

## COVID-19 Update for Partners

November 18, 2020

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

#### 1. **Simcoe Muskoka Region in Yellow/Protect level under provincial framework**

- We have been working to interpret and get clarification on the specifics for sports and recreation settings and other settings in our area for the yellow (protect) framework. Please note, if we continue to have increases in cases of COVID-19, we may go into the Orange/Restrict level of the provincial framework.
- The Yellow/Protect level of the provincial framework requires the following:
  - The person responsible for the facility must ensure that a safety plan is prepared and made available and must ensure that the name and contact information of all public entering the facility is collected and kept for a month.
  - For sporting leagues (cohorting must be a maximum 50). Sports like **hockey/curling** can take place at a maximum of 50 persons (indoors) and 100 persons (outdoors) – physical distancing should limit the maximum number of people in the facility/playing space.
  - Sports may only be practised/played in the facility if they do not allow physical contact or have been modified to avoid physical contact between the players.
  - Indoor fitness/exercise classes at a facility must maintain a physical distance of at least 3 metres from other persons and cannot exceed 10 people indoors.
  - Spectators must be limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from others and not exceed 50 spectators (indoors) and 100 spectators (outdoors).
- We continue to seek clarification from the province related to:
  - Multipurpose complexes with multiple separate but connected facilities such as pools, arenas and gyms. Each facility within the complex would be capped within the

requirements of each entity and therefore, the entire facility could go beyond the 50 person cap based on the infrastructure within the location.

- Restaurants must limit tables to six people and track those visiting.
- If our region moves into the Orange/Restrict level there would be additional limitations related to recreation facilities, dining and the sale of alcohol.

## 2. **Returning to school/work attestation forms on our website**

Some schools, child care, sports teams or employers may request that you complete an [attestation form](#) confirming that you have taken the actions needed prior to returning after COVID infection or as a close contact required to self-isolate. The [forms](#) may be used by individuals to demonstrate compliance with health and safety requirements related to COVID-19 in order to return to school, child care, sport/recreational activities or work.

## 3. **Winter/holiday celebrations, gatherings and services**

- As noted in our weekly COVID-19 case numbers, we continue to see clusters of cases occurring among families within and between households. So far in November there have been 19 clusters due to family gatherings with the number of positive cases associated with each gathering ranging from 2-11. As we saw with Thanksgiving, gatherings will increase transmission. It is important at this time during the pandemic to have close contact with only those people in your immediate household. Limit celebrations/meals to people in your immediate bubble only. For all other parties, celebrations and services, consider ways to connect and celebrate virtually. Some examples are:
  - online chats
  - online games
  - porch drop off/gift exchanges
  - outdoor visits
  - listening to seasonal music or religious services together online
- As a reminder if you have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been exposed and are awaiting results be sure to self-isolate so that others in your household are not put at risk. We have information on [how to self-isolate](#) and [how to care for someone who is COVID-positive](#) on our website.
- **Workplaces and offices** need to be cautious about holding any in-person parties or hosting get-togethers this year and continue to implement all of the precautions to stay safe during the work day. More information can be found on our [website](#).
- **Students returning from school** need to ensure that they are following all public health precautions (physical distancing, wearing a mask when distancing not possible, no parties with friends, frequent handwashing, minimal trips into the community, and monitoring health) to make sure they don't bring COVID-19 home for the holidays.

## 4. **SMDHU Annual Report**

- SMDHU recently released its 2019-20 [Annual Report](#)

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

## Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status *(As of Nov 18, 2020, 13:00)*

Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
1,765	205	1,502	51

### Highlights:

- Weekly case incidence is increasing. There have been 131 new cases reported for the current week beginning November 15. In comparison there were a total of 141 cases reported to SMDHU in the previous reporting week.
- The Simcoe Muskoka doubling time has decreased to 44.8 days (compared to 70.9 days last week) which although is longer than the provincial doubling time indicates the pandemic is growing in our area.
- Of the 205 active cases (which is an additional 36 active cases compared to last week), 25% are in those aged 18-34, 23.5% in those aged 45-64, 21% in those aged 35-44, 13% in children 0-17 and 6% in those 80 years and older.
- This is the fifth consecutive week of weekly case numbers above 100.
- There has been a steady increase in cases among children under 18 years of age.
- There are currently six people hospitalized in Simcoe Muskoka.
- There are currently 11 ongoing outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka (five in long-term care and retirement homes, three in workplaces, two in educational settings and one in a group home congregate setting).

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

## Local Media Updates *(Since Nov. 12, 2020 Partner Update)*

- 'A very large jump': With COVID-19 cases climbing rapidly, Simcoe Muskoka Health Unit plans for further restrictions ([article](#))
- Angus Tim Hortons reopens drive-thru after staff member tests positive for COVID ([article](#))
- Simcoe County becoming final destination for much of Toronto's exodus ([article](#))
- Simcoe County rethinks paramedic toy drive due to pandemic ([article](#))
- COVID costs remain unknown as city budget talks approach ([article](#))
- Midland COVID assessment centre now booking appointments online ([article](#))
- Stevenson Memorial Hospital now offering online booking for COVID-19 testing ([article](#))
- Local charities missing 'massive' support from Casino Rama ([article](#))
- Pandemic restrictions behind higher mental health, domestic calls ([article](#))
- Midland mayor wants students charged for 'flagrant, bad' behaviour ([article](#))
- Domestic abuse on the rise during COVID, officials says ([article](#))
- What will the homeless do? As temperature drops Barrie shelters prepare for influx ([article](#))
- Muskoka seasonal residents warned of delays in fire service response should they remain through the winter months ([article](#))
- Huntsville's Arrowhead park readies for winter after busy COVID-era summer ([article](#))
- City and Georgian College form partnership to support local business ([article](#))
- Salvation Army Christmas kettle bells ringing louder this year due to spike in demand ([article](#))
- Funding infusion helps Barrie hospital brace for the worst ([article](#))
- County to hire new staff at long-term care homes to help combat COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Even amid pandemic, small groups have the power to do big things ([article](#))
- Pandemic, 'sketchy' housing options leave Orillia man in dire straits ([article](#))
- Work-from-home lifestyle driving migration from GTA towards Simcoe County and Barrie ([article](#))
- An end to snow days? Muskoka schools will close but online learning continues at home ([article](#))

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

### Ontario (As of November 18, 2020, 10:30)

Total cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
98,162	12,822	81,925	3,415

#### Highlights:

- Since the last update there have been over 8,000 people infected with COVID-19, over 120 people have died and there are 1,550 more active cases this week compared to the previous week.
- The seven-day daily average number of new cases is 1,422 new cases per day.
- In the last day there has been:
  - An increase of 1,417 confirmed cases (+13.5%);
  - An increase of 1,495 resolved cases (+166.7%); and
  - An increase of 32 deaths (+31.7%).
- The number of people hospitalized (535 up from 431) in ICU (127 up from 98) and on ventilators (78 up from 62) continues to increase compared to the previous week.
- Highlights from the last reporting week (Nov. 1-7):
  - There were a total of 7,569 new cases reported to public health compared to 6,382 the previous week.
  - 21 of 34 health units reported an increase in rates of COVID-19, with Peel, Toronto, York and Halton regions reporting rates higher than the provincial average.
  - Rates of COVID-19 are increasing in all age groups, with cases in those 80 years and older increasing the most in the last two weeks.
  - Cases in people aged 20-39 continue to account for the largest number of cases.
  - 58.3% of exposures were from a known case or outbreak and 31.8% of cases had no epidemiological link.
  - 352 health care workers and 361 long-term care residents contracted COVID-19.
  - There were increases in the number of students ages 9-17 who tested positive for COVID-19.
  - There were a total of 556 ongoing outbreaks including 147 new outbreaks reported this week.

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](#)

### Canada (As of Nov. 17, 2020 at 19:00 EDT)

Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
306,468	51,230	244,152	11,086

#### Highlights:

- In the last week, almost 30,000 people in Canada have tested positive for COVID-19 and 400 people have died as a result of COVID-19.
- On November 17, Canada reported 4,276 new cases and 59 new deaths
  - New cases were reported in ON (1,249), QC (982), AB (773), BC (717) MB (269), SK (240), Nunavut (34), NS (5), NB (4), NFLD (2), Yukon (1)
  - New deaths were reported in QC (24), ON (12), BC (11), MB (7), and AB (5).
- The following are national highlights from the last published reporting week of Nov. 1-7:
  - An average of 3,516 new daily cases reported, representing a 18% increase in comparison to the previous week.
  - The average number of daily reported deaths (51) was also higher than the average from the previous week (31) and double the number from two weeks prior. The weekly number of deaths increased 65% with 354 deaths.

- Manitoba continued to report the highest age-standardized incidence rate (150.7 cases per 100 000 population) and the largest increase in age-standardized incidence rate when compared to the previous week (from 106.4 to 150.7 cases per 100 000 population). Incidence rates amongst all age groups has increased compared to the previous week (with a notable increase in those 80 years of age and older).
- The first case was reported in Nunavut since the pandemic began.
- The average number of people tested daily continues to decrease while the percent positivity continues to increase, 5.8% compared to 4.7% from the previous week. The highest percent positivity was reported in Quebec with 14.5% (who also had the highest weekly number of new cases at 7,407).
- Of all cases reported Nov 1-7, 53% were in people under 40 years of age including 19% under 20 years of age, 19% in people between 20 and 29 years of age and 15% in those between 30 to 39 years of age.
- The incidence rate increased in all age groups compared to the previous week including those 80 years of age and older who had the highest incidence rate of all groups (77.9 per 100 000)
- 63% of reported cases were exposed to COVID-19 by a known source and 36% were exposed to COVID-19 by an unknown source.
- The average number of people tested daily decreased from the previous week (6%) but the average percent positivity increased from 4% to 4.7%, with Manitoba showing a percent positivity rate of 8.1%.
- Hospitalizations and cases in ICU also continue to increase.

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

<b>Global</b> (As of November 18, 2020 at 11:14 CET)	
<b>Confirmed Cases</b>	<b>Confirmed Deaths</b>
55,064,128	1,328,015

- On November 17, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported an additional 457,477 people had a confirmed new case of COVID-19 and 6,880 people died of COVID-19.
- Those countries with the most new cases in the past day were the United States, India, Italy, Russia and the United Kingdom and those countries with the most new deaths were the United States, France, Italy, Iran and India.
- In the past week, the global number of cases of COVID-19 has increased by almost 7% with over 3.5 million new cases of COVID-19, and over 50,000 new deaths reported.
- 81% of new cases and deaths were reported in Europe and the Americas.
- While the European Region reported the highest number of new cases, there is a decrease from the previous week, whereas the Region of the Americas is experiencing a sharp increase in cases.
- The European Region continues to account for the greatest proportion of new cases and deaths in the past week, representing over half (54%) of all new cases and nearly half (47%) of new deaths.
- The United States, France, India, Italy and Poland had the highest weekly number of cases and the United States, France, India, Mexico and Iran had the highest weekly number of deaths.

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

## Provincial, National and Global Updates *(Since Nov. 12, 2020 Partner Update)*

### **Provincial Updates**

From the Ontario government:

- Ontario announces 13 new Ontario health teams ([news release](#))
- Ontario expanding mobile crisis services to respond to mental health emergencies ([news release](#))
- Ontario opens COVID-19 resilience infrastructure stream for Municipalities ([news release](#))

- Ontario launching new agency to centralize government procurement ([news release](#))
- Ontario protecting agri-food workers and food supply chain ([news release](#))
- Ontario updating COVID-19 response Framework to help stop the spread of COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Ontario supports production of face shields in the fight against COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Ontario making it more affordable to enjoy Provincial Parks ([news release](#))

#### Other Provincial News:

- Ontario's restaurants ask for a survival taskforce and more data as job losses loom ([article](#))
- Ontario schools will not have an extended winter break this year ([article](#))
- Health minister says don't count on Ontario being in the 'green zone' by Christmas ([article](#))
- Board of Health wants advice Ford government is getting from COVID-19 advisory tables made public ([article](#))
- Christmas break won't come early in Ontario schools but could students stay home longer? ([article](#))
- Ontario confirms 1,487 new COVID cases today ([article](#))
- Premier asks Ontarians to limit trips outside of the home as COVID-19 cases rise ([article](#))
- Lockdown may be looming for Ontario – but what that looks like isn't clear ([article](#))
- More regions move to 'red zone' in Ontario's COVID-19 framework ([article](#))
- 'Businesses not seeing a light at the end of the tunnel,' says Ontario Chamber survey ([article](#))
- Ontario not doing enough to prevent long-term care deaths, RAO says ([article](#))
- Ford's cabinet set to meet with top doctor as Ontario reports 1,396 new COVID-19 cases ([article](#))
- New modelling show Ontario could see 6,500 new daily cases of COVID-19 in December ([article](#))
- Ford says Ontario taking 'balanced approach' to COVID ([video](#))
- Ontario's doctors call on Ford Government to fix colour-coded COVID-19 framework ([article](#))
- Ontario's COVID-19 resurgence is threatening Christmas gatherings. Will people adjust their plans? ([article](#))
- COVID-19: Pandemic highlights lack of access to public washrooms during winter months ([article](#))

### ***National Updates***

#### The Government of Canada:

- Remarks from Chief Public Officer/Deputy Chief Public Health Officer of Canada: [November 17, 2020](#), [November 16, 2020](#), [November 15, 2020](#), [November 14, 2020](#), [November 13, 2020](#)
- Government of Canada COVID-19 update for Indigenous Peoples and communities ([news release](#))
- Prime Minister Justin Trudeau speaks with premiers on continued efforts to address the impacts of COVID-19 ([readout](#))
- Government of Canada signs another agreement for COVID-19 antigen rapid tests ([news release](#))

#### Other National News:

- Coronavirus: What's happening in Canada and around the world on Wednesday ([article](#))
- COVID-19: Canada still in 'incredibly serious' situation with pandemic, Trudeau says ([article](#))
- 'A big sigh of relief': Trudeau says coronavirus vaccines in spring will begin end of pandemic ([article](#))
- Fauci says Canada 'getting into trouble' as COVID-19 cases surge worldwide ([article](#))
- Business group says lockdown loopholes hurt small retailers, benefit big box stores ([article](#))
- Pandemic aggravates opioid crisis as overdoses rise and services fall out of reach ([article](#))
- Better broadband cellular access induced by COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Most Canadians could be vaccinated by end of 2021, says federal public health officer ([article](#))
- Flu season 'exceptionally low' so far, public health says ([article](#))
- Where exactly are Canadians catching COVID-19? Authorities are not totally sure ([article](#))
- Moderna says its coronavirus vaccine appears to be 94.5% effective ([article](#))
- Survey says 15% of Canadians skeptical or undecided about COVID-19 risks ([article](#))

- Tam warns of increasing pressure on hospitals as COVID-19 cases continue to rise ([article](#))
- Tam: Christmas gatherings out of the question as things stand ([article](#))
- How a national response could address an unprecedented COVID-19 surge across Canada ([article](#))
- How do people really feel about working from home? ([article](#))
- Has the pandemic disrupted the migration of new talent to Canada? ([article](#))
- Canada’s track record on children set to get worse with COVID-19 pandemic, profs say ([article](#))
- PM prods premiers to impose more stringent measures to curb spread of COVID-19 ([article](#))
- COVID-19 testing down as positive case numbers soar in most provinces ([article](#))
- Children’s mental health could be ‘significantly’ affected by pandemic, study warns ([article](#))
- The business case for a short, sharp shutdown and why it likely won’t work in Canada ([article](#))
- Will Thanksgiving be a COVID-19 disaster? In Canada, the answer was ‘Yes’ ([article](#))
- COVID-19: Holiday travel amid surging coronavirus cases – is it safe in Canada? ([article](#))
- COVID-19 transmission on flights ‘extremely rare,’ Dr. Tam says ([article](#))

### **International Updates**

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Director-General outlined [three fundamental shifts that WHO believes all countries must make](#):
  1. Invest in basic public health systems, which are the bedrock for preventing, preparing for, detecting and responding to outbreaks;
  2. Take a One Health approach (the pandemic is a stark reminder of the close links between the health of humans, animals and the planet we share);
  3. Go beyond the health sector (the pandemic has affected every sector).
- Announced the establishment of the [Council on the Economics of Health for All](#), composed of leading economists and health experts, to put “Health for All” at the center of how we think about value creation and economic growth. “The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the consequences of chronic under-investment in public health. But we don’t just need more investment; we must also rethink how we value health” said the WHO Director-General.
- 2021 has been designated as the [International Year of Health and Care Workers](#), in recognition of the dedication and sacrifice of the millions of health and care workers at the forefront of the pandemic.
- Published:
  - [Immunization as an essential health service](#): Guiding principles for immunization activities during the COVID-19 pandemic and other times of severe disruption, which provides support to countries in their decision-making regarding provision or resumption of immunization services during events such as COVID-19, natural disasters or humanitarian emergencies.
  - [Technical specifications of personal protective equipment for COVID-19](#), which provides guidance on the quality, performance characteristics and related standards of personal protective equipment to be used in the context of COVID-19.
- Recently updated several COVID-19 table top simulation exercise packages based on updated WHO guidance and can be found [here](#).
- Released [Guidance](#) for Ethics Oversight of COVID-19 Research in Response to Emerging Evidence.
- Updated the Ongoing Living Update of Potential COVID-19 Therapeutics: Summary of Rapid Systematic Reviews [link](#).

### **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

- [Wearing a face covering in all indoor places](#) has been updated to link to PHAC website instructions that include information about 3 layer masks.
- Simcoe Muskoka is in **YELLOW** – Protect level classification in the [Province’s Framework](#). The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) and local municipalities may also implement local public health directions, bylaws, and policies which can exceed the provincial laws and recommendations
- [Attestation forms](#)

#### Return to School - Families

- Revised and reposted [attestation form](#) (*revised Nov 11, 2020*)- listed under school admin page as well

#### [Operating your Business Safely](#)

- Revised and reposted [SMDHU Guidance Document for Licensed Childcare Settings](#)
- [Revised FAQ for Licenced Child Care Settings](#)

#### [Partners and Municipalities-](#)

- Posted [COVID-19 Public Health Guidance for Static Parades](#)
- Added:
  - [Malls](#)
  - [Workplace holiday celebrations](#)
  - [Prevention, Control and Outbreak Support Strategy for COVID-19 in Ontario’s farm workers](#) located in [this expander bar](#)
- 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](#)