



# PROBUS Club of Central Edmonton Newsletter

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## March 21 Presentation on Vaccine Task Force and COVID-19 (all slides are taken from Dr. Tyrrell's presentation)

Dr. D. Lorne Tyrrell spoke on the above. Dr. Tyrrell is a distinguished professor who has spent much of his life working at the U of A in the area of pharmacology. He has received many awards to recognize his remarkable achievements. He was one of 12 experts who were selected to join the COVID vaccine task force set up by the federal government to advise on vaccines.

He started by pointing out that the COVID pandemic drove a remarkable effort to develop vaccines to manage it, which were then developed in record time. He noted that the accelerated timelines did not compromise safety.

COVID had a massive toll on medical practitioners and other sectors. The following slide illustrates the impact of COVID:

**Pandemic COVID-19**

- Deaths**
  - Over 6.8 million – likely 15-20 million
  - Life expectancy decreased – direct and indirect effects
- Stressed Health Care Systems in all Countries**
  - Health care crisis in Canada
- Economy**
  - Effect measured in many trillions
  - U.S. estimate alone \$16-20 trillion
- Education**
  - 1 – 2 year setbacks on all levels
- Societal Effects**
  - Polarized societies
  - Deepened inequities
- Many More Examples**

**Respiratory-Borne RNA Viruses Most Likely Cause of Future GCBRs**

- Characteristics likely to be common to any pandemic-inducing pathogen:
  - efficient human-human transmissibility
  - nontrivial fatality rate
  - no widely available medical countermeasure
  - immunologically naïve population
  - capability of immune system evasion
  - respiratory mode of spread
  - transmissibility during incubation period
  - some percentage of mild infections

RNA viruses deemed the most likely pandemic-inducing pathogens

**PAIDEMIC PATHOGENS**

The slide displayed above and to the right interestingly illustrates a 2019 Johns Hopkins Centre prediction for a pandemic. This prediction proved to be remarkable accurate when COVID appeared the following year.

WHO's list of top 10 global threats included global influenza pandemic as number 3. This was the first of 6 viral related threats on the list, and antimicrobial resistance as number 5.

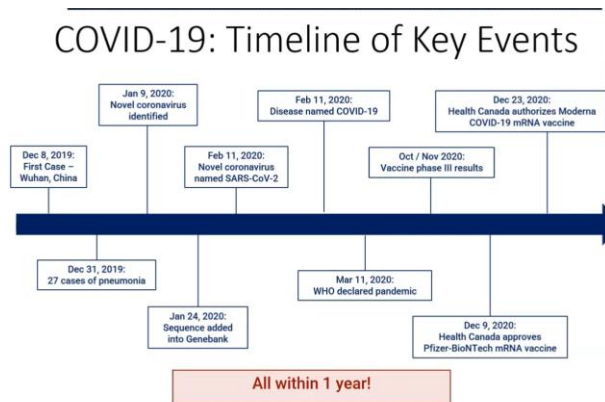
On June 2020, the COVID task forces was set up to advise on how to quickly get a vaccine in place to battle COVID.

It was well supported by the Government, and well positioned to make a difference. What was really impressive was that the recommendation included in 52 Letters of Advice were acted on. They had to sort through over 200 antiviral vaccines under study to determine which were likely to be the best. There were about 8 types of vaccines to consider. What was important was the need for faster development. Work continues. As illustrated by the following slide, it took just under a year to get vaccines.

**Canada's COVID-19 vaccine Task Force**

Advice on:

- Vaccines for Canada**
  - Safe
  - Effective
  - Timely Access
- Actions to build Canada's Biomanufacturing and Life Sciences Ecosystem**



He spoke about some of the challenges of building a vaccine and the brilliant researcher who found solutions to address the challenges. What was remarkable was to immune response realized by mRNA vaccine, it was 95% rather than the usual 70%. And yes, there was a Canadian contingent amongst these researchers.

Having identified vaccines, the next challenges was procuring the product, this took time but was achieved and many people are now benefiting from multiple vaccinations.

The emerging challenge is adapting vaccines to new stains of the virus. The most challenging has been

Omicron.

We have benefited from 4 doses in Alberta. (As a side note, Alberta has stated that the fifth dose can be booked). Each dose will assist in fighting new strains. COVID is still around and impacting the medical establishment. The quest is now to develop antiviral drugs. These will be used to fight infections in patients, as opposed to a vaccine which prevents the infection.

We need to act now to help with a quick response to any new pandemic, such as the focus on building antivirals. In additions, Canada is now trying to rebuild its Biomanufacturing and life science strategy. The U of A is part of the steps to developing an effective response for the next pandemic. We need to realize that there are viruses in circulation now that have a high mortality rate in humans. We need to prevent their spread. For example, we need to reestablish our surveillance system.

Dr Tyrrells presentation was very informative and his final warning that we need to be ever alert for the next virus must be taken to heart by citizens and Government alike.

### *March 29 Tour: Telus OUT OF THE DEPTHS: THE BLUE WHALE STORY*

Due to an unfortunate accident to our tour host, we were unable to take the tour originally planned. Mel suggested we view the Blue Whale Story. So off we went. It is quite a remarkable exhibition which was enjoyed by the few of us who found a parking spot. Spring break – who knew.

Telus World of Science is an incredible resource for teachers and children and other citizens in the Edmonton area. It has both permanent a one-time exhibition. It also contains theaters such as the IMAX. Its stated mission is:

“TELUS World of Science – Edmonton’s mission is to: Ignite curiosity. Inspire discovery. Celebrate science. Change lives. We are the destination to engage Albertans’ hearts and minds in science. The Edmonton Space & Science Foundation is a non-profit organization that operates TELUS World of Science – Edmonton.”

Currently, the major exhibition is on the Blue Whale. The exhibition is remarkable and tells the story of this amazing animal. The following brief quote from the website says it all:

*“This Exhibition dives deep into the story and explore the world's largest and one of the most mysterious animals, the blue whale.*

*You will see a complete skeleton of one of the world's largest animals... the blue whale. Discover how they evolved, what their heart size is, their ability to communicate, and more mind-blowing biology about why these giants are Earth's largest animals.”*

Here are a few pictures to give you a taste of what we saw:

Full size Skeleton

Harpoon gun



Looking down the Mouth



Full size model of the heart.

Exhibition included:

- A documentary on the discovery of several Blue Whale washed up n the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- The whaling industry
- Evolutionary stages of the whale
- Krill... its food source and how it harvests them.

Also, several interactive displays to assist children in learning. It was worthwhile seeing even though it took a while to find a parking spot. A thanks to Mel for the suggestion.

The Telus world of science is built to enthrall kids. Take your grand children and enjoy a day of discovery.

### *Interesting aside:*

Neil shared this with a us. It was so good I had to include it.

The King took his Queen on a fishing trip after consulting with the royal forecaster on the risk of rain. On the way, he met a man with a fishing pole riding on a donkey, and he asked the man if the fish were biting. The fisherman said, "Your Majesty, you should return to the palace. In just a short time I expect a huge rainstorm."

The king replied: "I hold the palace meteorologist in high regard. He is an educated and experienced professional. Besides, I pay him very high wages. He gave me a very different forecast. I trust him." So, the king continued on his way.

However, in a short time, torrential rain fell from the sky. The King and Queen were totally soaked. Furious, the king returned to the palace and gave the order to execute the meteorologist. Then he summoned the fisherman and offered him the prestigious position of royal forecaster. The fisherman said, "Your Majesty, I do not know anything about forecasting. I obtain my information from my donkey. If I see my donkey's ears drooping, it means with certainty that it will rain."

So, the king hired the donkey.

And so began the practice of hiring dumb asses to work in influential positions of government.

The practice continues to this day.

Thanks to Hal we have a list of great one-liners:

1. Keep the dream alive — hit your snooze button.
2. Dad, are we pyromaniacs? Yes, we arson.
3. What do you call a pig with laryngitis? Disgruntled.
4. Writing my name in cursive is my signature move.
5. Why do bees stay in their hives during winter? Swarm.
6. If you're bad at haggling, you'll end up paying the price.
7. Just so everyone is clear, I'm going to put my glasses on.
8. A commander walks into a bar and orders everyone around.
9. I lost my job as a stage designer. I left without making a scene.
10. Never buy flowers from a monk. Only you can prevent florist friars.
11. How much did the pirate pay to get his ears pierced? A buccaneer.
12. I once worked at a cheap pizza shop to get by. I kneaded the dough.
13. My friends and I have named our band 'Duvet'. It's a cover band.
14. I lost my girlfriend's audiobook, and now I'll never hear the end of it.
15. Why is 'dark' spelled with a k and not c? Because you can't see in the dark.
16. Why is it unwise to share your secrets with a clock? Well, time will tell.
17. When I told my contractor I didn't want carpeted steps, they gave me a blank stare.
18. Bono and The Edge walk into a Dublin bar and the bartender says, "Oh no, not U2 again."
19. Prison is just one word to you, but for some people, it's a whole sentence.
20. Scientists got together to study the effects of alcohol on a person's walk, and the result was staggering.
21. I'm trying to organize a hide-and-seek tournament, but good players are really hard to find.
22. I got over my addiction to chocolate, marshmallows, and nuts. I won't lie, it was a rocky road.
23. What do you say to comfort a friend who's struggling with grammar? There, their, they're.
24. I went to the toy store and asked the assistant where the Schwarzenegger dolls are and he replied, "Aisle B, back."
25. What did the surgeon say to the patient who insisted on closing up their own incision? Suture self.
26. I've started telling everyone about the benefits of eating dried grapes. It's all about raisin awareness.

Have a Great month – Now bring on summer...please!