

COVID-19 Update for Partners

November 25, 2020

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Key messages from Dr. Gardner, Medical Officer of Health

1. **Simcoe Muskoka moved into ORANGE-Restrict as of Monday morning**

Changes include:

- **Restaurants, bars and other food and drink establishments, meeting and event spaces** – Limit of 4 people seated together, reduced from 6 people. Regardless of size of space there is a 50-person capacity, with minimum 2 metres between tables. Reduced hours – close at 10:00 p.m. Reduced hours for liquor sales, serving, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. only. Require screening of patrons (ie. questionnaire).
- **Retail** - Limiting capacity in retail stores and in shopping malls in winter based on 2 meters of physical distancing. For malls - require screening of patrons at mall entrances (ie. questionnaire).
- **Personal Care Services** - Services requiring removal of face coverings prohibited. Change rooms and showers closed. Bath houses, other adult venues, hot tubs, floating pools and sensory deprivation pods closed (some exceptions). Require screening of patrons (ie. questionnaire).
- **Casinos, bingo halls and gaming establishments** – Liquor sales, serving restricted to 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. No consumption after 10 p.m. Require screening of patrons (ie. questionnaire).

2. **Letter to Municipalities**

The COVID-19 Response Framework strongly recommends that individuals and families in higher transmission areas should avoid travel to lower transmission areas (ie. from Red to Orange, from Yellow to Green) except for essential reasons. In keeping with this, I am strongly urging the County of Simcoe and District of Muskoka to prohibit access to their recreational facilities to individuals whose primary residence lies within the [Red/Control and Grey/Lockdown areas](#).

3. [Letter of Instruction for Simcoe Muskoka Businesses and Organizations](#)

Today I will be issuing a letter of instruction to businesses and organizations within the municipalities serviced by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) requiring them to take additional measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Since September 2020, SMDHU has observed a substantial increase in workplace transmission, often resulting in outbreaks. The letter outlines requirements to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, such as:

- **Enable remote work** for workers, where reasonably possible.
- **Appoint a Compliance Officer** who makes sure all requirements are in place.
- **Ensure active screening is conducted daily** for all workers attending the workplace in-person. Screening should occur before or when a worker enters the workplace at the beginning of their day or shift.
- **Ensure all unplanned absences by workers are investigated** by the Compliance Officer for any risk of COVID-19 exposure, and, those workers with COVID-19 symptoms, are to be encouraged by the Compliance Officer to self-isolate and seek assessment and testing.
- **Ensure physical distancing** of at least 2 metres between employees, where reasonably possible, including during eating and rest periods (ie. lunchrooms and change rooms). Where physical distancing is not possible personal protective equipment that provides protection of eyes, nose, mouth and chin shall be used in accordance with the Regulations under the Reopening Ontario Act.

Full details are in the letter and businesses will be required to comply with the above instructions as set out in the Regulations under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020*. Enforcement associated with these instructions may be conducted by police officers as well as provincial offences officers (which includes municipal bylaw officers and public health enforcement personnel). Fines are dependent on the type of infraction.

4. [Special statement to all residents](#)

We are facing a critical time and must increase our efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19. This second wave threatens our health and lives, and the ability of our healthcare system to manage the increased demands on its services..." It is only through our personal and societal actions that we will be able to collectively slow the spread of COVID-19, allowing us to keep our communities safe and healthy and our schools, organizations and businesses open... I am asking all residents of Simcoe Muskoka to take the following actions immediately:

Close Contact, Gatherings and Events

- Limit close contact to your household (the people you live with). Individuals who live alone, may consider having close contact with one other household.
- Physical distance (two metres) from everyone else outside of your immediate household.
- Wear a face covering indoors, outdoors if physical distancing cannot be maintained, or if wearing one is required.
- Adhere to provincial and applicable local restrictions on public and private gatherings.

Travel

- Staying home is the best way to protect yourself and others.

- Individuals and families in higher transmission areas should avoid travel to lower transmission areas (ie. from Red to Orange, from Yellow to Green) except for essential reasons.
- Individuals and families who consider travelling to another province for essential reasons during the holidays should:
 - Consider the risk associated with travelling, including COVID-19 transmission in the other province, entry requirements (ie. quarantine).
 - Self-quarantine, or drastically reduce close contact with others 10 to 14 days before travelling and after returning home. This will help lower the risk of exposure to COVID-19.
- Follow general (Ontario) public health advice, as well as any rules and regulations of the province you visit.

General Advice

- Stay home if you have symptoms, even if they are mild.
- Wash your hands thoroughly and regularly.
- Cover your cough.
- Download the [COVID Alert mobile app](#).
- Get tested if you have symptoms compatible with COVID-19, or if you've been advised of exposure by the health unit or through the COVID Alert mobile app."

Previous media briefings can be found on the [SMDHU Facebook](#) page and [YouTube](#) channel.

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status (As of Nov 25, 2020, 13:00)

Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
1,954	203	1,690	52

Highlights:

- In the last day an additional 19 cases and 31 recoveries have been reported.
- There have been 120 new cases reported for the current week beginning November 22.
- Since the last update there have been 189 new cases, 188 recoveries and one additional death.
- Of the 203 active cases (which is the same compared to the previous week 205), increases were seen in:
 - children under 18 years old (up to 15% of active cases from 13%);
 - adults aged 45-64 who now account for 27.5% of all active cases, higher than the 18-34 year old age group with a stable proportion of cases at 25%; and
 - 80 years and older who represent almost 10% of cases (up from 6% last week).
- This is the sixth consecutive week of weekly case numbers above 100.
- There are currently 12 people hospitalized in Simcoe Muskoka (up from 6 last week).
- There are currently 13 ongoing outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka (up from 11 last week). Ongoing outbreaks include four in educational settings, and two each in Long-Term Care Homes (LTCH), Retirement Homes, congregate settings, and workplaces and one in a community setting.
- In the last week SMDHU has:
 - identified nearly 5,400 high risk contacts, with an average of 4 high-risk contacts per case;
 - reached 84% of contacts within one day of being identified as a contact; and
 - had 22% no known epidemiological link indicating community spread.

SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#) and the [COVID-19 Case Explorer](#)

Local Media Updates *(Since Nov. 18, 2020 Partner Update)*

- Don't forget, RVH expands testing to Innisfil today ([article](#))
- Gardner urges businesses, ski resorts to deny service to visitors from 'hot zones' ([article](#))
- Don't share the air with anyone outside your household: Collingwood hospital CEO urges residents to stay vigilant in COVID-19 fight ([article](#))
- Barrie 'AAA' hockey team in isolation after positive COVID test ([article](#))
- Collingwood restaurant not taking reservations from red zone residents ([article](#))
- Here's how the pandemic impacted policing in Midland ([article](#))
- COVID precautions, along with vaccination, could keep the flu at bay ([article](#))
- East Gwillimbury McDonald's closes temporarily after employee test positive for COVID ([article](#))
- Collingwood encourages residents to 'go get out' ([article](#))
- 'We certainly have a playbook': Lessons learned at Innisfil Beach Park during the pandemic ([article](#))
- Employee at Kubota tests positive for COVID-19 ([article](#))
- RVH opens new 70-bed field hospital in preparation for increased demand on healthcare ([article](#))
- COVID framework means small swimming lessons for Collingwood ([article](#))
- How much is the pandemic costing BWG? ([article](#))
- COVID precautions, along with vaccination, could keep the flu at bay ([article](#))
- Mayor Lehman encourages everyone to do what is 'asked of you' as COVID numbers continue to climb ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status

Ontario (As of November 25, 2020, 10:30)			
Total cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
107,883	12,779	91,550	3,554
<p>Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since the last update there have been almost 10,000 more people infected with COVID-19, an additional 9,625 people have recovered and 139 people have died. • The seven-day daily average number of new cases is decreased to 1,389 new cases per day from 1,422. • In the last day there has been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ an increase of 1,373 confirmed cases; ○ an increase of 1,476 resolved cases; and ○ an increase of 35 deaths. • The number of people hospitalized has palteaued (523 compared to 535) but ICU admissions and ventilator support continues to increase (ICU 159 up from 127, ventilators 106 up from 77). • The current effective reproductive number (R_e) is 1.1 which is slightly lower than last week. • Peel Region, City of Toronto and York Region have the most active cases and the highest rate of cases per 100,000 population. • The health unit areas with the largest increase in cases in the last day are: Peel, Toronto, York, Windsor-Essex and Waterloo. • Active cases are evenly split among genders and over 50% of cases are in people under 40 years of age (15% in children and young adults under 20 years of age, 20% in young adults 20-29 years of age, and 15.5% in adults aged 30-39). • The source of infection for majority of cases in the last week is close contact with a known case and community spread. • Over 27,000 tests were completed yesterday with the current percent positive at 4.7% • Highlights from the last reporting week (Nov. 8-14): 			

- over 75% of public health units reported an increase in rates of COVID-19, with Peel, Toronto, York and Halton regions reporting rates higher than the provincial average.
- rates of COVID-19 are increasing in all age groups by at least 30% with the exception of cases in those 80 years and older with less than a 10% increase. Cases in those aged 60-79 increased by 45% and people aged 20-39 continue to account for the largest number of cases. Cases in children in all age groups from 4-17 years also increased over the last week.
- there were increases in the number of students ages 9-17 who tested positive for COVID-19.
- there were a total of 624 ongoing outbreaks (an increase from 556) including 168 new outbreaks reported this week. Workplaces, LTCHs and elementary schools had the most outbreaks reported.
- 86 health care workers and 381 long-term care residents contracted COVID-19.

For more provincial data see: [Province of Ontario COVID-19 case data](#) and [Public Health Ontario Data Tool, Public Health Ontario Daily Epidemiologic Summaries, Public Health Ontario Weekly Epidemiologic Summaries](#)

Canada (As of Nov. 24, 2020 at 19:00 EDT)

Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
342,444	57,435	273,391	11,618

Highlights:

- In the last week, over 35,000 people in Canada have tested positive for COVID-19 and over 500 people have died as a result of COVID-19.
- There are over 6000 more active cases in Canada, a 12% increase from the same day last week.
- On November 24, Canada reported 4,889 new cases and 97 new deaths:
 - new cases were reported in QC (1,124), AB (1,115), ON (1,009), BC (941) MB (471), SK (175), NS (37), Nunavut (10), NB (5), NFLD (2), Yukon (1); and
 - new deaths were reported in QC (45), AB (16), ON (14), MB (12), and BC (10).
- The following are national highlights from the last published reporting week of Nov. 8-14:
 - All provinces and territories reported new cases.
 - An average of 4,554 new cases were reported daily representing a 30% increase in comparison to the previous week.
 - There has been an increasing number of deaths observed since early October. The average number of daily reported deaths (57) was also higher than the average from the previous week (51). The weekly number of deaths increased 13% with 401 more deaths.
 - Increases in cases were seen in all age groups with those aged 20-29 and 80 years and over with the highest incidence.
 - Hospitalizations and number of people in intensive care also increased 30% and 32% respectively from the previous week. The weekly number of hospitalized children has increased in recent weeks but remains relatively low with 17 hospitalizations reported.
 - Quebec, Alberta and Manitoba have the highest rates of COVID-19 per 100,000 people.
 - 54% of the weekly cases were reported in those under 40 years of age, with children 19 and under and adults aged 20-29 representing almost 40% of new cases.
 - 55% of cases had an exposure to a known COVID-19 case and 44% were exposed to COVID-19 by an unknown source.
 - Almost 450,000 people were tested for COVID-19 with the average weekly percent positivity increasing to 7.1% from 5.8% the previous week. Alberta has the highest percent positivity at 12.9%.
 - According to forecasting, by Nov 30 Canada will have between 366,500 to 378,600 cumulative COVID-19 cases and 11,870 to 12,120 COVID-19 deaths.

[National daily epidemiology updates; National weekly epidemiology report](#)

Global (As of November 25, 2020 at 11:14 CET)	
Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Deaths
59,204,902	1,397,139
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On November 17, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported an additional 463,730 people had a confirmed new case of COVID-19 and 7,712 people died of COVID-19. Those countries with the most new cases in the past day were the United States, India, Russia, Italy and Brazil and countries with the most new deaths were the United States, Italy, France, Russia, and Iran. In the past week, acceleration of global cases of COVID-19 began to slow with over 4.1 million new cases, while death rates continued to increase with almost 70,000 new deaths reported. In the past seven days the United States, India, Italy, Brazil and Russia had the highest weekly number of cases and the United States, Italy, France, India, and Brazil had the highest weekly number of deaths. In the past week the European and South East Asia Regions continued downward trends in weekly cases, however, the European Region is still the largest contributor to weekly new cases and deaths. The reported decline in the number of weekly cases suggesting the reintroduction of stricter public health and social measures is beginning to slow down transmission. The Region of the Americas reported increases in both new cases and new deaths and the Region continues to account for the greatest proportion of cumulative cases and deaths. The United States reported 1.1 million new cases with Illinois, Texas and California reporting the highest numbers. With the upcoming US Thanksgiving holiday, officials have implemented additional public health measures and discouraged travelling however, more than 2 million airline passengers were screened last weekend after the government issued a travel warning. The African, Eastern Mediterranean and Western Pacific regions all reported increases in new cases and deaths this week. <p>WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard; Previous Situation Reports</p>	

Provincial, National and Global Updates (Since Nov. 12, 2020 Partner Update)

Provincial Updates

From the Ontario government:

- Ontario provides public health advice on how to celebrate the holiday season safely ([news release](#))
- Ontario deploys rapid testing to support COVID-19 response ([news release](#))
- Ontario appoints new ministers’ COVID-19 vaccine distribution task force ([news release](#))
- Motion tabled to reappoint Chief Medical Officer of Health ([news release](#))
- Ontario marks national housing day with partnership, progress and a renewed commitment to support vulnerable people ([news release](#))
- Ontario taking further action to stop the spread of COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Ontario adding 3,000 new and upgraded long-term care spaces ([new release](#))
- Ontario extends COVID-19 orders ([news release](#))
- Ontario launches workplace education and enforcement campaigns ([news release](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Ontario puts Toronto, Peel into lockdown: curbside retail, restaurants move to takeout only ([article](#))
- Ontario hits ‘critical’ 150 COVID-19 patients threshold in ICU raising concerns ([article](#))
- Province unleashes army of inspectors as part of workplace education and enforcement blitz ([article](#))
- JAMA published ‘Association between nursing home crowding and COVID-19 infection and mortality in Ontario, Canada.’ ([article](#))

National Updates

The Government of Canada:

- Remarks from Chief Public Officer/Deputy Chief Public Health Officer of Canada: [November 25, 2020](#), [November 24, 2020](#), [November 23, 2020](#), [November 22, 2020](#), [November 21, 2020](#), [November 19, 2020](#), [November 18, 2020](#)
- Government of Canada invests to help youth facing barriers to employment ([news release](#))
- Government of Canada COVID-19 [Update](#) for Indigenous Peoples and communities

Other National News:

- Coronavirus: What's happening in Canada and around the world on Wednesday ([article](#))
- Indoor air is the pandemic's ultimate enabler experts say ([article](#))
- Focus on the light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, experts suggest ([article](#))
- Dr. Tam has blunt message about holiday planning ([article](#))
- Canada will get COVID-19 vaccines after other countries ([article](#))
- People with disabilities at risk of being wrongly deemed 'incompetent' ([article](#))
- Old habits die hard: Are we smoking more amid the pandemic? ([article](#))
- Parks Canada pushes back opening of popular camping reservation system ([article](#))
- Dr. Tam urges to keep holiday gatherings restricted to 10 people or less ([video](#))
- Trudeau pleads with Canadians to limit contacts as country hurtles toward 20,000 COVID cases per day ([article](#))
- Stricter COVID-19 measures coming into effect as case numbers soar across Canada ([article](#))
- Workplace compensation claims reflect toll COVID-19 has taken on Canada's workers ([article](#))
- Long-awaited federal rent subsidy program for businesses hurt by COVID-19 opens today ([article](#))
- How to prevent COVID-19 'superspreader' events indoors this winter ([article](#))
- Women leaving workforce faster than men, childcare playing big role in exodus, study says ([article](#))
- New aid figures shed new light on variety of Canadians who needed the help ([article](#))
- The power of celebrity in coronavirus messaging ([article](#))
- Canada could get multiple coronavirus vaccines. Experts say there are unique challenges ([article](#))
- Trudeau warns that COVID-19 crisis could determine Canada's future ([article](#))
- Trudeau urges vigilance on public health measures to contain deadly spike in COVID-19 cases ([article](#))
- Tam warns of 'urgency' to lower infections as forecasts paint dire scenario ([article](#))
- 'COVID fatigue' wasn't planned for in pandemic modelling, Dr. Njoo says ([article](#))
- 2020 critical when it comes to children's futures, experts says ([article](#))
- PEI and Newfoundland and Labrador opt out of the Atlantic Bubble for the next few weeks ([article](#))
- New data shows impact of immigration system slowing sharply amid pandemic ([article](#))
- Applications are now open for COVID-19 resilience Infrastructure Stream for Municipalities in Ontario ([article](#))

International Updates

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- With other UN agencies issued a [Joint Statement on Data Protection and Privacy in the COVID-19 Response](#), calling for the use of data and technology in the COVID-19 response in a way that respects the right to privacy under international law, data protection and privacy principles, as well as the right to health, and economic and social development.
- Launched the [Global Strategy to Accelerate the Elimination of Cervical Cancer](#). Although COVID-19 has posed challenges to providing health services related to cancer, the strategy aims to reduce new cervical cancer cases by more than 40%; and reduce deaths by 5 million by 2050 through vaccination, screening and treatment.

- Is partnering with Ryerson University's Social Media Lab and the International Federation of Medical Students Associations (IFMSA) to develop opensource COVID-19 misinformation fact-checking tools.
- Continue its [3rd Virtual Global Infodemic Management conference](#) until Dec. 11. There are infodemic tools to ensure they are consuming and sharing accurate COVID-19 information. WHO's [COVID-19 Fact-checkers Dataset](#) is an international repository of more than 200 active COVID-19 fact-checking groups that verify COVID-19 related claims in over 40 languages. The [COVID19misinfo.org](#) tool streamlines debunked claims into one interface and are continuously updated. Here's [how to report misinformation online](#). [Play the Bad News Game](#) to learn about how disinformation spreads and challenge others to play as well.

SMDHU Resources

- SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#) and the [COVID-19 Case Explorer](#).
- [SMDHU Vulnerable Populations for COVID-19 Response Interactive Map](#) highlights vulnerable populations in Simcoe Muskoka.
- Current COVID-19 information is available on our [website](#). Updates have been made to:
 - ***Main COVID-19 page***
 - Framework level changed to **Orange** - Restrict
 - **New:** [Special statement from MOH](#)
 - **Updated:** [How to handle and exchange second hand goods](#)
 - ***Stop the spread***
 - **Updated:** [How to handle and exchange second hand goods](#)
 - ***Return to School***
 - **New:** [School Bus Drivers](#)
 - ***Operating your Business Safely***
 - **New:** [Letter of Instruction for Simcoe Muskoka Businesses and Organizations](#)
 - **New:** [Taxi and Ride Share Guidance](#)
 - **Updated:** [PSS guidelines](#)
 - ***Partners and Municipalities***
 - **New:** [Travel Restrictions to Facilities](#)
 - **New:** [Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Ward 2 By-Election](#)
[COVID-19 Guidance For Candidates in the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury Ward 2 Election](#)
- SMDHU Health Connection responds to calls and emails about COVID-19. Contact Health Connection at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 ext. 5829 or via [email](#).
Health Connection Hours:
 - Monday-Friday - 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Credible Sources of Information

- [Ontario Ministry of Health](#)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)