

Update for Partners

COVID-19

June 17 2020

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Current Situation

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status (As of June 17, 2020 at 13:00)			
Total cases	Recovered	Deaths	Current Hospitalizations
526	445 (85%)	36 (6.8%)	5
<p>Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The incidence rate in Muskoka continues to be significantly lower than the rate in Simcoe County, Simcoe Muskoka and Ontario. The vast majority (96%) of Simcoe Muskoka's confirmed cases reside in Simcoe County. Workplace outbreaks are now being identified across the province. SMDHU defines a workplace outbreak as multiple confirmed COVID-19 cases in employees of a workplace who worked in proximity and at the same time of other confirmed cases and, based on epidemiological investigation, a higher level of disease transmission within the workplace than what would be expected given current local COVID-19 activity and incidence in the community. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are currently 10 local cases associated with confirmed workplace outbreaks; however, this includes two workplaces within Simcoe Muskoka and the remainder are in other jurisdictions. As of June 16, 2020, the weekly incidence rate in Simcoe Muskoka continued to remain stable compared to the previous week, with 22 new cases reported. Doubling time in Simcoe Muskoka has increased since June 9th and is over five months in length. <p>SMDHU COVID-19 HealthSTATS page and the COVID-19 Case Explorer.</p>			
Ontario COVID-19 Case Status (As of June 17, 2020 at 10:30)			
Total cases	Recovered	Deaths	Current Hospitalizations
32,744	27,784 (84.9%)	2,550 (7.8%)	383
<p>Highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> On each of the last four days, Ontario reported fewer than 200 new cases of COVID-19. For more than a week, Ontario has reported more resolved than new cases. 			

- There are currently 92 people in ICU with 65 on ventilators, both of which continue to reflect decreases from the previous two Partner Updates.
- Since June 9th there has been a 32% decrease in the number of current confirmed cases that are hospitalized.
- As of June 16th, 65% of Ontario's confirmed cases were outbreak-associated or a close contact of a confirmed case. Travel was the mode of acquisition for five percent of the province's cases of COVID-19.
- A total of 1,071,429 tests have been completed, with 24,205 tests completed in the previous day and 21,635 tests currently under investigation.
- 335 outbreaks have been reported in long-term care homes, 72 of which are ongoing.

[Province of Ontario website.](#)

Canada COVID-19 Case Status (As of June 16, 2020 at 20:00 EDT)		
Total cases	Recovered	Deaths
99,467	61,443 (62%)	8,213 (8.3%)

Highlights as of June 16, 2020 at 20:00 EDT:

- The rate of total cases of COVID-19 in Canada was 265 per 100,000 population.
 - No new cases were reported in seven provinces or territories within the past 24 hours.
- The rate of deaths from COVID-19 was 22 per 100,000 population.
 - Only Ontario and Quebec reported new deaths within the past 24 hours.
- 2,216,730 people have been tested for COVID-19 in Canada.
 - This equates to a rate of 58,972 people tested per 1,000,000 population.
 - Percent positive (total) is 4.2%.

The [detailed epidemiology report](#) is now updated weekly on Thursdays, with higher-level [daily epidemiology updates](#) posted at 20:00 EDT. [Government of Canada website.](#)

Global Situation (As of 3:13pm CEST June 17, 2020)	
Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Deaths
8,061,550	440,290

According to remarks from WHO's Director-General on June 15, 2020:

- It took more than two months for the first 100,000 cases of COVID-19 to be reported. For the past two weeks, more than 100,000 new cases have been reported almost every day.
- After more than 50 days without a case in Beijing, last week China reported a new cluster of cases in that city. More than 100 cases have now been confirmed (see also [press release & surveillance update on pg. 2](#)).
- Almost 75% of recent cases come from 10 countries, mostly in the Americas and South Asia; however, increasing numbers of cases are also being seen in Africa, Eastern Europe, central Asia and the Middle East.

[WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard](#); daily [WHO Situation Report](#)

Updates

- Dr. Gardner's Facebook live media briefing takes place on Tuesday at 2:30 p.m. Recordings are posted on [SMDHU Facebook page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#). This Partner Update is published once a week on Wednesdays.

SMDHU Medical Officer of Health Key Messages from Tuesday June 16, 2020

- **Facemasks and face shields** – Wearing a facemask is strongly encouraged to protect others when keeping a two-metre distance from those outside one's social circle is a challenge or not possible. Wearing masks protects others so if we all wear face coverings we will protect each other. Masks and face shields alone will not protect you; physical distancing remains the best way to prevent COVID-19's spread from person to person.

There has also been some news reports about the use of face shields in public settings and questions about whether they are a better idea than masking because they cover the eyes as well. The benefits of face shields include: more comfortable to wear (especially on hot days), no breathing issues, you're less likely to touch your face with a shield over it, and they allow people to see each other clearly. Research continues, but there is no conclusive evidence to suggest shields are better. They have their drawbacks including the fact they offer less protection from small aerosols that can be inhaled around the shield. At this point in time it is still recommended that a face mask be worn as the primary mode of respiratory protection and face shields are not recommended for public use due to a lack of expected benefit. (Source is National Centres for Biotechnology Information (NCIB)).

- **Cottage and seasonal rentals** - With provincial regulation now permitting cottage rentals, many people will be coming to Simcoe Muskoka from areas of higher COVID-19 transmission. COVID-19 continues to be a threat, and therefore we must all continue to be vigilant and protect ourselves and others. We must learn to live safely with the virus and that means whether you are a resident or coming to visit, you need to continue to follow precautions. Continue to practise physical distancing. Social physically-distanced gatherings and public events should be limited to 10 people or fewer (including members of your household). Wear a non-medical mask or face covering when physical distancing is not possible. Cottagers and seasonal visitors should minimize trips into the community and stay at their cottage as much as possible. If coming from a region of high COVID-19 transmission, purchase food, supplies and medications in your home community and only shop in Simcoe Muskoka for essential shopping. Everyone should practice proper and frequent [handwashing](#), cough hygiene, and [self-isolate](#) if [symptomatic](#).
- **Social bubbles becoming social circles and the province approves social gatherings of up to 10 people** - There is some confusion about the expansion of social bubbles to social circles. **Social circles** are intimate members of your group who are exclusively associated with your household. Examples of social circles are grandparents joining their immediate family, or close friends merging their household with another to allow for a larger social circle. When joining with another household to form a new social circle you do not have to maintain the 2 metre distancing. You are now a single "exclusive" group. You can have dinner around the table together, ride in a car together and hug members of your social circle. **Social gatherings** have also been expanded from a group of five to maximum of 10. This means you can socialize from a two metre distance, with up to 10 people. In a social gathering you could sit outside together but sit apart. If you were having a BBQ, you would not share a dinner table or have any self-serve and communal foods like chips or popcorn. If you choose to have a social gathering reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 by not sharing items like cutlery, glassware, food and drinks. Ask guests to bring their own. Provide disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer for guests to use when entering the home or outdoor area and avoid sharing hand towels. More information is available on our [website](#).
- **COVID-19 Infection and links with ethno-culturally diverse areas** – At the request of community leaders and public health, the province announced on Monday that it is proposing a regulatory change to mandate the reporting of data on race, income, language and household size for individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. In Simcoe Muskoka all local COVID-19 cases, excluding institutional outbreak associated

cases, reported as of June 10, 2020 have been mapped to explore the potential disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic in ethno-culturally diverse areas within Simcoe Muskoka. A higher rate of COVID-19 infection is observed in persons living in areas with higher levels of ethno-cultural diversity. This aligns with research published by Toronto Public Health, ICES and Public Health Ontario (PHO), and internationally that shows a disproportionate impact of COVID-19 infection on persons of colour. Much of this research specifically identifies a disproportionate burden on Black persons; however, this specificity is not available within the SMDHU analysis. Health inequity in racialized communities is a symptom of systemic racism and highlights the need for interventions to support these communities and to address the underlying factor. In response to these findings, SMDHU intends to:

- Seek to engage ethno-culturally diverse populations regarding future data collection, reporting, and next steps;
- Explore the potential to collect voluntary individual-level sociodemographic data on COVID-19 cases, for a more specific understanding;
- Consider other short-term responses to this data in informing our work from a health equity perspective, and long-term responses to this data as part of the agency's ongoing priority on addressing the social and structural determinants of health.

The Simcoe Muskoka ethno-cultural analysis and resulting report will be posted on our [HealthSTATS](#) page in the coming days.

- **Get out and enjoy outdoor spaces, safely** – It is important to get outside and enjoy public spaces, however there is a risk of people congregating close together and spreading the virus. Reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 when visiting outdoor public spaces by maintaining physical distance, following signage and screening requirements, and avoid sharing equipment. Wear a face covering if distancing of two metres can't be maintained and engage in frequent hand washing. Use the outdoor public spaces within your own community, when possible.
- **Anti-racism protests during COVID-19** - Racism is an important public health issue that exists in our province and local communities. Systematic racism affects the health of racialized populations who can experience discrimination, higher rates of poverty, precarious and underemployment and systematic disadvantages within housing, education and public health systems. We are encouraged that many citizens in Simcoe and Muskoka are taking a stand to inspire change and to stop systematic racism as part of recent protests and events around the globe. Given the COVID-19 pandemic we strongly encourage anyone who participates to do so in the safest way possible to protect themselves and others from COVID-19. [Guidance](#) for reducing risk while participating in these events has been posted to our website for event organizers and participants, and also includes suggestions for alternative ways to participate, such as using social media and virtual protests.

Local Media on Wednesday June 17, 2020

- Farm outbreaks create 'a dangerous situation,' says Gardner ([article](#))
- Region's top doctor says race data will help show impacts of discrimination on health ([article](#))
- Travel is happening, it's up to everyone to reduce the risk, says health unit ([article](#))
- Reversal of COVID-19 trend in Simcoe Muskoka health unit sees increase in cases ([article](#))

- Bradford daycares preparing to safely re-open ([article](#))
- COVID-19: How to help high school seniors cope with milestones missed ([article](#))
- Can I visit a walk-in clinic in Muskoka during the COVID-19 pandemic? ([article](#))
- Flags downtown and along Barrie's waterfront to recognize community heroes during COVID-19 pandemic ([article](#))

Provincial Updates since last Partner Update

- Today, Ontario extended emergency orders until June 30, 2020 ([news release](#))
- Canada and Ontario support beef and hog farmers during COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Ontario is expanding data collection to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and provide a more complete picture of the outbreak ([news release](#))
- Effective Friday June 12, Ontarians were [encouraged](#) to establish a social "circle" of no more than 10 people, including those outside the immediate household who can come into close contact with one another without physical distancing.
 - The province has developed a practical [step-by-step](#) guide to help Ontarians as they safely develop and join a social circle.
- Also in effect as of June 12th, eased restrictions on wedding and funeral ceremonies in Ontario ([news release](#))
- Ontario announced that additional regions will enter into Phase 2 of the province's reopening on Friday June 19 ([news release](#))
- Ontario released a new toolkit to help employers create safer working environments for employees during COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Guidance for workplace outbreaks was also posted to the ministry's [website](#).
- Ontario protecting agri-food workers during COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Ontario supports children and youth during COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Ontario introduces public transit safety guidance ([news release](#))
- Ontario lifting 30-day supply limit on prescriptions ([news release](#))
- Ontario to resume family visits in long-term care homes, retirement homes, and other residential care settings ([news release](#))
- The Ministry of Education released an [operational guidance document](#) for childcare centre re-opening.

National Updates since last Partner Update

- National parks to open campgrounds for existing reservations next week ([article](#))
- Prime Minister announces an extension of the Canada Emergency Response Benefit ([news release](#))
- Canada – U.S. border to remain closed to non-essential travel until July 21 ([article](#))
- CAMH survey shows pandemic affecting mental health, but anxiety levels may be easing ([article](#))
- The Government of Canada contributes \$5.3 million to Pan American Health Organization for response to COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Government of Canada announces additional support for Indigenous businesses and the Indigenous tourism industry ([news release](#))

International Updates since last Partner Update

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Welcomes preliminary results about dexamethasone use in treating critically ill COVID-19 patients ([news release](#))
- Published a rapid advice guidance on the [use of chest imaging in COVID-19](#).
- Released updated [interim guidance for maintaining essential health services during COVID-19](#).

- Investigated the risks of women transmitting COVID-19 to their babies during breastfeeding. Based on the available evidence, WHO's advice is that the benefits of breastfeeding outweigh any potential risks of transmission of COVID-19. [Infographics](#) that share information related to pregnancy, childbirth, breastfeeding and COVID-19 are available, as well as a [Q & A on breastfeeding and COVID-19](#).

SMDHU Resources

- SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#) and the [COVID-19 Case Explorer](#).
- SMDHU Health Connection line 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](#).
 - **UPDATED HOURS:** Monday-Friday - 8:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.; Saturday / Sunday / Holidays - 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- [SMDHU Vulnerable Populations for COVID-19 Response Interactive Map](#) highlights vulnerable populations (e.g. seniors, persons living in low income) and places (e.g. long-term care homes, COVID-19 Assessment Centres) in Simcoe Muskoka.
- Current COVID-19 information is available on our [website](#).

New/revised content:

- On June 18 Simcoe County and District of Muskoka businesses are invited to virtually learn steps to safely reopen during #COVID-19 with speakers Dr. Gardner & Dr. Rebellato. Information and registration details have been posted to our website: www.smdhuwebinarjune.eventbrite.ca.
- Additional expander bars have been added to the [COVID-19 main page](#) to provide information on [visiting your cottage or seasonal residence](#); [social gatherings and social circles](#); and [how to safely enjoy outdoor public spaces](#).
- A number of resources have been developed by SMDHU to support businesses, services, and municipalities in reopening safely. These guidance documents can be found on our website and include resources for [day camps](#), [food operators](#), [personal service settings](#), [retail stores](#) (including grocery stores and pharmacies), [places of worship](#), [outdoor public spaces](#), [public beaches](#), and a [letter](#) to the CAOs for the municipalities in Simcoe County, the District of Muskoka, the Cities of Barrie and Orillia and the four First Nations located in Simcoe Muskoka to support them in resuming operations and public services in their community workplaces.

Credible Sources of Information

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