



## NATIONAL CITIZENS INQUIRY

Truro, NS

Day 3

March 18, 2023

### EVIDENCE

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**Witness 9: Linda Adshade**

Full Day 3 Timestamp: 07:08:15–07:28:15

Source URL: <https://rumble.com/v2dou14-national-citizens-inquiry-hearings-truro-day-3.html>

[00:00:00]

**Ches Crosbie**

Do you affirm that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?

**Linda Adshade**

I do.

**Ches Crosbie**

Thank you.

**Criss Hochhold**

Can you please tell us your name, where you're from, and what did you do?

**Linda Adshade**

My name is Linda Adshade. I'm from Oxford, here in Nova Scotia. I worked with the Nova Scotia Health Authority [NSHA] from 2009 until, let me see, probably October of 2019. At that point, I took a position with public health. Please don't shoot me.

**Criss Hochhold**

Linda, I understand you've had a lengthy career with Nova Scotia Health Authority, but I'd like to focus on your most recent role with NSHA. Can you tell me how you came to be in the position, what the position is, and what it entailed?

**Linda Adshade**

So there was a broad letter sent out; they were looking for many people to come to work with them for the lab results. So you had the negative and you had the positive lab results.

**Criss Hochhold**

Sorry, negative lab results for what?

**Linda Adshade**

Oh, sorry, for COVID-19.

**Criss Hochhold**

COVID-19 tests that people—

**Linda Adshade**

Yes, the PCR tests, sorry. So I was put in a position to look after the negative lab side of it. So when I went there, I actually started off doing the vaccine clinics. Was pulled from there to go back to work remotely from home. They made me the supervisor of about five people at that time.

**Criss Hochhold**

Okay, so if I understand correctly, you had a different role. They advertised this role specifically that deals with COVID-19 test results.

**Linda Adshade**

That's correct.

**Criss Hochhold**

And you assumed that role, and it was completed remotely. You did not have to attend the office.

**Linda Adshade**

That's correct, yes.

**Criss Hochhold**

So can you tell me more about— What do you mean you received, or you were in charge of, the negative tests? And what was the overall purpose and scope as well, please?

**Linda Adshade**

So I would get all the information in the morning. Then my staff would call all of the individuals on the list to give them their PCR test results. And we only dealt with the negative side. That's the only people that we called.

**Criss Hochhold**

Okay. So that means, if I understand correctly, people throughout the province would attend testing centres. They would get the COVID vaccine tests done—the swabs or whatever the case may be—and then you would receive the test, the lab results.

**Linda Adshade**

Right, that's correct.

**Criss Hochhold**

And would that include, then, contact information for the individuals?

**Linda Adshade**

Yes, that's correct.

**Criss Hochhold**

Okay, and what would you do with the test results?

**Linda Adshade**

So with the test results: So in the morning, I would get this huge, huge file. Of course, you can imagine how many people are being tested. Once I got that file, I would then take the file and separate it. I would keep all of the data for myself. I needed that information to deal with situations, but my staff only received the negative lab results. So they would have the name, all of their information, so that we could confirm, you know, "May I speak with so-and-so. Could you please give me your name, your date of birth, health card number," anything along those lines, just to verify. Then we would give them the test results.

**Criss Hochhold**

Okay, and you said you received a big file in the morning that included all test results.

**Linda Adshade**

That's correct.

**Criss Hochhold**

So that would be negative as well as positive.

**Linda Adshade**

Positive, yeah.

**Criss Hochhold**

But you were focused for your role only on the negative aspects that you would then disseminate to your staff who'd make the contact with the people.

Is there anything that you can tell us how that data that you received in those spreadsheets was related to information that was given to us on the televisions, through the media or through the government messaging?

**Linda Adshade**

Okay. So I started thinking to myself, “Wow, they seem to be like saying there’s all these cases; I don’t get it.” So again, it came on an Excel spreadsheet. I was able to take out the positives from the negatives so that I only ended up with the positives. When I counted those up each day, to the end of the week, they didn’t match what they were telling us on TV—not even close. They were saying thousands of people. There were not thousands of people in the run of a week.

[00:05:00]

They were off by hundreds. Not by two or three, hundreds. I started thinking, “Okay, this is crazy. They’re lying to people.”

**Criss Hochhold**

So based on the numbers that were shown on TV, it did not match up with what you had in front of you. You literally had the actual figures in front of you that they would have used to compile the numbers shown to the people in the province and around.

**Linda Adshade**

Yes, that’s correct.

**Criss Hochhold**

Did you take any steps about that? Did you follow up on that, or was this really more you were gravely concerned but— How did you feel about that then?

**Linda Adshade**

Well, I was upset because they were lying to the people. They were lying to us. They were lying to everybody. I didn’t take it up with my management or my supervisor because I was met with a lot of resistance prior to that for my opinion on the vaccine.

**Criss Hochhold**

We’ll get to that, too.

**Linda Adshade**

Yeah.

**Criss Hochhold**

Okay, so thank you for that. To summarize, your role as a supervisor gave you access to all the data, all the tests within the province—the entire province.

**Linda Adshade**

Yep. The entire province.

**Criss Hochhold**

And the Province inflated grossly, according to you, the numbers that they gave to the people in terms of how many people tested positive for COVID-19 in relation to how many actually tested positive.

**Linda Adshade**

Right.

**Criss Hochhold**

Thank you.

Josephine [sic], now I'm going to move away from that, and let's talk about your story a little bit as well because it is also very important. Your job that you had as the supervisor for negative COVID-19 testing, you mentioned it was done remotely. Were you able to do that entirely remotely, or did you need to go to an office at any time?

**Linda Adshade**

The only time I would have had to go to the office was to pick up equipment. But other than that, I worked remotely just from my kitchen in my home.

**Criss Hochhold**

And what happened that changed your employment status? Did you receive notification from the province in regards to your vaccination requirements because mandates were coming in?

**Linda Adshade**

Yes.

**Criss Hochhold**

For Nova Scotia Health Authority workers, employees—not just health care professionals, but all employees for the health authority.

**Linda Adshade**

Right.

**Criss Hochhold**

Were you affected by that?

**Linda Adshade**

Yes, I was. Yes.

**Criss Hochhold**

Okay. I'm going to enter Exhibit TR-17, which is a letter, an email that was sent out. I just want to read just a short excerpt from that, if I may. The date on this is November 30th, 2021, at 10:29 a.m. It was sent by the COVID-19 policy request, and the subject was "Viral Vector Offer of Vaccination."

"Dear NS team member. You're receiving this letter as you have submitted an intent to decline COVID-19 vaccination or an exception request (medical or Human Rights) that has been declined or remains on review. COVID-19 vaccine core planning team and Nova Scotia Health Occupational Health, Safety & Wellness team are continuously looking for ways to support health care workers impacted by the provincial mandate for those working in high risk settings." So I'm just going to focus on those three little words to that: "high-risk settings." How high risk of a setting was your home?

**Linda Adshade**

Well, let me put it to you this way: I live in the middle of absolutely nowhere. So unless a bear had COVID and come into the home, that's the only way.

**Criss Hochhold**

But so because you— It was really a rhetorical question in a sense, wasn't it?

**Linda Adshade**

Sorry.

**Criss Hochhold**

No, no, that's okay, I wanted an answer. But they sent an email out to health authority employees specifically addressed to those working in high-risk settings. Yet your role was not in a high-risk setting because you had no contact, ultimately—I'll sum it up—with the outside world. Because were you working from home remotely with no need to attend the office?

**Linda Adshade**

No.

**Criss Hochhold**

I won't read the rest of it, but it will be there for the commissioners. I take it you received that letter because you showed an intent, or you gave them notice, that you were not planning on getting vaccinated. Is that correct?

**Linda Adshade**

That's correct. Yeah.

**Criss Hochhold**

Did you feel that you had enough information about the vaccine, about its safety and efficacy before making that decision?

[00:10:00]

Or what prompted you to turn away from the vaccine?

**Linda Adshade**

There were several things. Basically, that it was rolled out so quick. My understanding is a vaccine takes years to— Not that I'm a doctor, nurse, scientist, or anything, just from understanding, it takes many years to produce a vaccine. I felt that this was too quick.

Fifty years ago, my mother was given a drug when she was pregnant. It affected me that I had at the age 22 cervical cancer from this drug that she took. It also affected my daughter who also has precancerous cells. It can also affect my grandson. So I have a little issue with trusting that stuff without actually doing some good research. When I did all my research and looked into it, I did not feel comfortable at all.

**Criss Hochhold**

You had obviously a very, very serious experience as a result of that. Do you remember what vaccine your mom got that might have caused, that might have been responsible for that?

**Linda Adshade**

I'm not sure. I believe.

**Criss Hochhold**

Okay, that's fine. So based on that, you made a decision: I'm not going to; I just don't trust it. And you said that you've done some research about this vaccine. Because of that decision, did you submit a letter of exemption or any other documentation to your employer advising them of your hesitancy?

**Linda Adshade**

I did not. Again, I've worked in about eight different areas of the hospital. I also worked at the doctor's office at one point. Not that this came from a doctor but told by some of the staff was, "Don't even ask. Nobody's getting them."

**Criss Hochhold**

So your belief was, well, I was talking to people, colleagues and workers, and they said, "Don't bother." So you chose not to.

**Linda Adshade**

That's correct.

**Criss Hochhold**

You received this email about the need of vaccination. Can you tell me about that experience that led to your suspension or termination of employment with the Nova Scotia Health Authority?

**Linda Adshade**

So I had my manager ask me several times, about getting the vaccine. I told her, “You knew from the start I’m not doing this.” So she said, “You know that you will be put on unpaid leave, which could lead to termination if you don’t take this vaccine.” And I said, “I’m well aware of the consequences.”

**Criss Hochhold**

So you had a conversation with your supervisor about the vaccine, your hesitancy, and you were advised of the potential consequences.

**Linda Adshade**

Mm-hmm.

**Criss Hochhold**

Did you have an experience with your supervisor, or a specific chat with your supervisor or manager about getting vaccinated. And that supervisor then would go and get the vaccine in order to make you feel safer about its safety? Can you tell me more about that, please?

**Linda Adshade**

So I was talking to her one day about my hesitancy and explaining, “You know, things just don’t seem to be adding up.” She goes, “Well, I’m going to get mine this afternoon. My first one,” you know. “When I get back, I’ll touch base with you.” Because I was a supervisor. So she said, “I should be back by four o’clock, at least.” Getting on to six o’clock, I still haven’t heard from her. Finally, she calls me and she says, “I am so sorry that I ran so late. I got my vaccine and I got facial paralysis and had to go to the doctor.”

**Criss Hochhold**

How did that make you feel?

**Linda Adshade**

I was like, okay, that determines it 100 per cent for me.

**Criss Hochhold**

So you had no support from your employer in regards to the vaccine hesitancy. Not because you submitted a letter, but because you chose not to— And also not to speak up because you were under the belief that they were not going to be receptive anyhow.

**Linda Adshade**

Right.

**Criss Hochhold**

In the interest of time: How were you then, I guess, laid off or terminated? Can you tell me, as we move forward, how that would happen, please? Thanks.



[00:15:00]

**Linda Adshade**

So I think my last day with public health was 27th of November of '21. So I was thinking to myself, okay, I'm possibly going to starve to death here. So I decided, "Okay, I guess I'm going to take early retirement." I still had three years to work to get my full benefits. Unfortunately, I don't have my full benefits.

So basically, they just told me, "As of December 1st, you're done." So I got up on the 1st of December to collect all my information off of the computer, and they had literally stripped me of everything. I could not get into my email, I could not check my pay, I could not look at anything.

**Criss Hochhold**

So you were locked out effectively. Was that a deadline for the vaccination requirement, or was that when you said, "I'm going to take early retirement and that early retirement is going to be effective on December 1st."

**Linda Adshade**

No, because it didn't become effective until January.

**Criss Hochhold**

Okay, so you were locked out of the system a little early.

**Linda Adshade**

So I was just stunned. And I even called and said, "Can I not just get my email about my pay?" "Nope, you are done," and basically, "don't contact until you're vaccinated."

**Criss Hochhold**

How has this impacted you financially? The early retirement—because it doesn't sound like you wanted to retire.

**Linda Adshade**

No, I didn't.

**Criss Hochhold**

How did that affect you?

**Linda Adshade**

Well, we are just living on my husband's income at this time, thank God. He's a good worker. He's a good man, so right now we're living on his income.

**Criss Hochhold**

Once again, while I have more questions, in the interest of time, I will ask the commissioners if they have any questions.

**Commissioner DiGregorio**

Thank you for testifying. I just had a question about the numbers that you were talking about at the beginning of your testimony. And I was just wondering how you know that the numbers you were getting every morning were for the entire province.

**Linda Adshade**

Because we called the entire province. So that's what they indicated when you first started working. You would receive all of the data of all of Nova Scotia. We called everywhere in Nova Scotia; it wasn't just within our area. We called right across Nova Scotia. So all the results came from the testing that was done here.

**Commissioner DiGregorio**

Thank you.

**Linda Adshade**

You're welcome.

**Commissioner Massie**

Yeah, on the same topic, what was the gap you would see between what you could see on the Excel sheet and what was published? Was it a significant gap in terms of the numbers?

**Linda Adshade**

I would say anywhere from two to four hundred, possibly. Is that what you're meaning?

**Commissioner Massie**

I mean, was it a two-fold more, or— Because 200 is an absolute number. Is that what you're saying?

**Linda Adshade**

No, it wouldn't be an absolute number. So I would say that probably, I don't know, they were reporting 25 to 30 per cent more than what was actually there.

**Commissioner Massie**

Okay, so it's an increase of about 25 per cent.

**Linda Adshade**

Yes, I would say, yeah.

**Commissioner Massie**

Okay. And any information on the cycle threshold on these Excel sheets, or is it blind?

**Linda Adshade**

They were sent to you every day, every morning at 8:00.

**Commissioner Massie**

No, I'm talking about what was the level of amplification they were using to get the positive. Was it like fixed 40-45 cycle, or you don't have information on that?

**Linda Adshade**

I'm not sure on that, to be honest with you.

**Commissioner Massie**

You don't have this information.

**Linda Adshade**

No, I don't have that information.

**Commissioner Massie**

And how long was that reporting or communication to the public maintained? Was it stopped at one point? What was the time frame? It was since the beginning of the pandemic, and then it went on until—

**Linda Adshade**

It was still going on when I left in '21. They were still reporting. Is that what you mean?

**Commissioner Massie**

Yeah, yeah. And it was going on after that.

**Linda Adshade**

Yes.

**Commissioner Massie**

Good, thank you.

**Criss Hochhold**

Thank you so very much. I appreciate your time.

[00:20:00]

**Final Review and Approval:** Jodi Bruhn, August 3, 2023.

*The evidence offered in this transcript is a true and faithful record of witness testimony given during the National Citizens Inquiry (NCI) hearings. The transcript was prepared by members of a team of volunteers using an “intelligent verbatim” transcription method.*

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