

PUBLIC INQUIRY NEEDED ON GOVERNMENT'S HANDLING OF PANDEMIC

QUESTIONS MUST BE ANSWERED ON VACCINE PROCUREMENT, WRITES MICHAEL CHONG



MICHAEL CHONG
Column

It's been over a year since the COVID-19 pandemic began. While Canadians are starting to receive vaccines, the Liberal government's failure to secure sufficient doses means that we've fallen behind.

Governments elsewhere secured sufficient doses — the United States and United Kingdom come to mind.

As a result, they are on track to vaccinating everyone in short order, and are about to completely reopen and get on with life. But here, Canadians are being subject to a third wave and third set of lockdowns — a result of the Liberal government's failure to secure sufficient doses.

It won't be until the end of September before all Canadians will have access to vaccines.

These ongoing restrictions are creating hardships for many — families trying to juggle work and children, small business owners being forced to close, seniors in isolation, those with mental-health

challenges and so many others.

It's true Canada did better than the U.S. and U.K. in containing the outbreak in the early days of the pandemic.

Our case counts and deaths were lower.

But the Liberal government's response was adequate, not exemplary. It did not completely eliminate the outbreak as did many other countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Taiwan.

Fast forward to today. The U.S. and U.K. have excelled in securing vaccines and are quickly leaving the pandemic behind. Again, the Canadian federal government's response has been second-rate, without sufficient vaccines to inoculate everyone and get on with life.

As of last week, only two per cent of Canadians had been fully vaccinated. We now have more new daily cases of COVID-19, relative to our population, than the United States.

Conservatives are calling for a public inquiry to examine every aspect of the government's pandemic response once the pandemic is over.

We must ensure that lessons are learned from the government's handling of this pandemic so that we can better respond to future outbreaks.

In a future pandemic, we cannot afford to repeat the failures of this one.

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SNAPSHOT



Charlie Hayward photo

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PROPOSED UBI MAKES ECONOMIC SENSE

PLAN WOULD BE A USEFUL SAFETY NET, WRITES PETER WATSON



PETER WATSON
Column

A Universal Basic Income (UBI) would provide all Canadians with a certain amount of money every year regardless of their financial need.

This is a concept that warrants our attention. At the Liberal Party convention earlier this month, this idea achieved overwhelming support, with a

77 per cent vote in favour.

The focus is to lift those currently below the poverty line into an area of better financial security.

In my opinion, this would be a useful social safety net for the millions of Canadians that will have their earning power reduced or eliminated because of future technical advancements or new ways that business is conducted.

Some argue giving a basic income to everyone makes no economic sense because everyone does not need the assistance.

For simplicity's sake, I would suggest it is tax-free for all. Taxing those that have medium to high income can easily be done by adjusting tax rates on income earned above the UBI amount.

Those that need to be taxed will be taxed.

The pandemic has been the most significant test of how the Canadian economy works during our lifetime. There is an opportunity to build a better future.

In my opinion the UBI concept will be implemented. It makes economic sense.

Peter Watson is registered with Aligned Capital Partners Inc. (ACPI) to provide investment advice. Investment products are provided by ACPI. ACPI is a member of the Investment Industry Regulatory Organization of Canada. The opinions expressed are those of the author and not necessarily those of ACPI. Watson provides wealth management services through Watson Investments. He can be reached at peter@watsoninvestments.com.

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