

COVID-19 Update for Partners

September 16, 2021

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Key messages from Dr. Gardner, Medical Officer of Health

Workplace COVID-19 vaccination policies

- We have provided a number of resources for businesses and workplaces on our [Operating your business safely webpage](#) related to vaccination policies and vaccination education.
- We are also publicly sharing the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit's (SMDHU's) [COVID-19 Vaccination Policy](#) that was approved on Sept. 8, 2021, and is now being implemented at the health unit. This policy applies to all individuals employed by or working for the SMDHU, including volunteers, students, contracted personnel (working on a full day basis for > 10 consecutive days), and members of the Board of Health.
- In addition to the policy, we are also posting the [Statement of Medical Exemption for COVID-19 Immunization](#) and [Refusal of COVID-19 Immunization](#) forms. These, along with the policy, can be used by your organization or business as examples for creating your own workplace vaccination policy and supporting forms.

Proof of vaccination requirements

- The provincial government released [the regulations](#) and [guidance](#) to support businesses and organizations in implementing [proof of vaccination requirements](#), which take effect on Sept. 22.
- Proof of vaccination is intended to help increase vaccination rates, protect individuals in higher-risk indoor settings, and keep businesses open.
- The province is also developing an enhanced vaccine certificate with a unique QR code and verification app that will be available by Oct. 22 and will be a secure and convenient way to show your vaccination status, when required.
- The health unit has also developed resources to support local businesses during the implementation of this requirement. These can be found on the [Operating your business safely webpage](#).
- Since Sept. 1 when proof of vaccination was announced, we have seen a significant increase in the number of vaccinations being delivered.
- Between Sept. 1 to 7, about 103,000 first doses were administered in Ontario, compared to about 78,000 doses the seven days preceding the announcement – an increase of about 33 per cent.

- Locally, we have seen a 27 percent increase in first doses administered among Simcoe Muskoka residents from Sept. 1-14 compared to Aug. 1-14.
- In advance of Sept. 22, all Ontarians can print or download their vaccination receipt from the [provincial booking portal](#). The Ministry of Health is working on more ways to support those who need help obtaining their vaccination receipt, including requesting a copy be sent by mail.
- Anyone who needs help obtaining a copy of their vaccination receipt may call the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre at 1-833-943-3900.
- An individual is considered fully vaccinated if they have received the full series of a COVID-19 vaccine authorized by Health Canada at least 14 days ago, or any combination of such vaccines. This includes one or two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada, followed by one dose of a COVID-19 mRNA vaccine authorized by Health Canada, or three doses of a COVID-19 vaccine not authorized by Health Canada.
- Individuals who have received a complete one or two-dose series of a COVID-19 vaccine that is not authorized for use by Health Canada should be offered one additional dose of an mRNA vaccine. The minimum interval between the preceding dose and the additional dose should be 28 days.
- If the individual has already received three doses of a non-Health Canada authorized COVID-19 vaccine at the appropriate interval, no additional doses should be offered at this time.

Provincial vaccine contact centre reaching out to unvaccinated unrostered patients

- Starting late this week, the Provincial Vaccine Contact Centre will begin conducting outbound calls to the approximately 720,000 unvaccinated, unrostered adults across Ontario. They will be reaching out to these individuals to:
 - Encourage them to get their vaccine;
 - Provide information about how the Delta variant continues to be a risk;
 - Provide information about the upcoming proof of vaccination requirement in prescribed settings as of Sep. 22, 2021; and
 - Help book an appointment if the individual is agreeable.

Third doses

- There are questions about whether the general population needs to receive a third dose of COVID-19 vaccine.
- To further protect those who face the highest risk from COVID-19 and the Delta variant, the government, in consultation with the Chief Medical Officer of Health, is following the evidence and recommendations from the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization \(NACI\)](#) and will begin offering third doses of the COVID-19 vaccine to [additional groups](#), such as individuals with moderate or severe primary immunodeficiency, individuals receiving active treatment for significantly immunosuppressive conditions and those with acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.
- Locations and timing for third doses will vary by public health unit and high-risk population based on local planning and considerations.

Vaccination pop-up clinics

- This is the last week of the health unit's formal pop-up clinics, with the last few scheduled through to Monday, Sept. 20.
- Dr. Gardner would like to thank the staff who have been setting up and working at the pop-up clinics for all their hard work and dedication in assisting with the COVID-19 vaccination response.

- Thanks to everyone's efforts we are now sitting at 83 per cent first dose coverage and 77 per cent fully immunized for those ages 12+ in Simcoe Muskoka. However, there is still more work to be done to reach the provincial 90 per cent target.
- The Immunization Clinic at 29 Sperling will also continue to operate until the end of the month on Sunday from 10am – 6pm and Mon-Wed from 3-7pm.
- We will also continue to request the GO VAXX bus for locations in our area through the next couple of months, with some dates planned to go back for second doses to some areas.

Return to school

- Now that we are into the second week of the school year, we are already seeing some cases in school aged children and youth. We are working closely with our school boards partners, schools and childcare operators to manage these cases and minimize risk for other students/staff.
- We have not yet seen any instances of confirmed transmission (i.e., outbreak) within the schools but there has been transmission in childcare centres with those ages 0-4 years in the past week.
- We encourage everyone to continue to practice public health measures outside of school/childcare hours to minimize transmission – including masking indoors, physical distancing, vaccinations for those that are eligible, and daily screening.
- In addition to keeping children showing symptoms at home, unvaccinated siblings of a household member who is symptomatic should not be attending school and/or childcare until COVID-19 has been ruled out.
- Based on the increase in cases, and time needed to complete investigations, you may hear about a possible case before the investigation is complete and letters are sent home.
- Parents will be notified if their child has been identified as a close contact and is required to isolate.
- If you do not receive a letter, then your child may continue to go to school/childcare.
- Screening and testing among those that are possible cases or identified contacts are very important measures that help to prevent COVID-19 being carried into schools or childcares.
- Children attending childcare or elementary school must be screened by a parent or guardian, while high school students may screen themselves.
- Even if you or your child is fully vaccinated, you must continue with daily screening and testing if you or your child have one or more COVID-19 symptoms.
- It is essential that all eligible individuals, particularly those who have, live with, or work with children under 12 get vaccinated to protect schools, childcare and communities.
- If you have children who are unable to be vaccinated, protect them by getting vaccinated and by supporting those turning 12 and above to get vaccinated.

Dr. Gardner's next media briefing will take place on Wednesday, October 6 at 1:30 p.m. Previous SMDHU MOH media briefings are posted on the SMDHU [Facebook](#) page and [YouTube](#) channel.

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Case Status *(As of Sept 16, 2021)*

Total Cases	Active Cases	Resolved	Deaths
13,275	234	12,784	257

As of the last update:

- 30 people became cases, there were 42 newly resolved cases, there was 1 new hospitalization, and there was 1 new death.

Currently:

- There have been 78 new cases reported to the health unit for the current week. There were 197 new cases reported to the health unit last week (week of September 5th), 3% lower than the 203 cases reported for the week of August 29th.
- 13 Simcoe Muskoka residents are hospitalized with COVID-19.
- There are 4 active COVID-19 outbreaks.

Since the last Partner Update:

- We have reported 212 new cases, 222 resolved cases, and 1 new death.
- There are 11 less active cases compared to the same day last week.
- There is 1 less active COVID-19 outbreak.

For more local data, see: [SMDHU COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#) and [COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard](#)

*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 Sept 16, 2021)*

Total # immunized with first dose	Total # immunized with second dose
443,717	407,961

Highlights:

- In total 859,995 doses of COVID-19 vaccine have been administered in Simcoe Muskoka, including doses administered by local pharmacies. 443,717 individuals living in Simcoe Muskoka have received at least one dose of vaccine, which represents 73% of the total population.
- Currently 84% of the population 12 years and older living in Simcoe Muskoka have had at least one dose of vaccine including 81% of youth 12 to 17 years of age who have received at least one dose of vaccine.
- The rate of COVID-19 infection among the unvaccinated vaccine-eligible Simcoe Muskoka population is 11 times higher than it is for the fully vaccinated population and the rate of COVID-19 hospitalizations is 37 times higher

Local Media Updates *(Since Sept 9, 2021 Partner Update)*

- Two new school-related COVID cases reported in Simcoe County ([article](#))
- Barrie CAO believes city hall's vaccination policy 'will put us on the right side of history' ([article](#))
- COVID cases plateau in Simcoe-Muskoka, but Gardner says winter could bring increase ([article](#))
- People getting on board with mobile vaccination buses ([article](#))
- Barrie hospital's pandemic recruiting efforts have been 'quite successful', says VP ([article](#))

- About 1.5 million more Ontarians need to be double vaxxed during 'last mile' ([article](#))
- Ontario releases more details on COVID-19 vaccine passport ([article](#))
- Hospital CEO calls protests 'disheartening, frustrating and offensive' ([article](#))
- Tears, fears and cheers as kids go back to class in Simcoe County ([article](#))
- New vaccine passport system leads to increase in first-dose appointments ([article](#))
- City of Orillia latest municipality to implement vaccine policy for staff ([article](#))
- Innisfil restaurant owner thinks vaccine passport will lead to awkward situations with customers ([article](#))
- Here are four topics addressed at Sept. 15 COVID-19 update for Simcoe-Muskoka ([article](#))
- 'This is a younger wave' kids under 12 making up a larger portion COVID caseload ([article](#))
- OHL requiring spectators to provide vaccine proof, including at Barrie's Sadlon Arena ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status			
Ontario (As of Sept 16, 2021 at 11:41)			
Total cases	Active Cases	Resolved	Deaths
577,253	6,129	561,492	9,632
<p><u>As of yesterday:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 864 new cases, 688 resolved cases, and 3 deaths in the last day. • Of the 864 new cases, 533 are unvaccinated, 56 are partially vaccinated and 209 are fully vaccinated and 66 are status unknown. • A total of 348 people are hospitalized with COVID-19, 191 people are in intensive care units (ICU) due to COVID-related critical illness, and 120 people are on ventilators. • A total of 21,283,180 vaccine doses have been administered. 74% of all Ontarians have received their first vaccine dose and 69% have been fully vaccinated. • Of all eligible Ontarians 12 years of age and older 85% have at least one dose and 79% are fully vaccinated. • There are currently 146 active COVID-19 outbreaks in Ontario. <p><u>Since the last Partner Update:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There have been 5,123 new cases, 4,997 recoveries, and 53 deaths. • There are 73 more active cases compared to the same day last week. • There are 17 less people hospitalized, 6 more people in the ICU, and 5 more people on ventilators compared to the same day last week. • The 7-day average number of new daily cases is 732. <p><u>Regional updates:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas with the highest number of active cases per 100,000 population: Windsor-Essex County (111.81), Chatham-Kent (105.35), Brant County (84.40), Hamilton (55.90), <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 September 15, 2021 at 19:00 EDT)			
Total Cases	Active Cases	Resolved	Deaths
1,559,410	42,322	1,489,783	27,305
<p><u>Yesterday:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canada reported 4,291 new cases and 42 new deaths. 			

- Most cases were reported in Alberta, Quebec, Ontario and B.C.

Since the last Partner Update:

- In the last week, 30,123 people tested positive for COVID-19, 198 people died

Key vaccine updates as of September 16, 2021 9:51 CST:

- 74.7% of the population has received at least one COVID-19 vaccine dose, including 85.8% of those ages 12 and older.
- 68.7% of the population has been fully vaccinated, including 78.9% of those ages 12 and older.

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

Global (As of Sept 16, 2021 at 16:18 CEST)	
Confirmed Cases	Confirmed Deaths
226,236,577	4,654,548
<p><u>In the last 24 hours:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There were 527,831 new cases and 9,331 deaths. • U.S.A, India, United Kingdom, Turkey and Iran reported the most new cases and U.S.A, Mexico, Russia, Brazil, Iran and India reported the most new deaths. <p><u>In the past week:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 4 million new cases and more than 64,000 deaths were reported. • U.S.A., United Kingdom, India, Turkey, Iran and Philippines reported the most new cases and U.S.A, Russia, Mexico and Brazil, Iran and Malaysia 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 Sept 9, 2021 Partner Update)*

Provincial Updates

The Ontario Government:

- Ontario Releasing Guidance to Support Proof of Vaccination Policy ([news release](#))
- Using your Vaccination Receipt: Frequently Asked Questions ([backgrounder](#))
- Expanded Eligibility for Third Doses of the COVID-19 Vaccine ([backgrounder](#))

Public Health Ontario:

- Ontario COVID-19 Data Tool ([interactive report](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Inside an Ontario ICU where the COVID-19 patients are largely young, and all unvaccinated ([article](#))
- 'It's terrifying': Police on hand as pandemic protesters picket hospitals ([article](#))
- Stress, staffing shortages brought on by COVID-19 causing nurses to leave the front lines ([article](#))
- Ontario lab technologists grapple with burnout, demand more funding from province ([article](#))

- More than 100 new school-related cases reported across Ontario, active caseload surpasses 500 ([article](#))
- Ontario has administered thousands of third COVID doses to the immunocompromised ([article](#))
- 'The next few weeks are going to be disastrous', employment lawyer says of Ontario's vaccine certificate rollout ([article](#))

National Updates

The Government of Canada:

- Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on September 16, 2021 ([statement](#))
- Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on September 10, 2021 ([statement](#))

Other National News:

- Health Canada authorizes new names for COVID-19 vaccines ([article](#))
- Alberta's new restrictions came into effect at midnight. Here's what you need to know ([article](#))
- Moderna says COVID-19 vaccine protection wanes, makes case for booster ([article](#))
- People recently diagnosed with COVID-19 won't be able to vote on election day ([article](#))
- Online COVID-19 risk assessment gets an upgrade to reflect larger gatherings ([article](#))
- 69 per cent of respondents reported mental distress during COVID-19 pregnancies: survey ([article](#))
- COVID-19 during pregnancy means 10 times higher risk of ICU admission, Canadian data suggests ([article](#))
- Pfizer and Moderna say COVID-19 vaccine protection wanes after six to eight months ([article](#))
- Moderna developing single-dose booster shot for COVID-19 and flu ([article](#))

Global Updates

- WHO provides support around the world to bring the COVID-19 pandemic under control through vaccines and other critical measures ([article](#))
- International Organizations, Vaccine Manufacturers Agree to Intensify Cooperation to Deliver COVID-19 Vaccines ([news release](#))

SMDHU Resources

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

- COVID-19- information about proof of vaccination status ([link](#))
- New page: Proof of vaccination ([link](#))
- Key things to know about COVID-19 vaccines ([link](#))
- Operating your Business Safely
 - Updated: COVID-19 vaccination policies for workplaces ([link](#))
 - New: COVID-19 proof of vaccination requirement ([link](#))
 - Updated: Resources for employers and workplaces ([link](#))
- Partners and Municipalities- COVID-19 proof of vaccination requirement ([link](#))

New Public Health Alerts

COVID-19 Vaccine: Update #36 Updated 3rd Dose Recommendations, Extended Expiry Dates for Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine, and Medical Exemptions ([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](#)