

December 15, 2021

Shelly D Hipson
RR3
Shelburne, B0T 1W0

Sent via email: shellyhipson@gmail.com

Dear Shelly D Hipson:

Re: You are entitled to the information you requested - 2021-01575-HEA

The Department of Health and Wellness received your application for access to information under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (the Act) on August 19, 2021.

In your application, you requested a copy of the following records:

Amended September 8, 2021: Records that show,

- 1. Definition of a COVID-19 case that is used in Nova Scotia.*
- 2. Please provide any and all reports from the start of the pandemic on how COVID-19 death were determined.*
- 3. Report on COVID-19 deaths that were probable or from clinically compatible illness*
- 4. Information/data that has been gathered as a result of COVID-19 testing:*
 - a. Total number of COVID-19 tests done monthly for 2020 and so far in 2021, Please provide: Number that were positive:*
For the positive cases, please include how many were:
Confirmed, Probable, Symptomatic, Asymptomatic
Number that were negative: Total number of COVID-19 deaths:
Determined by PCR test, Determined by a public health authority, a coroner using their discretion, autopsy
How many of the deaths were tested and symptomatic, asymptomatic, confirmed.
Any record that identifies data that shows that the only illness they had was COVID-19 and it was the true cause of death (they did not die because they were at the end of life and they did not have any other serious illness – for example, they were young, healthy, and died of COVID-19 only)
(Date Range for Record Search: From 3/22/2020 To 8/19/2021)

Responsive records have been located and are attached. Records have been provided that respond to part 1 and 4 of your request. The Department has completed a search for records that respond to part 2 and 3 of your request and no responsive records were found.

You have the right to ask for a review of this decision by the Information Access and Privacy Commissioner (formerly the Review Officer). You have 60 days from the date of this letter to exercise this right. If you wish to ask for a review, you may do so on Form 7, a copy of which is attached. Send the completed form to the Information Access and Privacy Commissioner, P.O. Box 181, Halifax, Nova Scotia B3J 2M4.

Please be advised that a de-identified copy of this disclosure letter and the attached response to your FOIPOP application will be made public after 14 days. The package will be posted online at <https://openinformation.novascotia.ca/>. The letter will not include your name, address, or any other personal information that you have supplied while making your application under FOIPOP.

Please contact Melinda Frelick at 902-424-6920 or by e-mail at melinda.frelick@novascotia.ca, if you need further assistance regarding this application.

Sincerely,



Craig Beaton
Associate Deputy Minister

Attachment

FOIPOP Request 2021-01575-HEA

Data Notes:

- Data sources:
 - 4a, Table 1: Provincial Public Health Laboratory Network COVID-19 lab line list
 - 4a, Table 2 and 4b: Panorama
 - Data includes records between March 22, 2020 and August 19, 2021
- Cell sizes <5 have been suppressed
- The symptom data represents what has been collected and entered in Panorama for this population of COVID-19 deaths and cases. Symptoms include pharyngitis, cough, fever, headache, pain, chills, diarrhea, malaise, nausea/vomiting, confusion/irritability, rhinorrhea or other.
- Deaths captured in this dataset are those that meet the Public Health Agency of Canada case definition. Panorama does not capture if the death was determined by a public health authority, coroner or autopsy (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/national-case-definition.html#dec>) :

Deceased case

- A probable or confirmed COVID-19 case whose death resulted from a clinically compatible illness, unless there is a clear alternative cause of death identified (e.g., trauma, poisoning, drug overdose).
 - A Medical Officer of Health, relevant public health authority, or coroner may use their discretion when determining if a death was due to COVID-19, and their judgement will supersede the above-mentioned criteria.
 - A death due to COVID-19 may be attributed when COVID-19 is the cause of death or is a contributing factor.
- All deaths included in this response were classified as confirmed cases of COVID-19
- The number of positive tests does not correspond exactly to the number of COVID-19 cases captured in Panorama because individuals can be tested multiple times, not all individuals tested are counted as NS cases (from out of province) and NS cases may have been tested outside of NS so are not captured in our provincial lab data.
- **Confirmed Case Definition**

A person with confirmation of infection with SARS-CoV-2 documented by:

1. The detection of at least 1 specific gene target by a validated laboratory-based nucleic acid amplification test (NAAT) assay (e.g. real-time PCR or nucleic acid sequencing) performed at a community, hospital, or reference laboratory (the National Microbiology Laboratory or a provincial public health laboratory)
or
2. The detection of at least 1 specific gene target by a validated point-of-care (POC) NAAT that has been deemed acceptable to provide a final result (i.e. does not require confirmatory testing)
or
3. Seroconversion or diagnostic rise (at least 4-fold or greater from baseline) in viral specific antibody titre in serum or plasma using a validated laboratory-based serological assay for SARS-CoV-2

- **Probable Case Definition**

A person who:

1. Has symptoms compatible with COVID-19

and

- Had a high-risk exposure with a confirmed COVID-19 case (i.e. close contact) **or** was exposed to a known cluster or outbreak of COVID-19
- and**
- Has not had a laboratory-based NAAT assay for SARS-CoV-2 completed **or** the result is inconclusive
- or**
- Had SARS-CoV-2 antibodies detected in a single serum, plasma, or whole blood sample using a validated laboratory-based serological assay for SARS-CoV-2 collected within 4 weeks of symptom onset

OR

2. Had a POC NAAT **or** POC antigen test for SARS-CoV-2 completed and the result is preliminary (presumptive) positive

OR

3. Had a validated POC antigen test for SARS-CoV-2 completed and the result is positive

Request:

4. *Information/data that has been gathered as a result of COVID-19 testing:*
- a. *Total number of COVID-19 tests done monthly for 2020 and so far in 2021,*
Please provide: Number that were positive:

For the positive cases, please include how many were:

- *Confirmed:*
- *Probable:*
- *Symptomatic:*
- *Asymptomatic:*

Table 1. Number of COVID-19 tests by month and result, March 22, 2020- August 19, 2021.

Month	Result		Total
	Negative	Positive	
Mar-20	4614	147	4769
Apr-20	24531	879	25473
May-20	18105	141	18251
Jun-20	15686	8	15702
Jul-20	12465	6	12475
Aug-20	15529	22	15558
Sep-20	28734	6	28748
Oct-20	22535	23	22565
Nov-20	43463	212	43685
Dec-20	48775	191	48975
Jan-21	47356	90	47452
Feb-21	52191	67	52261
Mar-21	92621	75	92703
Apr-21	150075	924	151036
May-21	239226	3219	242575
Jun-21	121115	279	121420
Jul-21	86630	63	86705
Aug-21	53000	74	53082
Total	1076651	6426	1083435

*Tests conducted before March 22 2020 and after August 19 2021 are excluded based on the dates of the FOIPOP request.

**26 tests were excluded in 2020 and 174 in 2021 as they were not processed.

***Excludes indeterminate results

Table 2: Number of confirmed and probable COVID-19 cases, March 22, 2020 – August 19, 2021

	COVID-19 Cases	
	Confirmed	Probable
Asymptomatic	1473	<5
Symptomatic	4411	--
Total	5884	21

4b. Total number of COVID-19 deaths:

Determined by PCR test:

Determined by:

-a public health authority:

-a coroner using their discretion:

-autopsy:

How many of the deaths were tested and

-symptomatic

-asymptomatic

-confirmed

Table 3. Number of COVID-19 deaths, March 22, 2020-August 19, 2021

	Number of Deaths
Asymptomatic	0
Symptomatic	93