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Chair: Hedy Fry



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• (1240)

[English]

The Chair (Hon. Hedy Fry (Vancouver Centre, Lib.)): I'm going to call the meeting to order. This meeting is now in public.

We have only 20 minutes. I don't know if we can get resources to go beyond 1 p.m., but we're checking. The clerk is checking on that.

I'm going to read you Mr. Mazier's motion first. It says:

Given that:

6.5 million Canadians do not have access to a family doctor.

Canada is short 23,000 family doctors and 60,000 registered nurses.

Over 80,000 internationally educated healthcare professionals in Canada are not working in their profession.

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on the impact of the federal government's immigration policy to health care and the barriers preventing the integration of internationally educated health professionals into the Canadian healthcare system.

That the study consists of no less than six meetings; that one full meeting be dedicated to the Minister of Health and officials; that one full meeting be dedicated to the Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and officials; that witnesses include the Canadian Post-MD Education Registry (CAPER), Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada, Medical Council of Canada, and internationally trained physicians; and that the committee report its findings to the House.

Is there discussion on the motion?

We are going to decide not only whether you agree to the sub-committee adopting this motion but also, at the end of the three motions, your priority for the studies—which one goes first, which one goes second and which one goes third.

I will open debate on Mr. Mazier's motion.

Seeing no hands up, I'm going to call the vote. The clerk will call the vote.

Maggie Chi (Don Valley North, Lib.): I have a point of clarification. Is this on the order of the motion or just—

The Chair: It's just the motion.

At the end of the three motions, if they're adopted, we will decide on the order.

Maggie Chi: Thank you for the clarification.

The Chair: We have only 15 minutes, so please, everybody, be as brief as you can. If somebody says something, don't repeat it. Just say, "what he said" or "What she said," and move on—because we have to finish this.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 9; nays 0)

The Chair: After the motions, we will decide on the priority.

The second motion is by Monsieur Thériault. It reads:

• (1245)

[Translation]

That, pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee undertake a study on antimicrobial resistance, which, according to the World Health Organization, is one of the 10 greatest threats to global public health facing humanity. That the committee hold a minimum of four meetings; that additional meetings be added to the committee's schedule if the committee deems it necessary; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request a comprehensive response to the report by the government.

[English]

That's Mr. Thériault's motion. You have it in English and French in front of you.

Is there any discussion on Mr. Thériault's motion? Seeing none, we will take a vote on the motion.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 9; nays 0)

The Chair: Now we will move on to the third motion, which is by Ms. Chi. It reads:

That, whereas it is in Canada's best interests to have a strong domestic pharmaceutical industry that ensures Canadians have access to essential medicines and medical supplies, the committee undertake a study pursuant to Standing Order 108(2) of no less than eight hours examining Canada's pharmaceutical sovereignty; that the committee hear from representatives of industry, academic, and patient groups; that the study develop recommendations for how Canada can best promote pharmaceutical sovereignty; that the committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that, pursuant to Standing Order 109, the Government table a comprehensive response to the report.

That's the third motion on the table. Is there any discussion?

Mr. Powlowski.

Marcus Powlowski (Thunder Bay—Rainy River, Lib.): I'm sorry. I'm a doctor. I have public health degrees. I have law degrees. I have no frigging clue what you mean by "pharmaceutical sovereignty".

Can you explain this term that I'm voting on?

Maggie Chi: Thank you, Dr. Powlowski.

The motion is about how we, as a nation, ensure that we have supplies when there is a shortage. Definitely, during the pandemic, we saw what unfolded.

It's more about how we make sure that we have enough supplies when we experience extraordinary circumstances. Even outside of that, it's how we make sure that folks—patients and families—have access to much-needed medications when they're presented with such challenges.

The Chair: Thank you, Ms. Chi.

Is there any further discussion or debate? No. I'll call the question.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 9; nays 0)

The Chair: Moving on to the process, we now have three motions that this committee has accepted on the floor. I need you to prioritize these motions for study. In other words, I'm going to ask you to decide which of those three motions should be the first one we study.

Mr. Powlowski.

• (1250)

Marcus Powlowski: On a point of clarification, we also have to finish the women's health study, and we are going to wait a month to get the opioid study report back.

What are we deciding here? There are two other studies to complete plus these three new studies. What's the order going to be? Are we going to finish those other ones?

The Chair: We decided on the order earlier on in this committee, Mr. Powlowski, but I think we now need to decide, once we embark on studies, which of these three will be our first study.

Marcus Powlowski: After we've—

The Chair: It's after we've done the other work that we discussed earlier on in the committee.

Marcus Powlowski: Okay.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Mazier.

Dan Mazier (Riding Mountain, CPC): I propose that we do the Conservative study first, the Bloc study second and the Liberal study third.

The Chair: Ms. Sidhu.

Sonia Sidhu (Brampton South, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

All of the studies are important, but right now, I'm thinking... You've seen in some cities that their mayors have declared emergencies. On the opioid study, we've already gone through so many witnesses and had so many meetings. I think the opioid study is very important right now.

As a country, we need to pay attention to that side, as mayors have declared emergencies. Everyone knows that. How many deaths are happening? This opioid study is a very important study—

The Chair: Ms. Sidhu, we're not voting on the opioid study. We already voted that we would get the report and then embark on the study. We're waiting a month for the report. We're discussing which of the three motions you just passed would be the first one. In order of priority, Mr. Mazier suggested that his be the first, Monsieur Thériault's be the second and Ms. Chi's be the third.

Ms. Chi.

Maggie Chi: Thank you, Madam Chair.

From my understanding, the women's study is already ready to be reported out—

The Chair: We decided on this earlier on.

Maggie Chi: Right. Let me finish.

I think it's very important—it's a study with a lot of witnesses and a lot of experts and impacts half our nation—to a lot of folks in the room and beyond. I would really like to see that presented soon, as in next week.

As to the order, I propose that we study Mr. Thériault's Bloc study first and then the Liberal study on pharmaceutical sovereignty, followed by the CPC study.

The Chair: Ms. Konanz and Mr. Bailey will be next. Mr. Powlowski also has his hand up.

Ms. Konanz.

Helena Konanz (Similkameen—South Okanagan—West Kootenay, CPC): Chair, as I mentioned earlier, I am very interested in the women's report, but I didn't actually notice that we had a vote on putting that as the first study. I think having the Conservative study go first, and the list that MP Mazier mentioned in order....

As for the women's study, give us a couple of months to look at that. As I said, I'm sure it will be very interesting, but that's not something that we all voted on looking at, at least not until we see the report.

Burton Bailey (Red Deer, CPC): Madam Chair, with the shortage of physicians in Canada and a couple of provinces actually making some headway, we as Conservatives would like to bring some information to light that might help other provinces. With the importance of this study, it needs to be looked at immediately. Hence, we've asked that it be first on the list.

The Chair: Monsieur Thériault, go ahead, and then Mr. Powlowski.

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault (Montcalm, BQ): I have absolutely nothing to say about that, apart from the reservations I expressed earlier about the Conservatives' motion. I did point out the limitations of this study. Consequently, as long as the limits are respected, I think it is appropriate to shed new light on the situation. That's why I support this motion.

I agree that, after the study of the report on women's health, which we will have to finish dealing with once it is tabled, the next committee study should be the one proposed by the Conservative motion. I don't see a problem with that. I'm not in a hurry to deal with my motion. I'm very generous.

• (1255)

[*English*]

The Chair: Is there any further discussion?

Mr. Powlowski.

Marcus Powlowski: Having sat on this committee for six years, I know that when these other studies.... When the women's study gets back to us, if we want to give it a couple of months before finishing it, that's fine with me. On the opioid study, I understand that it will take a month to get out the present evidence, but I agree with Sonia in that whatever other study we start first, I would like to see us interrupt that to finish the opioid study.

The opioid crisis is a gigantic problem, as I think we all know, across Canada and in many of our ridings. I know that in Thunder Bay, the opioid death rate is similar to what it is in Vancouver—that's your riding and your municipality, Hedy—but it's also closely tied with the homelessness crisis and the mental health issue. We've all seen the deteriorations in our downtown cores as a result of the open use of opioids. I think this is a problem that many Canadians are concerned about—

The Chair: Excuse me. We're actually speaking to the priority of the three motions on the floor.

Marcus Powlowski: With due respect, Hedy, I too am talking about the priority.

The Chair: We agreed to this earlier on, Mr. Powlowski. We have five minutes to go.

Marcus Powlowski: I would like to—

The Chair: There are no further resources to meet after one o'clock.

Marcus Powlowski: We're speaking to the motions and to the priority.

I repeat: Given the severity of the problem and the number of deaths of young people due to the opioid crisis, when we have finished and the analysts have sent out the report from the witnesses we've already seen, I would like us to go back to the opioid study, whatever we're doing, in order to finish that. Overwhelmingly, I think, this is a health crisis that we need to be dealing with.

The Chair: Thank you.

Go ahead, Ms. Sidhu.

Sonia Sidhu: Thank you, Madam Chair.

We are three past members—Mr. Thériault, Dr. Powlowski and I—and we did a lot of hard work, with 86-plus witnesses in the women's study. I urge the committee to look into the women's study first. Everything is ready to go. I just want to make that point.

The Chair: We all agreed that we would have the women's study printed and send it out to the new committee. That should be in your hands, I would suggest, in a day or two. That would be one of the first things.

We are now talking about, specifically, the three new motions that were made and how we prioritize them. We've heard that Mr. Mazier wants his first. I want to hear what others say, and then we're going to vote on the order of how we do this: Mazier, Thériault and then Liberals.

Ms. Konanz, go ahead.

Helena Konanz: I was just wondering why we didn't go to a vote. A motion has been made.

The Chair: We could in a minute. People are still debating this issue, I think.

Helena Konanz: In two minutes—

The Chair: Ms. Konanz, do you have something to say on the issue of the priority?

Helena Konanz: I agree with Mr. Mazier's priorities. The motion has been made. Let's take a vote.

The Chair: I have to wait until all debate has ended. I have names on the list, so I have to call them because they're debating Mr. Mazier's motion.

We'll go to Mr. Mazier and then Mr. Eyolfson.

Go ahead.

Dan Mazier: I just make some fine points on Ms. Chi's comments about the order. It's usually the official opposition, the Conservatives; then the opposition, the Bloc; and then the government, the Liberals. That's usually the order because of the committee....

I just bring that to everybody's attention. That's what I would move and we can have a vote.

The Chair: Before we do that, we have Mr. Eyolfson yet to speak. He had his hand up. The debate is not ended until everyone has had their hand acknowledged. We are now at the end of one o'clock. We're going to have to get moving to voting on this soon.

Doug, go ahead.

Doug Eyolfson (Winnipeg West, Lib.): Very quickly, I was in favour of Ms. Chi's motion on the priority of antibiotic resistance. It is a very pressing issue, as are the issues with.... We just went through a pandemic, and we know the issues with the availability of medications, so for that we need.... I agree with Ms. Chi's motion on Mr. Thériault's being first.

• (1300)

The Chair: Thank you.

I just heard from the clerk that we have a few more minutes, so we can stay past one o'clock. She just heard from the interpretation services, so we still have some time. Is anybody else's hand up? If not, we're voting on Mr. Mazier's motion, which said....

Excuse me, but we have more people.

Go ahead, Ms. Chi and then Ms. Sidhu.

Maggie Chi: Thank you, Madam Chair.

To Mr. Mazier's point, I believe the order you're referring to is for questions, not for motions. I'd just like to put that on the record as well.

I also want to add my support to what my colleague, Dr. Powlowski, was just referring to in terms of an opioid study, because it's such an important issue impacting so many families. I just want to add my support to that.

My last comment is on my motion to the committee, the pharmaceutical sovereignty piece. I think we've seen over and over again the importance of having that as we move forward and plan ahead. It's just to support the families across the country so that they no longer have to scramble for resources and pharmaceutical products. I just want to really emphasize the importance of that.

The Chair: Go ahead, Ms. Sidhu.

Sonia Sidhu: Madam Chair, I think that, before, in subcommittee, we agreed on all three studies. Now it's to set up the priority, the priority being—as my colleague said—the opioid study after the women's health study.

The Chair: That's already been decided, Ms. Sidhu.

Sonia Sidhu: No. I'm coming to that point. We all know how important antimicrobial resistance is. When we set it up, we are studying everything. The matter now is, what's the first thing? Let's go to the antimicrobial resistance study first. After that, we are coming to the.... We are not saying no to the other studies, but the priority is that study first.

The Chair: Mr. Powlowski.

Marcus Powlowski: I just wanted to bring up that under the previous committee, we decided on the next study, which was the cancer study. We have not seen fit to prioritize that, and I think that is a big mistake. I think we all know many people affected by cancer. Our committee has not studied this in six years. The Canadian Cancer Society has really promoted and was in favour of the cancer study.

I'll put notice out there. I certainly hope that all the other members of the committee remember this, and that, at some point, we adopt the previous study that was approved by all members of this committee, which is the cancer study. The number one cause of death of Canadians is cancer. It's not antimicrobial resistance or the lack of drugs, etc.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Powlowski.

I believe there's no further debate.

I'd like to be very clear what we're voting on. Mr. Mazier suggested that we vote to make priority number one his motion, then Mr. Thériault's and then Ms. Chi's. That's what we are voting on.

If you agree with Mr. Mazier's motion, you will be voting yes. If you do not agree, you will be voting no. That's just to be very clear on what we're voting on.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

The Chair: The priority of the new motions will be the order Mr. Mazier suggested. Thank you very much.

Go ahead, Mr. Mazier.

Dan Mazier: There was another motion. I move:

That the committee invite the Minister of Health, Marjorie Michel, to appear for two hours, no later than October 10, 2025, to discuss her mandate.

That's a motion that was tabled before and we haven't talked about it.

The Chair: There's a motion on the floor.

Can you please repeat it so that everyone knows exactly what the motion says?

• (1305)

Dan Mazier: The motion reads:

That the committee invite the Minister of Health, Marjorie Michel, to appear for two hours, no later than October 10, 2025, to discuss her mandate.

The Chair: Thank you.

Is there any discussion on the motion on the floor?

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault: Madam Chair, I have a point of order.

I would like the motion on opioids we adopted to be on the record as I worded it when I moved it. Do I need to read it?

[*English*]

The Chair: No, Mr. Thériault, it is already tabled.

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault: We're talking about the analysts being given the mandate to draft an interim report, but we never talked about the wording of the motion. I think it would be important to have that wording on the record.

I can read it into the record as is.

[*English*]

The Chair: It will be the exact motion that was read here to go into the record.

Would you like to read it, Mr. Thériault? We already voted on it, but go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault: That's perfect. The motion is as follows:

That the committee consider all testimony and evidence received by the committee during the study on the opioid epidemic and toxic drug crisis in Canada to have been received and adopted, that an interim report be produced and tabled before the committee before the inquiry continues, that the committee hold two more meetings to hear testimony from witnesses so that it can make its recommendations and table its findings in the House, and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request a comprehensive response to the report by the government.

[*English*]

The Chair: Mr. Thériault, the interpretation is obviously not working. Perhaps you could read it in English, or I will read it in English for you.

[*Translation*]

Luc Thériault: Okay. I'll try, since the interpretation isn't working.

[*English*]

It reads:

That the committee consider all testimony and evidence received by the committee during the study on the opioid epidemic and toxic drug crisis in Canada to have been received and adopted, that an interim report be produced and tabled before the committee before the inquiry continues, that the committee hold two more meetings to hear testimony from witnesses so that it can make its recommendations and table its findings in the House, and that pursuant to Standing Order 109, the committee request a comprehensive response to the report by the government.

[*Translation*]

The Chair: That's excellent. Thank you, Mr. Thériault.

[*English*]

Dan Mazier: This is probably a footnote, but we did have a motion on—

The Chair: It has just been read into the record; that's all. We already agreed to adopt Mr. Thériault's intent.

Mr. Mazier, do you have something new?

Dan Mazier: I brought the motion to ask the minister. That's what we were in the middle of.

The Chair: I know we were. He wanted to read his motion, which we had already agreed on.

Now we have the motion on the floor about inviting the minister. Is there any discussion on this motion?

Maggie Chi: I have one point of clarification.

I just want to clarify that the officials will also come. That will make it a very comprehensive conversation with the committee.

The Chair: I don't think ministers come on their own. They usually come accompanied by officials.

Is there any other discussion? Can we vote on Mr. Mazier's motion, please?

(Motion agreed to)

The Chair: It has unanimously passed. Thank you very much.

Go ahead, Ms. Chi.

Maggie Chi: I move to adjourn the meeting, please.

The Chair: All right, the meeting is adjourned.

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