

## COVID-19 Update for Partners

October 7, 2020

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### Key messages from Dr. Gardner, Medical Officer of Health

#### 1. COVID-19 Alert Notice

In the last week (Sept. 27 – Oct. 3) Simcoe Muskoka recorded the highest weekly number of cases of COVID-19 (75) since the pandemic began, surpassing the previous high of 74 reached the week of May 3 - 9. Cases from last week were: 60% male, younger in age, and 50% were acquired via close contact with a case. This information highlights the change of the pandemic in our area compared to the week of May 3 when: 59% of cases were female, 39% of cases were 65+ years of age, and most cases were related to institutional outbreaks. Another difference important to highlight is that percent positivity is still much lower now than earlier in the pandemic when testing capacity was more limited.

#### 2. SMDHU Issues Section 22 Class Order

I have issued a class order under Section 22 of the Health Promotion and Protection Act (HPPA) to enforce COVID-19 self-isolation for anyone who is residing in Simcoe Muskoka, either permanently or temporarily, and who presents a high risk to transmit COVID-19 in our communities. I don't issue this order lightly. To protect individuals from the spread of COVID-19, it is my obligation as Medical Officer of Health to enforce public health guidelines and provincial directives and address individuals or groups who put others at risk.

Over the past few weeks, acting on my behalf, public health inspectors in Simcoe Muskoka have written 14 orders (nine to individuals and five to groups). At this time a class order is most appropriate so that we can quickly and efficiently deal with any and all individuals or groups who put others at risk. The order covers anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms, has tested positive for the virus, or who is a close contact of a positive case. It requires them to self-isolate for 14 days, or longer depending on symptoms or test results. Failure to comply with the class order can result in a fine of up to \$5,000 for every day or part of each day on which the offence occurs or continues.

More information about the class order is available on our [website](#) as well as directions on [how to self-isolate](#) and [how to care for someone who must self-isolate](#).

### **3. Local and Provincial Epidemiological Updates**

Local:

Visualization of local COVID-19 transmission is now available on our [webpages](#). As our case count continues to rise we thought it was important to provide a visual showing of how easy it is for COVID-19 to spread in our community. We used information from a local situation to create the visual showing how one person with COVID-19 can spread the virus through social activities and going to work. The visualization shows that several people across two communities were impacted by COVID-19.

Also, the SMDHU COVID-19 Dashboard on HealthSTATS page is being developed for the purpose of providing:

- An 'at a glance' view of the COVID-19 situation in Simcoe Muskoka for local monitoring and informing reopening decisions;
- The public's general sense of the status of COVID-19 and its transmission in Simcoe Muskoka
- Stakeholders and community partners with information they can use to determine the need and timing for ramping up/down of their activities.

Provincial:

[Provincial modelling](#) show Ontario could see as many as 1,000 cases per day in early October. In the first wave there were impacts on primary care, home care, and mental health and addiction services. Impacts on health care during the second wave depends on how the pandemic unfolds provincially (low scenario will have minimal demand on ICU capacity, while high scenario could completely overwhelm the healthcare system). It is anticipated COVID-19 demands on ICUs will impact other healthcare demands (e.g. scheduled surgeries, surgical backlog).

### **4. Temporary Changes to Contact Tracing in Simcoe Muskoka**

In light of the rapid and sustained increase of COVID-19 cases in Simcoe Muskoka we are making temporary changes to our surveillance and contact tracing work. In doing so, it is important to know that we will continue to reach all high risk contacts of complex cases. Some residents of Simcoe Muskoka who have been identified as high-risk contacts may be contacted by Public Health Ontario (PHO) as they will now be providing support to our COVID Response Team in managing this current influx of COVID-19 cases.

### **5. Changes to Clinical Service Delivery in Schools**

With consideration of our community priorities, the provincial standards for public health unit programming and our organizational capacity, we have made the difficult decision to restructure our work and the services we deliver in the school setting for remainder of 2020.

- Our Vision Screening Program will be suspended
- Oral health screening will not be available in the schools but will be provided by appointment only at SMDHU clinic settings
- Immunizations:
  - Current Grade 8 students (2007 birth year) who would have missed doses during the school closures this past spring will be provided with catch-up immunizations by

appointment at one of our offices or through a request for vaccine by their health care provider.

- Students now in Grade 7 will receive these immunizations in the 2021/2022 school year when we plan to offer the program to both Grade 7s and 8s as a means of ensuring that no students are missed.

A detailed parent letter will be provided for distribution to the Grade 8 parent community.

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

### Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status (As of Oct 7, 2020, 13:00)

Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
992	93	855	39
<b>Highlights:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>COVID-19 Alert Notice:</b> In the last week (Sept. 27 – Oct. 3) Simcoe Muskoka recorded the highest weekly number of cases of COVID-19 (75) since the pandemic began, surpassing the previous high of 74 reached the week of May 3 - 9.</li> <li>• In the last day, there have been 36 new cases, 20 additional recovered cases, one new hospitalization and no additional deaths.</li> <li>• Cases from last week were: 60% male, younger in age, and 50% were acquired via close contact with a case. This information highlights the change of the pandemic in our area compared to the week of May 3 when: 59% of cases were female, 39% of cases were 65+ years of age, and most cases were related to institutional outbreaks.</li> <li>• Another difference important to highlight is that percent positivity is still much lower now than earlier in the pandemic when testing capacity was more limited.</li> <li>• There are six ongoing outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka (long-term care = 3, workplace = 3).</li> <li>• There are 15 cases reported in 15 schools. No school outbreaks have been declared to date.</li> </ul> SMDHU <a href="#">COVID-19 HealthSTATS page</a> and the <a href="#">COVID-19 Case Explorer</a>			

### Local Media Updates (October 1-7, 2020)

- Simcoe Muskoka health unit can't keep up with contact tracing ([article](#))
- Dr. Gardner issues orders to enforce self-isolation rules ([article](#))
- Barrie teacher 'frustrated' with Catholic board's class-size claim ([article](#))
- Muskoka classrooms to be restructured as more students switch to online learning ([article](#))
- "This virus is silent": COVID-19 outbreak claims more lives at Simcoe Manor in Beeton ([article](#))
- Where to get tested for COVID-19 in Simcoe County ([article](#))
- Shorter line than expected at Huronia Road assessment centre after province moves to appointment-only system ([article](#))
- Gateway reopening its casinos this week- except Casino Rama ([article](#))
- Bradford Remembrance Day services will be streamed live this year ([article](#))
- Elmvale Arena to reopen Monday ([article](#))
- Phased approach planned for Stayner Arena reopening ([article](#))
- Catholic school board manages to reduce class size through restructuring ([article](#))
- Midland councillor in hot water over hosting parties during pandemic ([article](#))
- No symptoms? Stay away, say Midland COVID-19 assessment centre officials ([article](#))
- COVID-19: How to support online homeschooling through the pandemic ([article](#))

- COVID broke RVH's ten-year streak of balanced books ([article](#))
- 'You can save medical resources for COVID-19': Why Barrie residents are being urged to get a flu shot this year ([article](#))
- 'We are going to see more people this winter': COVID-19 challenges Guesthouse Shelter in Midland ([article](#))
- SMH COVID-19 assessment centre will be closed on Monday ([article](#))
- COVID-positive Scout leader quarantining in his backyard ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status			
Ontario (As of October 7, 2020, 10:30)			
Total cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
55,945	5,344	47,613	2,988
<b>Highlights:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the last day there has been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ An increase of 583 confirmed cases (12.8% increase)</li> <li>○ An increase of one new death</li> <li>○ An increase of 707 resolved cases.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• On October 2, Ontario saw the highest number of daily cases since the pandemic began (732).</li> <li>• Of current active cases, those aged under 40 years of age currently represent 61% of all active cases, with those aged 20-29 representing 27.5% of all active cases.</li> <li>• There are currently 195 people hospitalized, with 43 in the ICU including 28 on a ventilator.</li> <li>• There are currently 96 ongoing outbreaks in health care facilities in Ontario (long-term care homes = 48, retirement homes = 40, hospitals = 8).</li> </ul> <p>For more provincial data see: <a href="#">Province of Ontario COVID-19 case data</a> and <a href="#">Public Health Ontario Data Tool</a>, <a href="#">Public Health Ontario Daily Epidemiologic Summary</a>, <a href="#">Public Health Ontario Weekly Epidemiologic Summaries</a></p>			
Canada (As of Oct. 6, 2020 at 19:00 EDT)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
171,323	17,799	143,994	9,530
<b>Highlights:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the past week, the WHO indicates Canada had a large increase in new cases and new deaths compared with the previous week.</li> <li>• In the last day, there was an increase of 2,363 new cases reported in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ QC (1,364), ON (548), AB (276), BC (102), MB (55), SK (16) and NB (2)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In the last day, 26 new deaths were reported in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ QC (15), ON (7), BC (2), AB (1), and MB (1)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Schools, child care centres, long-term care and retirement homes accounted for the highest number of outbreaks in September.</li> </ul> <p>The following are national highlights from the last published reporting week of September 20-16:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 62% of cases were in people under 40 years of age, with those 20-29 years of age accounting for 27% of all cases.</li> <li>• A notable increase in infection rates was observed in people 19 years of age and younger and in those 80 years of age and older.</li> <li>• The number of cases admitted to ICU that required ventilation within the first two weeks of September exceeded those reported in the month of August.</li> <li>• Since mid-September, testing has increased substantially across Canada with the average number of people tested daily continuing to increase.</li> </ul>			

- The average percent positivity has increased to 1.7% of people tested, compared to 1.4% of people tested in the previous week.
- According to forecasting, between 168,250 to 176,200 cumulative cases and 9,310 to 9,410 cumulative deaths are expected by October 10, 2020.

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

<b>Global</b> (As of October 7, 2020 at 10:43 CEST)	
<b>Confirmed Cases</b>	<b>Confirmed Deaths</b>
35,537,491	1,042,798
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The total number of weekly cases has remained stable for the past three weeks with considerable variation on a country by country basis.</li> <li>• The number of new cases is rising again, with the second wave already exceeding previous peaks in some areas (most notably within the European Region).</li> <li>• In the past week, the global Regions of the Americas, South-East Asia and Europe account for 91% of all new cases.</li> <li>• Yesterday, 237,085 new cases COVID-19 and 4,072 new deaths were reported around the world, with the highest number of new cases in India, USA, the UK, Brazil, and Russia and the highest number of deaths in India, Argentina, USA, Brazil, and Iran.</li> <li>• In the last week, India, USA, Brazil, Argentina and France had the most new cases (representing 60% of all new cases) and India, Argentina, USA, Brazil, and Mexico and had the most new deaths.</li> <li>• In the last week Israel registered the highest incidence (3,717 new cases per 1 million population).</li> <li>• Globally, the highest percentage of cases have been reported in the 25-39 age group. However, the percentage of deaths increases with age, with approximately 75% of all deaths in people ages 65 years and above.</li> </ul> <p><a href="#">WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard</a>; Weekly Epidemiological Update (<a href="#">October 5</a>); <a href="#">Previous Situation Reports</a></p>	

## Provincial, National and Global Updates

### **Provincial Updates** (since Sept. 30, 2020 Partner Update)

#### The Ontario government:

- Is building a modern, connected and comprehensive mental health and addictions system ([news release](#))
- Announced Ontario surpasses four million COVID-19 tests ([news release](#))
- Supports small main street businesses with \$60 million in funding through PPE grant ([news release](#))
- Increased mental health funding for postsecondary students ([news release](#))
- Announced new COVID-19 precautions at long-term care homes ([news release](#))
- Implements additional public health and testing measures to keep people safe ([news release](#))
- Provides \$461 million to temporarily enhance wages for personal support workers ([news release](#))
- Revised COVID-19 screening guidance for schools and child care ([news release](#))
- Modernizes social assistance to help more people re-enter the workforce ([news release](#))
- Released \$35 million to hire more staff, improve remote learning targeted communities ([news release](#)) ([backgrounder](#))

#### Other Provincial News:

- Mixed messaging on COVID-19 pandemic is leading to distrust in Ontario, experts say ([article](#))
- Private clinics allow people to bypass COVID-19 testing line for a fee ([article](#))
- Ontario unveils PPE grants for small business, alcohol takeout plan as pressure mounts with rising COVID-19 cases ([article](#))
- Ontario implementing stricter public health measures as province sees record-high new cases ([article](#))
- Province declares all COVID assessment centres be appointment only, imposes mandatory masks across Ontario ([article](#))
- Ontario wants to know if you're following the COVID-19 prevention rules ([article](#))
- Ottawa's health-care system is in crisis, says medical officer of health ([article](#))
- Kid's got a runny nose? COVID-19 testing no longer required under Ontario screening rules ([article](#))
- "A trail of havoc": Bar crawl by two men blamed as five Ottawa restaurants shut down over COVID fears ([article](#))
- Public health officials urge people to stick to own household but leave wiggle room for those living alone ([article](#))
- Private clinics now allow people to bypass COVID-19 testing line for a fee ([article](#))

#### **National Updates** (since Sept. 30, 2020 Partner Update)

##### The Government of Canada:

- Signs new agreement for COVID-19 rapid tests ([press release](#))
- Release Prime Minister's [remarks](#) updating Canadians on support available to them during COVID-19
- Statements from chief Public Officer of Canada on [October 6, 2020](#), [October 5, 2020](#), [October 4, 2020](#), [October 3, 2020](#), [October 2, 2020](#)
- Announced infrastructure plan to create jobs and grow the economy ([remarks](#))
- Announced investments for the Regional Relief and Recovery Fund and for women's organizations ([remarks](#))
- Accelerate investments in shelters, transition housing and other organizations providing gender-based violence supports and service ([news release](#))
- Announced legislation to support new recovery benefits and extend funding for COVID-19 measures receives Royal Assent ([news release](#))

##### Other National News:

- Theresa Tam urges caution for celebrating Thanksgiving, but no hard rules ([article](#))
- Why vaccine nationalism could prolong the COVID-19 pandemic ([article](#))
- Applications opened for new sick leave and caregiver benefit ([article](#))
- 'It just wears you down': Essential workers describe pandemic struggles, coping strategies ([article](#))
- COVID-19 in Indigenous communities: 'alarming rise' in new and active cases ([article](#))
- Canadian military reports 24 active COVID cases in the ranks ([article](#))
- Nova Scotia Premier says Atlantic bubble won't reopen to rest of Canada 'any time soon' ([article](#))
- A dream or an emotional roller-coaster? Working from home has range of mental health effects ([article](#))
- Pandemic sapping the joy out of recess, lunchtime ([article](#))
- Travel experts warn out-of-country medical insurance may be insufficient for COVID-related illnesses ([article](#))
- Teachers concerned about their health, quality of education as they deal with challenges of COVID-19 pandemic ([article](#))

- Air Canada views rapid testing kits as a safe alternative to a 14-day quarantine ([article](#))
- Canadians forced to miss work due to COVID-19 can start applying for new federal aid ([article](#))
- Why a 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of COVID-19 is more dangerous than it looks ([article](#))
- Scouts Canada offers free online resource to help kids be resilient ([article](#))
- COVID-19: Data suggests Canadians are less willing to fly during pandemic than Americans ([article](#))
- COVID-19: Making sense of coronavirus tests, terminology ([article](#))
- For many workers, reduced hours or pay cuts beat pandemic layoffs ([article](#))

### **International Updates** (since Sept. 30, 2020 Partner Update)

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Published [interim guidance](#) highlighting the value of antigen based rapid diagnostic tests in areas where community transmission is widespread and where nucleic acid amplification-based diagnostic testing is either unavailable or where test results are significantly delayed.
- Director-General highlighted through the ACT Accelerator and COVAX (168 countries are participating), any vaccines that are proven to be safe and effective will be rolled out equitably across the world.
- Launched a [data portal](#) that will compile data on global indicators for monitoring the health and well-being of people aged 60 and over. Globally, older persons and those receiving long term care, accounts for a majority of COVID-19 severe cases and deaths.
- Is organizing an advocacy event “[Big Event for Mental Health](#)” on October 10, World Mental Health Day. Billions of people around the world have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which is having an added impact on people’s mental health. The event will focus on the urgent need to address the world’s chronic under-investment in mental health – a problem that has been thrown into the spotlight during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- With the United Nations General Assembly held a [high-level event](#) that highlighted the need for sustainable health emergency preparedness as COVID-19 will not be the world’s last health emergency.

## **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](#) updated with the new Section 22 information, and new expander bar for [local example of how COVID-19 can spread easily from person to person](#)
  - [Return to School](#)
    - [Families page](#) was fully updated
    - [School Administrators and educators](#) was fully updated with content and resources including:
      - [Student screening tool](#)
      - [Employee/visitor screening tool](#)
      - [My child did not pass the COVID-19 daily screening. Now what?](#) (includes return to school guidelines for students)
      - [When COVID-19 symptoms develop at school or child care](#)
      - [School Protocol when Students, Staff or Visitors tests positive for COVID-19](#)
      - [School Protocol When COVID-19 Outbreak is Declared](#)
      - [Return to School Protocol for Staff with COVID-19 Symptoms](#)
      - [Sample Return to school attestation form](#)
  - [Assessment Centres and Testing](#)



- Updated: Barrie RVH testing facilities at 29 Sperling
  - Updated: Drive thru at RVH campus is closed
  - [Reopening your Business Safely](#) webpage fully updated
  - [Revised Food Premise Guidance Document](#)
- 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:**

- Please note Health Connection will be closed on Thanksgiving Monday.
- 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](#)