

## COVID-19 Update for Partners

June 23, 2021

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

#### **Interchangeability of COVID-19 vaccines**

- Full vaccination provides the strongest protection against COVID-19 and its variants, including the Delta variant. As such, it is crucial for all individuals to complete their vaccine series as soon as they are eligible and within the recommended dose interval.  
**The best vaccine for your second dose is the first vaccine that is available to you.**
- In alignment with recommendations from the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), individuals who received an mRNA vaccine (Moderna or Pfizer) for their first dose can safely receive either Moderna or Pfizer for their second dose. Mixing these COVID-19 vaccines is safe, provides strong protection, and enables more people to receive their second dose sooner.
- Individuals who received AstraZeneca for their first dose can safely receive Moderna, Pfizer, or AstraZeneca for their second dose. In fact, **NACI is now recommending that an mRNA vaccine is preferred as the second dose for those who received a first dose of AstraZeneca.** This recommendation was made based on emerging evidence of a better immune response from this mixed vaccine series and to mitigate the potential risk of rare blood clotting events associated with the AstraZeneca vaccine. Those who received a first dose of the AstraZeneca vaccine can continue to choose to receive either an mRNA vaccine or AstraZeneca for their second dose at an interval of 8 to 12 weeks, with informed consent.
- **Based on these recommendations and in response to an unexpected shipment delay of the Pfizer vaccine, the health unit will be providing Moderna as the primary vaccine to those aged 18 and older at our clinics.** This will help ensure that people are not delayed in receiving their second dose when they are eligible. Individuals have the right to know which vaccine they are receiving, and we will ensure that people attending our clinics have the opportunity to ask questions and understand the risk of delaying their second dose.

#### **Further acceleration of early second dose eligibility**

- Simcoe Muskoka has been identified as a provincial hot spot for the Delta variant and, accordingly, we will be further expanding eligibility for early second doses this week. Beginning Wednesday, June 23 at 8AM, all Simcoe Muskoka residents ages 18 and older who received a first dose of an mRNA vaccine on or before May 30 will be eligible to book or rebook their second dose appointment at an interval of at least 28 days.

- Beginning the week of June 28, **all** Ontarians, ages 18 and older who received a first dose of an mRNA vaccine, regardless of the date, will be eligible to book or rebook their second dose appointment at an interval of at least 28 days.
- According to the current provincial schedule, the majority of youth 12-17 years of age are to receive their second vaccine dose between August 9-22. Youth who are First Nations, Inuit, or Metis, a [high-risk health care worker](#), an agricultural worker, or who have a [high-risk health condition](#) can continue to receive their second dose at an interval of 28 days.

#### **Health unit seeking volunteers for COVID-19 vaccination clinics**

- Our local COVID-19 vaccination program is one of the largest, most complex and most rapid mass vaccination programs in history. The success of our vaccination program to date is a result of the collective efforts of many individuals and organizations, including health unit staff and volunteers as well as our municipal, health care and community partners. SMDHU is grateful for the support of each staff member, volunteer and our many partners as we work together to protect the health of Simcoe Muskoka residents.
- There are currently 429 volunteers supporting our COVID-19 vaccine clinic operations across Simcoe Muskoka. Clinic volunteers contribute to an excellent client experience and provide essential support in non-clinical roles such as monitoring waiting areas, assisting and directing clients, and disinfecting and cleaning surfaces at the community clinics across our district.
- As our COVID-19 vaccine program continues to evolve and expand, **the health unit is currently accepting applications for volunteer support in the COVID-19 vaccination clinics located in Barrie, Innisfil, Orillia, Bracebridge and Huntsville.** Volunteers must be 18 years or older, be able to stand for long periods of time, work both indoors and outdoors, wear personal protective equipment (PPE), and obtain a satisfactory criminal record check upon hiring.
- Please visit the health unit's [website](#) for more information about volunteering and to complete a volunteer application form.

#### **Messaging for the upcoming Canada Day holiday**

- As people make plans for Canada Day, it is important that everyone, regardless of their vaccination status, abides by the restrictions in place under the [Reopening Ontario Roadmap](#).
- Of note, the province is expected to remain in Step 1 until at least July 2, 2021. I would advocate for the province to abide by its timeline for reopening with at least 21 days between each step. Remaining in each step for at least 21 days provides the time needed to evaluate any impacts of relaxed restrictions on key public health and health system indicators. We have made great progress in bringing the third wave under control and following a cautious and gradual approach to reopening will help ensure that this progress continues.
- We encourage residents to safely celebrate Canada Day and abide by the following restrictions in place under Step 1 of the [Reopening Ontario Roadmap](#):
  - Outdoor gatherings are limited to 10 people and indoor gatherings with non-household members are not permitted.
  - 2-metres physical distancing must be maintained from everyone outside your household, indoors and outdoors, and a face covering should be worn when this distance cannot be maintained.
  - Drive-by events are restricted to concert venues, theatres, and cinemas in association with a drive-in cinema, drive-in or drive-thru concert and/or performance.
  - A face covering must be worn in all indoor public spaces and workplaces.
  - Stay home and get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19.

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

<b>Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status</b> (As of June 23, 2021 14:00)			
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>Active Cases</b>	<b>Recovered</b>	<b>Deaths</b>
12,233	110	11,453	249
<p><u>In the last day:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9 people tested positive, 5 people recovered, there were no new hospitalizations, and there were no new deaths.</li> </ul> <p><u>Currently:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There have been 9 new cases reported to the health unit for the current week.</li> <li>14 Simcoe Muskoka residents are hospitalized with COVID-19.</li> <li>There are 72 active variant cases*.</li> <li>There are 2 ongoing outbreaks, both of which are in congregate settings and have known variant cases.</li> <li>There has been a total of 33 confirmed cases of the Delta variant in Simcoe Muskoka.</li> </ul> <p><u>Since the last Partner Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have reported 61 new cases, 83 recoveries, and 3 new deaths.</li> <li>There are 25 fewer active cases compared to the same day last week.</li> <li>There are 4 fewer active outbreaks compared to the same day last week.</li> <li>During the week of June 13, there were 67 cases reported to the health unit, which was 31% lower than the 97 cases reported the week prior. This was the lowest weekly case total since September 2020.</li> </ul> <p>For more local data, see: SMDHU <a href="#">COVID-19 HealthSTATS page</a> and <a href="#">COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard</a></p> <p><small>*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.</small></p>			

<b>Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Vaccine Data</b> (As of June 23, 2021 14:00)	
<b>Total first doses administered</b>	<b>Total second doses administered</b>
385,485	113,112
<p><u>Highlights:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>47,880 immunizations have been provided since the last Partner Update.</li> <li>Nearly 385,500 people have received their first dose, representing 64% of the total population and 74% of adults ages 18 and older in Simcoe Muskoka. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>215,709 adults 50 years of age and older (85%);</li> <li>148,594 adults 18-49 years of age (62%); and,</li> <li>21,167 youth 12-17 years of age (54%).</li> </ul> </li> <li>Over 113,100 people have received both required doses of the vaccine, representing 18.7% of the total population and 22.9% of adults 18 and older in Simcoe Muskoka.</li> </ul>	

<b>Local Media Updates</b> (Since June 16, 2021 Partner Update)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vaccines 'safe to mix': SMDHU encourages booking any second dose available (<a href="#">article</a>)</li> <li>'A hesitancy we knew would come': first dose appointments 'plateau' (<a href="#">article</a>)</li> <li>Delta variant looms over Simcoe Muskoka, 'we need to win that race' (<a href="#">article</a>)</li> </ul>

- Heightened surveillance at Orillia hospital after patients test positive for COVID ([article](#))
- Simcoe Muskoka in need of COVID-19 vaccination clinic volunteers ([article](#))
- Simcoe Muskoka region now a Delta variant hotspot ([article](#))
- 'I just want to work': Reopening is happening, but not for everyone ([article](#))
- Not all equal as to who is getting COVID-19 vaccinations in Simcoe Muskoka ([article](#))
- Local fitness centres push to be included in Step 2 of reopening ([article](#))

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

### Ontario (As of June 23, 2021, 10:30)

Total cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
543,019	3,032	530,894	9,093

#### As of today:

- There were 255 new cases, 460 resolved cases, and 11 deaths in the last day.
- The total confirmed variant of concern cases in Ontario are as follows:
  - Lineage B.1.1.7 (Alpha variant): 142,647
  - Lineage B.1.351 (Beta variant): 1,154
  - Lineage P.1 (Gamma variant): 4,263
  - Lineage B.1.617.2 (Delta variant): 975
- A total of 295 people are hospitalized with COVID-19, 305 people are in intensive care units (ICU) due to COVID-related critical illness, and 190 people are on ventilators.
- A total of 13,096,628 vaccine doses have been administered. 65.9% of all Ontarians and 75.4% of those ages 12 and older have received their first vaccine dose. 22.6% of all Ontarians and 25.9% of those ages 12 and older have been fully vaccinated.
- There are 130 ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks (workplaces: 46, congregate living: 26, other settings: 25, health care settings: 17, schools and childcares: 16).

#### Since the last Partner Update:

- There have been 2,209 new cases, 3,732 recoveries, and 107 deaths.
- There are 1,630 fewer active cases compared to the same day last week.
- There has been a 49% increase in the number of confirmed cases of the Delta variant.
- There are 143 fewer people hospitalized, 72 fewer people in the ICU, and 52 fewer people on ventilators compared to the same day last week.
- The 7-day average number of new daily cases is 316.

#### Regional updates:

- Areas with the highest number of active cases per 100,000 population: Porcupine (174.58), Waterloo (87.45), North Bay (55.73), Niagara (29.47), and Brant (25.94).
- Areas with the highest number of active cases: Toronto (692), Waterloo (468), Peel (353), Ottawa (172), and Porcupine (147).

#### Weekly Epidemiological Summary highlights: June 6-12, 2021:

- During the week of May 30, there were 3,497 new cases reported, which represented a 33% decrease compared to the 5,209 cases reported the week prior.
- Reinfections have accounted for a very small proportion (0.04%) of cases in Ontario. The majority of reinfections (42%) have occurred among cases 20-39 years of age.
- 75.1% of reported cases this week tested positive for a mutation or variant of concern.

For more provincial data, see: [Ontario COVID-19 case data](#), [Public Health Ontario Data Tool](#), [Daily Epidemiologic Summaries](#) and [Weekly Epidemiologic Summaries](#)

Canada (As of June 22, 2021 at 19:00 EDT)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Recovered	Deaths
1,410,206	10,162	1,373,889	26,155
<u>Yesterday:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Canada reported 627 new cases and 71 new deaths.</li><li>• New cases were reported in all provinces and territories except PEI, NWT, and NT.</li><li>• New deaths were reported in AB, MB, ON, QC, and NS.</li></ul>			
<u>Since the last Partner Update:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In the last week, 6,113 people tested positive for COVID-19, 183 people died, and 10,691 people recovered.</li><li>• There are 4,761 fewer active cases of COVID-19 than there was a week ago.</li></ul>			
<u>Key vaccine updates as of June 23, 2021:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 66.3% of the population has received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, including 76.2% of those ages 12 and older.</li><li>• 21.1% of the population has been fully vaccinated, including 24.2% of those ages 12 and older.</li></ul>			
<u>Between June 8 and June 15, 2021:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The number of COVID-19 patients hospitalized decreased from 1,177 to 914.</li><li>• The number of COVID-19 patients in ICU beds decreased from 674 to 534.</li><li>• The number of COVID-19 patients mechanically vented decreased from 413 to 323.</li></ul>			
<u>Weekly epidemiology update: June 6-12, 2021:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New cases decreased by 33% compared to the previous week, with an average of 1,387 new cases reported every day.</li><li>• New deaths decreased by 18% compared to the previous week, with an average of 28 deaths reported every day.</li><li>• The number of weekly hospitalizations decreased by 21% and the number of weekly cases in the ICU decreased by 17% compared to the week prior.</li><li>• Variants of concern represent an increasing proportion (approximately 65%) of reported cases from mid-April to mid-May 2021.</li><li>• According to forecasting, between 1,407,545 to 1,420,335 cumulative reported cases and 26,060 to 26,450 cumulated reported deaths are expected by June 27, 2021.</li></ul>			
For more national data, see: <a href="#">Daily epidemiology updates</a> and <a href="#">Weekly epidemiology report</a>			
Global (As of June 23, 2021 at 12:25 CET)			
Confirmed Cases		Confirmed Deaths	
178,701,170		3,877,316	
<u>In the last day:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There were 280,786 new cases and 6,755 deaths.</li><li>• India, Brazil, Colombia, Russia, the U.S. reported the most new cases and India, Brazil, Colombia, Russia, and Argentina reported the most new deaths.</li></ul>			
<u>In the past week:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Over 2.5 million new cases and 61,830 deaths were reported.</li><li>• Brazil, India, Colombia, Argentina, and Russia reported the most new cases and the most new deaths</li></ul>			

Weekly Epidemiological Summary highlights: June 14-20, 2021:

- During the week of June 14, there were over 2.5 million new cases reported, which represented a 6% decrease compared to the week prior and the lowest weekly case count since February 2021.
- There were over 64,000 deaths reported, which represented a 12% decrease compared to the week prior. While the number of new deaths continues to decline, global mortality remains high with over 9,000 new deaths reported each day.

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

## **Provincial, National and Global Updates** *(Since June 16, 2021 Partner Update)*

### ***Provincial Updates***

The Ontario Government:

- Releases tourism economic recovery report ([news release](#))
- Is providing accessible rides to COVID-19 vaccination sites ([news release](#))
- Accelerated second dose eligibility continues ahead of schedule ([news release](#))

Public Health Ontario published:

- Risk of COVID-19 Transmission from Vaccinated Cases ([evidence brief](#))
- Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 at Day and Overnight Camps ([webpage](#))
- Updated: COVID-19 B.1.617 Variant of Concern – What We Know So Far ([synthesis](#))
- Updates to Variants: Terminology, Laboratory Testing, and Reporting ([blog post](#))
- Updated: Persistent Symptoms & Post-Acute COVID-19 ([synthesis](#))
- Updated: Adverse Events Following Immunization for COVID-19 ([surveillance report](#))
- Updated: Confirmed Cases of COVID-19 Post-Vaccination in Ontario ([surveillance report](#))
- Updated: Confirmed Cases After Vaccination in Long-Term Care Homes ([epi summary](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Get fully vaccinated with first vaccine offered, ON Medical Officers of Health urge ([article](#))
- Ontario on pace to begin next stage of reopening 'a few days' early, says CMOH ([article](#))
- What's driving Waterloo Region's COVID-19 surge? ([article](#))
- Ontarians cancelling AZ doses after new guidance, ON still offering dose choice ([article](#))
- Ontario's vaccine booking system is complex, but gets job done, experts say ([article](#))
- COVID-19 outbreak at Toronto Western Hospital 'more than likely' Delta variant ([article](#))
- Williams urges patience as Ontarians face lineups, lack of bookings for 2<sup>nd</sup> dose ([article](#))
- As cases plummet, joy is spreading in GTA hospitals over empty ICU beds ([article](#))
- Ontario to open second dose eligibility to all adults by end of June ([article](#))
- Want safe classrooms in September? Get the ventilation right, experts say ([article](#))
- Could Ontario enter Step 2 early? Ford promises to raise issue with health table ([article](#))
- What Ontario can learn from the U.K. and new data on the Delta variant ([article](#))

### ***National Updates***

The Government of Canada:

- First phase to easing border measures for travellers entering Canada ([news release](#))
- COVID-19 update for Indigenous Peoples and Communities ([news release](#))
- Statements from the Chief Public Health Officer: [June 17](#), [June 19](#), [June 20](#), [June 21](#), [June 23](#)



### Other National News:

- Risk-assessment tool for fully vaccinated people coming soon, Tam promises ([article](#))
- Why mixing Pfizer and Moderna could help Canada end the pandemic sooner ([article](#))
- Some international travel restrictions ease for vaccinated people with proof ([article](#))
- How long will immunity to COVID-19 last after vaccination? Studies offer clues ([article](#))
- Death of fully vaccinated patient in Calgary is rare, but not unexpected: experts ([article](#))
- How students and teachers in Quebec kept schools open despite the pandemic ([article](#))
- Even fully vaccinated, Canada will have to be vigilant against outbreaks: Tam ([article](#))
- Alberta set to be first province to lift nearly all COVID-19 restrictions on July 1 ([article](#))
- Public health agency reports spike in confirmed cases of Delta variant ([article](#))
- Vaccine deliveries enough to fully vaccinate all eligible Canadians by end of July ([article](#))
- Pandemic shows EI system in need of significant retooling, committee finds ([article](#))
- AstraZeneca vaccine recipients lament constantly changing advice from NACI ([article](#))
- Universities and colleges wrestle with mandating vaccines for return to campus ([article](#))
- What to know about the potential link between heart inflammation and vaccines ([article](#))

### ***Global Updates***

#### The World Health Organization (WHO):

- Special Focus: Update on SARS-CoV-2 variants ([Weekly epidemiological update](#) p.5-13)
- Special Focus: Global Consultation on Variants of Concern and their Impact on Public Health Interventions ([Weekly epidemiological update](#) p.14-15)
- Director General highlights the global inequities that exist in vaccine distribution “While a handful of countries have high vaccination rates and are now seeing lower numbers of hospitalizations and deaths, other countries in Africa, the Americas and Asia are now facing steep epidemics... The inequitable access to vaccines has demonstrated that, in a crisis, low-income countries cannot rely on vaccine-producing countries to supply their needs.” ([Remarks at June 21 media briefing](#))
- Supports establishment of first mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub ([news release](#))
- Carries on supporting COVID-19 response in countries around the world ([feature story](#))
- PAHO paving the way for COVID-19 vaccination in the Americas ([feature story](#))

#### Other International News:

- COVID-19 surge in Africa raises fears of a calamity like India’s ([article](#))
- ‘Likely link’ between rare heart inflammation and Pfizer, Moderna: CDC advisers ([article](#))
- AstraZeneca, Pfizer vaccines effective against Delta COVID-19 variant ([article](#))
- Most poorer countries don’t have enough COVAX shots to continue vaccinations ([article](#))
- COVID-19 Delta variant becoming globally dominant, says WHO official ([article](#))
- Biden urges shots for young adults as variant concern grows ([article](#))

## **SMDHU Resources**

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

#### **Main COVID-19**

- Updated messaging about COVID-19 vaccination and public health measures and restrictions for everyone to follow

#### **Getting your Vaccination**

- Updated information on second dose appointments to reflect that those who are 18+ and received their first dose on or before May 30 are now eligible to book their second dose
- Updated information on [submitting out of province immunization documents](#)
- Updated messaging on [combining vaccines to complete your series](#)
- Updated [clinic information](#) for Alliston immunization clinic

### **Operating your Business Safely**

- Updated FAQ document on [Mandatory face coverings in indoor public spaces](#)
- Updated information and guidance for [Outdoor Recreational Amenities](#), [Day Camps](#), and [Recreational Camps](#)

### **Partners and Municipalities**

- Updated information and guidance for [Outdoor Recreational Amenities](#) and [Day Camps](#)

### **New Public Health Alerts:**

- **June 18, 2021:** [COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #28: Simcoe Muskoka Identified as a Hot Spot for Delta Variant, Significantly Increased Vaccine Supply and Updated Second Dose Recommendations](#)
- **June 23, 2021:** [COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #29: Updated Guidance of Second Dose for Youth, Mixing mRNA Vaccines and Pfizer-BioNTech Supply 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](#)