

Update for Partners

COVID-19

September 16, 2020

[Current Situation](#)

[Updates](#)

[SMDHU Resources](#)

[Credible Sources of Information](#)

Current Situation

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status (As of September 16, 2020, 13:00)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
778	58	680	37
Highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compared to the previous day, the total case count represents eight new cases, six additional recovered cases, one new hospitalization and no additional deaths. There was a 70% increase in the number of cases in the last week and the weekly incidence rate is higher than it has been since the end of June. The seven-day moving average of new cases has steadily increased since early August. Almost 70% of current active cases are in people 18-34 years of age. The rate of new cases among males has more than doubled in September compared to July and August. The rate among males in September is nearly double the rate of females. Of current active cases, 52 are in Simcoe County with 40 in Barrie, and six are in Muskoka. The reproductive number (Rt) has been above 1 in the past four weeks and is currently 1.3 (anything above 1.0 means pandemic is growing in our area). There are currently two people hospitalized with COVID-19 in our area. There are two ongoing outbreaks, one in a long-term care home and one in a workplace. In the most recent week, testing rates were 98 per 10,000 in Simcoe County and 43 per 10,000 in the District of Muskoka. Testing rates have increased for all age groups except those 80 years of age and older. <p>SMDHU COVID-19 HealthSTATS page and the COVID-19 Case Explorer</p>			
Ontario COVID-19 Case Status (As of September 16, 2020, 10:30)			
Total cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
45,383	2,316	40,245	2,822
Highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There has been a steady week to week increase in cases and outbreaks since mid-August. In the last day there has been: 			

- An increase of 315 confirmed cases (25.5% increase)
 - Two new deaths
 - An increase of 154 resolved cases
 - Of those active cases 64.5% are in people under 40 years of age; almost 50% in people under 30 years of age; those aged 20-29 years have the most active cases of all age groups (778).
 - 28,761 tests were completed yesterday.
 - There are currently 44 people hospitalized, 20 in the ICU, 12 of which are on a ventilator.
 - There are currently 55 ongoing outbreaks in health care facilities in Ontario (long-term care homes = 35, retirement homes = 18, hospitals = 2).
 - In the last 2 reporting weeks there were 92 cases among health care workers (11 related to long-term care) and 19 cases in long-term care residents.
 - In the last full reporting week (Aug. 30 – Sept. 5) 50.8% of new cases were a contact of a close case or outbreak related, 40.9% were community acquired, 1.6% were travel related and 6.7% were unknown or had missing data.
- 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 COVID-19 Case Status (As of September 16, 2020 at 19:00 EDT)

Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
139,747	8,105	122,449	9,193

Highlights:

- There has been an increase of 944 new cases and nine deaths in the last day.
- No new cases have been reported in six provinces/territories and no new deaths have been reported in 11 provinces/territories in the last day.
- In the last day, new cases were reported in QC (303), ON (315), AB (171), BC (122), MB (23), SK (10) and PEI (2) and new deaths have been reported in QC (3) and ON (2)
- The number of new cases reported during the week of Aug. 30 – Sept. 5 represents a 26% increase.
- Incidence rates in those 20-39 years of age continue to be consistently higher than any other age group.
- Since the beginning of the pandemic, the number of reported deaths continues to be highest in people over 70 years of age and hospitalizations continue to be highest in people 60 years of age and older.
- 169,055 people tested per million.
- Weekly testing rates remained high from Aug. 30 – Sept. 5, with over 47,000 people tested daily. The current percent positivity is 2.1%.
- According to forecasting, by September 19 Canada expects to see 137,100-142,030 cumulative cases and 9,150-9,220 cumulative deaths.

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

Global Situation (As of September 16, 2020 at 11:44 CEST)

Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Deaths
29,356,292	930,260

- In the week from September 7-13, there were over 1.8 million new cases of COVID-19 reported, similar to the previous week; while deaths increased slightly over the previous week to just over 40,000 deaths.

- Yesterday, 231,984 new cases and 4,260 new deaths were reported around the world, with the highest number of new cases in India, USA, Brazil, Argentina and France and the highest number of deaths in India, Brazil, USA, Argentina and Mexico.
- 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 has consistently reported the greatest number of cases for many weeks and continues to account for nearly half of all global cases. In the last week cases in Guadeloupe and Curacao have increased the most with deaths increasing the most in Guadeloupe and Costa Rica.

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

Weekly Epidemiological Update ([September 13](#)); [Previous Situation Reports](#)

Updates

SMDHU Medical Officer of Health - Key Messages from Tues., Sept. 15, 2020

*Next week Dr. Gardner's Facebook live media briefing will take place on Thursday, September 24, 2020. Previous media briefings can be found on the [SMDHU Facebook page](#) and [YouTube Channel](#).

1. COVID-19 case numbers are rising

Number of cases is going up quite dramatically (a 70% increase in the past week) and this is worrisome. In Simcoe County we've had more cases in September than we had through the whole month of August, and in Muskoka we've had more cases in September than we had through all of July and August.

There are currently nine clusters of cases in multi-unit dwellings and households, many with links to outbreaks and work environments who have had cases.

Our trajectory is going up in a very worrisome way. In addition, the reproductive number in Simcoe Muskoka has been above 1 for the last four weeks in a row (indicating that the pandemic is growing in our area).

2. Return to school amid rising numbers

At the same time we have commenced with school we are seeing an increase in community cases which is not a good combination. We want to keep COVID-19 out of schools and other facilities like long-term care homes. The likelihood of people being exposed or transmission happening in those environments increases as our transmission rate in the community goes up.

To avoid exposure in the school environment, it is critical that parents screen their children for symptoms of COVID-19 every day before they leave for school. If a child has even one symptom, they should:

- Stay home from school (self-isolate)
- Report they have symptoms to the school
- Seek medical assessment/testing

In addition, all household members of the ill child are to self-monitor for 14 days. They can continue to go to school or work, as long as they have not developed symptoms themselves, and as long as the ill child has not been diagnosed with COVID-19.

3. Reduce your exposure by shrinking social circle and gatherings

Given the substantial increase in case numbers we need to revisit what control measures we use to reduce the spread of COVID-19. At this time, it is important to be particularly cautious and reduce exposures within the community. To do so, we are advising people to only have close contact with people in their own household. For those living alone or requiring assistance, there may be a need to continue to have close contact with another household, but limiting the number of close contacts everyone has is key.

It is time to think carefully about how often we go out and what is essential and avoid social gatherings. With regards to unregulated gatherings (e.g. backyard get-togethers), we are recommending we shrink the number of people included to 10 or less people. Keeping the physical distance from others is key. Make a point of noticing if others are getting too close and to take a step away. This is of course in addition to other preventative measures including self-monitoring, hand hygiene and wearing a mask when physical distance cannot be maintained.

4. Guidance for upcoming religious holidays, celebrations and traditional gatherings

With Rosh Hashanah, Thanksgiving, Halloween, Remembrance Day and other holidays approaching we have been receiving requests for direction about how to safely celebrate. We are expecting provincial guidance for upcoming events like Halloween, Remembrance Day and Christmas parades. All public gatherings would need to follow provincial restrictions (indoors – 50 people; outdoors -100 people).

Ultimately, we need to rethink our approach to these gatherings and reduce gatherings to small numbers of people where physical distance can be maintained. Consider using technology and consider ways to reduce the number of close contacts. Also, as numbers continue to rise, recommendations about any gatherings may change.

Halloween considerations:

- How to prevent large groups of children gathering (e.g. virtual visits)
- Ways to decrease contact when giving out candy (setting it outside)
- Going out only as a family, or not going out at all.

Remembrance Day considerations:

- Vulnerability of population in attendance
- Remote opportunities for those who would be in attendance
- Mask use even if outdoors

Parades are not recommended as they will bring large groups of people together.

Local Media (September 10-16, 2020)

- With COVID cases rising, doctor unwraps some tips for Halloween ([article](#))
- Santa Clause parade? Not a merry idea this year, says health unit ([article](#))
- Students, staff at Orillia high school don't need to be quarantined: Top doc ([article](#))
- It's time to clamp down on gatherings warns health unit official ([article](#))
- Province teases pharmacy COVID testing as RVH notes increased demand lately ([article](#))
- Can connecting passengers leave the airport? Your COVID-19 travel questions answered ([article](#))
- No risk to public as Huntsville Pita Pit COVID-19 cases confirmed, says health unit ([article](#))

- McDonald's confirms COVID-19 case at Gravenhurst location ([article](#))
- Popular 'See You on the Patio' Program extended until Sept. 25 ([article](#))
- No COVID-19 case yet linked to Muskoka camp incident, says health unit ([article](#))
- Muskoka school board says it's hard to know how many teachers are not returning ([article](#))
- Pandemic a reminder of 'crucial work' of public health: Gardner ([article](#))
- Crowding at local school could be a prime example of COVID fatigue ([article](#))
- County plans to hire dozens to fill gap at local long-term care homes ([article](#))
- Remote learning will start Sept. 21 for public board students ([news release](#))
- COVID-19 impacting crime and calls: Orillia OPP ([article](#))
- 'These rules are very unrealistic for students': Stayner Collegiate student reacts ([article](#))
- Is your child returning to school? Here's what the SMDHU wants you to know ([article](#))
- Committee supports a permanent seasonal patio program in Bradford ([article](#))
- How are Muskoka's classrooms being kept clean during COVID-19 ([article](#))

Provincial Updates (since Sept 9, 2020 Partner Update)

The Ontario government:

- Launched an online COVID-19 screening tool for students and staff ([news release](#))
- Launched COVID-19 school and licensed child care-specific web page ([statement](#))
- Ramps up production of Ontario-made ventilators ([news release](#))
- Web page making school-specific COVID-19 data available ([news release](#))
- Ontario finalizing 'fall preparedness plan' for second wave of COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Ontario expanding innovative Mental Health and Addictions Services ([news release](#))
- New research project aims to improve Ontario's response to COVID-19 ([backgrounder](#))
- Ontario calls on chief coroner to manage COVID-19 outbreaks, including in schools ([article](#))
- Ontario investing in hospital upgrades and repair ([news release](#))
- Health preparedness and rebuilding the economy top priorities in Ontario's fall legislative agenda ([news release](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Sick Kids study says classrooms too small to accommodate more than 15 students safely ([article](#))
- Here's who's eligible for a COVID-19 antibody test in Ontario ([article](#))
- Ontario to address long COVID-19 testing wait times in the coming weeks ([article](#))
- Ford may ask doctors to start working weekends to clear surgery backlog ([article](#))
- Toronto calls on funding for homelessness plan as pandemic costs mount ([article](#))
- Pandemic offers 'huge potential' for shift to walking, biking to school ([article](#))
- Stepping up: How one man's push to get his neighbours walking is starting to bring a Toronto community together ([article](#))
- COVID-19 may present the opportunity to embrace outdoor education ([article](#))
- COVID-19: How the pandemic has reshaped university education ([article](#))
- School bus routes cancelled across Ontario as COVID-19 worsens driver shortage ([article](#))
- Cottage party a cautionary tale about rampant spread of COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Need for flu vaccine increased this year to keep hospitals free and focused elsewhere ([article](#))
- Ontario hospitals warn of a second lockdown as COVID-19 infection rates match those in early June ([article](#))
- Some Ontario school boards delay start of online classes due to growing demand ([article](#))
- COVID-19 outbreak hits Western University as five students test positive ([article](#))
- COVID-19 presents challenges for many small-town schools ([article](#))

National Updates (since Sept 9, 2020 Partner Update)

The Government of Canada:

- Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada: [September 9](#), [September 10](#), [September 11](#), [September 12, 2020](#), [September 13, 2020](#), [September 14, 2020](#), [September 15](#), [September 16](#)
- Released a [backgrounder](#) on COVID-19 measure for youth and students and plans to deliver support for young people this fall (Sept. 11 [news release](#) and Sept. 15 [news release](#))
- Released a [policy statement](#) on research security and COVID-19.
- Open call for applications for Canada Healthy Communities Initiative ([news release](#))
- [Indigenous Services Canada](#) reported that there have been 491 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among First Nations communities in Canada including 42 hospitalizations, 53 active cases, 429 recovered cases, and 9 deaths. There are a further 18 confirmed cases in Nunavik, Quebec. There has been a resurgence of positive case numbers among First Nations individuals living on reserves in the past week.

Other National News:

- Pressure mounts on Health Canada to approve rapid COVID testing devices ([article](#))
- Why many Canadians support the Canada-U.S. border closure, despite the costs ([article](#))
- Federal health minister 'can't rule out' that Canada is facing a second wave ([article](#))
- Hajdu says future lockdowns should be targeted based on case tallies ([article](#))
- Strokes can be the first symptom of COVID-19 in young patients ([article](#))
- COVID-19 Experts say Canada's schools need better air ventilation ([article](#))
- Canada marks 10th consecutive day of over 500 new coronavirus cases ([article](#))
- Doctors keep a close eye on kids' mental health as school resumes during pandemic ([article](#))
- School rules that send children home with any symptoms however minor, leave Canadian parents scrambling or on standby ([article](#))
- Apprehension grows over congestion during school drop offs and pick-ups with parents ([article](#))
- Trudeau kicks off cabinet retreat, warns against relaxing guard on COVID-19 ([article](#))
- 'It's not too late' to prevent major COVID-19 resurgence in Canada, Hajdu says ([article](#))
- Early data shows Canadian children experience milder COVID-19 symptoms: study ([article](#))
- Almost half of kids in hospital with COVID-19 were admitted for other unrelated issues ([article](#))
- When it comes to the pandemic economy, we are not all in this together ([article](#))
- Canadians may be wasting more food at home during COVID-19, new report suggests ([article](#))
- BoC's Macklem warns rising inequality in jobs and income poses the biggest threat to economic recovery ([article](#))
- Doug Ford says quarantine system 'broken', accuses Ottawa of failing to enforce it ([article](#))
- COVID-19 has taken 'heavy toll' on female immigrants working in health care, report says ([article](#))

International Updates (since Sept 9, 2020 Partner Update)

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Published both a [Question and Answer](#) and [Considerations for school-related public health measures](#) in the context of COVID-19.
- Is pursuing the opportunities [digital tools](#) present to optimize contact tracing.
- Released [survey results](#) which reveal that the pandemic has resulted in major disruptions to health services.
- Compiled a number of [communication resources](#) including videos and social media cards. [Communication toolkits](#) are also available for healthcare facilities, leaders and journalists (bottom of page).

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: Families page](#)
- 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](#)