



Airline Division / Division du Transport Aérien
Canadian Union of Public Employees / Syndicat canadien de la fonction publique
Affiliated with International Transport Workers Federation / Fédération Internationale Des Ouvriers du Transport

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

November 19, 2020

Hon. Patty Hajdu
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Minister Hajdu

I am the President of the Airline Division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), representing over 15,000 flight attendants at nine different airlines across Canada.

News of multiple effective COVID-19 vaccines on the horizon is providing a glimpse of hope for Canadians. The sooner Canadians are immunized against this deadly virus, the sooner life can return to normal.

I am writing you today to ask that the government consider flight attendants as “those contributing to the maintenance of other essential services for the functioning of society” and “those whose living or working conditions put them at elevated risk of infection” under the government’s [Preliminary guidance on key populations for early COVID-19 immunization.](#)

Since the beginning of the pandemic, flight attendants have performed essential work under extremely trying circumstances. At the outset, flight attendants answered the government’s call to bring Canadians home from abroad, in spite of the personal risks involved. Canada is a large country, and throughout the pandemic, Canadians have continued to depend on air travel to connect communities and commerce alike. Flight attendants have performed a vital role in keeping this critical industry in the air.

Flight attendants, of course, do not have the ability to work virtually, nor do they have the ability to observe any remote kind of physical distancing in their workplace. Furthermore, due to the nature of their work, they are put into close contact with dozens, if not hundreds, of people on a daily basis, and regularly must travel interprovincially and internationally in the performance of their duties.

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Letter to Minister Hajdu

While we want to be clear that at-risk populations and health care workers should receive absolute priority, we also believe flight attendants clearly meet the government's stated criteria for early immunization. We think it is important for the government to acknowledge the fact that flight attendants were some of the first in Canada to encounter and become infected with COVID-19 in the workplace. We ask that you consider this information as the government determines its priorities for early immunization.

Yours truly,



Wesley Lesosky
President, Airline Division of CUPE

cc: Airline Division Council of Presidents
Chantale Grenon-Nyenhuis - Assistant Director Organizing and Regional Services, CUPE National
Kevin Tyrrell – national Representative, CUPE National