

Ottawa, July 15th, 2019

The Honourable David Lametti

House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

We are writing to you in one collective voice on behalf of all Canadians whose breath is taken away daily by lung disease. Our organizations are all involved in respiratory health. We exist to help Canadians with lung disease live better and healthier lives. Recent reports of inflexible measures concerning roadside breathalyzer testing have been making the lives of Canadians more stressful and difficult.

We are very concerned about Canadians with severe lung disease being required to take a breathalyzer test and being unable to produce any reading due to an airway obstruction.

We understand the need for roadside testing; however, one's inability to produce significant enough breath should signal an introduction of a substitute testing mechanism, rather than an automatic fail, which results in fines, or in some cases, impounding of the driver's vehicle. Lung disease is frequently misunderstood and is often invisible. Uninformed testing could add undue harm to an already difficult condition.

Lung diseases such as chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), severe asthma and idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis, among others leave thousands of Canadians incapacitated and unable to do many tasks. This includes severe limitations to their ability to breathe. Exhaling can be extremely problematic.

Media reports and personal accounts have suggested that many Canadians with lung disease have been offered no accommodations when they were unable to produce enough airflow for a breathalyzer reading. Anecdotally, we know that this has resulted in mental and financial strain, along with possible disease-related exacerbations.

We are reaching out to understand what accommodations are available for Canadians with severe respiratory disease who are unable to complete a roadside breathalyzer test. We seek to understand how officers of the law who perform roadside breathalyzer tests uphold these accommodations, if any exist. We will inform our stakeholders as appropriate and look forward to working with you to resolve these issues.

Thank you for your consideration of our concerns. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Terry Dean
President and CEO
The Canadian Lung
Association



Henry Roberts
Member of Executive
Committee
COPD Canada



Vanessa Foran
President and CEO
Asthma Canada