

## COVID-19 Update for Partners

December 9, 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. **New section on HealthSTATS page**

A new section has been added to the HealthSTATS webpage: [Cases by Sociodemographic Characteristics](#). Since July 21<sup>st</sup> Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) has been collecting sociodemographic data on confirmed cases. Of those cases for which we have information, the data shows the following impacts related to COVID-19 and sociodemographic characteristics:

- 50% of people in Simcoe Muskoka with a confirmed case of COVID-19 identified as a visible minority (non-White); whereas visible minorities make up 7% of Simcoe Muskoka's population (2016 Census).
- 43% of people in Simcoe Muskoka with a confirmed case of COVID-19 report having a mother tongue other than English and French. Individuals who report a non-official language (neither English nor French) as their mother tongue represent 10% of the Simcoe Muskoka population (2016 Census).
- Individuals with higher incomes in Simcoe Muskoka and those living in areas that are moderately and well-resourced are more likely to be a COVID-19 case, which is in contrast to other areas in the province which report individuals with lower incomes, and living in areas with fewer resources being more likely to have had the COVID-19 virus.

2. **Outbreaks of COVID-19 continue in Simcoe Muskoka**

In Simcoe Muskoka there are a number of COVID-19 outbreaks including in work settings. A [letter of instruction](#) has been provided to businesses and organizations to ensure precautions are in place to prevent transmission of COVID-19, and protect the workforce, customers and clients. Almost one-quarter of all cases in our area are related to outbreaks. With the widespread community transmission, the only way to control and reduce transmission of COVID-19 is to ensure all of us are adhering to all of the precautions. The best way to protect ourselves, our families and the people we work with is by presuming everyone we come into contact with could be carrying the virus (e.g. the person behind you in a line, the friend you have coffee with, the people on your sports team).

We must continue to:

- Monitor our health/our children's health and stay home when unwell;
- Get tested when we have symptoms and self-isolate until our symptoms have resolved and we have a negative test result;
- Self-isolate if we have been in contact with someone who has the virus;
- Wash and sanitize our hands frequently;
- Wear a mask and maintain a physical distance of 2 metres when interacting with anyone outside of our immediate households;
- Limit outings; and
- Limit travel for essential purposes such as work or appointments.

### **3. Naming businesses with positive cases**

We do not routinely identify businesses with cases or ones that are in outbreak because we are legally bound by the [Personal Health Information Protection Act](#) to protect personal health information. This means we only provide non-identifying information and as much information as is necessary to protect the public's health and to reduce any unnecessary harm to the business. When we are able to identify all high-risk contacts and there is no risk to the general public, the public is not notified. When there is an outbreak and there is a risk to the general public where we are not able to determine all the close contacts, we do notify the public. If a business notifies the public about having positive cases of COVID-19 or having an outbreak declared, we will acknowledge that they have cases and/or an outbreak and report the same level of information that we would share about non-identified businesses.

### **4. Planning for the holidays**

The holidays need to look different this year to help prevent virus transmission and protect the ones we love and ourselves. It is important to limit our celebrations to only those we live with. We are hearing about different strategies people are planning to use to try to keep each other safe but still visit with people outside of their households, such as getting a COVID-19 test and having close contact with people outside of their household once the negative result is received. Having a negative COVID-19 test doesn't mean it is safe to attend gatherings with people outside of your household. As we have seen with some examples of transmission, group gatherings are high risk places for transmission. This is because it is possible people attending are carrying the virus but are not symptomatic. It is also possible to have a negative test result and later test positive. The safest ways to visit with your loved ones and keep everyone safe is through virtual visits or outdoor visits with physical distancing (2 metres apart).

### **5. Updated guidance documents for businesses and organizations**

Guidance documents have been revised outlining Orange/Restrict expectations for businesses to ensure they put all precautions in place to limit risk to staff, clients, and visitors. When we transition to a new level there is a lag in our ability to update guidance documents due to the legal interpretation of the regulations. We know businesses need the information so they can comply with the expectations and will continue to answer your questions and update our documents as quickly as possible when our area changes levels in the framework.

### **6. COVID- 19 vaccine distribution**

The Government of Canada through Health Canada has issued a release advising that they have approved the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine which is expected to be received in Canada as early as next week. As recommended by the COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force and in alignment

with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, the province has identified key populations to receive the vaccine first, including long-term care and retirement home residents and the staff who provide care in these settings. This approach is informed by science and prioritizes populations that are at greatest risk. Further information is expected in coming days and weeks on the logistics of distribution and vaccination efforts.

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

### Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status (As of Dec. 9, 2020, 13:00)

Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
2519	383	2070	53

#### Highlights:

- Since the last update there have been 341 new cases, 206 recoveries and one additional death.
- In the last day, an additional 61 new cases and 23 recoveries have been reported.
- So far this week (starting Dec. 6), there have been 272 new cases reported to the health unit, more than any other full week of reported cases since the pandemic began. Last week (Nov. 29 - Dec. 5), there were 230 new COVID-19 cases reported by the health unit which was the highest number of weekly cases reported since the pandemic began.
- For the most recent week (Nov. 29 – Dec. 5), the average daily growth in confirmed cases was 1.8%. Based on projections, with the same level of growth continuing there will be approximately 450 cases reported during the week of December 27 - January 2, or about 64 cases per day.
- Approximately half of all new infections in December with a known cause were acquired from close contact with a confirmed positive case and about 20% were acquired in the community with no known source of infection.
- There are 132 more active cases than the same day last week.
- More than one-third of all active cases are among young adults 18-34 years. This age group has had the highest rate of infection since June and the rate in November and December for this age group is double the rate in September and October. Adults aged 45-64 account for 29% of active cases, while adults aged 35-44 account for 16% of all cases.
- There are currently 13 people hospitalized in Simcoe Muskoka.
- There are currently 16 ongoing outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka, including five in educational settings, four in congregate settings, three in workplaces, two in long-term care homes and one each in a retirement home and community setting.

SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#) , [COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard](#)

### Local Media Updates (Since Dec. 2, 2020 Partner Update)

- High caseload puts health unit behind on COVID investigations ([article](#))
- Ten COVID cases confirmed at Canada Post sorting facility in Barrie ([article](#))
- Two Barrie bus drivers considered low risk for COVID transmission, routes not released ([article](#))
- Employee at Bayfield Street Loblaws tests positive for COVID ([article](#))
- Waypoint reports positive COVID case, testing now ongoing at four hospital units ([article](#))
- When Justin comes calling for CERB repayment, say you're sorry and pay up! ([column](#))
- Georgian Bay General Hospital reporting 19 cases of COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Bradford man dies after contracting COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Six staff at Collingwood Loblaws have now tested positive for COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Students and staff among new cases of COVID-19 linked to schools in Barrie, Angus, Alliston ([article](#))

- Muskoka petitions province to avoid red COVID-19 status as Simcoe cases rise ([article](#))
- 'It has been incredibly stressful': Midland nurse works to keep COVID-19 from spreading ([article](#))
- Pandemic pets: breeders, shelters see spike in requests for dogs, cats due to COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Positive test shuts down class at Twin Lakes Secondary School ([article](#))
- 'When you support local, local supports you': Orillia Chamber ([article](#))
- Head health official remind bosses to actively screen employees at the start of the work day ([article](#))
- City of Barrie offers live-streamed fitness classes ([article](#))
- Huntsville's Table Food Bank calls for donors as need rises in COVID-19 era ([article](#))
- Clearview restricts access to rec facilities for those from red, grey COVID areas ([article](#))
- 'Have a wonderful holiday season in 2021': Simcoe Muskoka health unit asks residents to stay home, shop online this December ([article](#))
- New COVID-19 restrictions at Orillia recreation facilities ([article](#))

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

<b>Ontario</b> (As of December 9, 2020, 10:30)			
<b>Total cases</b>	<b>Active Cases</b>	<b>Recovered</b>	<b>Deaths</b>
132,800	16,089	112,875	3,836
<b>Highlights:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Since the last update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Almost 13,000 more people have been infected with COVID-19, 11,000 people have recovered and 138 people have died;</li> <li>○ There are 811 people hospitalized with 221 in ICU of which 129 are on ventilators; and</li> <li>○ There are 1,600 more active cases compared to the same day last week.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• In the last day there has been: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ an increase of 1,890 new cases;</li> <li>○ an increase of 1,924 resolved cases; and</li> <li>○ an increase of 28 deaths.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The seven day average for daily cases is 1,676 (11.5 cases per 100,000) and the current effective reproductive number (<math>R_e</math>) is 0.98 (The <math>R_e</math> an estimate of the average number of people that 1 person with COVID-19 will infect. <a href="#">Learn more about <math>R_e</math></a>).</li> <li>• 52% of active cases are in people under 40 years of age (15% in children and young adults under 20 years of age, 21% in young adults 20-29 years of age, and 16% in adults aged 30-39).</li> <li>• The source of infection for 56% of cases in the past week are from close contacts and outbreaks while 42.5% of cases are attributed to community spread.</li> <li>• There are currently 811 active outbreaks occurring in Ontario (up from 755 last week), with health care settings (232), workplaces (231), and education settings (184) reporting the highest number of outbreaks.</li> <li>• Almost 50,000 tests were completed yesterday with 4.4% of the processed tests as positive. Positive results are increasing in children under 18 and adults 65 and older.</li> <li>• 44% of tests are processed within one day and 80% are completed within two days.</li> <li>• Health unit areas with the highest cumulative rate of cases per 100,000 are: Peel, Toronto, York, Windsor-Essex and Ottawa.</li> <li>• Health unit areas with the highest number of active cases are: Toronto, Peel, York, Ottawa and Durham Region.</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, Public Health Ontario Daily Epidemiologic Summaries, Public Health Ontario Weekly Epidemiologic Summaries</a></p>			

Canada (As of Dec. 8, 2020 at 19:00 EDT)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
429,035	71,968	344,200	12,867
<b>Highlights:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In the last week, almost 40,000 people in Canada have tested positive for COVID-19 and almost 550 people have died as a result of COVID-19.</li><li>• There are more than 4,400 more active cases in Canada, compared to one week ago.</li><li>• On December 8, Canada reported 5,981 new cases and 90 new deaths:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ New cases were reported in AB (1,727), ON (1,676), QC (1,564), BC (566) MB (245), SK (185), NS (7), NB (5), Yukon (4), NFLD (1), and Nunavut (1); and</li><li>○ New deaths were reported in QC (36), BC (16), MB (13), ON (10), AB (9), and SK (6).</li></ul></li><li>• The following are national highlights from the last published reporting week of Nov. 22-28:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ There was an average of 5,591 new cases every day representing a 13% increase compared to the previous week.</li><li>○ 48% of all new cases were exposed to the virus from an unknown source and 51% were exposed by a known source.</li><li>○ All provinces and territories other than the Northwest Territories reported new cases.</li><li>○ Manitoba reported the highest age-standardized incidence rate (202.4 cases per 100,000 population), however, the largest increase in age-standardized incidence rate compared to the previous week was observed in Saskatchewan (from 77.8 to 118.8 cases per 100,000 population).</li><li>○ The highest proportions of cases by age group were observed in the 0-19 year age group followed by those 20-29 years of age.</li><li>○ The largest age specific incidence rate increase was observed among those aged 80 years and older (109.2 to 126.0 per 100 000 population), followed by those aged 0-19 years (62.3 to 67.9 per 100 000 population).</li><li>○ 522,172 Canadians in all provinces and territories were tested for COVID-19, representing a 9% increase in testing compared to the previous week. The average weekly percent positivity increased to 7.4% compared to 7.2% the week prior. Alberta saw the highest increase where percent positivity increased from 13.9% in the previous week to 17.9%.</li><li>○ An increase was observed in the average number of daily deaths compared to the previous week (from an average of 74 to 84 daily deaths).</li><li>○ In the last week of November, hospitalizations, ICU admissions and number of patients needing to be mechanically vented all increased.</li><li>○ According to forecasting, between 445,300 to 478,700 cumulative reported cases and 13,170 to 13,590 cumulative deaths are expected by December 13, 2020.</li></ul></li></ul>			
<a href="#">National daily epidemiology updates</a> ; <a href="#">National weekly epidemiology report</a>			

Global (As of December 9, 2020 at 9:34 CET)	
Confirmed Cases	Deaths
67,530,912	1,545,140
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• On December 8, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported an additional 496,895 people had a confirmed new case of COVID-19 and 7,744 people died of COVID-19.</li><li>• Those countries with the most new cases in the past day were the United States, Turkey, India, Russia, and Brazil and countries with the most new deaths were the United States, Russia, Italy, Germany, and India.</li></ul>	

- Global weekly case incidence remains high with over 3.8 million new cases in the last week and weekly deaths remain high with over 73,000 new deaths reported.
- In the past week:
  - The United States, Brazil, India, Turkey, and Russia had the highest number of new cases and the United States, Italy, Brazil, Mexico, and Russia had the highest number of deaths.
  - The Region of the Americas contributed to nearly half of all new cases and over one third of all new deaths.

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

## Provincial, National and Global Updates *(Since Dec. 2, 2020 Partner Update)*

### **Provincial Updates**

From the Ontario government:

- Ontario identifies key groups for distribution of initial COVID-19 vaccines ([news release](#))
- Ontario protecting workers and employers during COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Ontario moving three regions to new levels in COVID-19 Response Framework ([news release](#))
- Ontario expanding innovative home and community care services ([news release](#))
- Province expanding capacity with made-in-Ontario respirators and masks ([news release](#))
- Ontario appoints members of COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution Task Force ([news release](#))
- Ontario supports management agreement between Southlake Regional Health Centre and King City Lodge Nursing Home ([news release](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Workplaces are the new hotspot for COVID-19 outbreaks in Ontario ([article](#))
- Ontario Caregivers Report shows increase in family caregivers, responsibilities and mental health concerns amid COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Ontario's attorney general says COVID-19 has jumpstarted justice system modernization ([article](#))
- Toronto, Peel Region toughen COVID-19 rules that would force students to stay home ([article](#))
- Ontario to issue proof of vaccination cards ([article](#))
- Study shows pandemic has nurses, PSWs suffering high COVID infection rate, job stress ([article](#))
- 'Very encouraged': Local mayors respond to Ontario's COVID-19 vaccination plan ([article](#))
- Ontario's financial accountability office says the Ford government is sitting on \$12 billion in reserve funds ([article](#))

### **National Updates**

The Government of Canada:

- Health Canada authorizes first COVID-19 vaccine ([statement](#))
- IRCC announces opening date of special measures for refugee claimants working in health care during the pandemic ([news release](#))
- Government of Canada investment supports more than 3,400 businesses across Ontario to leverage technology and adapt ([news release](#))
- Remarks from Chief Public Officer/Deputy Chief Public Health Officer of Canada: [Dec. 8](#), [Dec. 7](#), [Dec. 6](#), [Dec. 5](#), [Dec. 4](#).
- Government of Canada invests in Canadian families ([news release](#))
- Protecting Canadians during the pandemic and driving economic recovery ([speech](#))
- Government of Canada awards contract to distribute COVID-19 vaccine coast to coast ([news release](#))
- Government of Canada COVID-19 Update for Indigenous Peoples and communities ([news release](#))
- Competition Bureau seeking input on Canadians' experiences accessing and using digital health services ([news release](#))



- Government expands Canada Emergency Business Account loans ([news release](#))
- Government of Canada and partners invest 1.8M in strengthening pandemic preparedness in long-term care and retirement homes ([news release](#))

#### Other National News:

- The latest news on COVID-19 developments in Canada for Wednesday, Dec. 9 ([article](#))
- Pfizer and BioNTech Achieve Health Canada Authorization for Vaccine to Combat COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Canada 'Must Build Back Better' for Indigenous People After COVID-19: Bellegarde ([article](#))
- Canada waiting to see if Trump tries to limit its access to COVID-19 vaccines signing order to put Americans at head of vaccine line ([article](#))
- 'Long road' still ahead despite coronavirus vaccine on the horizon, Tam says ([article](#))
- It's 'unknown' when Canada will reach herd immunity from coronavirus vaccine: Tam ([article](#))
- The dangers of inactivity during lockdown ([article](#))
- Interest in going off grid, being a survivalist growing during the pandemic ([article](#))
- Seniors, long-term care workers should be first in line for COVID-19 vaccine, committee says ([article](#))
- Vaccine priority list must be refined to match available doses: Tam ([article](#))
- Prairie provinces become epicentre of Canada's COVID-19 crisis ([article](#))
- COVID-19 stress creates perfect conditions for mental health crises for university students ([article](#))
- Is there a way to convince someone to listen to public health experts? ([article](#))
- It's winter. It's cold. How do I deal with a mask that freezes ([article](#))
- CDC shortens quarantine recommendation for U.S. raising questions in Canada ([article](#))

#### ***International Updates***

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Urges for the [maintenance of essential HIV services](#), ensuring the maintenance of antiretroviral treatments (ARV) and treatments for co-morbidities, as preliminary evidence suggest people with HIV have an increased risk of poor outcomes from COVID-19. Reports suggest significant disruptions to HIV services since June. Innovative approaches to testing and services have also been adopted which could help progress towards ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.
- Have [published a report](#) outlining factors that drive people's behaviour related to vaccines as they identify [vaccine acceptance will be the next hurdle](#).
- Launched a [youth council](#) to advise the Director-General on global health and development issues that impact young people. These challenges include the long-term consequences of the pandemic which will shape the world they live and work in for decades to come.
- Published:
  - [Mask use in the context of COVID-19](#);
  - [Health workforce policy and management in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic response](#);
  - [A prospective cohort study investigating maternal, pregnancy and neonatal outcomes for women and neonates infected with SARS-CoV-2](#); and
  - [Feasibility, Potential Value and Limitations of Establishing a Closely Monitored Challenge Model of Experimental COVID-19 Infection and Illness in Healthy Young Adult Volunteers](#).

## SMDHU Resources

- SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#)
- [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-19 page

**Revised:** [You are a close contact of a person who tested positive for COVID-19](#)

## Families

### **Added:**

- [Someone at a School or Child Care Centre Tested Positive for COVID-19.](#)
- [My Child has Been Identified as a Close Contact of Someone Confirmed to Have COVID-19.](#)
- [Hand-washing Heroes - Healthy Canadians](#)
- [Clean Hands Save Lives- Handwashing song](#)

## School Administrators and Educators

### **Added:**

- [Someone at a School or Child Care Centre Tested Positive for COVID-19.](#)
- [My Child has Been Identified as a Close Contact of Someone Confirmed to Have COVID-19](#)

## Assessment Centres and Testing

### **Revised:**

- Includes testing information in the community and at pharmacies, and all locations now state whether the location is assessment and testing or testing only.

## Operating your Business Safely

### **Revised:**

- [Mandatory face covering](#)
- [Personal Service Settings](#)
- [Licensed Child Care](#)

### **Added:**

- [COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan Guidance Document - Orange Restrict](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance: On-Farm Outbreak Management](#)
- French Signage:
  - **Business Self Screen Before Entry:**
    - Français [tout en couleur](#) / [noir et blanc](#)
  - **Physical Distancing:**
    - Français [tout en couleur](#) / [noir et blanc](#)
  - **Do's and Don'ts of Wearing a Face Covering:**
    - Français [tout en couleur](#) / [noir et blanc](#)

### **Removed:**

- [Guidance on Face Covering Instructions for Businesses and Organizations \(including Public Transit Services\)](#)

### **Amended:**

- [Letter of Instruction to Businesses and Organizations for Additional Public Health Measures](#)

### **Updated:**

- [FAQ - Wearing masks or face coverings within enclosed public spaces](#)
- [COVID-19 Guidance for Recreational Water Facilities - Orange Restrict](#)

- 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](#)