

COVID-19 Update for Partners

April 28, 2021

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Key messages from Dr. Gardner, Medical Officer of Health

Pregnant individuals are now eligible for vaccination

- **As of April 23**, pregnant individuals are now eligible to receive the COVID-19 vaccine under the highest-risk health conditions in Ontario's Phase 2 prioritization guidance.
- Those who are pregnant can book an appointment through the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line at 1-833-943-3900. A letter from a health care provider is not required.
- It is recommended, but not required, that pregnant individuals discuss the risks versus benefits of vaccination with a health care provider who is familiar with their pregnancy before getting vaccinated.
- Partners of those who are pregnant are generally not eligible; they are only eligible as essential caregivers if they are required to provide regular and sustained assistance to their pregnant partner with personal care and/or daily living activities.

Bradford West Gwillimbury (BWG) hot spot update

- **As of April 23**, residents **40 years and older** living *anywhere* within BWG are now eligible for vaccination. Residents 40 years of age and older can book through the Town of BWG [website](#) and, **as of April 27**, residents **ages 45+ can now book online** via the [provincial system](#).
- We are seeing an improvement in vaccination coverage in BWG. The proportion of BWG residents who had received their first vaccine dose prior to April 15 was 12% and, as of April 25, 23% of BWG residents had received their first dose.
- Special clinics were hosted for agricultural workers in the Holland Marsh area of BWG last week which saw more 90% of those workers vaccinated. These clinics were collaboratively organized by the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU), the Holland Marsh Growers' Association, York Region Health Unit and local municipalities.

Ontario expands vaccine eligibility to licensed childcare workers

- **Starting Thursday, April 29**, childcare workers in licensed childcare settings will be able to book an appointment via the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line at 1-833-943-3900.
- Eligible workers will receive a letter from their employer. This letter must be available at the time of booking and taken to their vaccination appointment.
- In the coming weeks, it is expected that eligibility will be expanded to childcare workers in unlicensed childcare settings across the province.

Process for those needing support at immunization clinics

- We want to do all that we can to ensure that everyone who attends our immunization clinics has a positive experience. We are able to provide accommodation in a number of ways to support our clients' needs, such as providing a low stimulation environment, drive-thru option, or an appointment before or after the clinic starts.
- For those who would benefit from additional support to receive their vaccine, please call our COVID-19 Immunization Appointment Booking Support line at 705-721-7520 (1-877-721-7520) ext. 5997 and our staff would be happy to make arrangements for you.

Vaccination coverage by municipality

- We now have data on vaccination coverage by municipality which is available on our [HealthSTATS](#) webpage.
- We have seen lower rates of vaccination than expected in some regions. In particular, 7 lower-tier municipalities have a vaccination rate of less than 70% among adults 80 years and older. We have reached out to these municipalities and are working together to develop and implement tailored strategies to increase vaccination coverage in these communities. Some strategies we are exploring include hosting pop-up clinics, advocating for additional pharmacies to be included, and expanding available transportation supports to clinics.
- As a reminder, the best vaccine to get is the first one that is available to you. If you are eligible, please make sure to get vaccinated.

Next week is Mental Health Week

- Mental Health Week is a Canadian tradition, with communities, schools, and workplaces rallying to celebrate, protect, and promote mental health.
- We know that the pandemic has taken a significant toll on people's mental health, both nationally and locally. On our Local Impact Survey, 45% of Simcoe Muskoka residents reported increased stress levels and 49% reported worsening anxiety since the start of the pandemic.
- We encourage you to attend *Our Health – North Simcoe's* live event on '**Mental Health and Addictions in the Time of COVID-19**' which is taking place next Thursday, May 6th at 7:30 pm. A panel of local experts will unpack the impact of the pandemic on mental health and explore options for local support. This event will be broadcasted on all Rogers TV Simcoe County channels.
- Additional information and tools are available on the Mental Health Week [website](#).

Simcoe Muskoka education and enforcement initiative

- On April 30 and May 1, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development will be working with local police officers, public health, and municipal bylaw enforcement to conduct education and enforcement visits across Simcoe Muskoka. These inspections will assist with confirming that retail businesses and workplaces are complying with the provincial [Reopening Ontario \(A Flexible Response to COVID-19\) Act, 2020](#) and associated regulations. Some of the measures in these regulations include:
 - Safety plans must be written and posted where easily seen;
 - Screening staff and customers for symptoms of COVID-19;
 - Proper use of masks and face coverings; and,
 - Crowd control measures and capacity limits to ensure proper physical distancing.
- Businesses are encouraged to visit the SMDHU [website](#) often for information and resources to support them in operating in compliance with COVID-19 emergency measures. SMDHU's [Health Connection](#) line is also available.

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

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status *(As of April 28, 2021 14:00)*

| Total Cases | Active Cases | Recovered | Deaths |
|-------------|--------------|-----------|--------|
| 10,241 | 1,334 | 8,236 | 223 |

In the last day:

- 99 people tested positive, 80 people recovered, and there was 1 new death.
- There were 90 new variant cases* identified.

Currently:

- There have been 210 new cases reported to the health unit for the current week.
- 50 Simcoe Muskoka residents are hospitalized for COVID-19.
- There are 959 active variant cases*.
- There are 21 ongoing outbreaks (workplaces: 12, congregate settings: 3, institutions: 3, community settings: 2, educational settings: 1), including 13 active outbreaks with known variant cases.

Since the last Partner Update:

- We have reported 587 new cases, 314 recoveries, and 5 new deaths.
- There are 230 more active cases compared to the same day last week.
- There are 2 fewer active outbreaks compared to the same day last week.
- During the week of April 18, there were 635 new cases reported to SMDHU, which was 11% lower than the 714 cases reported the week prior.

For more local data, see: SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#), [COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard](#), [Provincial COVID-19 Response Framework – Status of Simcoe Muskoka](#)

*Variant cases encompass confirmed VOC cases and positive screens for a VOC. Caution should be taken when interpreting these data due to potential sampling biases and delay between sample collection and sequencing in recent weeks.

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Vaccine Data *(As of April 28, 2021 14:00)*

| Total first doses administered | Total second doses administered |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 179,839 | 20,242 |

Highlights:

- 32,296 immunizations have been provided since the last Partner Update.
- Nearly 180,000 people have received their first dose, representing 28.8% of the population in Simcoe Muskoka. This includes:
 - 25,619 adults 80 years of age and older (86%);
 - 18,680 adults 75-79 years of age (83%);
 - 25,161 adults 70-74 years of age (77%); and,
- Over 30,000 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine have been administered by primary care settings and pharmacies in Simcoe Muskoka.
- Over 22,200 people have received both required doses of the vaccine, representing 3.2% of the population in Simcoe Muskoka.

Local Media Updates *(Since April 21, 2021 Partner Update)*

- Over 90% of Holland Marsh workers vaccinated through pop-up clinics ([article](#))
- City 'exploring all available actions' to stop Meridian Place protests ([article](#))
- Weekend safety inspections will target supplement stores, garden centres, etc. ([article](#))
- Simcoe Muskoka logs fewer cases, but health officials warn third wave isn't over ([article](#))
- Case of new COVID variant discovered in India reported in Simcoe Muskoka ([article](#))

- RVH president describes COVID's third wave as 'punishing' for hospitals ([article](#))
- Local vaccine clinic asks for a 'little kindness' ([article](#))
- Anti-protest protesters bring the noise in downtown Barrie ([article](#))
- Orillia OPP investigating Friday's protest, but no charges laid yet ([article](#))
- GBGH cancels elective surgeries, expands ICU to house patients from away ([article](#))
- 'I wish you could come inside and see what we see,' RVH Chief of critical care ([article](#))
- 'Freedom rally' over province's COVID-19 regulations hits Midland town dock ([article](#))
- 'I did what I could to stall it': SMDHU top doc blames province for severe 3rd wave ([article](#))

| Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status | | | |
|--|--------------|-----------|--------|
| Ontario (As of April 28, 2021, 10:30) | | | |
| Total cases | Active Cases | Recovered | Deaths |
| 455,606 | 38,853 | 408,765 | 7,988 |
| <p><u>As of today:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 3,480 new cases, 4,517 resolved cases, and 24 deaths in the last day. • There is a total of 60,355 confirmed cases of the U.K. variant, 220 cases of the South African variant, and 405 cases of the Brazilian variant. • A total of 2,281 people are hospitalized for COVID-19, 877 people are in intensive care units (ICU) and 605 people are on ventilators. • There are 742 ongoing outbreaks (workplaces: 259, schools and childcares: 160, congregate living: 124, other settings: 104, health care settings: 95). <p><u>Since the last Partner Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been 26,483 new cases, 30,348 recoveries, and 199 deaths. • There are 4,064 fewer active cases compared to the same day last week. • There are 54 fewer people hospitalized, 87 more people in the ICU, and 39 more people on ventilators compared to the same day last week. • The 7-day average number of new daily cases is 3,783. <p><u>Vaccine status:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 4,907,203 vaccine doses have been administered to date, with 116,173 doses administered yesterday. 365,166 people in Ontario have been fully vaccinated. <p><u>Regional updates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas with the highest number of active cases per 100,000 population: Peel (617.77), Toronto (463.40), Niagara (340.04), York (324.62), and Brant (289.75). • Areas with the highest number of active cases: Toronto (12,658), Peel (8,536), York (3,603), Ottawa (2,582), and Durham (1,856). <p><u>Weekly Epidemiological Summary highlights: April 11-17, 2021:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 30,490 cases were reported this week, compared to 25,694 cases the week prior. The number of cases reported this week represents the largest number of weekly cases reported in Ontario since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. • Approximately 39% of COVID-19 cases reported this week were those with confirmed or presumed B.1.1.7 (U.K. variant) lineage. <p>For more provincial data, see: Ontario COVID-19 case data, Public Health Ontario Data Tool, Daily Epidemiologic Summaries and Weekly Epidemiologic Summaries</p> | | | |

| Canada (As of April 27, 2021 at 19:00 EDT) | | | |
|---|--------------|------------------|--------|
| Total Cases | Active Cases | Recovered | Deaths |
| 1,194,989 | 84,313 | 1,086,611 | 24,065 |
| <u>Yesterday:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Canada reported 7,072 new cases and 55 deaths.New cases were reported in all provinces and territories except PEI, NL, NWT, and YT.Deaths were reported in AB, SK, ON, QC, and NB. | | | |
| <u>Since the last Partner Update:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">In the last week, 55,946 people tested positive for COVID-19, 352 people died, and 59,153 people recovered.There are 3,559 fewer active cases of COVID-19 than there was a week ago. | | | |
| <u>Between April 12 and April 19, 2021:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">The number of COVID-19 patients hospitalized increased from 2,749 to 3,205.The number of COVID-19 patients in ICU beds increased from 1,028 to 1,215.The number of COVID-19 patients mechanically vented increased from 599 to 747. | | | |
| <u>Weekly epidemiology update: April 11-17, 2021:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">New cases increased by 17% compared to the previous week, with an average of 8,730 new cases reported every day.New deaths decreased by 20% compared to the previous week, with an average of 42 deaths reported every day.The number of weekly hospitalizations and ICU admissions continued to increase, with a 30% increase in hospitalized cases and a 22% increase in ICU admissions compared to the week prior.Daily case rates remain highest among those 20-39 years of age and lowest among those 80 years and older.According to forecasting, between 1,209,780 to 1,281,040 cumulative reported cases and 24,000 to 24,570 deaths are expected by May 2, 2021. | | | |
| <u>Key vaccine updates as of April 17, 2021:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">24.21% of the population has received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, including: 86.63% of adults aged 80 or older and 79.45% of adults 70-79 years of age.2.37% of population have received both required doses of the vaccine. | | | |
| For more national data, see: Daily epidemiology updates and Weekly epidemiology report | | | |
| Global (As of April 28, 2021 at 14:08 CET) | | | |
| Confirmed Cases | | Confirmed Deaths | |
| 148,128,030 | | 3,124,905 | |
| <u>In the last day:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">There were 702,752 new cases and 12,172 deaths.India, the U.S., Turkey, Brazil, and Iran reported the most new cases and India, Brazil, the U.S., Iran, and Poland reported the most deaths. | | | |
| <u>In the past week:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Nearly 5.9 million new cases and 92,781 deaths were reported.India, Brazil, the U.S., Turkey, and France reported the most new cases and India, Brazil, India, the U.S., Poland, and Colombia reported the most new deaths. | | | |

Highlights from Weekly Epidemiological Summary as of April 25, 2021:

- The number of new global COVID-19 cases continued to increase for the ninth consecutive week, with nearly 5.7 million new weekly cases reported.
- The number of reported new deaths increased for the sixth consecutive week, with over 87,000 new deaths reported.
- The South-East Asia region reported the highest increase in both cases and deaths for the third consecutive week, with India accounting for the vast majority of this regional trend. India accounted for 38% of global cases reported in the past week.

For more international data, see: [WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard](#) and [Weekly Epidemiological and Operational Updates](#)

Provincial, National and Global Updates *(Since April 21, 2021 Partner Update)*

Provincial Updates

The Ontario Government:

- Responds to Auditor General's report on long-term care ([statement](#))
- Is maximizing critical care capacity to support hospitals ([news release](#))
- Introduces legislation to strengthen health workforce accountability, enhance data-driven COVID-19 response ([news release](#))
- Expands vaccination booking to those 45 and up in hot spot communities ([news release](#))
- Is expanding innovative models to deliver better, connected care ([news release](#))
- Legislature passes budget bill to protect health and jobs ([news release](#))
- Takes further measures to expand hospital capacity, health care staffing ([news release](#))
- Ontario confirms first case of rare AstraZeneca-linked blood clotting ([statement](#))

Public Health Ontario published:

- Persistent Symptoms and Post-Acute COVID-19 – What We Know So Far ([synthesis](#))
- Updated: COVID-19 Regional Incidence and Time to Case Notification ([epi summary](#))
- Updated: COVID-19 Vaccine Uptake in Ontario ([surveillance report](#))
- Updated: Trends of COVID-19 Incidence in Ontario ([surveillance report](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Ontario's long-term care sector wasn't ready or equipped for COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Workers eligible for 3 paid days off as part of temporary sick leave program ([article](#))
- Ontario allows hospitals to move patients to long-term care without consent ([article](#))
- Military to send medics to help Ontario hospitals with third wave of COVID-19 ([article](#))
- ON migrant farm workers at higher risk of COVID-19 and need better protection ([article](#))
- Ontario doctors prepare for worst-case COVID-19 triage decisions ([article](#))
- 'We are ready to go to work': Healthcare workers from NL arrive in Ontario ([article](#))
- Toronto, Peel target businesses with COVID-19 outbreaks ([article](#))
- Ontario reports third blood clot associated with AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine ([article](#))
- 36 India variant cases confirmed in ON, Ford calls for tougher border restrictions ([article](#))
- ON should refocus vaccinations on essential workers, hot spots: Science table ([article](#))
- Amazon, Maple Leaf Foods to begin on-site vaccinations for employees in Peel ([article](#))
- Nearly 2,000 doctors demand urgent action to get the third wave under control ([article](#))
- 13-year-old girl from Brampton, Ontario dies after contracting COVID-19 ([article](#))
- Ontario's top doctor issues directive to cease all non-emergency surgeries ([article](#))

National Updates

The Government of Canada:

- Announces funding support in response to COVID-19 in India ([news release](#))
- Assists Ontario with COVID-19 response ([news release](#))
- The Minister of Health on National Immunization Week ([statement](#))
- AstraZeneca and Janssen vaccines produced at Emergent BioSolutions ([statement](#))
- Update for Indigenous Peoples and communities ([news release](#))
- Chief Medical Officers of Health Council on the use of AstraZeneca vaccine ([statement](#))
- Secures vaccine supply beyond 2021 ([news release](#))
- Statements from the Chief Public Health Officer: [April 21](#), [April 22](#), [April 24](#), [April 25](#), [April 26](#), [April 28](#)

Other National News:

- How the spread of COVID-19 misinformation is undermining trust in public health ([article](#))
- Hospital COVID-19 visitation rules exact a heavy toll on families, ICU staff ([article](#))
- Trudeau reassures AstraZeneca vaccine is safe after QC woman's death ([article](#))
- Rapid tests, drugs, contact tracing support from feds going unused by provinces ([article](#))
- Higher COVID infection rates among general population increase risk for children ([article](#))
- O'Toole, Singh support sending aid to India as they battle deadly COVID surge ([article](#))
- With enough vaccine coverage, restrictions can start to lift mid-summer: PHAC ([article](#))
- Why we need to get it right: Inside the country's hardest-hit ICUs ([article](#))
- Health Canada updates J&J vaccine label to mention 'very rare' blood clot cases ([article](#))
- B.C. reports COVID-19-related death of infant ([article](#))
- Canada bans flights from India and Pakistan as COVID surges across region ([article](#))
- AstraZeneca vaccine now recommended for people 30 and older: NACI ([article](#))
- Canada to get 1.9M vaccine doses this week, including first J&J shots ([article](#))
- Deaths, hospitalizations dropping among oldest adults as vaccinations ramp up ([article](#))
- Health Canada to start real-time review of Medicago COVID-19 vaccine ([article](#))

Global Updates

The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Special Focus: Update on SARS-CoV-2 variants ([Weekly epi update p.4-8](#))
- Continued review of emerging evidence on AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines ([statement](#))
- Director General continues to emphasize the need for vaccine equity "Around the world people are dying because they're not vaccinated, they're not tested, and they're not treated... The solution is straightforward: we need countries and companies that control the resources that could save lives to share... It means sharing vaccine doses to protect the most at-risk, not just the most-rich" ([Remarks at April 23 media briefing](#))
- Fighting misinformation in the time of COVID-19, one click at a time ([feature story](#))
- COVID continues to disrupt essential health services in 90% of countries ([news release](#))
- WHO donors and partners support COVID-19 response around the world ([feature story](#))

Other International News:

- Vital medical supplies begin arriving in India as country's death toll nears 200K ([article](#))
- 'Perfect storm' of actions to blame for India's COVID-19 crisis, WHO says ([article](#))
- U.S. will share its supply of AstraZeneca vaccines based on urgent need ([article](#))
- U.S. to resume J&J COVID-19 vaccinations despite rare clot risk ([article](#))
- Pfizer and Moderna reduce hospitalization risk by 94% among older adults: CDC ([article](#))

SMDHU Resources

SMDHU [website](#) – recent changes include:

Main COVID

- Updated content under “[My COVID-19 test was positive, now what?](#)” and “[I am a close contact of a person who recently tested positive for COVID-19](#)” expander bars

Vaccine and Immunization

- Added [licensed child care workers](#) to the list of groups eligible to register for vaccination
- Added pregnant individuals to the list of those eligible for vaccination under the [highest-risk health condition category](#)
- Updated information on [hot spot eligibility](#) and how to book an appointment
- Added information about how [those in the high-risk health condition categories](#) who would benefit from additional support to receive the vaccine can make arrangements
- Updated information to reflect that parents or essential caregivers of children with a [high-risk health condition](#) can receive vaccination even if their child is under 16 years of age
- Updated information on how [Second dose appointments](#) will be arranged
- Updated ‘Community Clinic’ section to reflect that one person can accompany a client to their appointment if the patient has a disability or requires interpretation of instructions

Partners and Municipalities

- Posted revised guidance documents under the following expander bars:
 - [Farmers’ Markets](#)
 - [Food Banks and Donation Centres](#)
 - [Shelter Services](#)

New Public Health Alerts:

- **April 23, 2021:** [COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #16: Those Who Are Pregnant are Now Eligible to Receive COVID-19 Vaccine](#)
- **April 24, 2021:** [COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #17: Clarifications on Essential Caregivers, High-Risk Children 12 to 15 Years of Age, Allergy e-Consult Service and Updated Recommendations on Use of AstraZeneca Vaccine](#)
- **April 28, 2021:** [COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #18: Licensed Child Care Staff Eligible for Vaccine and Hot Spot Eligibility Update](#)

Additional SMDHU resources:

- SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#)
- [SMDHU Vulnerable Populations for COVID-19 Response Interactive Map](#) highlights vulnerable populations in Simcoe Muskoka.
- 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 - 8:30am-6pm; Saturday - 8:30am-4:30pm

Credible Sources of Information

- [Ontario Ministry of Health](#)
- [Public Health Ontario](#)
- [Centre for Effective Practice COVID-19 Resource Centre](#)
- [Government of Canada](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)