

COVID-19 Update for Partners

October 14, 2021

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Key Issues

Outbreak at St. Marie of the Incarnation Catholic School

- As the community of Bradford West Gwillimbury continues to experience higher rates of COVID-19 transmission, the risk of infection within school communities is also higher.
- As of Thursday Oct. 14, 2021, the COVID-19 outbreak at St. Marie of the Incarnation Catholic School in Bradford involves 21 people.
- To support the school community the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU):
 - Held a PRC COVID-19 testing clinic on Wednesday for asymptomatic students, their household family members, and staff families.
 - Is holding a virtual Q&A session on Thursday Oct. 14th for parents of children who attend the school. The session will provide information about COVID-19 outbreak management and prevention.
- It is crucial everyone attending school complete the daily screening and follow the directions on the screening tool. Community members should also continue to monitor for symptoms, stay home when unwell and seek testing as soon as possible.
- Getting tested quickly when you feel unwell supports the health unit to receive positive test results quickly, allowing us to investigate and contact individuals who may have been exposed as quickly as possible.
- Community members can also help protect children who cannot be vaccinated by getting vaccinated.

Letter of Instruction to Recreational Facilities

- As cases increase in children and youth, it is essential we protect children who are unable to be vaccinated. The vaccination of individuals who interact with children is an important contribution to their protection.
- On Thursday, October 14, a [letter of instruction](#) was issued by SMDHU's Medical Officer of Health to all owner operators and persons responsible for any indoor facilities used for sports and recreational fitness.
- Effective Thursday, Nov. 25, 2021, at 12:01 a.m., owners, operators and persons responsible for any indoor facilities or any premises or part of a premises used for sports and recreational fitness activities in Simcoe Muskoka will be required to ensure that each individual, age 12 years and older

provides identification and proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 or a valid medical exemption to attend the facility's indoor area for coaching, teaching, instructing, officiating at organized sports, or volunteering. They must also comply with all other regulations and requirements under the Reopening Ontario Act, 2020, unless specifically exempt by these instructions, in addition to any COVID-19 regulatory requirements, local bylaw or health unit Order that are in force or effect. The letter of instruction does not apply to individuals aged 12-17 years who participate in organized youth sports.

- While sport and recreational fitness activities provide physical and mental health benefits, many of these activities are high-intensity and involve heavy breathing, prolonged close contact, and lack of masks, putting individuals at greater risk for COVID-19 transmission. As well, volunteers, coaches and officials frequently have close and prolonged contact with participants, including youth and children, some of whom are unvaccinated.

Ontario Cautiously Lifts Capacity Limits in Select Settings

- Effective October 9, the province lifted capacity limits to allow 100 per cent capacity in some settings (e.g., concert venues, theatres, and cinemas; spectator areas of sporting venues, meeting and event spaces, horseracing tracks, car racing tracks, and commercial film and television productions with studio audiences) with proof of vaccination required. Other public health measures, such as masking and physical distancing, remain in place.
- Guidance for businesses and organizations provided on our website is currently being updated to reflect this change. Please check back often for updates.

Education and Compliance Initiative Results

- During a three-day (October 4-6) education and enforcement campaign for businesses that must request proof of vaccination from patrons, SMDHU, along with partners from a multi-ministry team, police services and municipal enforcement agencies collectively visited over **240** businesses in Simcoe Muskoka.
- The top three common issues identified during this education and enforcement campaign were: businesses not conducting screening; businesses over capacity limits; and outdated COVID-19 safety plans that require the inclusion of proof of vaccination information.
- Businesses with outstanding issues will be followed-up with to ensure compliance with the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act, 2020, S.O. 2020, c. 17*.

SMDHU Vaccination Policy

- In September, the health unit implemented a staff COVID-19 vaccination policy (available on our [website](#)) requiring staff to submit their vaccination status by October 8. At this time, **97%** of SMDHU staff have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19 infection.

Dr. Gardner's next media briefing will take place on Wednesday, October 20, 2021 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 14, 2021)*

Active Cases	New cases in the most recent week (Oct 3-9)	New cases reported in the last day	Current Hospitalizations	Residents 12+ fully vaccinated (%)
151	134	23	11	81%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Active cases increased from 131 to 151 compared to the same day last week. The number of cases in the most recent week (Oct 3-9) is 37% higher than the previous week. There are three more people in hospital compared to this time last week. Of all local cases reported to public health in the past 4 weeks, 77% are not fully vaccinated (69% unvaccinated plus 8% partially vaccinated). There are 4 active outbreaks (three 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 Oct. 7, 2021 Partner Update)*

- Simcoe Muskoka health unit to mandate vaccinations for coaches, officials and volunteers of youth sports ([article](#))
- Simcoe Muskoka logs 13 new cases and three elementary school outbreaks ([article](#))
- New COVID-19 cases reported at Bradford Catholic school ([article](#))
- Simcoe County District School Board vaccination rate at 91 per cent among employees and trustees ([article](#))
- RVH requiring visitors to be vaccinated against COVID-19, starting in mid-November ([article](#))
- Town of Midland introduces procedure encouraging COVID-19 vaccinations ([article](#))
- COVID-19 vaccine not required on GO trains ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Data

Ontario <i>(As of Oct. 14, 2021)</i>				
Active Cases	New cases in the last week	New cases reported in the last day	Hospitalizations	Residents 12+ fully vaccinated
4,022	3,333	306	254	83%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the last week 21 people have died from COVID-19. There are 557 fewer active cases compared to the same day last week. Of new active cases 57% are unvaccinated, 5% are partially vaccinated, 31% are fully vaccinated and 7% have an unknown vaccination status. There are 26 fewer people hospitalized compared to last week, with 129 people in the ICU and 81 on a ventilator. Of those people who are hospitalized and in ICU for which there is data, 78% of those hospitalized (not in ICU) are not fully vaccinated and 87% of those in ICU are not fully vaccinated. Areas with the highest number of active cases per 100,000 population: Eastern Ontario (69.95), Chatham-Kent (61.14), Windsor-Essex County (56.02), and Lambton (45.81). 				

Highlight from [Oct 28 Weekly Epidemiological Summary](#)

- Case rates have declined across most quintiles of neighbourhood diversity with the rate in the most ethnically diverse neighbourhoods reporting a 29% decrease since August 29, 2021. While the least diverse neighbourhoods continue to report the lowest rate of cases, it is the only quintile that has not reported a decrease in cases.

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 Oct. 13, 2021)

Active Cases	New Cases (last 7 days)	Deaths (last 7 days)	Current Hospitalizations	Population 12+ fully vaccinated
35,998	23,105	255	2478	81%

Weekly case highlights for Sept 26 – Oct 2 compared to the previous week:

- The number of cases reported in the last week decreased 1%.
- There were increases in the number of deaths (up 14%), hospitalizations (up 5%), and ICU admissions (up 6%).
- Manitoba, Northwest Territories, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia all experienced increases in cases (over 25%).
- Cases and hospitalizations are highest among unvaccinated individuals. Case rates among fully vaccinated individuals remains low but has increased slightly.

For more national data, see: [COVID-19 daily epidemiology update](#) and the national Weekly epidemiology report ([PDF](#)).

Global Data

- Last week over 2.8 million new cases and over 46,000 deaths were reported reflecting a decline in both case numbers and deaths.
- The European Region was the only region reporting an increase in cases and deaths.
- In the last week the highest number of cases were reported in: United States, United Kingdom, Turkey, Russia, and India.
- In the last week the highest number of deaths were reported in: United States, Russia, Mexico, Brazil, and Romania.
- International data (including international vaccine coverage) is available at: [WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard](#)
- [WHO weekly epidemiological update on COVID-19 - 13 October 2021](#)

Provincial, National and Global Updates (Since Oct. 7, 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:

- Union leader warns of staff shortages due to mandates in the healthcare sector ([article](#))
- Science table looks at health worker burnout ([article](#))
- Vast majority of cases at shuttered Etobicoke school are result of student-to-student transmission: official ([article](#))
- Large venue capacity increases 'head-scratching' ([video](#))
- Ontario hospitals seeing low rates of staff losses to mandatory vaccine policies ([article](#))
- Here's how this eastern Ontario health unit hit a provincial vaccination high of 92 per cent ([article](#))
- CAMH aims to address vaccine hesitancy with COVID-19 vaccination clinics for Black community ([article](#))
- As schools roll out rapid testing for COVID-19, different approaches emerge across regions ([article](#))

National Updates

The Government of Canada:

- New App Provides Remote Access to COVID-19 Resources for Workplaces ([news release](#))
- Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada – Oct. 8, 2021 ([statement](#))

Other National News:

- Canada's vaccine passport for travellers expected 'within weeks' ([article](#))
- COVID-19 outbreaks rising in long-term care homes across the country ([article](#))
- COVID-19 booster shots not yet needed for most Canadians, health experts say ([article](#))
- Alberta's COVID-19 triage plan changed to exclude children ([article](#))
- U.S. to reopen its land border to fully vaccinated Canadians in early November ([article](#))
- Some unvaccinated people are going public after getting COVID-19. Will it convince others to get the shot? ([article](#))
- Why courts can allow children to make up their own minds about getting vaccinated ([article](#))
- Still worried about getting a vaccine for COVID-19? Here's how to understand the rare, but real, risks ([article](#))
- Surging COVID-19 numbers prompt New Brunswick hospitals to move to Red Alert level ([article](#))
- The advantages, challenges of rapid, at-home COVID-19 tests ([video](#))
- Breakthrough COVID-19 cases bring confusion, concern ([video](#))
- Quebec's nurses order says it will suspend licence for unvaccinated members ([article](#))
- 'Long COVID' is painful, expensive - and so far, impossible to cure ([article](#))
- What can Canada learn from the most vaccinated country in the world? We asked the man behind Portugal's vaccination effort ([article](#))
- Alberta introduces more cash, new fines in its COVID-19 vaccine passport program ([article](#))

Global Updates

- U.S won't block travellers with AstraZeneca or other non-approved FDA vaccines from visiting ([article](#))
- WHO hopes new COVID-19 panel can find coronavirus origins ([article](#))
- Italy is about to bring in the strictest COVID-19 measures in Europe ([article](#))
- What we know about Merck's experimental pill to treat COVID-19 ([article](#))
- [WHO weekly operational update on COVID-19 - 12 October 2021](#)

SMDHU Resources

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

- **Business and Partners & Municipalities**
 - **NEW** October 14, 2021 – [Letter of Instruction](#) to owners/operators of any indoor facilities or any premises or part of a premises used for sports and recreational fitness activities
 - October 12, 2021 - [RESCINDED: Class Order for Service Providers of Vulnerable Settings](#)
- **Business and Partners & Municipalities**
 - [COVID-19 proof of vaccination](#)
 - [Faith-based organizations](#)
- **Operating your business safely**
 - [COVID-19 proof of vaccination](#)
 - [Facilities for sports and recreational fitness activities](#)
 - [Recreational water facilities](#)
- [Gatherings, Events and Celebrating Holidays](#)
- [Pop-up clinics](#)
- **Going to School**
[Families](#)
 - [What do I do if someone in our school community has tested positive for COVID-19](#)
 - [Face Masks](#)
 - [My Child has symptoms of COVID-19. What should I do?](#)
- [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](#).
- **PLEASE NOTE: We are experiencing high call volumes and our response times are longer than usual.**
- **Health Connection Hours:** Monday-Friday - 8:30am-4:30pm – closed on holidays

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](#)