

Some Montreal health-care workers say shops, banks turning them away over COVID-19

The Canadian Press

MONTREAL
Premier Francois Legault hails Quebec health-care workers as “guardian angels,” but some say they are being denied services at banks and pharmacies when they reveal their occupations.

Olijah Springer, a nursing assistant and technician at the Montreal General Hospital, voiced his displeasure on Facebook last week after he was told he couldn't shop at a Pharmaprix in the Montreal borough of LaSalle.

“It didn't feel good,” Springer said in a subsequent interview. “I don't know how to better describe it.”

Springer was asked by a clerk when he entered the store if he had any symptoms, or if he had been exposed to anyone with symptoms of COVID-19. He said no but explained he worked in a hospital. He says he was then told that someone would shop for him.

“At this point, I saw people that I knew from the area and they're like ‘What's going on? Why are you standing on the side?’” Springer said. “Well, apparently I can't be a public servant and shop at the same.”

The pharmacy referred questions to parent company Loblaw, which said in a statement that such measures have been adopted by up to a quarter of Quebec pharmacists and “are not corporately directed.”

Bertrand Bolduc, president of Quebec's order of pharmacists, said all pharmacies across the province have strict hygiene measures in place to limit the spread of COVID-19. About a quarter of them have gone even further and operate under “closed-door” conditions.

Those pharmacies are closed to the public, he said. Employees will do the shopping for customers and make home deliveries or hand off products to



CP FILE PHOTO

Premier Francois Legault hails Quebec health-care workers as “guardian angels,” but some say they are being denied services at banks and pharmacies when they reveal their occupations.

clients in the parking lot.

As for the businesses that refuse to let certain health workers into the stores, Bolduc said it's the pharmacy owner's decision to make.

“There isn't anyone in Quebec who is being deprived of the services of a pharmacy,” Bolduc said in an interview Wednesday. “And each owner is doing what they feel is right for their pharmacy.”

Springer says he was “frustrated” and eventually left the store without making any purchases. He also says he endured a similar experience at a bank, when his financial adviser explained they would be limiting contact with health-care workers.

Denyse Joseph, vice-president of the provincial nurses' union says she has heard similar stories of nurses being denied service from two other

businesses. She says she has yet to hear of any formal complaints.

“It's not because you're a health-care professional that you'll automatically contaminate people around you,” Joseph said.

“We know what precautions we have to take. They're very, very cautious about the precaution not to contaminate either other health-care professionals ... patients and families,” she said of the province's nurses. “I think we have to trust their judgment.”

The shunning of nurses flies in the face of the premier's regular praise of health-care workers as saviours. “You are our guardian angels. We're counting on you,” Legault said March 13. “You are doing an extraordinary job, and I want to tell you we're ready to support you in any way possible.”

Broader gender focus needed for COVID-19 response: advocates

TERESA WRIGHT
The Canadian Press

OTTAWA

As Canada continues to combat the health and economic impacts of COVID-19, women's rights advocates say not enough focus has been placed on the unique and often disproportionate impact the pandemic is having on women.

Women and Gender Equality Minister Maryam Monsef says Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has tasked her department with examining how government spending and policies, including COVID-19 efforts, affect women and men differently — known as “gender-based analysis plus” — or GBA+, following longstanding Liberal government practice.

But a growing chorus of national and international voices focused on gender equality and human rights say more must be done to ensure Canadian women's needs are addressed in the government response to this pandemic.

Last week, Trudeau did announce \$40 million for women's shelters and sexual-assault centres across the country. Another \$157.5 million has also been earmarked to ensure homeless shelters remain safe and accessible.

Monsef says this funding came after she voiced concern at the cabinet table about the risks women face in situations of domestic or family violence now that Canadians are being told to stay home.

“This hit home for us when the PM had to self-isolate,” she said in a recent interview.

“My team and I got on the phone in that first 48 hours with stakeholders and said, ‘What do we do? What's our first step?’ And they all said the same thing ... ‘Race and gender-based violence is going to increase, so you'd better start ensuring that shelters have capacity, sexual-assault centres have capacity and that different women's organizations have capacity,’” Monsef said.

Monsef said her GBA+ unit, which has been mandated since 2016 to examine all memos to cabinet and Treasury Board submissions, has had its phones ringing off the hook since the federal government began rolling out the biggest emergency aid package in Canada's history.

“I've asked them to restructure our machinery so that we can better respond to the fast pace and the high stakes,” she said.

Champagne defends amended Saudi-Canadian arms deal, says rights concerns remain

The Canadian Press

OTTAWA

Saudi Arabia still has a troubling human rights record but Canada's foreign affairs minister says an amended contract to sell it light-armoured vehicles is better than the version the previous Conservative government negotiated.

Francois-Philippe Champagne offered that explanation Thursday as he defended the government's decision to announce - just hours before the start of a holiday long weekend - that it had improved the much-maligned \$14-billion contract to sell light-armoured vehicles to Saudi Arabia.

Champagne said the government was able to make significant improvements to the contract, including making its terms more transparent and eliminating Canada's exposure to risk when it runs into issues with future export permits.

Champagne said two new amendments to the deal, negotiated by Finance Minister Bill Morneau in recent months, were signed on March 31 and the government just wanted to tell Canadians about it as soon as it could. He said 50 per cent of the vehicles had been delivered and that Morneau managed to make improvements to the Saudi “payment schedule.”

But he said he couldn't go into any further detail on that because of commercial confidentiality.

Champagne also said the new deal shouldn't be taken as a sign that Canada's frosty relations with Saudi Arabia have warmed since that country broke off relations over an August 2018 tweet by then foreign affairs minister Chrystia Freeland criticizing its human rights record.

Canada then froze all new export permits and began a review of the existing light-armoured vehicle deal after the Saudi Arabian government beheaded Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi in October 2018. That review ended in December 2019, said Champagne.

“The human rights record of Saudi Arabia remains troubling, particularly when it comes to civil and political rights and women's rights. So we will continue to advocate for human rights. We will continue to advocate for Raif Badawi as always when we have discussions with our Saudi counterparts,” Champagne said, referring to the imprisoned Saudi blogger whose wife lives in Quebec.

Nor is the newly-amended deal in any way connected to the current COVID-19 pandemic or anything Saudi Arabia may or may not be doing to depress the price of oil, he said.

“I can assure you that this has nothing to do with either COVID or whatever may happen on the oil market,” Champagne said.

“This is not something that is related to, or any way connected with any other discussions.”



Francois-Philippe Champagne

PUBLIC NOTICES

8AM - 4PM SPECIAL SERVICES

Electric Outages	403.529.8260
Gas Emergency	403.529.8191
Water & Sewer Emergency	403.502.8042
After Hours Special Services	403.526.2828



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DEVELOPMENT PERMITS APPROVED APRIL 2 TO APRIL 8, 2020 PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

RESIDENTIAL

29 PARK MEADOWS PLACE SE (Lot 49, Block 3, Plan 951172) DP15374.
Single Detached House (Enclosed Decks).



HOME OCCUPATION

306 ROSS GLEN DRIVE SE (Lot 29, Block 11, Plan 7910917) DP15373. Office Use With Storage On Site. Mobile Food Vendor.

26 2637 21 AVENUE SE (Lot 27, Block 8, Plan 1171LK) DP15382. Office Use With Storage On Site. General Contractor/Project Manager.

A person claiming to be affected by a decision of the Development Officer or the Municipal Planning Commission may appeal to the Medicine Hat Subdivision and Development Appeal Board by completing and submitting to the City Clerk Department, the required Notice of Appeal form within twenty-one (21) days of this publication. Notice of Appeal forms are available from the City Clerk Department, Third Floor, City Hall or on the City's website at www.medicinehat.ca

All Development Permits listed are subject to conditions. Further information on any Development Permit may be obtained from the Planning & Development Services Department, Second Floor, City Hall during normal business hours (Telephone 403.529.8374).

PARKS NOTICES

TRAILS AND RESPONSIBLE ANIMAL OWNERSHIP #3935 – (32)

Due to an increase in pedestrian and biking activity on our trails, pet owners are encouraged to keep all dogs on leash while using the trail system.

Please practice physical / social distancing on trails and use proper trail etiquette. Be courteous, calm, and caring towards other trail users.

Please note, if an animal defecates on any public or private property, other than the Owner's Property, the Owner shall remove the feces immediately and the Owner of dog shall carry a suitable means of removing dog feces at all times while dog is with Owner.

Bylaw Complaint Line 403-529-8481

REFRAIN FROM USE – PLAY SPACES AND PLAYGROUNDS

The City of Medicine Hat is reminding all members of the public to refrain from use of any playground, sport field, tennis court, pickleball court, basketball court, fenced dog parks, and skate-park to ensure everyone is complying with the physical / social distancing guidelines set out by the Alberta Government.

YARD WASTE COLLECTION STARTS

Regular collection of yard waste material starts **Monday, April 13, 2020.**

Download the Recycle Coach App to your smartphone or refer to medicinehat.ca/collectionschedule to determine your first scheduled yard waste collection day. Yard Waste collection remains on the same day as household waste collection.

To ensure successful collection of yard waste materials, please remember the following tips:

- Place grass clippings and other yard materials loosely in the yard waste cart
- Cut branches and trimmings to less than 3ft (1m) in length and 2in (5cm) in diameter to fit inside the cart
- Do not over pack or overfill the cart
- Do not place yard waste or garbage outside of carts as it cannot be collected
- Do not contaminate yard waste with plastic bags, garbage or food waste.
- Be sure to set yard waste and household garbage carts 3ft (1m) apart.

If you do not have a yard waste cart or would like more information, contact Environmental Utilities at 403.529.8176 or by email to eu@medicinehat.ca.

DEFECTIVE STREETLIGHTS Resident Alert

If you reside in the City of Medicine Hat, Redcliff or Dunmore and you notice a streetlight that is not operating properly, please notify Electric Utility at:

www.medicinehat.ca/reportproblem

Or, call **403.529.8262**. If after hours, please leave a message.

Please have the following information when submitting your report:

- streetlight number
- street address or nearest house number, office or store
- nature of problem (i.e. cycling between on and off, always off etc.)
- number of lights out (single light, multiple lights, sequence of lights)



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