



## NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Ottawa, ON

Day 3

May 19, 2023

### EVIDENCE

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**Witness 11: Lyne Vandenplas**

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**Shawn Buckley**

Welcome back to the National Citizens Inquiry as we come to the closing part of our third day of hearings and the last day of our eight-city tour. We're going to have a presentation by a few different volunteers that have been involved in this project, sharing their different roles and perspectives, and just actually whatever they want to say. So we have Lyne Vandenplas who is attending. Lyne, can you hear us?

**Lyne Vandenplas**

Yes, I can. I hear you very well.

**Shawn Buckley**

Okay, well we can see and hear you, so you're actually just ready to do a presentation and share what your involvement was.

**Lyne Vandenplas**

I will do that.

**Shawn Buckley**

Okay.

**Lyne Vandenplas**

I just want to say I was responsible for creating the list of individuals who would receive a summons from the National Citizens Inquiry across Canada. I worked with another volunteer out in British Columbia and we spent most of January and February trying to identify the correct Canadian government officials that have the titles of Public Health Officer, Minister of Health, Chief Medical Officer, and of that kind.

It took us about a month to find everyone for the ten provinces and the three territories. It was particularly challenging because a lot of the individuals changed positions, went to a different government or a different ministry, a different province, and there were a lot of former ministers and so on. Finding the addresses that were not P.O. boxes, because you can't deliver a summons to a P.O. box. And finding their email was particularly challenging. It's as if they didn't want us to find them.

But finally, we did succeed and we made a lengthy list [Exhibit OT-14b]. Then I started issuing summonses as of early March 2023. There were basically eight batches. Each hearing had a different venue and different dates and everyone was invited in each province and all the territories. So basically, what I did is: I submitted a list of all the names of the individuals who had received a summons and whether they received one by email or by mail. It was registered mail—all of them were registered mail. For all of them, I have a receipt date and a signature. And basically, I have the province, the title, the name, the address, the email, and the hearing date and location that everyone was invited to.

So a total of 63 government officials were sent summonses across Canada. Fifty-seven of them received it by email and I sent it with a read receipt request. Also, I sent 58 registered mail summonses. And I also had tracking numbers that had to be tracked and I have all the received dates and signatures. And of the 57 email summonses, I only received eight read receipts, so only eight individuals actually opened it up and confirmed that they read it.

I got two responses saying they were unable to attend. I got one response stating that they were not legally permitted to attend. I got one who declined the invitation. And for the 58 summonses sent by registered mail, I got two letters that were never picked up. I have one delivery that was inexplicably delayed and remains as is. And we received two COVID responses with reports by email that had been done by that province.

My observations are: I did observe that of the 63 individual summonses, no one accepted the invitation. No one agreed to testify with the NCI. I also observed that of 13 provinces and territories, out of those 13 provinces,

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there have been at least 13 changes in either the Chief Medical Officer or the Health Officer during three years. And that is it, that's my report.

### **Shawn Buckley**

Lyne— Just before you guys clap, hang on; I'm just going to talk with Lyne a little bit. So, Lyne, you had said that a couple had indicated that they couldn't attend. Am I right that the summonses are actually drafted so we'd invite them to attend at a specific hearing, but it would include, "Hey, we're travelling across other cities and if you can't make it at this time, we'll schedule you in virtually otherwise or we could even accommodate you by scheduling you when we're not having a city and to attend virtually." That's how the summons is drafted, isn't it?

### **Lyne Vandenplas**

Yes, it was. It was very clear in the summons that they were invited to do so virtually, or we were very willing to accommodate them. So they just decided not to—to declare they were unable to attend without asking for any kind of accommodation or interest in participating.

**Shawn Buckley**

Right. Can I just ask you before we let you go: how did that make you feel not to have any response? Because people may not appreciate how much work it is to send these out, get all the registered mail things done, actually get down to the post office, do all of this, and then be tracking it to see what happens. It's a lot of work.

How did it make you feel that basically no government official decided to attend?

**Lyne Vandenplas**

Well, they made it really obvious that they didn't want to speak with the citizens of Canada. They were not interested in coming to listen and to share their point of view. So I really felt that we were dismissed. It was not a good feeling. But the longer this went on, the less and less I was surprised; it became the expectation, which is not a good thing.

**Shawn Buckley**

No, and I see that you're emotional about that. I'm sorry. I didn't mean to—

**Lyne Vandenplas**

That's okay.

**Shawn Buckley**

So, are there any other thoughts that you wanted to add? We're actually so pleased that you shared this.

**Lyne Vandenplas**

I just think that the upside to my doing this was the fact that I met so many wonderful Canadians from coast to coast. That was the gift because the gift was not the responses or the lack thereof. And I want to thank the NCI for allowing me to participate and do something, my little bit. That would be it.

**Shawn Buckley**

Okay, and just so people know, Lyne also attended at the Quebec City hearings and was instrumental in helping find interpreters and things like that. She's very modest, but she has just been a tremendous help. And Lyne, we're so thankful to have you as part of the team.

**Lyne Vandenplas**

Thank you.

**Shawn Buckley**

And I know I share that— I know the team's been very pleased and honoured to work with you, so.

**Lyne Vandenplas**

Thank you.

**Shawn Buckley**

Okay. Thanks, Lyne. And now you guys can clap.

So, Lyne, you can't see it, but you're basically getting a standing ovation, so people are appreciating what you've done.

[00:08:55]



***Final Review and Approval: Jodi Bruhn, September 6, 2023.***

*The evidence offered in this transcript is a true and faithful record of witness testimony given during the National Citizens Inquiry (NCI) hearings. The transcript was prepared by members of a team of volunteers using an “intelligent verbatim” transcription method.*

*For further information on the transcription process, method, and team, see the NCI website: <https://nationalcitizensinquiry.ca/about-these-transcripts/>*