

KEVIN O'REILLY—MLA FRAME LAKE
COVID Public Information Supply
Committee of the Whole—2021-2022 Operating Budget Review
Dept. of Health and Social Services—February 25, 2021

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks to the Premier for that response. I am not sure I am going to ask the right party this question, but yes, when there are reports issued now about COVID cases, I have had to ask: are we actually routinely testing for the variants, or when a case is reported, does that happen as a routine course now? If that information could be added to the public health advisories when they're issued, that would be really helpful because I know it was even raised on CBC Radio by callers yesterday. I don't know who to address that question to. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am going to ask the Minister of Health and Social Services if we're testing for the variants on every test that we do for COVID now. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. It's my understanding that all the tests are now sent south for sequencing, and as of this time, we have no variants. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. O'REILLY: Thanks, Mr. Chair, and thanks for that. Can that information be added to the public health advisories when they're issued, about whether it's a suspected or a confirmed case is a variant or not? Right now, it's not part of the public health advisory when they're issued. Thanks, Mr. Chair.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Member.

HON. CAROLINE COCHRANE: Thank you, Mr. Chair. This is under the responsibility of Health and Social Services, so I'd like to defer that to the Minister of Health and Social Services. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

HON. JULIE GREEN: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The content of the public health advisory is solely at the discretion of the Chief Public Health Officer, so I have no ability to influence the information that it includes. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON (Mr. Rocky Simpson): Thank you, Minister. Member.

MR. O'REILLY: Great, thanks. I know that the Minister -- we want an independent Chief Public Health Officer, but maybe the suggestion might be made. Maybe she's listening in, and she might listen to what I'm saying. I'm hoping that that kind of information can be added because it is causing some public concern. It was raised on the radio yesterday.