

COVID-19 Update for Partners

November 4, 2020

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Key messages from Dr. Gardner, Medical Officer of Health

Local COVID-19 Trends

- The highest number of new cases of COVID-19 is occurring in the southern municipalities within Simcoe County. Reasons for this include commuting to the GTA to and from work, and workplace related exposures. All workers must be diligent practicing physical distancing and wearing a mask when commuting with others from outside of your household.
- We are also continuing to see clusters of cases associated with multi-unit housing and family get-togethers. At this time it is of increased importance to only have close contact with your immediate household. If you plan to gather with family, friends, neighbours outside of your immediate household, maintain physical distance, wear masks and meet outdoors.
- The average age of people being diagnosed with COVID-19 is rising, up to 44 years of age in October compared to 33 years of age in September.
- We have released Thanksgiving case details on our [HealthSTATS page](#). This data shows SMDHU had an additional 340 cases for a cumulative total of 1,346 cases from October 9 to October 30 inclusive.
 - Of these 340 cases, 47 (14%) can be attributed to 23 separate Thanksgiving gatherings. An additional 15 identified confirmed cases outside of our area are also connected to these gatherings. Most gatherings consisted of members from the same household along with visiting extended family members. Most cases (43%) are between the ages of 45 to 64 years.

Turning the tide on the second wave - Key messages

- **Limit your close contacts** to the people you can hug and touch without physical distancing (e.g. those in your immediate household or one other family for those who live alone). For all other interactions maintain a physical distance of two metres (six feet).
- **Limit sharing rides**, carpooling to two people in a vehicle if you are not from the same household. Both passengers need to wear a mask for the duration of the trip and the passenger should sit in the back, passenger-side seat to ensure proper distance from the driver.

- Minimize trips in public settings avoiding non-essential trips and avoid travel outside your community if possible.
- **Screen school-age children** for symptoms of COVID-19 every day before they leave for school; if a child has even one symptom, they should stay home and self-isolate. Visit [COVID-19 school pages](#) on health unit website for information for school aged children, what to expect if there is a case at a school and more.
- **Screen yourself** for symptoms of COVID-19 every day before you leave for work. If you have even one symptom, you should stay home and self-isolate.
- **Wear a face covering** in all indoor public spaces such as businesses, organizations, or riding on public transit. Also wear a face covering when physical distancing is not possible. Make sure it fits. Learn how to wear it properly and follow the do's and don'ts found on our [website](#).

New COVID-19 Response Framework released

The new provincial framework takes a gradual approach that includes introducing preventative measures earlier to help avoid broader closures and allows for additional public health and workplace safety measures to be introduced or removed incrementally. Each public health unit region is categorized into five levels: Green-Prevent, Yellow-Protect, Orange-Restrict, Red-Control, and Lockdown being a measure of last and urgent resort. Each level outlines public health and workplace safety measures to implement. These include targeted measures for specific sectors, institutions and other settings.

Class order issued for Simcoe Muskoka long-term care homes

In recent weeks, we have seen significant and continually increasing incidence of COVID-19. To protect our most vulnerable, a Section 22 class order has been issued to immediately restrict all indoor visits at long-term care homes to one essential visitor at a time and suspend general visiting. The class order also limits trips outside of homes to those related to health care. The order applies to all long-term care homes in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka but does not apply to retirement homes or other congregate care settings at this time.

- **Essential visitors** are people who are not members of a facility's staff but are performing essential support services such as healthcare or maintenance; a person visiting a very ill or palliative resident; or a caregiver designated by the resident or their substitute decision maker who comes in to provide direct care and support to the resident. This ensures that a family member or designate who comes in to help a resident with their meals, personal hygiene, mental stimulation, communications or other needs will not be prevented from visiting. A maximum of two caregivers may be designated as essential for a resident at this time.
- A news release has been issued and details about the order are posted on our [website](#).

Flu vaccine availability

Pharmacies and healthcare providers are awaiting further shipments of flu vaccine. Flu vaccinations usually take place well into November and December so if you aren't able to get one yet please be advised that more vaccine will be coming in the weeks ahead. Public uptake of the flu shot has been very good this year with people are recognizing the value of it. We continue to encourage everyone to get vaccinated as they become available.

COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard

The current overall status of the COVID-19 pandemic in our area as depicted by the [COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard \(on our HealthSTATS pages\)](#) is **YELLOW**

- Virus spread and containment: **Red**

- Laboratory testing: **Red**
- Health system capacity: **Yellow**
- Public health system capacity: **Yellow**

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

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status (As of Nov 4, 2020, 13:00)

Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
1,471	205	1,210	50

Highlights:

- For the week beginning October 25, there were 124 new cases reported by the health unit, which was the highest number of cases reported in a single week since the start of the pandemic.
- There have already been 101 new cases reported for the current week, beginning November 1st.
- There were more than 450 new cases reported in October, which was more than double what was reported in any previous month.
- Since the last update there have been an additional 145 people with confirmed cases of COVID-19 and one person has died.
- There are 45 more active cases of COVID-19 in Simcoe Muskoka today than there were on the same day last week.
- In the last day there have been 17 new cases, no new deaths and 18 recoveries reported.
- There are currently six people hospitalized, with one person in ICU.
- There are currently 13 ongoing outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka (seven more than last week), four in workplaces, three each in retirement homes and educational settings, and one each in a long-term care home, congregate setting and community setting.
- In October, there was a significant increase in cases in all age groups, with those 80 years of age and older have the most cases, which has not occurred since April 2020. Those aged 18-34 years also continue to have a high number of cases compared to the other age groups.
- Of cases that are currently active:
 - 38% are in people under 35 years of age (increase from 32.5% from the previous week);
 - 35% are in people 35 to 64 years of age (decrease from 40% from the previous week); and
 - 27% are in 65 years of age and older (the same as the previous week).

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

Local Media Updates (Since Oct. 28, 2020 Partner Update)

- November 12, Ask an expert all your burning questions about COVID-19 in the workplace ([new release](#))
- COVID forces Barrie MPs to rethink expenses while keeping people safe ([article](#))
- Delay in reporting Banting COVID case due to testing: health unit ([article](#))
- COVID's second wave signals need to help Barrie's economy ([article](#))
- More COVID restrictions would 'suit region well,' says Gardner ([article](#))
- Health unit declares outbreak at Barrie elementary school ([article](#))
- Local health unit dealing with slew of outbreaks including schools, daycare, hair salon ([article](#))
- Long-term care visits restricted to one essential visitor at a time under new health unit order ([article](#))
- Collingwood COVID test site moves to Legion parking lot ([article](#))

- Survey shows what Ontario travelers think about Huntsville in COVID-19 era ([article](#))
- COVID-19: Here's how a local food diet can make you and your community healthier ([article](#))
- Local OPP elevates mental health resources amid COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Local teen shares tips on beating those pandemic blues ([article](#))
- Move to hybrid school model 'a complete surprise' to local teachers, officials ([article](#))
- Pandemic a factor as 2020 national poppy drive launches ([article](#))
- Barrie to offer ice time, other pre-booked activities, at select recreation facilities ([article](#))
- Simcoe Manor in Beeton has now lost 10 residents to COVID-19 ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status			
Ontario (As of November 4, 2020, 10:30)			
Total cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
79,692	8,321	68,189	3,182
Highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last week there have been over 6,800 people infected with COVID-19 and almost 75 people have died. • There are almost 850 more active cases today than there were on the same day last week. • In the last day there has been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ An increase of 987 confirmed cases; ○ An increase of 945 resolved cases; and ○ An increase of 16 deaths. • There are currently 367 people hospitalized, with 75 in ICU and 44 in ICU on a ventilator. • As of November 3, 2020, there are 152 ongoing outbreaks in health care facilities in Ontario, [long-term care homes (76), retirement homes (56) and hospitals (19)]. • Highlights from the last reporting week (Oct. 18-24): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 51% of cases were exposed through close contact with a confirmed case or associated with an outbreak while 38% of cases were exposed to an unknown source; ○ The number of ongoing long-term care home outbreaks continued to increase as did the number of outbreak associated cases among longterm care home residents (82.5% increase); ○ There were 453 outbreaks in the province, with 25% (n=114) in workplaces (representing 33 cases), 18% (n=83) in long-term care homes (representing 312 cases), and 17% (n=78) in childcare, elementary and secondary schools (representing 31 cases); ○ 658 school-aged children were diagnosed with a confirmed case of COVID-19; and ○ Neighbourhoods with the highest level of ethnic diversity have the highest rate and number of cases of COVID-19, with 86% of cases from neighbourhoods with the highest level of ethnic diversity reported by Toronto, Peel Region and York Region. <p>For more provincial data see: Province of Ontario COVID-19 case data and Public Health Ontario Data Tool, Public Health Ontario Daily Epidemiologic Summaries, Public Health Ontario Weekly Epidemiologic Summaries</p>			
Canada (As of Nov. 3, 2020 at 19:00 EDT)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
244,935	31,147	203,509	10,279
Highlights: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last week, over 22,000 people in Canada have tested positive for COVID-19 and over 250 people have died as a result of COVID-19. • On November 3rd Canada reported: 			

- 2,974 new cases [reported in ON (1,050), QC (871), AB (570), BC (299), MB (102), SK (81), and NS (1)]; and
- 71 new deaths [reported in QC (34), ON (14), AB (15), MB (5), and BC (3)].
- The following are national highlights from the last published reporting week of Oct. 18-24:
 - An average of 2,552 new daily cases reported, representing a 14% increase in comparison to the previous week;
 - The average number of daily reported deaths (25) was also higher than the average from the previous week (20);
 - Although the median age of new cases has been slowly increasing in recent weeks, the majority of new cases continue to be in the younger age groups;
 - Incidence rates of COVID-19 continue to be the highest in adults 20-29 years of age, however incidence rates decreased in the last week in all age groups except those 80 years of age and older who experienced a notable increase compared to the previous week;
 - 56% of reported cases were exposed to COVID-19 by an unknown source;
 - The daily number of reported hospitalizations and people with COVID-19 in ICU continues to increase, with each increasing 11% over the last reporting week;
 - The average number of people tested daily decreased, however the average positivity rate increased to 4.0% of people tested compared to 3.1% the previous week;
 - 51% of people were exposed to COVID-19 from a known case of COVID-19 and 49% of people were exposed to COVID-19 by an unknown source; and
 - According to forecasting, between 251,800 to 262,00 cumulative cases and 10,285 to 10,400 cumulative deaths are expected by November 8, 2020.

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

Global (As of November 4, 2020 at 9:58 CET)	
Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Deaths
47,059,867	1,207,327
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the last day, almost 430,000 more people tested positive for COVID-19 and 5,322 more people died as a result of COVID-19. • In the past week, over 3.5 million new cases and over 45,000 deaths have been reported globally. • In the past week the European Region is reporting the highest incidence of new cases (about half of global new cases) and a substantial rise in the number of new deaths (a 46% increase compared with the previous week). • Despite regional variations, the countries reporting the highest number of cases in the past week remain the same as in the previous four weeks: The United States of America, India and France. • Since the start of the pandemic nine countries have reported more than 1 million confirmed cases (United States, India, Brazil, Russian Federation, France, Spain, Argentina, Colombia, and the United Kingdom) and five countries have reported over 40,000 cumulative deaths (United States, Brazil, India, Mexico, and the United Kingdom). • Although the Region of the Americas as a whole reported a 13% rise in cases compared with last week (Figure 6), declines were observed in many countries, especially in South America. The United States of America, Brazil, and Argentina continue to report the highest number of new cases. • The overall change in the number of new deaths being reported in the Region of the Americas (+2%), is much lower than the rapid rise seen in the European Region. 	
WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard ; Weekly Epidemiological Update (October 27); Previous Situation Reports	

Provincial Updates

The Ontario government:

- Ontario releases COVID-19 response framework to help keep the province safe and open ([news release](#))
- Province increasing direct care for long-term care residents to four hours per day ([news release](#))
- Ontario launching COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream ([news release](#))
- Ontario helps protect most vulnerable people across the province ([news release](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Experts worry Ontario's new COVID-19 guidelines set threshold for closure, lockdown too high ([article](#))
- Ontario reports 948 more COVID-19 cases as new long-term care standard coming ([article](#))
- Why Ontario hospitals are full to bursting, despite few COVID-19 patients ([article](#))
- Mental health a top concern as pandemic drags on ([article](#))
- Government to commit to average four-hour care standard in long-term care ([article](#))
- Restaurants ask province to explain restrictions, show COVID-19 data ([article](#))
- Front-line workers who left LTC homes in May won't come back, commission hears ([article](#))
- Electricity rates climb as of Sunday ([article](#))
- Take a walk on the woolly side to ease pandemic stress ([article](#))
- New provincial COVID-19 modelling data shows second wave slowing but we're not out of the woods ([article](#))
- Ontario on track to avoid worst-case COVID-19 scenario modelling shows ([video](#))
- Premier Doug Ford's Etobicoke constituency declares COVID-19 outbreak ([article](#))
- At least 44 COVID-19 cases linked to Vaughan wedding ([article](#))

National Updates

The Government of Canada:

- Remarks from Chief Public Officer/Deputy Chief Public Health Officer of Canada: [November 3, 2020](#), [November 2, 2020](#), [November 1, 2020](#), [October 31, 2020](#), [October 29, 2020](#), [October 28, 2020](#)
- Chief Public Health Officer of Canada Statement on Preliminary Guidance from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) on key populations for early COVID-19 vaccination ([statement](#))
- Minister Ng announces new measure to help Canadian small businesses access global markets amid COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Prime Minister's [remarks](#) announcing support for businesses and farmers
- Government of Canada announces new mandatory requirements for travellers to Canada ([news release](#))
- Government introduces legislation for new, targeted support to help businesses through pandemic ([news release](#))
- Government of Canada extends support program for farmers and processors to protect temporary foreign workers' health and safety during pandemic ([news release](#))
- Government of Canada COVID-19 Update for Indigenous Peoples and communities ([news release](#))
- [Statement](#) from the Council of Chief Medical Officers of Health: Working with Canadians on the ongoing management of COVID-19 in the months ahead
- Government of Canada invests in COVID-19 border study led by McMaster HealthLabs ([news release](#))
- Government of Canada announces funding for research and development to address COVID-19 gaps and challenges ([news release](#))
- Put safety on the agenda for Take Our Kids to Work Day ([news release](#))

- COVID Alert app updated to send more precise notifications ([news release](#))
- Prime Minister announces new supports for Indigenous peoples and communities ([news release](#))
- New rapid housing initiative to create up to 3,000 new homes for Canadians ([news release](#))
- [Statement](#) from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on her Report on the State of Public Health in Canada 2020 – From Risk to Resilience: An Equity Approach to COVID-19

Other National News:

- Coronavirus: What's happening in Canada and around the world on Wednesday ([article](#))
- Canada's top public health doctor now recommends 3-layer non-medical masks ([article](#))
- 'Every little thing that you do' could impact spread of COVID-19 over winter: Dr. Theresa Tam ([article](#))
- How vulnerable people are further endangered by coronavirus pandemic ([article](#))
- How close can you get with masks on? Your mask questions answered ([article](#))
- Legion branches set to 'take a hit' as COVID-19 wilts poppy campaign ([article](#))
- Dr. Tam fires back at messaging criticism, says advice 'evolved' with science ([article](#))
- Canadians need to cut contacts by 25 per cent to curb second COVID-19 wave: modelling ([article](#))
- Second wave will be 'weeks and months' of limiting contacts, but Trudeau says 'blunt' lockdowns unnecessary ([article](#))
- Canada: Feds unveil more pandemic support for Indigenous communities ([article](#))
- From business to public space: How COVID-19 could alter our economy for good ([article](#))
- Canada's top doctor outlines 'uncomfortable facts' on coronavirus inequalities ([article](#))
- COVID-19: What's working in schools and what's not ([video](#))
- Outdoor winter sports bring business boost during pandemic ([video](#))

International Updates

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- With the International Health Regulations Emergency Committee met and advised that the pandemic still constitutes a public health emergency of international concern ([statement](#))
- Director-General discussed the range of serious long-term effects and post COVID-19 symptoms at the [October 30 media briefing](#) and complications have been reported in both non-hospitalised and hospitalized patients. "While people do recover, it can be slow – sometimes weeks or months". Those who contract COVID-19 disease can experience a vast spectrum of symptoms that fluctuate over time, and affect any system in the body. Ongoing long-term effected and post COVID-19 symptoms can include: fatigue, cough, shortness of breath, inflammation and injury of major organs (including the lungs and heart), neurological and psychological effects.
- Announced several vaccines are now in final phase three trials. If proved safe and effective they will be rolled out through the ACT Accelerator's vaccine arm – the COVAX Facility, which is now supported by 186 countries. The COVAX Facility is speeding up the search for an effective vaccine for all countries. At the same time, it is supporting the building of manufacturing capabilities, and procuring doses ahead of time so that 2 billion doses can be fairly distributed by the end of 2021.
- Supported the British Medical Journal special series of papers on "Women's Health and Gender Inequalities" The series identifies, the COVID-19 pandemic is limiting or reversing gains made towards gender equality.
- Kicked off the first WHO Infodemic Management Training programme this week with participants coming together during eight sessions over four weeks with a cohort of 270 trainees (p. 4 of [Weekly Operational Update, Oct 30 2020](#))
- Expanded access to online learning for COVID-19 through its open learning platform for health emergencies [OpenWHO.org](#)
- Is holding "What Must Not Go Unspoken: Gender Based Violence during COVID-19 - the Risk Communication and Community Engagement Response" on Tuesday November 10, 08:00-09:30 ([register here](#))

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](#)
New expander bar and content – [New Class Order Restrictions for Long Term Care Homes](#)
[Return to School](#)
 - **Families: Added:** My child did not pass the COVID-19 daily screening, now what – [English/ French](#)
 - **School Administrators and Educators: Added:** My child did not pass the COVID-19 daily screening, now what – [English/ French](#)
[Reopening Your Business Safely](#)
 - **Added:** [Food Premises Regulatory Requirements Updates](#)
[Partners and Municipalities-](#)
 - **New Letter:** [Salvation Army 2020 Christmas Kettle Campaign](#)
- 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](#)