

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The National Advisory Committee on SARS and Public Health wishes to acknowledge the contributions to our work by a number of individuals and teams.

Ian Green, Deputy Minister, Health Canada and Scott Broughton, Assistant Deputy Minister, Population and Public Health Branch, gave the Committee Chair unfettered access to Health Canada officials and staff outside of their normal reporting structures.

Many individuals in the Population and Public Health and Health Policy and Communications Branches of Health Canada provided background information and support critical to the development of the Committee's final report.

Among those who made direct contributions were: Ian Shugart, Assistant Deputy Minister, Health Policy and Communications Branch; Dr. David Mowat, Director General, Centre for Surveillance Coordination; Dr. Paul Gully, Senior Director General, Population and Public Health Branch; Dr. Ron St John, Director General, Emergency Preparedness and Response; Dr. Judith Shamian, Executive Director, Nursing Policy Office; Dr. Arlene King, Director, Immunization and Respiratory Diseases Division; Dr. Ping Yan, Chief, Centre for Infectious Disease Prevention and Control; Dr. Theresa Tam, Medical Specialist; and Claude Giroux, Senior Policy Advisor.

This senior group of Health Canada employees made themselves available for interviews and prepared background materials that were very helpful to the Committee. All were supported by large teams; some also drew on stakeholders for input and advice. Both these senior personnel and the Committee wish to thank all their team members and the stakeholders who assisted them in supporting the Committee's deliberations.

Also from Health Canada, Edith Morber, Senior Policy Advisor, greatly facilitated the Committee's work with her editorial and synthetic skills and secretariat support. Sylvie Ladouceur and Carole Morris provided logistical support and ensured that Committee meetings ran smoothly.

While the Committee is indebted to these and other individuals in Health Canada for their assistance and input, we have drawn our own conclusions, as will be plain from some critical assessments of Health Canada's actions, policies, and preparedness for SARS.

Independent consultants played a key role in the Committee's work. Saira David served as a policy and research advisor to the Committee, providing valuable input. Prof. Sujit Choudhry of the University of Toronto Faculty of Law consulted extensively to the Committee on some thorny constitutional and policy issues. We have incorporated his work into the report with permission, although it should not be assumed that Prof. Choudhry endorses or agrees with all the recommendations and conclusions drawn by the Committee. The Hay Group in Toronto undertook a major consultancy on local/regional clinical and public health issues. Again, we have incorporated their outstanding work into the report, but the Committee takes full responsibility for the findings and recommendations.

Drs. Irfan Dhalla and Jeff Kwong, post-graduate specialty residents in, respectively, Medicine and Community Medicine at the University of Toronto, served as tireless research and editorial associates. They made a major contribution to the Committee's work, somehow balancing these demands with the exigencies of residency training.

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The Committee is particularly appreciative of the front-line health care and public health professionals and administrators who took time out of their busy schedules to discuss their first-hand experiences combating and containing SARS, and their views on the lessons learned. We have generally referenced their comments without attribution. A few interviewees requested complete anonymity; the names of other interviewees are listed in an appendix to the report. The Committee extends its sincere thanks to them all.

This report would not have been possible without the many excellent submissions received by the Committee from various non-governmental and private sector organizations. Not every stakeholder group will find all its comments or recommendations directly referenced in the report. Similarly, to keep the number of recommendations to a manageable and prioritized list, not every suggestion from the submissions has been transformed into a Committee recommendation. However, the Committee can warrant that all submissions had an influence on our deliberations and recommendations. With a few exceptions, stakeholders kindly agreed to have their submissions posted electronically for internet access (see www.sars.gc.ca). We urge interested readers to access the important ideas and recommendations of these stakeholders; various of their briefs address issues that could not be covered in this report, and all the briefs serve as valuable resources for further study and action.

These individuals and organizations share fully in credit for any meritorious aspects to the report. The Committee accepts responsibility for errors or omissions.

Dr. Julie Gerberding, Director of the US Centers for Disease Control [CDC], agreed to participate as a corresponding member and facilitated our access to information about the CDC's operations. On her behalf, Dr. Marty Cetron attended a Committee meeting and helped us understand aspects of the CDC's perspectives on SARS. Dr. David Heymann had also agreed to participate as Executive Director of Communicable Diseases for the World Health Organization; but was reassigned in July 2003 by the new WHO Director-General, Dr. Lee Jong-wook, to be his Representative for Polio Eradication.

Last, the Committee was mandated to produce an account of key lessons learned from the outbreak of SARS in Canada, particularly as regards measures that must be taken to enhance the public health systems of our nation. We are grateful for the mandate given our members by the Government of Canada and the Hon. Anne McLellan, Minister of Health, and hopeful that prompt action will be taken by all levels of government, as well as relevant institutions and stakeholders, to ensure that the health of Canadians is protected and promoted even more effectively in the years ahead.