

## COVID-19 Update for Partners

October 21, 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. **School Immunization program update**

**Current Grade 8 students** who have not completed their series of Hep B, HPV and meningitis immunizations due to COVID-19 will be able to get them at health unit offices by appointment only beginning November 2. Information letters are coming out through schools and the information has been [posted on our Immunization pages](#) on our website.

**Current Grade 7 students** will not be offered immunizations this school year. Immunization catch-up school-based clinics will be offered to these students during the 2021/22 school year.

#### 2. **Flu shots, vaccine availability**

Flu vaccines have been arriving from manufacturers since late September and will continue through November with priority deliveries made first for long-term care homes, hospitals and other vulnerable care settings. Broader community distribution of the flu shot, including to primary care providers and pharmacies is currently being rolled out across the province. This takes several weeks given the large number of locations where flu vaccine is administered. So if your healthcare setting doesn't have them yet they will be receiving them over the coming weeks and we urge everyone to get vaccinated to protect themselves. It's an important year to get one with COVID-19 circulating as well. We now have 2020 influenza vaccine information posted on our website [Immunization pages](#) including information on where to get your flu shot.

#### 3. **Simcoe Muskoka On The Move – active school transportation initiative**

This week we launched a new web section promoting active school travel as a safe and healthy choice for students and families. Walking or wheeling to and from school is a great way to get exercise, fresh air and social time while still physically distancing from others which is even more important during the COVID-19 pandemic. Active school transportation is also good for the environment, reducing traffic that contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and it helps to fight climate change.

The project is a collaboration with several local school boards, municipalities and community partners. Visit the [On the Move pages](#) under physical activity on our website for more information and tips to keep your children active.

#### 4. **Halloween Reminder**

Choosing not to trick-or-treat, nor to hand out candy is the most cautious approach this year; an alternative approach to celebrate at home could include virtual costume contests, candy scavenger hunt, and pumpkin carving.

If you choose to participate in trick-or-treating and handing out candy we have a full list of recommendations on our [website](#) - but some of the most important include:

- Avoid gatherings with people outside of your household.
- Stay home if feeling ill even if you have mild symptoms, or if you are at higher risk for Serious illness from COVID-19.
- Only go out with members of your direct household.
- Only trick-or-treat outside.
- Both trick-or-treaters and people handing out candy should wear a face covering.

#### 5. **Remembrance Day Ceremonies**

The importance of honouring our fallen heroes in service of their country and the courage of those who still serve is vital to each family and community in Simcoe Muskoka. However SMDHU and the Province of Ontario are experiencing a second wave of the pandemic. We recommend community members use virtual options for taking part in Remembrance Day ceremonies this year, through online or broadcast services to best protect the health of veterans and community members.

Organizers proceeding with an in-person ceremony risk community transmission of COVID-19. Limit attendees to a token number. Maintain physical distance of no less than 2 metres (6 feet) by all participants at all times. Face coverings should be worn at all times. It is possible that public gatherings may be further restricted in the coming days/weeks. Organizers should be sure to check the province's Ontario regulations to monitor legal compliance and public health precautions going forward.

For more information on SMDHU public health recommendations for the 2020 Poppy Campaign, please see the [letter](#) we sent to the Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Provincial Command found in the [Remembrance Day section](#) on the COVID-19 main website page.

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

### **Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status (As of Oct 21, 2020, 13:00)**

<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>Active Cases</b>	<b>Recovered</b>	<b>Deaths</b>
1207	142	1,012	47
<b>Highlights:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>COVID-19 Alert Notice:</b> There have already been 86 cases reported by the health unit for the current week, starting October 18<sup>th</sup> (the highest weekly number of cases thus far occurred the</li></ul>			

week of October 4-10 with 134 cases). There have already been more cases reported in October than any other month since the start of the pandemic.

- In the last day there have been 26 new cases, no new deaths and 13 recoveries reported.
- There are currently five ongoing outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka, two in long-term care, two in workplaces, and one in a congregate setting.
- There have been 30 students/staff cases reported in 27 elementary and secondary schools with no outbreaks declared to date.
- Of cases that are currently active, 35% are in people under 35 years of age, 35% in people 35 to 64 years of age and 30% in those 65 years of age and older. This indicates an increase in cases in older residents.

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

## Local Media Updates (October 15-21, 2020)

- Medical officer of health cautions Muskoka as COVID-19 case count rises ([article](#))
- Dozens of programs benefitting from Emergency Community Support Fund ([article](#))
- Local family health teams win pair of provincial awards ([article](#))
- Council turns down free bus rides for high school students due to safety, capacity concerns ([article](#))
- Town of New Tecumseth considering banning hot spot residents from municipal recreation facilities ([article](#))
- COVID case in Bradford raises reporting questions ([article](#))
- Local health unit not sure how to interpret missed testing mark by the province ([article](#))
- COVID-19 has made the homeless problem in Collingwood worse ([article](#))
- Is there any way to stop future COVID-19 waves in Simcoe-Muskoka? ([article](#))
- Flattening the curve (again) will take time and restrictions, says top doc ([article](#))
- All bets are off as Casino Rama confronts an uncertain future ([article](#))
- These seniors aren't letting pandemic slow them down ([article](#))
- New COVID-19 assessment centre at Rotary Place 'running very well' ([article](#))
- Simcoe County parents keep sick children at home longer ([article](#))
- Area Provincial Offences Office will stay closed until January ([article](#))
- Dorset lab restrictions in COVID-19 concern Muskoka Watershed Council ([article](#))
- Bracebridge McDonald's employee tests positive for COVID-19 ([article](#))
- COVID-19 increasing Muskoka's boat traffic and marine incidents OPP says ([article](#))

## Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status

Ontario (As of October 21, 2020, 10:30)			
Total cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
66,686	6,299	57,325	3,062
<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 790 confirmed cases</li> <li>○ An increase of 719 resolved cases</li> <li>○ An increase of 9 deaths</li> </ul> </li> <li>• There are currently 260 people hospitalized, with 71 in ICU.</li> <li>• There are currently 143 ongoing outbreaks in health care facilities in Ontario (long-term care homes = 80, retirement homes = 47, hospitals = 16).</li> </ul>			

- In the last reporting week (October 4-10) the greatest number of cases and outbreaks were reported since the pandemic began with total of 5,059 cases and 127 outbreaks, compared to the previous peak in April which reported 4,267 cases and 91 outbreaks.
- The number of cases in those aged 80 years and over is increasing faster than other age groups again.

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](#)

<b>Canada</b> (As of Oct. 20, 2020 at 19:00 EDT)			
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>Active Cases</b>	<b>Recovered</b>	<b>Deaths</b>
203,688	22,151 (10.9%)	171,743 (84.3%)	9,794 (4.8%)

**Highlights:**

- As of October 20<sup>th</sup>, there were 2,252 new cases reported in:
  - ON (821), QC (787), AB (323), BC (157), MB (109), SK (43) and PEI (1)
- As of October 20<sup>th</sup>, 16 new deaths were reported in:
  - QC (11), ON (3), BC (1), and AB (1)

The following are national highlights from the last published reporting week of October 4-10:

- The number of new cases increased by 21% over the previous week and 79% compared with two weeks prior.
- The number of reported hospitalizations has been steadily increasing since mid-September.
- There was a continued increase in the number of deaths reported, resulting in an increase in the average number of daily deaths (n=21) compared to the previous week (n=12).
- New cases were reported in all provinces.
- 56% of cases were under the age of 40.
- According to forecasting, between 209,900 to 219,600 cumulative cases and 9,822 to 9,933 cumulative deaths are expected by October 25, 2020.

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

<b>Global</b> (As of October 21, 2020 at 10:27 CEST)	
<b>Confirmed Cases</b>	<b>Confirmed Deaths</b>
40,455,651	1,119,431

- The incidence of new COVID-19 cases continues to accelerate, while the incidence of new deaths remains stable.
- The highest number of daily cases reported thus far during the pandemic occurred October 17 with over 400,000 cases occurring in one day.
- Yesterday, 297,815 new cases COVID-19 and 4,039 new deaths were reported around the world, with the highest number of new cases in USA, India, UK, Russia and Brazil and the highest number of deaths in India, USA, Argentina, Iran and Brazil.
- In the last week, India, USA, France Brazil, and the UK had the most new cases and India, USA, Brazil, Argentina, and Mexico had the most new deaths.
- The European Region is experiencing a rapid increase in cases and deaths, the highest increase compared to all other regions in the most recent reporting week. France, the UK, Russia, Czechia and Italy continue to report a high incidence of new cases. Slovenia reported a 150% increase in cases this week (n=4890) and 1924 deaths, compared to only one death last week.

- In the Region of the Americas, USA, Brazil, Argentina, Colombia and Mexico continue to register the highest number of weekly new cases, while the highest incidence of new cases per million population is being reported in Argentina, Bahamas, Costa Rica and Saint Martin (more than 1600 cases per million from Oct. 11-18).

[WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard](#); Weekly Epidemiological Update ([October 18](#)); [Previous Situation Reports](#)

## Provincial, National and Global Updates

### **Provincial Updates** (since Oct. 14, 2020 Partner Update)

#### The Ontario government:

- Ontario protects workers, volunteers and organizations who make honest efforts to follow COVID-19 public health guidelines and laws ([news release](#))
- Ontario extends COVID-19 orders to protect the public ([news release](#))
- Ontario making government services more convenient, reliable and accessible during COVID-19 and beyond ([news release](#))
- Ontario expanding mental health services for children and youth ([news release](#))
- Support for Ontario Onwards: Ontario's COVID-19 Action Plan for a people-focused government ([backgrounder](#))
- Stay safe and follow public health advice this Halloween ([news release](#))
- York Region added to list of areas of higher community spread ([news release](#))

#### Other Provincial News:

- Some Ontario teens starting to adapt to stress from COVID-19 pandemic, research finds ([article](#))
- Ontario Premier Doug Ford appeals for people with symptoms in COVID-19 hot spots to get tested ([article](#))
- 'Completely unfair': Small Ontario gym owners frustrated they must remain closed as dance studios reopen ([article](#))
- Less paper, no field trips, but more time outdoors. How COVID-19 has changed the classroom experience ([article](#))
- Ontarians unclear on how to access social support during pandemic, survey finds ([article](#))
- Ontario restaurants near virus hot spots weigh safety-vs-profit with locals-only dining ([article](#))
- How one Ontario region has kept its COVID-19 death rate at zero ([article](#))
- Toronto Public Health to publish COVID-19 testing positivity data by neighbourhood ([article](#))
- Ontario's agricultural fairs delayed until 2021, but organizers find ways to fill the gap ([article](#))
- Ontario hasn't hit its testing target, Premier says no one is seeking testing ([article](#))

### **National Updates** (since Oct. 14, 2020 Partner Update)

#### The Government of Canada:

- Remarks from Chief Public Officer of Canada: [October 20, 2020](#) , [October 19, 2020](#) ,[October 18, 2020](#) ,[October 17, 2020](#) ,[October 16, 2020](#)
- Prime Minister's [remarks](#) on the measures taken to support Canadians during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Government of Canada launches new COVID-19-related challenges to help reduce environmental impact of PPE in Canada ([news release](#))

#### Other National News:

- Why getting COVID-19 vaccines approved in Canada won't be 'overnight solution' to pandemic ([article](#))
- Psychologists worry about mental health in first full COVID-19 winter ([article](#))
- Lack of antidotes called 'serious ethical dilemma' for COVID-19 vaccine challenge trial ([article](#))
- EU removes Canadians from list of approved travelers because of COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Fake news creates serious issues for battling pandemic, Tam says ([article](#))
- School board struggle with software tech issues as teachers adapt to virtual learning ([article](#))
- How to determine a hand sanitizer is safe to use ([video](#))
- Trudeau hands out advice on Halloween, saying 'sacrifice' necessary for many ([article](#))
- Virtual emergency rooms bridge gap between health-care professionals, patients amid pandemic ([article](#))
- Chief public health officer calls for continued 'collective effort' against COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Two reports suggest pandemic intensifying inequities as poor get poorer ([article](#))
- Teen uses Instagram to help kids with mental health during COVID-19 ([article](#))
- A closer look at Canada's homegrown COVID-19 vaccine candidates ([article](#))
- How dissecting superspreading events can help people take COVID-19 measures seriously ([article](#))
- Heavier breathing, spewing droplets, poor ventilation add to gyms; superspreading risk ([article](#))
- Canadians spend more money and time online during pandemic StatsCan says ([article](#))
- Canada-U.S. border closure extended until November ([article](#))

#### ***International Updates*** (since Oct. 14, 2020 Partner Update)

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Released interim results from the [Solidarity Therapeutics Trial](#) (coordinated by WHO), which indicate that remdesivir, hydroxychloroquine, lopinavir/ritonavir and interferon regimens appear to have little or no effect on 28-day mortality or the in-hospital course of COVID-19 among hospitalized patients.
- Is partnering with Kim Sledge and the World We Want to [re-record the unity anthem, "We Are Family"](#), in response to COVID-19 and to bring focus on global public health needs. A special edition cover of Sister Sledge's hit "We Are Family" will be released in a new and inspiring call for global solidarity to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and to generate proceeds to address the most pressing global health challenges of our time. In support of the song's release, people worldwide are invited to submit videos of themselves singing We Are Family for inclusion in a compilation video for release on December 7, 2020.
- Director General expressed concern during the [weekly media briefing](#) around the concept of reaching so-called "herd immunity" by the letting the virus spread, stating: "Never in the history of public health has herd immunity been used as a strategy for responding to an outbreak, let alone a pandemic. It is scientifically and ethically problematic."
- Released a joint statement on the [Impact of COVID-19 on people's livelihoods, their health and our food systems](#). The pandemic has been affecting the entire food system and has laid bare its fragility. According to the [policy brief](#) published by the United Nations, in the long run, we face possible disruptions to the functioning of food systems, with severe consequences for health and nutrition.
- Published a [Handbook for public health capacity-building at ground crossings and cross-border collaboration](#).
- Region of the Americas released guidance on [Resuming non-essential international travel in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

## 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 Page](#)

- [Updated: How to have a safe and happy Halloween](#)
- [Added: Remembrance Day Ceremonies](#)
- [Added: Hunting during COVID-19](#)
- [Revised: Wearing a face covering in all indoor spaces](#)

### [Return to School](#)

- [School Administrators and Educators](#)
- [Revised: COVID 19: SMDHU Supplemental Guidance Document for School Settings English/French](#)

### [Assessment Centres and Testing](#)

- [Updated: Follow-up Instructions for Individuals Tested for COVID-19.](#)
- 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](#)