

COVID-19 Update for Partners

September 30, 2020

[Key messages from Dr. Gardner](#)

[Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status](#)

[Local Media Updates](#)

[Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status](#)

[Provincial, National and Global Updates](#)

[SMDHU Resources](#)

[Credible Sources of Information](#)

Key messages from Dr. Gardner, Medical Officer of Health

1. What to do if someone in your school tests positive for COVID-19?

We are working closely with our school boards to identify and act on any students or staff who test positive for COVID-19. We recognize there are some misunderstandings about cases in schools and what to do. We know parents and staff are concerned and want to protect their children and families. This has led to some instances of high absentee rates for students/staff. When a case of COVID-19 occurs in your school you will receive one of the following communications which will let you know the risk and your next steps.

- A) If you receive notification from your school that someone in the school community has tested positive for COVID-19, but are **NOT** contacted by the health unit, you/your child are not a high risk contact and are considered at low risk for infection. Next steps for you/your child:
- Continue to self-assess for symptoms every day before school
 - Continue to go to school as long as you have no symptoms
 - Stay home, self-isolate and get tested if you develop symptoms
 - Practice physical distancing as much as possible, wear a mask, and wash/sanitize your hands often.
- B) If you receive a letter that says **you/your child is considered a close contact** with someone in school who has tested positive for COVID-19, you will be contacted by the health unit for follow up and testing options. Next steps for the person who is a close contact and their household members:
- ***Close contacts*** must stay home, self-isolate and monitor for symptoms; this includes staying out of school for 14 days (longer if symptoms develop that last longer than the 14 days).
 - ***Household members*** are to self-monitor for 14 days and can continue to go to work/school as long as they have no symptoms themselves, **and** the close contact has not been diagnosed with COVID-19. **If the close contact tests positive** for COVID-19,

household members will receive directions from the health unit on next steps including self-isolating for 14 days.

Those with more questions are encouraged to visit our COVID-19 'Return to School' webpages.

2. School testing support shout out

SMDHU would like to say thank you to:

- Community paramedics and home and community care staff who helped us with a pop-up/drive-thru testing clinic last Friday for a school cohort to get tested quickly and efficiently once a case was confirmed, and
- Assessment centres that helped get other schools' cohorts tested efficiently.

3. Secondary school students at lunch and in the community

There has been much debate and concerns raised about the decision to allow or prevent secondary school students from leaving the school grounds for lunch. In practice it would be highly desirable for students to stay in cohorts together and in a class room but reality tells us that's difficult to do. We can encourage them to stay in, but just as important we need to ensure they are educated on the risks of close contact and gathering without precautions whether it is at lunch or outside of school hours.

Remind youth that we don't always know who has an underlying medical condition that increases their vulnerability to having severe illness if they get COVID-19. It could be a friend, school mate, teacher, someone's brother or sister, someone's parents or older family members. We all need to intentionally and thoughtfully protect ourselves and one another. Everyone needs to do their part preventing the transmission of COVID-19 now before the spread of the virus requires us to tighten controls again.

Everyone, including students, are reminded that preventing the transmission of COVID-19 means:

- Avoid gathering in groups
- Stay 2 metres apart from each other and wear a mask when you can't avoid being closer
- Wash your hands frequently
- Don't share anything you eat, drink, or otherwise put in your mouth.

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

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status (As of Sept 30, 2020, 13:00)

Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
894	86	767	38
Highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In the last day, there have been 11 new cases, 16 additional recovered cases, no new hospitalizations and no additional deaths.• From Sept 20-26 there were 54 cases of COVID-19 reported in Simcoe Muskoka.• In the last two weeks there have been 114 cases of COVID-19 and one death reported in Simcoe Muskoka.			

- There are five ongoing outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka (long-term care = 3, retirement home = 1, workplace = 1).
 - There are 11 cases reported in 10 schools. No school outbreaks have been declared to date.
 - There has been an exponential growth of new cases since the beginning of August both locally and provincially, with new cases doubling faster than they were at the beginning of August.
 - The case counts for September have surpassed the total case count for June and is approaching the total number of cases reported in May.
 - Locally testing rates remain lower than the provincial rate.
 - There has been an increased testing rate specifically in children and youth 0-19 years of age.
- SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#) and the [COVID-19 Case Explorer](#)

Local Media Updates (September 24-30, 2020)

- Dr. Gardner recommends car rally attendees self-monitor for COVID symptoms ([article](#))
- Shrink your bubble ahead of Thanksgiving, advises medical officer of health ([article](#))
- Catholic board secondary school students will get lunch at the end of the day ([article](#))
- Nearly 300 people isolating due to school cases in Simcoe-Muskoka, health unit ([article](#))
- Local bar owners say province's new rules are tough on business ([article](#))
- 'We just didn't feel safe': Simcoe County parents pull kids from classrooms ([article](#))
- Pandemic making it harder for some community organizations in Alliston to maintain, recruit volunteers ([article](#))
- COVID closed classrooms in Bradford, Alliston and Collingwood ([article](#))
- Wasaga Beach shut down in wake of massive car event ([article](#))
- Shopping locally during pandemic can come with some challenges ([article](#))
- Georgian College, Waypoint working on projects to help front-line workers ([article](#))
- The BWG leisure centre is now open ([article](#))
- Three busy Barrie transit routes return to normal service this week ([article](#))
- Plan to work out at a City of Orillia facility? Here's what you need to know ([article](#))
- Top doc says second wave is here; prioritized testing is needed ([article](#))
- Health unit says 'virus circulating freely' in Muskoka as case counts surge ([article](#))
- Update: Premier staffer positive for COVID-19 did not visit Huntsville ([article](#))
- Contact tracing at South Muskoka hospital for COVID-19 positive staff member ([article](#))
- 'This was offensively underfunded': Teacher's union says COVID-19 cases in Simcoe County schools were inevitable ([article](#))
- Reducing class sizes to 15 students not on the table for public board ([article](#))
- CP holiday train derailed this holiday season due to the pandemic ([article](#))
- Provincial offences courts in the area remain closed until mid-October ([article](#))
- Helping Hand Food Bank expands hours to keep up with increased demand ([article](#))
- Demonstrators gather in Barrie to protest mask wearing and business lockdowns ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status

Ontario (As of September 30, 2020, 10:30)			
Total cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
51,710	4,995	43,907	2,848
Highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last day there has been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An increase of 625 confirmed cases (12.8% increase) ○ An increase of four new deaths 			

- An increase of 457 resolved cases.
- On September 28, Ontario saw the highest number of daily cases since the pandemic began (700).
- Of current active cases, those aged under 40 years of age currently represent 64% of all active cases, with those aged 20-29 representing 31% of all active cases.
- There are currently 150 people hospitalized, with 35 in the ICU including 17 on a ventilator.
- There are currently 79 ongoing outbreaks in health care facilities in Ontario (long-term care homes = 42, retirement homes = 34, hospitals = 3).
- In Ontario, almost 10% of all COVID-19 cases have resulted in hospitalization, 2% requiring intensive care and 5.5% resulting in death.

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

Canada (As of September 29, 2020 at 19:00 EDT)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
156,961	13,933	133,737	9,291

Highlights:

- There was an increase of 1,660 new cases reported in:
 - QC (799), ON (554), AB (160), BC (105), MB (34), SK (7) and PEI (1)
- In the last day, 13 new deaths were reported in:
 - QC (7), ON (4), AB (1), and BC (1)

The following are national highlights from the last reporting week of September 13-19:

- The number of new cases increased by 38%.
- Outbreaks in September are attributable to long-term care and retirement residences, schools and child care centres.
- The majority of new cases (58%) were exposed to an unknown source of COVID-19 in Canada.
- The age distribution of cases continues to be younger as the pandemic continues; incidence rates in those 20-39 years of age continue to be consistently higher compared to all other age groups and 64% of all cases were in people under 40 years of age (with those aged 20-29 years accounting for the largest proportion of cases).
- There were increases seen in the number of hospitalizations and people in ICUs as well a slight increase in weekly reported deaths.
- The average number of people tested daily increased substantially this week with almost 70,000 people tested every day.
- The percent positivity remained stable at 1.4% of those tested.
- National epidemiological forecasting (published Sept 25) suggests Canada can expect to see between 150,780-155,785 cases and 9,220-9,300 deaths by October 2, 2020; case numbers have already been surpassed and it is likely the number of deaths will surpass the forecast as well.

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

Global (As of September 30, 2020 at 11:44 CEST)	
Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Deaths
33,441,919	1,003,497

- Yesterday, 225,001 new cases COVID-19 and 3,745 new deaths were reported around the world, with the highest number of new cases in India, USA, Brazil, Argentina and Russia and the highest number of deaths in India, Argentina, Brazil, USA, and Iran.
- In the last week, India, USA, Brazil, Argentina and France had the most new cases and India, USA, Brazil, Mexico and Argentina had the most new deaths.

- The Region of the Americas continues to account for the highest incidence of COVID-19 globally. In the last reporting week the Americas accounted for 38% of all new cases and 52% of all new deaths.
 - In the previous reporting week (Sept. 21-27), the Eastern Mediterranean Region showed the greatest increase in cases while the European Region showed the greatest increase in deaths.
- [WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard](#);
Weekly Epidemiological Update ([September 27](#)); [Previous Situation Reports](#)

Provincial, National and Global Updates

Provincial Updates (since Sept 24, 2020 Partner Update)

The Ontario government:

- Released updated COVID-19 modelling for second wave ([news release](#))
- Provides over half a billion dollars to protect vulnerable seniors against second wave of COVID-19 ([media release](#))
- Invests \$52.5 million to recruit, retain and support more health care workers ([news release](#))
- Launches recovery program for Northern businesses impacted by COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Implements new public health measures province wide to keep Ontarians safe ([news release](#))
- Invests more than \$1 billion to expand COVID-19 testing and contact tracing ([news release](#))
- Extends critical delivery program for seniors and people with disabilities ([news release](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Ontario could see 1,000 new daily cases of COVID-19 in weeks, modelling suggests ([article](#))
- Ontario makes changes to long-term care visits ([article](#))
- Tam says Ontario's positivity rate still 'relatively low' despite rising COVID-19 cases ([video](#))
- Vast majority of schools with COVID-19 have only one or two cases ([article](#))
- Ontario's second wave of COVID-19 forecast to peak in October ([article](#))
- Ontario sees single-day record of 700 new COVID-19 cases as calls grow to return to Stage 2 ([article](#))
- Ontario, Quebec stress risk of socializing amid surge in COVID-19 cases ([article](#))
- Hospital association calls for restrictions to be reinstated in COVID-19 hot spots as Ontario cases surge ([article](#))
- Ontario restricts asymptomatic testing for COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Experts call for lockdown measures now to deal with COVID-19 surge ([article](#))
- Leaked document reveals Ontario's plan to avoid another COVID-19 lockdown ([article](#))

National Updates (since Sept 24, 2020 Partner Update)

The Government of Canada:

- Co-chairs high-level meeting to address economic devastation caused by COVID-19 and announces new funding to fight the pandemic ([news release](#))
- Along with world leaders focus on key actions to assist countries battered by the financial crisis caused by COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Signs agreement for COVID-19 rapid tests and analyzers ([news release](#))
- Introduced legislation to support Canadians through Recovery Benefits and extend access to funds for emergency measures ([news release](#))
- Reached new agreements to secure additional vaccine candidates for COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on [September 30, 2020](#), [September 29, 2020](#), [September 28, 2020](#), [September 27, 2020](#), [September 26, 2020](#), [September 24, 2020](#)

Other National News:

- Testing delays can hamper efforts to control COVID-19: Tam ([article](#))
- COVID-19 cases rising at an alarming rate in Indigenous communities ([article](#))
- Masks, shields may contribute to vocal strain for teachers says speech pathologist ([article](#))
- Why some snowbirds are still heading south this winter despite COVID-19 and a closed land border ([article](#))
- New parents waiting months for financial benefits amid surge in CERB claims ([article](#))
- This student has COVID-19 – and the stigma that comes with it ([article](#))
- Liberals survive confidence vote as COVID-19 aid bill passes unanimously ([article](#))
- COVID-19: How the pandemic could create a caregiver-friendly work culture ([article](#))
- COVID-19: What's the best strategy to reduce coronavirus outbreaks in schools? ([article](#))
- Canada: Amusement fair operators ask for support during COVID-19 pandemic ([article](#))
- Canada: Prof says food banks should be eliminated. Basic Income implemented post-COVID-19 ([article](#))
- COVID-19: Are targeted restrictions enough to keep cases down? ([video](#))
- Canada records fewer business closures, more openings in June compared to May ([article](#))
- School cohorts are bursting social bubbles across Canada ([article](#))
- Canadian ski resort operators preparing for winter season as COVID-19 pandemic persists ([article](#))
- End of CERB means uncertainty for some, new system for others ([article](#))
- COVID-19 pandemic further delaying some overdue military procurements ([article](#))
- Black Canadians get sick more from COVID-19. Scientists aim to find out why ([article](#))
- Parents fear surge in COVID-19 cases will cause a stampede to online learning ([article](#))

International Updates (since Sept 24, 2020 Partner Update)

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Released a new report '[Protect the Progress: Rise, Refocus, Recover, 2020](#)' (along with other international partners) warning that the COVID-19 crisis is exacerbating existing inequities, disproportionately impacting the most vulnerable women and children
- Released a video series, '[Science in 5](#)', in which experts explain the science about specific issues related to COVID-19. To date 5 episodes have been released and are available on WHO's [YouTube](#), [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [LinkedIn](#) pages
- Called on countries to [develop and implement action plans](#) to promote the timely distribution of science-based information and prevent the spread of false information while respecting freedom of expression

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:
 - [Return to School – School Administrators and Educators: REVISED SMDHU Supplemental Guidance Document for Schools](#)
 - [COVID-19 Assessment Centres and Testing – NEW Pharmacies](#), REVISED [Barrie Assessment Centre information](#)
 - [REVISED - Reopening and Operating Your Business Safely](#)

- 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](#)