

COVID-19 Update for Partners

August 25, 2021

[Key messages from Dr. Gardner](#)

[Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status](#)

[Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Vaccine Data](#)

[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

Fourth Wave

- We're very concerned about the fourth wave, which could be severe.
- We need people to abide by the control measures that are in place and get fully vaccinated with two doses of the vaccine.

In-School Vaccination Clinics Update

- The health unit is currently working with our school board partners to plan clinics in high schools from Thursday, Sept. 9 to Friday, Sept. 17.
- While clinics won't be located at every high school, there will be at least one in each community.
- The clinic schedule is still being confirmed but the plan is to offer the clinics from 11 a.m. – 3 p.m. for staff and high school students at that particular schools, and then from 3:00 p.m. – 7 p.m. for feeder elementary schools, families and other community members.

Third Doses

- At this time, third doses for eligible individuals cannot be given in mass immunization clinics (MICs) or pharmacies so eligible patients will need to access it through their hospital program providing care (hospital programs are reaching out to patients) or their primary care provider.
- The province is working on a referral form to allow primary care providers not offering the vaccine, to confirm diagnosis and refer their patients to public health or a pharmacy.
- In the meantime, eligible patients who are unable to receive the vaccine from their primary care provider can bring a medical note verifying their diagnosis to the 29 Sperling Drive clinic in Barrie where they can receive their third dose.
- We are actively working with long-term care homes and eligible retirement homes to have their residents all immunized by mid-September at the latest so as not to interfere with flu vaccination.

Vaccine Clinic Volunteer Appreciation

- We want to recognize the approximately 550 individuals who collectively volunteered more than 27,500 volunteer hours to support the COVID-19 vaccine clinic operations throughout Simcoe Muskoka region between March and August 2021.
- Clinic volunteers enhanced our ability to provide an excellent client experience by monitoring waiting areas, assisting and directing clients, monitoring clients in aftercare, and disinfecting and cleaning surfaces at the community clinics across our region.
- Clinic volunteers were an integral component of clinic operations. At every clinic, volunteers helped make it possible to deliver hundreds of vaccinations while ensuring the health and safety of each and every client.
- Vaccine clinic volunteers contributed a wealth of knowledge gained through previous volunteer involvement and as current or retired nurses, teachers, police, allied health professionals, business executives, event planners, students, public servants, first responders, government employees and community citizens.
- We appreciate the valuable contributions of the community partners providing support with volunteer coordination. This includes Georgian Bay General Hospital, Matthews House Hospice and Orillia Soldiers' Memorial Hospital.
- We acknowledge and are thankful for the contributions made by several municipalities who enabled the support from local firefighters to oversee aftercare areas within vaccine clinics across the district.
- The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) is grateful for the support of each volunteer and our many community partners who came together to protect the health of Simcoe Muskoka residents.

COMOH MANDATORY COVID-19 Vaccination at Ontario Universities and Colleges

- On August 24, the Council of Ontario Medical Officers of Health (COMOH), which represents the Medical Officers and Associate Medical Officers of Health in all 34 public health units across the province, sent [a letter with their recommendation](#) for COVID-19 vaccination policies to all Ontario universities and colleges.
- The risk of COVID-19 has been highlighted by outbreaks among post-secondary students, both on and off campus and the age cohort with the highest cumulative number of cases has been amongst those who are students at post-secondary institutions, specifically those aged 20-29 years. Unfortunately, vaccination uptake amongst this age group has also plateaued.
- The virus will continue to circulate this fall and it is important to create the conditions that will allow students to return to in person education and the post-secondary sector to operate with appropriate public health measures in place during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On August 17, 2021, the Chief Medical Officer of Health indicated that mandatory vaccination policies will be required for post-secondary institutions, with specific minimum requirements.
- In light of these facts and as post-secondary institutions continue to develop their policies, COMOH strongly recommends that:
 - Full vaccination against COVID-19 be required for all individuals involved in any in-person activities on campus with the rare exception of those individuals who cannot be vaccinated due to permitted exemptions. Individuals are to be required to submit proof of vaccination.
 - All individuals who are unvaccinated due to permitted exemptions or who are awaiting their second dose be required to adhere to additional health and safety measures, up to and including serial and frequent rapid testing.

Individuals involved in any in-person activities on campus should be fully vaccinated as soon as operationally feasible.

Kindergarten Masking Recommendation

- SMDHU is recommending that school boards and private schools mandate students in kindergarten (JK and SK) to wear masks while attending school in-person during the 2021-2022 school year.
- Reasonable exemptions on the requirements to wear masks continue to apply (e.g., students who have trouble breathing or are unable to wear a mask for medical reasons, temporarily removing the mask when eating, etc.). I make this recommendation based upon several factors including:
 - The highly transmissible Delta variant is the dominant strain in Simcoe Muskoka necessitating the implementation of more conservative infection prevention and control approaches in schools this fall.
 - A review of declared school outbreaks from September 2020 to June 2021, whereby ~16% of all Simcoe Muskoka school outbreaks involved full-day kindergarten (JK/SK) classes.
 - There is an anticipated increase in other respiratory viruses this fall/winter and universal masking will provide protection against these other viruses as well.
 - A statement from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) that children aged 2 to 5 may be able to wear a mask if supervised, depending on their ability to tolerate it, as well as put it on and take it off.
- While this recommendation goes above and beyond the provincial guidance requiring students in Grades 1 to 12 to wear properly fitted non-medical or cloth masks indoors at school, the province also indicates that “at the advice of the local public health unit, schools and school boards may choose to implement additional masking measures based on local circumstances”. I believe this additional measure, in addition to the existing protocols, is necessary to further prevent transmission of COVID-19 in Simcoe Muskoka during in-person learning.

Event Applications (Public Events)

- Step 3 of the province’s [Road to Reopen](#) permits indoor social gatherings and organized public events up to 25 people and outdoor social gatherings and organized public events up to a capacity of 100 people. All people in attendance must maintain a physical distance of at least 2 metres (6 feet).
- We provide recommendations and regulatory requirements to help stop the spread of COVID-19 when organizing an event or gathering on the [Operating Your Business Safely](#) page of our website.
- Specific to COVID-19, a COVID-19 safety plan for a public event is required, which outlines the steps that an organizer will conduct to keep staff, volunteers and attendees safe.
- It is important to note that for all events at which food is served (either sold or given away) to the general public, a special event permit from SMDHU is also required.
 - To apply for the permit the event organizer must complete an [Event organizer application form](#), which must be received by SMDHU at least 30 days before the planned event.
 - This requirement was in place prior to COVID-19, and therefore is not specific to the pandemic response.
 - Due to the volume of applications being received, event organizer applications received less than 30 days before the event is to take place may not receive an approval.
- More information is available on our [Special Event Planning](#) webpage.

New COVID-19 Wastewater Surveillance Page on HealthSTATS

- As part of Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks' province-wide Wastewater Surveillance Initiative for COVID-19, Barrie, Orillia, Collingwood and Midland are providing samples from their wastewater treatment facilities to be analyzed to measure the amount of COVID-19 present.
- Studies have shown that a significant proportion of people with active COVID-19 infections shed the virus in their stool, sometimes even before symptoms start.

Results included on the NEW HealthSTATS page:

- Declining SARS-CoV-2 levels in Barrie wastewater mirror decreasing COVID-19 cases in the community from early April through July 2021.
- In recent weeks, there have been increases in both SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater and reported cases in Barrie and Orillia.
- Due to low case counts in Collingwood and Midland, it is unclear how strong of a predictor wastewater surveillance for COVID-19 is in these communities, but monitoring will continue.

New Chart on HealthSTATS Illustrates the Number of Confirmed COVID-19 Cases Based on Immunization Status

- On the [COVID-19 Immunization page](#), there is a new chart that shows the immunization status of confirmed COVID-19 cases living in Simcoe Muskoka. For the week of August 15th, of the 128 cases reported to public health, 103 (80%) were unimmunized, 9 (7%) were partially immunized and 16 (12.5%) were fully immunized.
- We have not included the vaccination status of COVID-19 hospitalizations or those that have passed away from COVID-19 because case counts are still too small and we need to protect privacy. This decision may be revisited in the future.

Dr. Gardner's next media briefing will take place on Wednesday, September 1 at 1:30 p.m. Previous SMDHU MOH media briefings are posted on the SMDHU [Facebook](#) page and [YouTube](#) channel.

PLEASE NOTE: Starting the week of August 30, 2021, Partner Updates will be published on Thursdays.

Key Items from Dr. Moore's Media Conference August 24, 2021

- Dr. Moore stated there were 486 new COVID-19 cases. He said unvaccinated individuals are 8 times more likely to catch COVID-19 and 29 times more likely to be in hospital and 48 times more likely to be a patient in the intensive care unit compared with people who are vaccinated. 82.3 per cent of Ontarians age 12 and older have received their first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and Ontario has reached our second dose target of 75 per cent.
- Dr. Moore said, "to date we have found no evidence that points to increased risk for either male or female fertility following vaccination."
- He continued his appeal to the 18-29 year age group to get vaccinated because only 62.6 per cent are fully immunized with two doses. Dr. Moore said you're "playing roulette by

not getting vaccinated without it being so aggressive and spreading, wanting to spread so rapidly across Ontario all over again.”

- Asked when capacity limits can be eased, Dr. Moore said it’s a government decision and that a 90% fully vaccinated rate would be an “aspirational goal” and many communities are starting to achieve it.
- Dr. Moore stated the way “to get back to a new normal, is to build the highest level of protection. ...we’ll have small outbreaks that we’ll learn to live with that.” He said the province could avoid future waves and move away from public health measures as early as six to eight months from now. “It’s all about prevention, prevention, prevention. Our fate is in our hands.”
- On potential third doses, Dr. Moore said they are working with the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) in September to explore these issues.
- Dr. Moore said the last 14% of people to get vaccinated is very slow and steady. “It’s the last mile of a very long marathon, and we know we have to answer questions for these individuals. It’s going to take longer. We want them to build their confidence in immunization.”

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status *(As of August 25, 2021 13:15)*

Total Cases	Active Cases	Resolved	Deaths
12,698	158	12,284	256
<p>In the last day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 17 people became cases, there were 22 resolved cases, there was no new hospitalizations, and there were no new deaths. <p>Currently:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been 51 new cases reported to the health unit for the current week. There were 127 new cases reported to the health unit last week (week of August 15th), 27% higher than the 100 cases reported for the week of August 8th. • 9 Simcoe Muskoka residents are hospitalized with COVID-19. • There are 75 active variant cases.* • There has been a total of 394 confirmed cases of the Delta variant in Simcoe Muskoka. • There are 2 active COVID-19 outbreaks in a workplace setting. <p>Since the last Partner Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have reported 157 new cases, 120 resolved cases, and 1 new death. • There are 36 more active cases compared to the same day last week. • There is 1 more active COVID-19 outbreak. <p>For more local data, see: SMDHU COVID-19 HealthSTATS page and COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard</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>			

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Vaccine Data *(As of August 25, 2021 13:20)*

Total # immunized with first dose	Total # immunized with second dose
430,371	388,282
<p><u>Highlights:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 16,458 immunizations have been provided since the last Partner Update. • In total 827,137 doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Simcoe Muskoka, including doses administered by local pharmacies. 430,371 individuals living 	

in Simcoe Muskoka have received at least one dose of vaccine, which represents 71% of the total population.

- Currently 81% of the population 12 years and older living in Simcoe Muskoka have had at least one dose of vaccine including 75% of youth 12 to 17 years of age who have received at least one dose of vaccine.

Local Media Updates *(Since Aug 18, 2021 Partner Update)*

- Region's top doc asking science table to release fourth-wave projections ASAP ([article](#))
- 'Hitting younger people harder': Average age of Simcoe-Muskoka COVID-19 cases drops to lowest point in pandemic ([article](#))
- Barrie police not making vaccinations mandatory for its officers, civilian staff ([article](#))
- COVID-19: The challenges of being a gig worker during the pandemic ([article](#))
- COVID-19 vaccines available at local clinics this week ([article](#))
- Third doses, school vaccine clinics in the works for Simcoe-Muskoka ([article](#))
- Barrie man dies after contracting COVID ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status

Ontario *(As of August 25, 2021 at 10:29)*

Total cases	Active Cases	Resolved	Deaths
561,297	5,140	546,685	9,472

As of yesterday:

- There were 660 new cases, 572 resolved cases, and 1 death in the last day.
- Of the 660 new cases, 279 are unvaccinated, 41 are partially vaccinated and 114 are fully vaccinated and 52 are status unknown.
- A total of 283 people are hospitalized with COVID-19, 161 people are in intensive care units (ICU) due to COVID-related critical illness, and 92 people are on ventilators.
- A total of 20,526,219 vaccine doses have been administered. 72% of all Ontarians have received their first vaccine dose and 66% have been fully vaccinated.
- Of all eligible Ontarians 12 years of age and older 82% have at least one dose and 75% are fully vaccinated.
- There are currently 115 active COVID-19 outbreaks in Ontario.

Since the last Partner Update:

- There have been 4,377 new cases, 3,263 recoveries, and 41 deaths.
- There are 2,529 more active cases compared to the same day last week.
- There are 120 more people hospitalized, 34 more people in the ICU, and 14 more people on ventilators compared to the same day last week.
- The 7-day average number of new daily cases is 625.

Regional updates:

- Areas with the highest number of active cases per 100,000 population: Windsor-Essex County (104.54), Hamilton (81.06), Middle Sex London (52.21)

Weekly Epidemiological Summary highlights:

- There are a total of 561,297 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Ontario reported to date.
- Compared to the previous day, this represents:
- An increase of 660 confirmed cases (percent change of +35.8%)
- An increase of 1 death (percent change of -94.4%)
- An increase of 572 resolved cases (percent change of +5.7%)

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 August 24, 2021 at 19:00 EDT)

Total Cases	Active Cases	Resolved	Deaths
1,476,149	24,671	1,424,629	26,849

Yesterday:

- Canada reported 2,334 new cases and 35 new deaths.
- Most cases (64.1%) and deaths (77.5%) were reported by Ontario and Quebec.

Since the last Partner Update:

- In the last week, 18,395 people tested positive for COVID-19, 130 people died

Key vaccine updates as of August 13, 2021:

- 72.6% of the population has received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, including 83.5% of those ages 12 and older.
- 65.5% of the population has been fully vaccinated, including 75.3% of those ages 12 and older.

Cases reported since the start of the vaccination campaign, as of August 07, 2021

Since the start of the vaccination campaign on December 14, 2020, PHAC received case-level vaccine history data for 75.5% (n=624,980) of COVID-19 cases aged 12 years or older.

Of these cases:

- 562,343 (88.9%) were unvaccinated at the time of their episode date.
- 33,178 (5.2%) were not yet protected by the vaccine, as their episode date occurred less than 14 days after their first dose.
- 31,543 (5.0%) were only partially vaccinated, as their episode date occurred either 14 days or more after their first dose or less than 14 days after their second dose.
- 5,139 (0.8%) were fully vaccinated, as their episode date occurred 14 days or more after their second dose.

Weekly epidemiology report: August 8-14, 2021:

- During week 32 (08 August to 14 August 2021), Canada reported moderate and increasing COVID-19 activity compared to the previous week (week 31: 01 August to 07 August 2021). Out of all the other provinces and territories, only Nunavut reported no COVID-19 activity for week 32.
- There was an average of 1 828 new cases reported daily during week 32, representing a 62% increase compared to the previous week. Following a decrease in the number of cases reported since mid-April 2021, the daily number of reported cases has been increasing since mid-July 2021.
- During week 32, almost all provinces and territories, with the exception of Yukon and Northwest Territories, reported an increase in new cases compared to the previous week.
- Daily rates of cases per 100 000 population are increasing as of mid-July 2021. Among both males and females, case rates are highest among individuals in the 20-39 year age groups and lowest among individuals in the 60 to 79 and 80 years and older age groups.

For more national data, see: [Daily epidemiology updates](#) and [Weekly epidemiology report](#)

Global <i>(As of August 24, 2021 at 17:56 CEST)</i>	
Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Deaths
212,357,898	4,439,843
<p><u>In the last 24 hours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 604,493 new cases and 9,598 deaths. • U.S.A, Iran, United Kingdom, India, and Russia reported the most new cases and Indonesia, Russia, Iran, Vietnam and India reported the most new deaths. <p><u>In the past week:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 4.5 million new cases and more than 68,000 deaths were reported. • U.S.A., Iran, India, United Kingdom and India reported the most new cases and Indonesia, U.S.A, Russia and Brazil reported the most new deaths. <p>For more international data, see: WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard and Weekly Epidemiological and Operational Updates</p>	

Provincial, National and Global Updates *(Since August 10, 2021 Partner Update)*

Provincial Updates

The Ontario Government:

Ontario Deploying Last Mile Strategy to Further Increase Vaccination Rates ([news release](#))

Public Health Ontario published:

COVID-19 Delta Variant: Risk Assessment and Implications for Practice ([evidence brief](#))

Other Provincial News:

- 'Herd immunity' no longer possible without vaccinating young children, Public Health Ontario says ([article](#))
- Ontario will experience COVID-19 waves for at least another six to eight months, top doctor warns ([article](#))
- Ontario's top doctor willing to consider lifting capacity limits in venues with mandatory vaccination requirements ([article](#))
- Ontario chamber of commerce issues guidance for businesses on proof-of-vax protocols ([article](#))
- Ontario to pilot at-home COVID-19 testing for students and staff at certain schools ([article](#))
- Ontario COVID-19 science table member resigns, alleges that modelling data 'projects a grim fall' ([article](#))
- Unvaccinated employees at Toronto hospital network told they will be fired ([article](#))
- Liberal leader urges Ontario premier to convene meeting on vaccine passports ([article](#))
- Doug Ford to vaccine-refusing MPP: You're out of our party ([article](#))
- Toronto Police Service announces mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policy for all members ([article](#))
- Disagreement over mandatory vaccines creates rift between Toronto Police Service, police association ([article](#))

National Updates

The Government of Canada:

- COVID-19: Border services resume at a number of small Canadian marine vessel reporting sites, airports of entry and ferry terminals ([news release](#))

- Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on August 20, 2021 ([statement](#))

Other National News:

- How Quebec's vaccine passport will work, and where it will apply ([article](#))
- Starbucks reintroduces reusable mugs. Tim Hortons, McDonald's still reject them due to pandemic ([article](#))
- B.C. government once again changes its pandemic policies in a matter of hours ([article](#))
- Travellers to Canada doubled after border reopened to Americans ([article](#))
- COVID-19 breakthrough cases signal next phase of Canada's battle ([article](#))
- Before COVID-19, governments ignored warnings Public Health wasn't ready for a pandemic ([article](#))
- COVID restrictions reinstated in B.C., Quebec and Manitoba as cases surge in some area ([article](#))

SMDHU Resources

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

New resources added:

- **Ask at Every Visit- Quick Reference Tool (for Clients – General)** – To help build confidence and reduce barriers to COVID-19 vaccination for your clients or patients ([PDF](#))
- **Ask at Every Visit Quick Reference Tool (for Clients – Youth)** – To help build confidence and reduce barriers to COVID-19 vaccination for your clients or patients who are 12-17 years of age ([PDF](#))

New resources added:

- **The 4A Model - Minimal Contact COVID-19 Vaccine Intervention (for Clients) –** ([PDF](#))

Getting your vaccination

- Information about consent for 12–17-year-olds.
- Information about [local pop-up clinics](#) continues to be updated.

New Public Health Alerts

- COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #33 Updated Schedule for 29 Sperling Barrie COVID-19 Vaccine Clinic ([PDF](#))
- COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #32 Last Mile Strategy and Closing Mass Immunization Clinics, Third Doses for Specific Groups and Youth Turning 12 in 2021 Now Eligible ([PDF](#))

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-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](#)