

COVID-19 Update for Partners

October 7, 2021

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Key Issues

Death of Youth in Simcoe Muskoka

- The health unit is aware of online and anecdotal reports of the recent death of a young person in our community being connected to the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Specific details regarding cause of death are being investigated by the coroner's office.
- Our condolences go out to the family and friends of the youth who died in our community on Monday. Please respect the family's privacy to allow them space to grieve and honour their loved one.

Outbreaks in Educational Settings

- Overall transmission of COVID-19 in education settings has been low so far this fall.
- Preventing outbreaks requires the continued use of public health measures, including screening all students (even if they are fully vaccinated) every day for symptoms (including on days they are not attending school) and getting tested at an assessment centre if they have one or more COVID-19 symptoms.
- Students who have symptoms (without an alternate diagnosis from a health care provider) and who have not been tested, must self-isolate for a minimum of 10 days from the start of their symptoms.
- Unvaccinated individuals with a household member who is symptomatic should not be attending school and/or childcare until COVID-19 has been ruled out.
- Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) [Going to School](#) web pages have guidance documents and other resources specific to school and COVID-19 for families and school administrators.

Rapid Antigen Testing in Schools

- The province announced that after Thanksgiving it will be making rapid antigen screening available to schools through participating public health units where risk of transmission is high.
- We anticipate using these tests in outbreaks and in schools with cases that have an undetermined source.

- Rapid antigen tests will be used only for unvaccinated asymptomatic students and children who are not high-risk contacts.
- Symptomatic children and high-risk contacts should continue to access lab-based PCR testing available at assessment centres and other collection centres.
- Parents can choose if their unvaccinated asymptomatic children will participate and will be able to conduct the rapid antigen screening at home with instructions. Children with positive rapid tests will have to be tested at a local assessment centre or specimen collection centre and isolate until the result of that lab-based PCR test is known.

Gatherings, Events, and other Celebrations

- The province has announced recommendations on social gatherings related to upcoming holidays and events.
- In keeping with the provincial regulations, indoor social gatherings are limited to 25 people and 100 people outdoors.
- Virtual gatherings or events are still the safest way to celebrate, but if you choose to host or attend an in-person gathering or event, take precautions to reduce the risk of COVID-19.
- Our website has [updated recommendations for gatherings, events and celebrated holidays](#).

mRNA Vaccines and Myocarditis

- Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health recently recommended the Pfizer vaccine be used for people aged 18-24 out of an "abundance of caution" due to a very small but observed number of cases of myocarditis and pericarditis.
- Locally, there have been 14 cases of myocarditis with eight cases occurring among those receiving Moderna and six receiving Pfizer. Five were among those 18-24 years of age.

Third Doses of Vaccine for LTC Residents and Seniors Living in Congregate Settings

- The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends a booster dose of an mRNA vaccine be offered to long-term care (LTC) residents and seniors living in other congregate settings who have already received two doses of COVID-19 vaccine.
- We are awaiting provincial direction on what interval (five or six months from dose 2) will be used going forward.
- It is very important that healthcare workers, staff, visitors, and other close contacts of residents are fully vaccinated to reduce the likelihood of the virus being introduced into the congregate living setting, infecting the residents, and causing an outbreak.

Vaccinations Continue to be Available in Simcoe Muskoka

- The COVID-19 Immunization Centre, 29 Sperling Dr., in Barrie continues to provide walk-in vaccinations on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays until the end of November. Information about clinic times is available on our [website](#).
- Vaccines are also available through [participating pharmacies](#), the [Barrie Family Health Team](#), some health care providers, pop-up clinics, and limited appointments are available at our local health unit [offices](#).

Dr. Gardner's next media briefing will take place on Wednesday, October 13 at 1:30 p.m. Previous SMDHU MOH media briefings are posted on the SMDHU [Facebook](#) page and [YouTube](#) channel.

Simcoe Muskoka COVID-19 Data (As of October 7, 2021)

Active Cases	New cases in the most recent week (Sept 26-Oct 2)	New cases reported in the last day	Hospitalizations	Residents 12+ fully vaccinated (%)
131	97	19	7	80.1%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Of the new cases reported in the last day 89.5% are unvaccinated, 0% are partially vaccinated and 10.5% are fully vaccinated. There are 86 active variant cases. In the last day there were 19 resolved cases and no new hospitalizations or deaths. There are the same number (5) of active outbreaks as last week (four in educational settings and one in a congregate setting). <p>More local data available at: SMDHU COVID-19 HealthSTATS page and COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard</p>				

Local Media Updates (Since Sept. 29, 2021 Partner Update)

- Vaccination is 'the best way to end this': Orillia doctor ([article](#))
- Most customers compliant with vaxx passport mandate say local business owners ([article](#))
- Volunteering amid the COVID-19 pandemic a challenge for Simcoe County high schoolers ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Case Status

Ontario (As of Oct. 6, 2021)				
Active Cases	New cases in the last week	New cases reported in the last day	Hospitalizations	Residents 12+ fully vaccinated
4,579	4,015	587	280	82%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last week 48 people have died from COVID-19. There are 410 fewer active cases compared to the same day last week. Of new active cases almost 60% are unvaccinated, 5.5% are partially vaccinated, 27% are fully vaccinated and 9% have an unknown vaccination status. There are 12 fewer people hospitalized compared to last week, with 149 people in the ICU and 102 on a ventilator. Of those people who are hospitalized and in ICU for which there is data 73% of those hospitalized are not fully vaccinated and 87% of those in ICU are not fully vaccinated. <p><u>Highlights from Sept 28 weekly Epidemiological Summary</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Case rates were highest amongst children 5 – 11 years of age and for the first time since the beginning of the pandemic children 0 – 4 years of age had a case rate higher than adults aged 20 to 39. <p><u>Regional highlights:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Areas with the highest number of active cases per 100,000 population: Chatham-Kent (93.12), Brant County (77), Eastern Ontario (69.47), Lambton (70.25), and Windsor-Essex County (63.08), <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 Oct. 6, 2021)				
Active Cases	New Cases (last 7 days)	Deaths (last 7 days)	Current Hospitalizations	Population 12+ fully vaccinated
41,636	27,016	293	2535	80.7%
<p>Weekly case highlights for Sept 19 – 25 compared to the previous week:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The average number of cases reported daily decreased 2%. There were increases in the number of deaths (up 31%), hospitalizations (up 12%), and ICU admissions (9%). Newfoundland, Nunavut, Yukon, and New Brunswick all experienced large increases in cases. <p>New: Analysis of data available on cases following vaccination show over 95% of cases, hospitalizations and deaths have occurred in people who are not fully vaccinated.</p> <p>For more national data, see: COVID-19 daily epidemiology update and the national Weekly epidemiology report (PDF).</p>				
Global Data				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Last week case numbers continued to decline that began in August. Over 3.1 million new cases and over 54,000 deaths were reported. The highest numbers of new cases last week were reported in: United States, United Kingdom, Turkey, Russia, and India. The highest number of deaths last week were reported in: United States, Russia, Brazil, Mexico, and India. International data (including international vaccine coverage) available at: WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard 				

Provincial, National and Global Updates *(Since Sept 29, 2021 Partner Update)*

Provincial Updates

The Ontario Government:

- Ontario Supporting People and Businesses Rebuilding Economic Stability While Keeping Ontarians Safe and Healthy ([news release](#))
- Ontario Taking Action to Immediately Increase Staffing in LTC, Leading to More Direct Care for Residents ([news release](#))
- Ontario Providing Financial Relief to Employers ([news release](#))
- Ontario Supporting Non-Profits through the Community Building Fund ([news release](#))
- Targeted COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Screening to Keep Students Safe ([news release](#))
- Ontario Taking Additional Steps to Protect Long-Term Care Home Residents ([news release](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Toronto hospitals report surge in sick kids as some pediatricians still won't see them in person ([article](#))
- 'There's no social escape': Pandemic led to rising homelessness, depression among queer and trans people in Toronto ([article](#))
- Long-term care home staff must be double vaxxed by Nov. 15 ([article](#))
- Her family did everything right, but they still caught COVID-19 amid a school outbreak ([article](#))
- Durham MPP removed from legislative role after misrepresenting vaccination status ([article](#))

- Businesses that don't comply with vaccine passport rules could lose their liquor license ([article](#))
- Businesses thumbing their nose at the vaccine passport law may be courting legal disaster ([article](#))

National Updates

The Government of Canada:

- Canada endorses OECD joint statement on supporting global economic recovery from COVID-19 ([news release](#))
- Mandatory COVID-19 vaccination requirements for federally regulated transportation employees and travelers ([backgrounder](#))
- Government of Canada to assist Alberta with COVID-19 response ([news release](#))
- COVID-19 vaccine requirement for the federal workforce ([backgrounder](#))
- Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on October 1, 2021 ([statement](#))
- Update on COVID-19 Vaccines and the Risk of Myocarditis and Pericarditis ([statement](#))
- Canada announces extension of flight ban from India as it prepares for the return of direct flights ([news release](#))

Other National News:

- Employment lawyers brace for first wave of COVID-19 layoffs as vaccine mandates kick in ([article](#))
- 5,000 travelers who defied hotel quarantine rules got big fines ([article](#))
- What's the rationale behind a COVID vaccine booster? ([article](#))
- Canadian companies delay return to office amid Delta variant concerns ([article](#))
- Ottawa under pressure to extend business and worker COVID-19 benefits ahead of Oct. 23 deadline ([article](#))
- Facing pandemic losses, business owners say proof of vaccination requirements adding to stress ([article](#))
- Cybercriminals are offering to sell fake Canadian COVID-19 vaccination certificates online ([article](#))
- Will Canadians with mixed-vaccine doses be blocked from U.S. flights? ([article](#))
- Alberta, B.C., Saskatchewan ask Ottawa to send one-shot J&J COVID-19 vaccines to boost uptake ([article](#))

Global Updates

- Pfizer asks U.S. to allow COVID-19 shots for kids ages 5 to 11 ([article](#))
- Study suggests Pfizer/BioNTech antibodies disappear in many by seven months ([article](#))
- Merck says experimental drug molnupiravir cuts worst effects of COVID-19 ([article](#))
- The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Reference Group on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in Emergency Settings has developed a new book titled 'My Hero is You 2021: How kids can hope with COVID-19', a sequel to the successful 'My Hero is You: How kids can fight COVID-19!'. Both books have been a collaboration of 60 organizations including WHO; read more about the new book [here](#) or download it [here](#).
- [WHO weekly epidemiological update on COVID-19 - 5 October 2021](#)
- [WHO weekly operational update on COVID-19 - 4 October 2021](#)

SMDHU Resources

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

- **Business and Partners & Municipalities**
 - [Safety Plan, Screening and Proof of Vaccination](#)
 - [Facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities](#)
 - [Proof of Vaccination expander bar](#) (the links to the province's proof of vaccination *Guidance for Businesses and Organizations* and *Question and Answer* resource reflect the updated 2nd version (dated Sept 27 and 28, respectively)
 - [Curling Clubs](#)
 - [Facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities](#)
 - [Outdoor recreational amenities](#)
- **Partners and Municipalities**
 - [Outdoor recreational amenities](#)
- **[Gatherings, Events and Celebrating Holidays](#)**
- **Key things to know about COVID-19 vaccines**
 - [Learn from the experts](#)
 - [Multilingual information](#)
- **[Pop-up clinics](#)**
- **Going to School**
 - [Families](#) – daily screening
 - Going to school after [travelling outside of the country](#)
- **[Complaints about businesses](#)**

HealthSTATS:

- SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#)
- [SMDHU Vulnerable Populations for COVID-19 Response Interactive Map](#) highlights vulnerable populations in Simcoe Muskoka.

SMDHU Health Connection:

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 – closed on holidays (Thanksgiving Monday)

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](#)