



\$1 Billion Worth of Unused COVID Vaccines in Canada Will Expire by Year's End, Says Auditor General

Description

*About \$1 billion worth of unused COVID-19 vaccines in Canada are set to expire by the end of 2022 due to an excess supply previously acquired by the federal government, wrote **Auditor General Karen Hogan** in a performance audit tabled today in the House of Commons.*

"We found that the Public Health Agency of Canada was unsuccessful in its efforts to minimize vaccine wastage," [Hogan's office wrote](#) in the performance audit, titled "Report 9: COVID-19 Vaccines," and tabled on Dec. 6.

"The agency had a surplus of vaccine doses resulting from the obligation to buy doses as specified in advance purchase agreements and the purchase of optional doses."

The auditor general also said the public health agency's procurement of enough vaccines for the Canadian public took too long and added that it had "delays in implementing a vaccine management information technology system."

"This finding matters because vaccine wastage results in a financial cost to Canadians," read the audit.

Health Minister Jean-Yves Duclos told reporters on Parliament Hill today that the government's vaccine procurement strategy was "very successful" despite the surplus.

"Canada's overall COVID-19 immunization strategy has been a success," Duclos said on Dec. 6, while acknowledging that "improvements can and should always be made."

Duclos also said a total of 10.8 million doses of COVID vaccines have been either destroyed or have expired in Canada to date.

Minister of Public Services and Procurement Helena Jaczek said that "Canada's vaccine procurement was both effective and efficient."

"There was care taken [and] due diligence in the handling of the contracts," she told Parliament Hill

reporters on Dec. 6.

International Development Minister Harjit Sajjan said that the federal government is looking to return a large number of unused vaccines to a global vaccine-sharing initiative known as COVAX, from which Canada previously obtained some of its COVID vaccine supply.

"We've been continually assessing which each country's needs have been," Sajjan said. "So every nation is making a request through COVAX for what those needs are."

Ontario Surplus

Ontario Auditor General Bonnie Lysyk also found a large number of unused COVID vaccines within the province in her annual report, released on Nov. 30.

Lysyk said that the Ontario government wasted 38 percent of its available vaccine doses between February and June 2022 by overestimating the number that would be needed for administering boosters.

In total, Lysyk found that the province wasted 3.4 million doses of COVID vaccines. She also reported a large number of wasted personal protective equipment (PPE) across Ontario—totalling \$66 million in value—after it was found to be damaged, expired, or obsolete.

by Peter Wilson is a reporter based in Ontario, Canada.

Featured image is from Children's Health Defense

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Date Created

12/09/2022