukon Government
- 16 that declared a state of emergency in response to
- 17 COVID-19, is that right?
- 18 A. On all of these I'm going to
- 19 just say that my memory of the details of each of
- 20 these would -- may not be adequate to -- you know,
- 21 to affirm truth. But I doubt if that's important
- 22 but, if it is, I just wanted to say that. That
- 23 sounds right to me. I can't claim to be sure of
- 24 the details of what you just said. That sounds
- 25 right.

- 1 14. Q. Yes, that's fair. I'm not
- 2 asking for the specific details, just a general
- 3 understanding of what the cases were about. And,
- 4 in that case, you were retained by Mr. Mercer who
- 5 was challenging the restrictions, correct?
- A. I was retained by the lawyer
- 7 who was, I think, representing him.
- 8 15. Q. Okay, and that's fine. The
- 9 next case is Beaudoin v. British Columbia. This
- 10 case involved a challenge to COVID-19 Public Health
- 11 orders restricting gatherings and public events in
- 12 British Columbia, is that right?
- A. Sounds right.
- 14 16. Q. And again, you were retained
- 15 by the individuals challenging the COVID-19
- 16 policies?
- 17 A. By the lawyer representing
- 18 them.
- 19 17. Q. By the lawyer representing
- 20 them. And then after that there's the case of
- 21 Gateway Bible Baptist Church in Manitoba, and this
- 22 also involved a challenge to Public Health orders
- 23 with respect to religious gatherings in Manitoba,
- 24 is that right?
- 25 A. Yes.

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1 18. Ο. And again, you were retained 2 by the party challenging those Public Health 3 orders, or the lawyer challenging those Public Health orders? 4 5 Α. Yes. 19. And the next is (inaudible) 6 Ο. 7 Barbecue in Ontario, this involved a challenge to 8 COVID-19 Public Health regulations that restricted 9 the operation of restaurants in Ontario, is that 10 right? 11 Α. Yes. 12 20. And you were retained by the Ο. 13 individuals challenging the COVID-19 policies? 14 Α. Sorry, by whom? 15 By either the individuals 21. Ο. challenging the policies or by the lawyers 16 17 challenging the policies? 18 Yes. Α. 19 22. And Wellandport v. Ontario, Ο. 20 this is another case that involved a challenge to 21 COVID-19 Public Health orders with respect to the 22 religious gatherings in Ontario, is that right? 23 Α. Yes. 24 23. And again, you were retained Ο.

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by the party challenging those orders or the lawyer

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- 1 representing the party challenging those orders?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 24. Q. The next case is City of
- 4 Barrie v. Tyler Nicholson. Do you recall what this
- 5 case was about?
- 6 A. Well, is this the one that
- 7 related to outdoor gatherings?
- 8 25. Q. I confess, I was not able to
- 9 find information on this particular case, so I was
- 10 wondering if you recalled what this case was about
- 11 and what your role in it was?
- 12 A. Well, I was retained by the
- 13 lawyer representing Tyler Nicholson and, if my
- 14 memory is right, it related to outdoor gathering.
- 15 26. O. Okay, thank you. And then
- 16 there's another case in British Columbia, Canadian
- 17 Society for the Advancement of Science in Public
- 18 Policy v. Bonnie Henry, and I believe Dr. Henry is
- 19 the Provincial Health Officer of British Columbia,
- 20 is that right?
- 21 A. Yes, at the time, and I
- 22 believe still.
- 23 27. Q. Yes, at the time, yes, and I
- 24 believe still as well. And this was another case
- 25 involving a challenge to COVID-19 Public Health

- 1 orders restricting gatherings in British Columbia,
- 2 is that right?
- 3 A. Yes, I think it was -- it was
- 4 more related to indoor activities, I think, maybe
- 5 pertaining to restaurant attendance. I'm not sure
- 6 that I remember exactly.
- 7 28. Q. Okay. And again, you were
- 8 retained by the party or lawyer challenging those
- 9 restrictions?
- 10 A. Yes.
- 11 29. Q. I'll just skip down. There's
- 12 another one -- last one I want to ask about is the
- 13 Harjit(ph) case. The Harjit case, this involved a
- 14 challenge to Ontario regulations that required
- 15 proof of vaccination before entering certain
- 16 facilities such as restaurants, is that right?
- 17 A. Hmm, I can't say I'm sure
- 18 about that off the top of my head.
- 19 30. Q. Okay. But it did involve a
- 20 challenge to some of Ontario's vaccine policies,
- 21 correct?
- 22 A. I believe that's true.
- 23 31. Q. And you were retained by the
- 24 party challenging those COVID-19 Public Health
- 25 regulations?

- 1 A. I'm sorry to be repetitive
- 2 about this, but -- and I don't know if it's
- 3 particularly important, but all I know is that I
- 4 dealt with the lawyer representing them. I didn't
- 5 really have any direct dealings with the party, if
- 6 that's related to the -- you know, the person
- 7 filing the notice. I just want to be clear about
- 8 that.
- 9 32. Q. No, I appreciate you being
- 10 clear, and that's my fault, I should have rephrased
- 11 my question. It's not relevant for my purposes,
- 12 but I appreciate you being very particular about
- 13 your answers. So overall, you've been retained by
- 14 a number of parties that have challenged a number
- of different COVID-19 policies in a variety of
- 16 different circumstances, correct?
- 17 A. Yes.
- 18 33. Q. And then the next part I want
- 19 to turn to, and I'll just stop sharing for a moment
- 20 just as I turn to a different part of your
- 21 Affidavit, I want to talk about --
- A. Mr. Cookson, sorry to
- 23 interrupt you.
- 24 34. Q. Yes, of course
- 25 A. I know if you're going to

- 1 come back, you know, to the purpose of those
- 2 questions in terms of either the numbers or types
- 3 of cases that I've been retained in. But, you
- 4 know, for the benefit of the Court, it might be
- 5 useful to describe, in general, why -- or explain,
- 6 in general, why I have been retained and why I have
- 7 done these cases. And in case there might be a
- 8 misunderstanding of my purpose.
- 9 35. Q. I think that was clear in
- 10 your Affidavit. I'm just going to proceed with my
- 11 questions and then perhaps we can come back to
- 12 that. So the next part I'm going to turn up is the
- 13 part of your Affidavit where you talk about your
- 14 mandate. And I'll just pull that up in one moment.
- 15 So this is your main Affidavit sworn on September
- 16 7th, 2022, which is at Tab 4 of the Application
- 17 Record. And I'm specifically focusing on paragraph
- 18 10. First of all, do you see that document in
- 19 front of you?
- 20 A. I do.
- 21 36. Q. Right. And it states at
- 22 paragraph 10, "I have been asked by counsel for the
- 23 Applicants to prepare a report as an expert
- 24 witness, to provide my professional opinions on the
- 25 following questions:" and then you list the

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- 1 questions. Do you see that?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 37. Q. So these questions, I believe
- 4 there are seven of them, are the questions you were
- 5 asked to answer in this case?
- A. Yes.
- 7 38. Q. You were not asked to answer
- 8 any other questions?
- 9 A. Correct.
- 10 39. Q. And if I turn to Question 3,
- 11 it states, "Based on what you have been able to
- 12 find with respect to the Ontario Government and
- 13 Public Health officials, what information has been
- 14 used, what issues have been considered, and how
- 15 have these been used to explain and justify the
- 16 restrictions of outdoor gatherings?" And it
- 17 states, based on what you've been able to find. So
- 18 I take it, in order to answer this question, you
- 19 did some type of search for information, is that
- 20 right?
- 21 A. Yes.
- 22 40. Q. Okay. Can you tell me about
- 23 that search? How do you conduct it?
- A. Well, given that it was
- 25 stated that it was in respect to Ontario Government

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- 1 public heath officials, the only information that I
- 2 sought was publicly-available information. I
- 3 didn't do any research or investigation beyond
- 4 that. So I searched primarily Ontario websites,
- 5 Public Health Ontario's website. I looked at
- 6 websites of relevant local health authorities, I
- 7 looked at other information of the government
- 8 related to its announcements, to data that it
- 9 provided. I looked at the Emergency Measures
- 10 documents and the various orders. I did look --
- 11 and if they came to me during those searches, media
- 12 reports or references to other documents, then I
- 13 also included those. Now, these weren't the only
- 14 documents that I referred to, of course. I'm
- 15 talking about information that I was able to gather
- 16 related to Ontario Government and Public Health
- 17 officials, what they provided in terms of
- 18 information, in terms of issues that had been
- 19 considered in their deliberations and how this
- 20 information and these issues were used to explain
- 21 and justify the restrictions of outdoor gatherings.
- 22 41. Q. Right. And so was all of the
- 23 research done online?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 42. O. And so if there was

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- 1 information that was not posted online on the
- 2 websites you just mentioned, would not have been
- 3 captured by your search, correct?
- Not in a direct way. 4 Α. I mean,
- as I said, if I found something in the official 5
- sites that, you know, led me to look -- you know, 6
- had the information in it that might lead me to 7
- 8 other locations for data or other information, then
- I would explore those, you know, looking for 9
- 10 information that was relevant to the questions that
- 11 I was trying to answer.
- 12 43. Right. And if the Ο.
- 13 information was no publicly available or posted
- online, that information would not have been taken 14
- 15 into account in the answer to this question,
- 16 correct?
- 17 Α. To my recollection, I think
- that's a true statement. 18
- 19 44. Okay. Ο. And you've never
- 20 advised the Ontario Government on any matter with
- 21 respect to COVID-19, correct?
- 22 Α. Correct.
- 23 45. And so you have no personal Ο.
- knowledge of what information the Ontario 24
- 25 Government did or did not consider in developing

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- 1 its COVID-19 policies, correct?
- A. That is correct and that's an
- 3 important point to be clear about. Because I hope
- 4 I was careful in my Affidavit to not claim that the
- 5 government or Public Health officials had
- 6 information which was not disclosed in a way that I
- 7 was able to find it.
- 8 46. Q. Thank you for that
- 9 clarification. We're done with this part now. I
- 10 know just want to talk about some of the -- what
- 11 I'll call like the basics of COVID-19, none of
- 12 which I believe are controversial. First of all,
- 13 COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the
- 14 SARS-CoV-2 virus, is that right?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 47. O. And the SARS-CoV-2 virus can
- 17 spread through small liquid particles that can be
- 18 expelled from a person's mouth or nose, is that
- 19 right?
- 20 A. That's considered to be the
- 21 main way that it's transmitted.
- 22 48. Q. Yes. I believe it's been
- 23 described as the primary route of transmission, is
- 24 that right?
- 25 A. Yes.

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- 1 49. Q. And, as a result, SARS-CoV-2
- 2 can be spread from person to person if people are
- 3 in close proximity to one another, is that right?
- 4 A. That's the primary way that
- 5 it is transmitted.
- 6 50. Q. And so all else being equal,
- 7 the closer a person is to someone infected with
- 8 COVID-19 the higher the likelihood that the virus
- 9 will be transmitted, is that fair?
- 10 A. I think that would be
- 11 categorized as something that's not controversial
- 12 about COVID-19.
- 13 51. Q. I agree. And similarly, all
- 14 else being equal, the longer the duration of time
- 15 that a person is in close contact with someone
- 16 infected with COVID-19 the more likely the virus
- 17 would be transmitted, correct.
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 52. Q. And some behaviours like, for
- 20 example, singing or shouting, could increase the
- 21 exhalation of droplets in aerosols and increase the
- 22 likelihood of transmission, is that right?
- 23 A. Well, if you're going to use
- 24 the word "could," then pretty much any question you
- 25 ask me is going to be yes. But in this case, I

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- 1 think what you mean is there's a reasonable --
- 2 there's a belief that there's a significant
- 3 increase in transmissions under those
- 4 circumstances. And I think this is controversial
- 5 in terms of being able to actually quantify, you
- 6 know, how much of an increase that is. But it's
- 7 certainly reasonable on scientific principles and
- 8 maybe some empirical observation, you know, unclear
- 9 as it has been, that behaviours that expel more of
- 10 droplets that have the virus on it are more likely
- 11 to result in a higher exposure by the contact.
- 12 53. Q. Right. And behaviours like
- 13 wearing a mask can reduce the spread of droplets in
- 14 aerosols, which could reduce the risk of
- 15 transmission, is that right?
- 16 A. Yes.
- 17 54. Q. And another factor that might
- 18 influence the risk of transmission is potentially
- 19 the nature of the virus itself. So, for example, if
- 20 the virus mutates over time it might become more
- 21 transmissible, is that right?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 55. Q. And we've seen that with, for
- 24 example, the Delta and Omicron variants, correct?
- 25 A. Yes.

- 1 56. Q. Right. And would you agree
- 2 that COVID-19 resulted in a significant public
- 3 health emergency in Ontario and indeed around the
- 4 world?
- 5 A. Well, you'd have to define
- 6 what significant public health emergency means. I
- 7 mean, there's no question that it was declared as
- 8 such. And if you're asking me that question, yes.
- 9 If you're asking me was it a public health
- 10 emergency, you know, I'm not going to -- I don't
- 11 want to give the impression I don't think it was a
- 12 serious problem, but just from a scientific and
- 13 public health expert point of view, I have to be
- 14 very careful about sort of general statements like
- 15 that and what do they mean. It was a public health
- 16 concern, it had public health implications in terms
- 17 of disease and death, and it came on us fairly
- 18 quickly as a new problem. So, yes, I think from
- 19 that point of view, if I can qualify it like that,
- 20 I would call it a public health emergency in a
- 21 generic sense. The reason I'm taking some time
- 22 over the answer to this question is that public
- 23 health emergency has not only sort of a general
- 24 epidemiological meaning, it has in many cases
- 25 legal, legislative, and operational definitions

- 1 which have implications. That means that we need
- 2 to be careful how we use the word emergency, as in
- 3 terms of what context.
- 4 57. Q. Thank you for that
- 5 clarification. Perhaps I'll ask it this way. In
- 6 your opinion, as a public health practitioner, was
- 7 COVID-19 a public health emergency in Canada?
- 8 A. Yes.
- 9 58. Q. Thank you. And so in light
- 10 of that, it was important for governments to take
- 11 steps to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases,
- 12 hospitalizations and deaths?
- 13 A. It was important for
- 14 governments, as in any emergency, to achieve many
- 15 things; one of which is to reduce the threat and
- 16 serious outcomes from the specific threat in
- 17 question. The reason I'm taking some time to
- 18 answer these questions also is that in the response
- 19 to any public health threat it is not only the
- 20 purpose to reduce the incidence and morbidity and
- 21 mortality of the particular threat, it must be
- 22 addressed in the context of health of the
- 23 population as a whole and the importance of
- 24 considering all diseases and injuries which
- 25 continue to occur at the same time. And maybe

- 1 other consequences, not only of the public health
- 2 threat itself, but of the actions and responses to
- 3 the threat. So one has to take a broad and deep
- 4 view as a public health official, and therefore the
- 5 governments that they advise, of the total threat
- 6 to health in general and the effectiveness and
- 7 harms of interventions that are chosen.
- 8 59. Q. Perhaps I'll rephrase then.
- 9 In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the
- 10 important objectives of the government was to take
- 11 steps to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases,
- 12 hospitalizations and deaths, correct?
- 13 A. Yes.
- 14 60. Q. Thank you. I'd like to turn
- 15 now to some of the documents you cite in your
- 16 report. Before you swore your Affidavit, did you
- 17 review the documents you cited in your report?
- 18 A. Sorry, can you repeat that
- 19 question?
- 20 61. Q. Sure. In your export report
- 21 you cite a number of documents. Did you review
- 22 those documents before you swore your Affidavit?
- A. What do you mean by review?
- 24 62. O. Did you read them?
- A. The whole document?

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- 1 63. Q. Yes.
- A. Probably not.
- 3 64. Q. Okay. So --
- 4 A. (inaudible/speaking
- 5 simultaneously) documents and I selected elements
- 6 that were relevant to the question I was answering.
- 7 65. Q. Okay. So you did not read
- 8 all of the documents in full that you cite in your
- 9 report?
- 10 A. I didn't say that either. I
- 11 don't recall whether I read every document in full
- 12 that I cited. But it's quite possible, if not
- 13 probable, that I did not.
- 14 66. Q. Okay, that's fine. But given
- 15 that you cited them in your report, you believe
- 16 that those documents are reliable and authoritative
- 17 sources of information, is that fair?
- 18 A. No, I wasn't judging in any
- 19 way the quality or the reliability of the
- 20 documents. I was citing what those documents
- 21 included and stated. You know really the judgment
- 22 of any person as to whether the Public Health
- 23 Agency of Canada's official documents, to what
- 24 degree they're valid or accurate, similar to the
- 25 World Health Organization, it would be up to any

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- 1 individual to decide to what degree they trust or
- 2 think that the organization or its documents would
- 3 be reliable. I extracted information to show what
- 4 those organizations and the writers of the various
- 5 documents that I cited had to say relevant to the
- 6 question I was answering.
- 7 67. Q. Thank you for that. So, just
- 8 to be clear, just because you cite a document in
- 9 your report, that should not be taken as evidence
- 10 that you believe that document is authoritative and
- 11 reliable, correct?
- 12 A. Correct.
- 13 68. Q. Okay, thank you.
- 14 A. What it does show is at
- 15 pretty much face value what was in the document
- 16 that I thought was relevant to the question I was
- 17 answering.
- 18 69. Q. Thank you, I appreciate that
- 19 clarification. I'm going to take you to one of
- 20 those documents.
- 21 A. I just want to clarify one
- 22 other thing. This is quite important, it might be
- 23 important to other questions also. Public health
- 24 science, public health practice, epidemiology,
- 25 requires one to not take at face value anything and

- 1 to probe, where necessary, the depth of the
- 2 evidence and the validity before reaching one's
- 3 best estimates or best conclusions, none of which
- 4 are ever exact or perfect. However, it's
- 5 absolutely 100 per cent true that what I quoted --
- 6 in my opinion, that what I quoted was exactly what
- 7 was in the document that I referred to. That part
- 8 I feel very confident of. And also, I may not even
- 9 agree with some parts of what I quoted, I was just
- 10 quoting what is --
- 11 70. Q. Thank you, yes.
- 12 A. -- which I thought was
- 13 relevant to answering the question that I was asked
- 14 to answer.
- 15 71. Q. Thank you, I appreciate that
- 16 clarification. I'm going to turn to one of those
- 17 documents now. So you cite a document at footnote
- 18 5, which is on page 7 of your report. And just for
- 19 counsel, that's at page 237 of the Application
- 20 Record in the PDF. I'm going to bring it up on the
- 21 screen just for ease of reference, and I'll do that
- 22 right now. Do you see a document in front of you?
- 23 A. I do.
- 24 72. O. And this is a document from
- 25 the World Health Organization titled, "Key Planning

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- 1 Recommendations for Mass Gatherings in the context
- of COVID-19," correct?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 73. Q. And could you just describe
- 5 what is the World Health Organization?
- 6 A. The World Health Organization
- 7 is an international organization overseen by the
- 8 World Health Assembly, which is made up of mostly
- 9 Ministers of Health of the countries that
- 10 participate in the United Nations. It is an
- 11 official organization, not a political
- 12 organization. One might compare it to the
- 13 bureaucracy of a government or the bureaucracy of a
- 14 health department, or even some arms-length
- 15 organizations, and provincial governments in Canada
- 16 and elsewhere. It's funded by a variety of
- 17 countries and its main role -- it has many roles,
- 18 but I think in the context of this is to provide
- 19 information that can be used by countries around
- 20 the world, some of it scientific information,
- 21 research, some of it is guidelines that can be used
- 22 in decision making, and they also do things like
- 23 collect information such as surveillance data. All
- 24 of which is somewhat voluntary, just to add this
- 25 point, is countries are asked to provide

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- 1 information on not just numbers of cases, but also
- 2 their experience with things like public health
- 3 measures. And then the WHO tries to summarize that
- 4 information and share it mostly on public health
- 5 issues, but any health issue.
- 6 74. Q. Thank you. And I'm just
- 7 going to zoom into part of this document just so
- 8 that it's easier to see, because we're going to
- 9 read part of it. Can you read the text here under
- 10 the heading, "Purpose and Rationale of this
- 11 Guidance," or is it still too small?
- 12 A. No, I can see it.
- 13 75. Q. So I'm just going to read
- 14 part of it. It states here that, "The purpose of
- 15 this document is to provide guidance to host
- 16 governments, health authorities and national or
- 17 international event organizers on taking decisions
- 18 related to holding mass gatherings in the context
- 19 of the COVID-19 pandemic and on decreasing the
- 20 risks of SARS-CoV-2 transmission and strain on
- 21 healthcare systems associated with such events
- 22 through dedicated precautionary measures." Now,
- 23 that was a bit of a mouthful, but you would agree
- 24 that that accurately describes the purpose of this
- 25 document?

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- 1 A. Yes.
- 2 76. Q. And then I'm going to take
- 3 you to a part of this document under heading 3.3,
- 4 which is titled, "Risks Associated with Mass
- 5 Gatherings." And here, it says, "During mass
- 6 gatherings the likely high-density and mobility of
- 7 attendees (crowding) represents a conducive
- 8 environment for close, prolonged and frequent
- 9 interactions between people, which can entail
- 10 increased risk of transmission of SARS-CoV-2." And
- 11 I guess I'll ask, you would agree that this
- 12 paragraph reflects the view of the World Health
- 13 Organization, correct?
- 14 A. This document, the World
- 15 Health Organization, you know, is -- as I said, I
- 16 mean it's an organization that gathers information,
- 17 cites research, issues guidelines. I think any
- 18 specific guideline or any specific document it
- 19 might be argued as to whether it actually
- 20 represents the opinion of the World Health
- 21 Organization per se. In fact, many elements of a
- 22 WHO document often say that it is the -- you know,
- 23 it's the opinion of the authors or whatever and
- 24 they're providing a platform for the... So I can't
- 25 really say that, but I can say that this describes

- 1 this particular guideline. I mean, if that answers
- 2 your question. I'm not questioning that.
- 3 77. Q. Right. This represents the
- 4 view of the authors of this document who are
- 5 writing on behalf of the World Health Organization?
- 6 A. Perhaps. We'd have to go to
- 7 the front of the document, some of them are more
- 8 clear than others about who's the actual
- 9 accountable party. If it says these are the WHO
- 10 guidelines, then that would be the document that
- 11 the WHO's taking responsibility for.
- 12 78. Q. Okay. Let's move to the next
- 13 paragraph. This is actually the paragraph you
- 14 quoted in your report. So it states, "An analysis
- of mass gatherings held globally in 2020 and 2021
- 16 has indicated that the most important factors
- 17 associated with increased risk of SARS-CoV-2
- 18 transmission in conjunction with such events are:
- 19 duration, risk grows with the duration of the event
- 20 or with the duration of stay of attendees at the
- 21 event, especially in the case of multiple days;
- 22 location, risk is higher in indoor venues than in
- 23 outdoor venues; and, compliance with precautionary
- 24 measures, risk is higher when measures are not
- 25 applied, weakly implemented or not followed by

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- 1 attendees." And so you quoted this in your report
- 2 at page 8. Given that you quoted it in your
- 3 report, is it true that you agree with the
- 4 statements in this paragraph?
- A. Well, I think we're coming
- 6 back to the same conversation we had a few minutes
- 7 ago. I quoted this because this is what the WHO
- 8 guidelines stated, period. That's all I claim. I
- 9 did not say anything in my Affidavit about the
- 10 validity, about the strengths and weaknesses of
- 11 these statements. For example, I did not say that
- 12 these are qualitative statements, not quantitative
- 13 statements, other than higher or lower. This does
- 14 not state what -- you know, how much greater the
- 15 risk of transmission is related to duration. It
- 16 does not say how much higher the risk of
- 17 transmission is in indoor venues compared to
- 18 outdoor venues. And it does not say to what degree
- 19 various precautionary measures quantitatively
- 20 reduce the risk of transmission in mass gatherings.
- 21 So I cannot give you an opinion about really the
- 22 validity or relevance of those. I can tell you
- 23 that that is what the WHO guideline says.
- 24 79. Q. Okay, thank you.
- 25 A. This is an important

- 1 question, so maybe this is an opportunity for me to
- 2 clarify in case the power goes out and this is the
- 3 end of my opportunity to answer your questions.
- 4 What's important in applying these principles,
- 5 these guidelines, as is stated in other parts of
- 6 the guideline, is that they must be based on local
- 7 circumstances, current science, current
- 8 epidemiology, estimates of impacts, estimates of
- 9 quantified benefit and harm. And this is the
- 10 general theme of my answer to the questions. It is
- 11 not whether these statements are true or false.
- 12 I'm not -- I've stated before and I'll state again,
- 13 clearly if there's a risk of transmission in an
- 14 event, the longer that event goes on the more
- 15 likely there's going to be transmission.
- 16 Similarly, if there is a gathering that's indoors
- 17 compared to outdoors, the probability of
- 18 transmission is going to be greater indoors. And
- 19 similarly, if other precautions are used, the
- 20 probability of transmission is less. The problem
- 21 is not whether these statements, which are pretty
- 22 much undeniable, even without any information about
- 23 SARS-CoV-2, this information we knew decades ago
- 24 because respiratory viruses all behave in this way.
- 25 What's of relevance is the quantitative estimates

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- 1 of the impacts and probabilities of transmission
- 2 under such circumstances, and this is a general
- 3 theme of my answers; not to take a position for or
- 4 against the measures that have been brought in, not
- 5 to take a position that there isn't some scientific
- 6 basis for the expectations of these interventions.
- 7 The problem is lack of quantification of the
- 8 benefits and harms of these interventions and lack
- 9 of the data, information, analysis, evidence and
- 10 rationale used to implement these policies. That,
- in the main, is the question that I've been asked
- 12 to answer. And I've looked for that and I've
- 13 reported what I was able to find.
- 14 80. Q. Thank you very much, I
- 15 appreciate that clarification once again, Dr.
- 16 Kettner. Let's just move on to the second-last
- 17 paragraph here. It states here, "In addition to
- 18 the risk of transmitting SARS-CoV-2, mass
- 19 gatherings can also strain the planning and
- 20 response resources of the host country or
- 21 community, and be associated with disruptive
- 22 impacts health services. This is because when
- 23 transmission amplifies among large numbers of
- 24 individuals, it can generate a significant number
- of COVID-19 cases whose management may overwhelm

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- 1 the response capacity of the host country's
- 2 healthcare system." Would you agree with that
- 3 statement?
- 4 A. Okay. You're asking me if I
- 5 would agree with this statement?
- 6 81. Q. It's really the statements in
- 7 this paragraph.
- 8 A. Well, again, as I said
- 9 before, can strain, hard to disagree with that.
- 10 Can generate, may overwhelm... Yes, I mean pretty
- 11 much -- scientifically, it's pretty impossible --
- 12 I'm going to say pretty much impossible to disagree
- 13 with those statements unless one is 100 per cent
- 14 sure that any of those things could not possibly
- 15 happen.
- 16 82. Q. Thanks. And I'm just going
- 17 to turn to another part of the document. Forgive
- 18 me, it's going to take a bit of scrolling again,
- 19 it's actually closer to the top. You'll see at the
- 20 top of this document there's a box, and at the top
- 21 of the box it says, "Key Messages." Do you see
- 22 that?
- 23 A. I do.
- 24 83. Q. So presumably, these are the
- 25 key messages that the authors of this document want

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1	the reader to take away from it?
2	A. I would agree with that,
3	yeah.
4	Q. That's fair to say?
5	A. Yeah.
6	85. Q. And I'm just going to zoom in
7	to No. 6, and it says, "Mass gatherings should
8	never be left unmanaged or poorly managed
9	regardless of their size, type, and level of
10	associated risk. Zero risk does not exist." And
11	so you would agree that what's stated in Bullet No.
12	6 here is one of the key messages that the authors
13	of this document want the reader to take away from
14	this guidance from the WHO, correct?
15	A. I would say that it's self-
16	evidence that that's a key message.
17	MR. COOKSON: Thank you. I'd like
18	to mark this as an exhibit.
19	MS. PARMAR: Yes, no objection.
20	EXHIBIT NO. 1: Document
21	from the World Health
22	Organization titled, "Key
23	Planning Recommendations
24	for Mass Gatherings in the
25	context of COVID-19"

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- 2 Point 6? Maybe what more important, in my mind,
- 3 than whether it represents a key message, which
- 4 seems self-evident?
- 5 BY MR. COOKSON:
- 6 86. Q. Yes, you may comment on this.
- 7 A. So mass gathering is an
- 8 interesting term. From an international point of
- 9 view that includes and, as I recall from my
- 10 readings, is the main concern, mass gatherings of
- 11 tens of thousands of people, such as religious
- 12 events and I forget what they're called, but I
- 13 think you know what I'm referring to. It doesn't
- 14 mean that other gatherings, you know, of other size
- 15 or duration are not included in consideration for
- 16 this report. But we should just be careful not to
- 17 conclude that the mass gatherings referred to here
- 18 are the same order of the types of mass gatherings
- 19 that maybe are in question in Canada or Ontario.
- 20 And never be left unmanaged or poorly managed.
- 21 Again, from a public health point of view,
- 22 unmanaged or poorly managed depends on definition
- 23 of what management means. It could be a general
- 24 policy, it could be police on site. It has to be
- 25 in the context of the local situation, the local

- 1 science, the local epidemiology, and the purpose.
- 2 To say that zero risk does not exist is a waste of
- 3 five words on that page. There's never ever been a
- 4 claim or statement in public health or epidemiology
- 5 that zero risk exists. It's just not a helpful
- 6 statement and it can be misleading.
- 7 87. Q. All right, thank you. That's
- 8 all I have for this document. I'm going to take
- 9 you to another document you cite in your report,
- 10 which is at footnote 8, which is on page 9 of your
- 11 report. And for reference, that's page 239 of the
- 12 Application Record. And the document is -- I'll
- 13 again bring it up on the screen. Do you see a
- 14 document in front of you?
- 15 A. Yes.
- 16 88. Q. And did you read this
- 17 document before you swore your Affidavit?
- 18 A. I did.
- 19 89. Q. And it appears to be a letter
- 20 to the Editor of the Journal of Infectious
- 21 Diseases, is that right?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 90. Q. And it's commenting on a
- 24 previously-published article in the Journal of
- 25 Infectious Diseases titled "Outdoor Transmission of

- 1 SARS-CoV-2 and Other Respiratory Viruses, a
- 2 Systematic Review." Correct?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 91. Q. And I just want to turn of
- 5 the end of this letter, after the footnotes. And
- 6 you can see here that there are a number of dates.
- 7 It says it was received on 26th of May, 2021 and
- 8 editorial decision was made on 28th of May, 2021,
- 9 accepted June 2nd, 2021, and it was published
- 10 online on June 4th, 2021. Do you see that?
- A. (inaudible/off mic)
- 12 92. Q. So it's safe to assume that
- 13 this would not have been publicly available prior
- 14 to June 4th, 2021, correct?
- 15 A. Yes, this well, that update
- 16 would not have been, yes.
- 17 93. Q. And it's commenting, as we
- 18 talked about earlier, on a previous article in the
- 19 Journal of Infectious Diseases. Did you read that
- 20 previous article?
- 21 A. I did.
- 22 94. Q. You did, okay. So let's take
- 23 a moment to look at that. Just one moment, I'm
- 24 organizing the documents we have here. And I'll
- 25 attempt to share my screen once again. Do you see

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- 1 a document in front of you?
- 2 A. Yes.
- 3 95. Q. And this is the article that
- 4 was referenced in the previous document we just
- 5 looked at?
- A. I believe that's true.
- 7 96. Q. All right. And I'm going to
- 8 take you to one part of that on page 558, and I'm
- 9 going to zoom in just so that we can all read it
- 10 together. Is the text big enough for you to read,
- 11 Dr. Kettner?
- 12 A. Yes.
- 13 97. Q. So in the very last
- 14 paragraph, I'm just going to read the first
- 15 sentence that then goes on to the next page. It
- 16 states, "These findings, as well as reports of
- 17 influenza outbreaks and adenovirus outbreaks in
- 18 outdoor bodies of water suggest that while outdoor
- 19 transmission is less common than indoors, it is not
- 20 impossible." So you would agree, as it states
- 21 here, that one of the findings of this study is
- 22 that outdoor transmission is less common than
- 23 indoor, but is not impossible, correct?
- 24 A. I don't know how anyone could
- 25 disagree with that statement.

- 1 98. Q. Okay. And let's go on to the
- 2 second statement. It states here, "Case reports
- 3 identified, after our review had been completed,
- 4 provide further evidence that high-density outdoor
- 5 gatherings, particularly with low mask use, may
- 6 lead to higher transmission rates." Do you see
- 7 that?
- 8 A. I do.
- 9 99. Q. And, as we can see here,
- 10 another finding of the study is that high-density
- 11 outdoor gatherings, particularly with low mask use,
- 12 may lead to higher transmission rates. Correct?
- 13 A. Correct, as in what?
- 14 100. Q. As in you agree that this is
- one of the findings of this study?
- 16 A. You're asking me if what is
- 17 written here on the page is what the authors
- 18 intended to write on the page?
- 19 101. O. Correct.
- 20 A. I suspect that's true, unless
- 21 there's been a real serious mistake or accident to
- 22 put something else in there that they did not
- 23 intend.
- 24 102. Q. And then it goes on in the
- 25 remaining paragraph to discuss a number of studies

- 1 that have found instances of transmission at
- 2 outdoor gatherings. And, for example, it starts in
- 3 the next sentence talking about the Myren et al
- 4 study, which noted that incidence of COVID-19 cases
- 5 was significantly higher in 14 out of 20 counties
- 6 that had large outdoor gatherings 15 days prior.
- 7 Do you see that?
- 8 A. I do.
- 9 103. Q. Did you review the Myren
- 10 study?
- 11 A. No.
- 12 104. Q. Okay. And the next one says,
- 13 "The Dave(ph) et al study estimated that in the
- 14 three weeks following the start of the Sturgis
- 15 Motorcycle Rally on 7 August, 2020 in South Dakota,
- 16 a multi-day event with 500,000 participants, cases
- 17 grew more in counties with weak mitigation policies
- 18 than those with strong mitigation policies, such as
- 19 closure --" Do you see that there?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 105. Q. And did you review the Dave
- 22 et al study?
- 23 A. No.
- 24 106. Q. Okay. I'm going to turn to a
- 25 different part of the document.

I need to comment on

1

10

EXAMINATION FOR DISCOVERY OF JOEL KETTNER

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2	something here, because I'm not entirely sure what
3	the point of your questioning is regarding this.
4	But in the anticipation that we get cut-off, let me
5	just make something clear. First of all, these
6	studies probably from an epidemiological scientific
7	point of view would view be considered weak
8	studies. You know, their associations in time,
9	they're very low-evidence studies. Having said

Α.

11 transmission in an outdoor setting. I'm not

that, these studies may be underestimating the

12 arguing that outdoor transmission is higher or

13 lower than anyone else is claiming or believing.

14 I'm not arguing that we shouldn't be concerned

15 about the potential transmission or the rates of

16 transmission from outdoor gatherings. I need to

17 make it clear that what I've quoted in terms of

18 articles like this is to show that there are some

19 opinions about this and there are some

20 quantification of this, and I'm not claiming that

21 any of them are more accurate than the other. I

22 could do that. I mean, I could tell you more about

23 the flaws in the research of these papers, which  ${\tt I}$ 

24 would have done and read the papers and done a

25 detailed critical appraisal of them if I thought

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- 1 that was relevant to answering the question. I
- 2 have nowhere in my report, I hope, implied that I
- 3 know the actual rate of transmission in outdoor
- 4 gatherings or how much they're increase or
- 5 decreased by mask wearing or duration. Nor do I
- 6 claim in any of the report, I hope, that this risk
- 7 of outdoor transmission should be ignored or that
- 8 it is so low that it's not worth considering. That
- 9 would be an entirely different set of questions for
- 10 me to answer. All I'm answering is, has the
- 11 government shown, have Public Health officials
- 12 explained on what basis they have made these policy
- decisions? And what I've shown throughout the
- 14 report are examples of information, estimates, and
- 15 ways that should or could have been considered in
- 16 setting these policies.
- 17 107. Q. Thank you, Dr. Kettner, I
- 18 appreciate that clarification. There's just one
- 19 more part of this article that I'd like to turn to,
- 20 and it relates to something that you just mentioned
- 21 actually. I take it that it is standard practice
- 22 when reporting the results of a study like this one
- 23 to note the limitations of that study?
- A. Can you ask that again?
- 25 108. O. Certainly. I believe it's

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- 1 standard practice when reporting the results of a
- 2 study such as this one to note any limitations of
- 3 that study, correct?
- 4 A. When you're talking about the
- 5 authors like of a journal article, that it would be
- 6 expected for them to describe limitations?
- 7 109. Q. That's correct.
- A. Yes, I agree.
- 9 110. Q. Yes. And one of the reasons
- 10 it's important to note those limitations in a
- 11 journal article is because the findings in that
- 12 article should be interpreted in light of those
- 13 limitations, correct?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 111. O. And so I'm just going to turn
- 16 to page 559 of this document. And you see here, we
- 17 have a paragraph that begins with the words, "This
- 18 systemic review has several limitations." Do you
- 19 see that paragraph?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 112. Q. And this is an example of
- 22 exactly what we just talked about, it's the authors
- 23 noting the limitations of this particular study
- 24 that they conducted, correct?
- 25 A. Yes.

- 1 113. Q. And I'm just going to take
- 2 you through a few sentences. It says, "This
- 3 systemic review has several limitations. The few
- 4 and heterogenous studies on outdoor transmission of
- 5 respiratory viruses had used various metrics,
- 6 exposures, and outcomes making it challenging to
- 7 compare findings quantitatively. The low
- 8 proportion of outdoor COVID-19 cases may reflect
- 9 the general decrease in outdoor activities since
- 10 strict lockdowns were enacted in the countries
- 11 surveyed. Relying on reports of symptomatic
- 12 infections may underrepresent asymptomatic cases
- 13 that occur outdoors." And I'll just stop there.
- 14 You have no reason to disagree with the authors'
- 15 description of the limitation of their study,
- 16 correct?
- 17 A. Well, that -- you know, when
- 18 you put the question now it's a bit more difficult.
- 19 I need to be more clear about that. I always have
- 20 reason to doubt the description of limitations. In
- 21 fact, my job in teaching critical appraisal of
- 22 scientific literature to medical students and
- 23 others is that you cannot take at face value
- 24 anything that's written in an article, including
- 25 what the authors themselves to be the limitations.

- 1 Because sometimes they ignore some really really
- 2 important limitations, implicitly or explicitly,
- 3 deliberately or indeliberately, which we need to
- 4 sleuth out and ask about before drawing too many
- 5 conclusions about the scope and depth of the
- 6 limitations described, just as we have to do with
- 7 the rest of the paper. Whether that's relevant to
- 8 the question you asked me, I'm not really sure.
- 9 But I think I will just restate that I said before.
- 10 For an author to say afterwards that maybe our
- 11 estimate is a little high or maybe it's low, or
- 12 very high or very low, is a very very important
- observation which, in general, I would agree with
- 14 and I would accept. So good on them, you know, for
- 15 saying at least that.
- 16 114. Q. Thank you, that is helpful.
- 17 I'll phrase my question in a different way. This
- 18 clearly represents the authors' view of the
- 19 limitations of their own study, correct?
- 20 A. It represents what the
- 21 authors have chosen to write and print. What their
- 22 own view of their limitations is, I don't know.
- 23 115. Q. Okay, thank you. I think
- 24 we're done with this document. I just have a few
- 25 more questions, Dr. Kettner. It touches on

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- 1 something that we discussed a bit earlier. I
- 2 understand that it's normal, and perhaps even
- 3 expected, for a virus like SARS-CoV-2 to mutate
- 4 over time, is that right?
- 5 A. Yes, there's some controversy
- 6 about what the word mutate means, but I'm going to
- 7 say that they're -- it changes enough so that it
- 8 can be recognized with, you know, diagnostic
- 9 methods as at least a little bit different.
- 10 116. Q. And when these mutations
- 11 occur, if they are significant enough, they may
- 12 result in what has been referred to as a variant of
- 13 the virus, is that correct?
- 14 A. Yes.
- 15 117. O. And a variant might have
- 16 different characteristics or properties as compared
- 17 to the original strain of the virus, correct?
- 18 A. Yes.
- 19 118. Q. So, for example, the variant
- 20 could be more transmissible or potentially result
- 21 in more severe disease?
- 22 A. Yes.
- 23 119. Q. And if a variant has
- 24 properties that are significant from a public
- 25 health perspective, at least in the case of COVID-

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- 1 19, they've sometimes been described as a variant
- 2 of concern, correct?
- 3 A. Yes.
- 4 120. Q. And over the course of the
- 5 pandemic, what we've just discussed is exactly what
- 6 happened with COVID-19; it mutated over time and
- 7 eventually produced different variants of concern,
- 8 correct?
- 9 A. You're talking about the SARS
- 10 coronavirus-2 virus. You're not talking about --
- 11 121. Q. Correct.
- 12 A. -- COVID-19?
- 13 122. Q. Sorry, correct, yes. I'm
- 14 talking about the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- 15 A. Okay. So can you repeat the
- 16 question?
- 17 123. Q. Sure. The SARS-CoV-2 virus
- 18 mutated over time and eventually produced different
- 19 variants of concern?
- 20 A. Yes.
- 21 124. Q. So, for example, one of them
- 22 was what the World Health Organization described as
- 23 the Alpha variant?
- 24 A. Yes.
- 25 125. O. And the Alpha variant was

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- 1 more transmissible than the original strain of
- 2 COVID, correct?
- A. According to -- you know,
- 4 according to reports that were issued and data that
- 5 was gathered, yes.
- 6 126. Q. And I believe that the Delta
- 7 variant was even more transmissible than the Alpha
- 8 variant, is that correct?
- 9 A. Yes. I mean, again, I could
- 10 go into more depth about really answering that
- 11 question more accurately and scientifically, if
- 12 it's important, if it's relevant. But if you're
- 13 asking me, you know, were there variations over
- 14 time of concern and were there differences of
- 15 transmissibility and severity, yes, I think the
- 16 surveillance data and the analyses would support,
- 17 you know, that view.
- 18 127. Q. And so --
- 19 A. It's more difficult and more
- 20 controversial perhaps to actually characterize
- 21 quantitatively the differences between these
- 22 different variants. That's less clear. But I'm
- 23 not trying to dispute the importance of differences
- 24 in variants. That was an important part, may still
- 25 continue to be an important part of surveillance of

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- 1 the SARS-CoV-2 virus.
- 2 128. O. Yes, thank you. So when a
- 3 variant is first discovered its exact properties or
- 4 characteristics may not be immediately known,
- 5 correct?
- A. Correct.
- 7 129. Q. So, for example, it may not
- 8 be immediately clear whether or not the variant is
- 9 more or less transmissible or results in more or
- 10 less severe disease, correct?
- 11 A. Yes.
- 12 130. Q. And so in order to determine
- 13 the characteristics of the variant, that variant
- 14 needs to be studied and those studies take time,
- 15 correct?
- A. What do you mean by time?
- 17 131. Q. Exactly what I just
- 18 discussed, that it's not apparent immediately what
- 19 those characteristics are and so studying the
- 20 variant in order to determine, for example, whether
- 21 it's more transmissible or not --
- 22 A. I understand what you're
- 23 saying --
- 24 132. O. -- takes a certain amount of
- 25 time.

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- 1 A. -- yes, sorry. Well, a
- 2 certain amount of time -- the reason I was stopping
- 3 on the word "time" is because some of this
- 4 information can be gathered very very quickly.
- 5 With good surveillance tools in place in a variety
- 6 of countries where they may begin -- you know, may
- 7 be more apparent than in others, time depends on
- 8 very very many different characteristics and it can
- 9 be a very short time, and I will be quantitative,
- 10 as in days, or it could take a long time, in some
- 11 people's opinion, as in weeks. But those are the
- 12 kind of timeframes we're talking about. They're
- 13 relatively short compared to tracking the influenza
- 14 virus around the globe. So I just want to be
- 15 clear, because it's maybe sounding like a little
- 16 broke record, and I apologize if it is, but I'm
- 17 taking quite a bit of time to clarify exactly what
- 18 your words mean so that the Court can be clear
- 19 about what my answers are. So anyway, I'll stop
- 20 there. Maybe I'll need to say more about it,
- 21 depending on why you're asking me these questions.
- 22 133. Q. I appreciate the
- 23 clarification, Dr. Kettner. I guess my question
- 24 is, if it is the case that the exact properties of
- 25 the new variant may not be immediate apparent, as

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- 1 we've just discussed, public health officials may
- 2 need to make decisions about how to address the new
- 3 variant with information that is either imperfect
- 4 or incomplete, correct?
- 5 A. Again, just let me be clear,
- 6 yes, that's a true statement, as it is everyday in
- 7 monitoring the variant that has not changed for the
- 8 last several weeks. Everyday it requires
- 9 monitoring by surveillance and other means what is
- 10 happening locally, as the WHO document refers,
- 11 local science, local capacity, local epidemiology
- 12 and whether it's a new variant or whether it's the
- 13 same variant, that process must be in place. Not
- 14 only does it have to be in place, but the data has
- 15 to be used and, from public health ethics point of
- 16 view, it has to be transparently shared and
- 17 explanations of keeping the same policies or
- 18 changing them would be expected to accompany the
- 19 transparent availability and release of that data
- 20 whether it is the same virus variant that we've
- 21 been dealing with for weeks or months or a new one
- 22 that is emerging. From a public health point of
- 23 view, it is interesting, these variants are
- 24 interesting, but they're only really interesting in
- 25 how they behave and how they impact on the public

- 1 and population health, which is the more important
- 2 measure than nucleic acid sequencing, which helps
- 3 us maybe to understand or explain how these things
- 4 change. But what becomes important is daily
- 5 estimates of incidence, morbidity, mortality,
- 6 hospital capacity, hospital demand, and what
- 7 activities are most important in transmission and
- 8 what outbreaks and cases and places and settings is
- 9 the disease transmitting in a way that impacts on
- 10 severe outcomes. That's the daily work, even if we
- 11 didn't have nucleic acid testing, even if we didn't
- 12 know what different variants there were, would not
- 13 really change that work that Public Health
- 14 undertakes everyday to survey and analyze the data.
- 15 134. O. I see. So, you know, making
- 16 decisions based on incomplete or imperfect
- 17 information is just one of the realities of the
- 18 field of public health, is that fair?
- 19 A. And clinical medicine, and
- 20 pretty much anything that I know in the health or
- 21 medical world. I could go beyond that world, but
- 22 that's not my expertise.
- 23 MR. COOKSON: Okay, thank you very
- 24 much.
- 25 I think now is a good point for a

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short break. Why don't we take five minutes, if 1 2 that's all right with everybody? 3 THE WITNESS: Can I have -- I 4 appreciate you can't give me an exact --MR. COOKSON: Let's just go off 5 6 the record, sorry. 7 --- OFF THE RECORD AT 11:15 A.M. 8 --- ON THE RECORD AT 11:16 A.M. 9 MR. COOKSON: Thank you, Dr. 10 Kettner, those are all my questions. 11 THE WITNESS: Thank you. 12 MS. PARMAR: No questions from us. 13 MR. COOKSON: So thank you very 14 much, Dr. Kettner. We appreciate your time today. 15 MS. PARMAR: Thank you, Dr. 16 Kettner. 17 THE WITNESS: You're very welcome. It's an honour to serve the people of Ontario. 18 19 MR. COOKSON: Thank you. 20 --- Whereupon the proceedings adjourned at 11:16 a.m. 21 22 23 24

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