

COVID-19 Update for Partners

November 12, 2021

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Key Local Issues

Increased transmission in the community

- Over the past week there has been a sharp increase in the incidence rate of cases in Simcoe Muskoka, going from 21.0 cases per 100,000 population during the week of Oct. 24-30 to 41 cases per 100,000 during the week of Oct. 31 to Nov. 6. Meanwhile, the provincial incidence rate, during the same time, was 17.0 and 22.3 respectively.
- This trend builds on the gradual increase in weekly incidence rate of cases in Simcoe Muskoka over the past four weeks.
- With case counts continuing to rise, the result is that many high-risk contacts and exposure locations require follow up. As previously implemented, the health unit will streamline its case and contact management processes to ensure we can continue to reach new cases as quickly as possible. This allows us to prioritize contacting positive cases within 24-48 hours of lab confirmation while also managing current capacity. Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit (SMDHU) will also continue to prioritize outbreaks and exposure site investigations in settings based on vulnerability such as long-term care, childcare and congregate settings.
- This upward trajectory of cases speaks to the need for all people, regardless of vaccination status, to maintain public health measures including mask use and physical distancing in indoor public places and workplaces, and to isolate and seek assessment and testing if experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, even if they are mild. These measures are particularly important as people are spending more time together indoors.

COVID-19 booster dose available to those eligible

- Booster dose appointments are currently available at the Barrie Immunization Clinic at 29 Sperling Dr. [Community clinics](#) will open November 15 with appointments available to be booked through the [online provincial booking system](#) or the Provincial Vaccine Booking Line: 1-833-943-3900. Booster doses are also available at [select pharmacies](#), [GO-VAXX bus mobile clinics](#), at some primary health care providers and for health care workers from their employer.
- For more information about COVID-19 booster shots and who is eligible for an appointment, please visit our COVID-19 pages at www.smdhu.org.

Flu shots

- With the arrival of flu season, SMDHU urges residents to get vaccinated to protect themselves and their families against getting and spreading the flu, and to ease the burden on the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Last year's flu season was mild both locally and provincially due to COVID-19 public health measures that prevented travelling and gatherings and promoted physical distancing and mask wearing. Now that these measures are gradually being lifted in Ontario, we expect that influenza activity will increase during the 2021/2022 season.
- While it is recommended that everyone 6 months of age and older get the flu shot, some individuals are more vulnerable to complications and hospitalization from the flu and are encouraged to get the flu shot as soon as possible.
- The flu shot is now available free of charge to all residents over the age of 6 months through primary care providers and pharmacies. For those in high-risk groups, the influenza vaccine is also available in other settings such as long-term care homes, retirement homes, some workplaces, hospitals, and community health centres.
- People are able to receive both the COVID-19 and flu vaccines at the same time, as [recommended](#) by the National Advisory on Immunization (NACI).

School closures

- In-school learning is very important to the health of students, and we are balancing that with the risk of COVID in schools. For the most part, the risk to students has been low given the current measures taken by schools. The potential disruption a closure would cause for some parents is also a consideration.
- There are numerous factors that we carefully monitor day-to-day that contribute to the potential decision to temporarily close schools. They include the number of class cohorts that are affected, the number of students affected, the number of students testing positive for COVID who likely got infected outside of their class/bus cohorts or outside of school (e.g., home) as we expect some spread to occur in those class/bus cohorts, how much COVID there is in the community where the school is, the immunization rate among other factors.

Holiday parties and gatherings

- As the holidays approach businesses and organizations are planning gatherings. SMDHU will be providing resources on its website in the coming weeks with information about how workplaces and the public can gather safely during holiday festivities such as work parties and family gatherings.

*Dr. Gardner's next media briefing will take place on **Wednesday, November 17, 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 Nov 12, 2021)					
Total Confirmed Cases	Active Cases (% change from previous week)	New cases Oct 31-Nov 6 (% change from previous week)	Total deaths (# change from previous week)	Current Hospitalizations (# change from previous week)	Residents 12+ fully vaccinated (Target 90%)
14,496	378 (+65%)	249 (+96%)	269 (+2)	19 (-2)	84%
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Of the 249 new cases reported last week, 65% were unvaccinated, 6% were partially vaccinated, and 30% were fully vaccinated.					

- From September 12th to November 6th, the rate of COVID-19 infection among the unvaccinated vaccine-eligible Simcoe Muskoka population is 8 times higher than it is for the fully vaccinated population and the rate of COVID-19 hospitalizations is 9 times higher.
- There are 18 active outbreaks, including nine in local schools.

More local data available at: [SMDHU COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#) and [COVID-19 Monitoring Dashboard](#)

Local Media Updates *(Since Nov 4, 2021 Partner Update)*

- RVH requires visitors to show proof of full vaccination beginning Monday ([article](#))
- Avoid further restrictions by going back to pandemic-driven basics: expert says ([article](#))
- Simcoe Muskoka health unit hopes to 'avoid anything remotely like another shutdown' as COVID-19 cases surge ([article](#))
- 'I don't feel the need to be vaccinated': Group of Collingwood hospital staff rebukes vaccination policy ([article](#))
- More than 500 eligible local residents turned out for a booster shot ([article](#))
- Simcoe-Muskoka region's weekly COVID-19 case count has nearly doubled in two weeks: Health unit ([article](#))
- Health unit confirms 16 COVID cases linked to outbreak at south-end church ([article](#))
- Muskoka Algonquin Healthcare on board with province's decision against mandatory COVID vaccinations for staff ([article](#))
- Testing finds no new COVID-19 cases at Pines long-term care in Bracebridge ([article](#))
- Proof of vaccination now required at Penetanguishene Centennial Museum ([article](#))
- Vaccination required for visitors to Beaver Creek federal prison in Gravenhurst ([article](#))
- Staff member at Amica Little Lake seniors facility tests positive for COVID ([article](#))
- RVH stands behind its vaccination policy despite provincial decision on hospital workers ([article](#))
- Midland hospital fires 17 staff members for failing to get vaccinated ([article](#))
- 'Managing forever more': Why Simcoe-Muskoka's top doc doesn't think COVID-19 is going away ([article](#))
- Health unit declares COVID outbreak at Mapleview Community Church ([article](#))

Provincial, National and Global COVID-19 Data

Ontario <i>(As of Nov 12, 2021)</i>					
Total Cases	Active Cases (% change from previous week)	New cases Nov 4- Nov 11 (% change from previous week)	Total deaths (change from previous week)	Current Hospitalizations (change from previous week)	Residents 12+ fully vaccinated* (Target 90%)
605,846	4,400 (+37%)	4,162 (+55%)	9,921 (+30)	207 (-27)	85%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the new cases, 50% are unvaccinated, 4% are partially vaccinated, 37% are fully vaccinated and 9% have an unknown vaccination status. • Areas with the highest rate of active cases per 100,000 population are: Sudbury and District (139), Algoma (86), Haldimand-Norfolk (81), Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox and Addington (67), and Simcoe Muskoka (62). 					

For more national data, see [Ontario COVID-19 case data](#), [Public Health Ontario Data Tool](#), [daily](#) and [weekly](#) epidemiologic summaries

Canada (as of Nov 10, 2021)				
Total Cases (includes confirmed and probable cases)	Active Cases (% change from previous week)	New Cases in the last 7 days (% change from previous week)	Total Deaths (change from previous week)	Population 12+ fully vaccinated
1,740,005	24,011 (+3.7%)	17,432 (-4.7%)	29,249 (+154)	84%

Weekly case highlights for Oct 24-30 compared to the previous week:

- Canada reported moderate and decreasing COVID-19 activity compared to the previous week.
- Since early-October 2021, daily rates of cases per 100 000 population have been decreasing among all age groups.
- Outbreaks have been a significant source of COVID-19 spread in Canada and point to vulnerabilities in closed and crowded settings. Notably, in schools and childcare centres, following an increase in outbreaks observed since early August 2021, early signs point to a decrease in outbreaks since early October 2021.

For more national data, see: [COVID-19 daily epidemiology update](#), [Canada COVID-19 Weekly Epidemiology Report](#)

Global (as of 7:19 pm CET, 11 November 2021)		
Total confirmed cases	New Cases Nov 1-7 (% change from previous week)	Total Deaths (Change from previous week)
251,266,207	3,141,227 (+2.7%)	5,070,244 (-3.7%)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the week 1 to 7 November 2021, a slight upward trend (1% increase) in new weekly cases was observed, with over 3.1 million new cases reported. • The WHO European Region reported increases in case and death incidence, while other regions reported declines or stable trends. • In the last week the highest number of global cases were reported in: United States, Russia, United Kingdom, Germany and Turkey. 		
For more international data, see: WHO COVID-19 Disease Dashboard and WHO weekly epidemiological update on COVID-19 - 9 November 2021		

Provincial, National and Global Media Updates *(Since Nov 4 Partner Update)*

Provincial Updates

The Ontario Government:

- Ontario Pausing the Lifting of Capacity Limits in Remaining Settings Where Proof of Vaccination is Required ([news release](#))

Science Table: COVID-19 Advisory for Ontario

- Update on COVID-19 Projections ([slide deck](#))

Other Provincial News:

- Testing numbers flat, positivity higher as COVID-19 cases rise in most Ontario regions: modelling ([article](#))
- 'No number is too small.' Ontario COVID vaccine clinics are not giving up — and here's who is trickling in ([article](#))
- Ontario long-term care homes near 98% vaccination rate among staff, sources say ([article](#))
- Ontarians have until Friday to get first COVID-19 shot and be fully vaccinated for Christmas ([article](#))
- Ontario schools see week-over-week rise in active COVID-19 cases for first time since early October ([article](#))
- Ontario staying the course on COVID-19 reopening plan despite recent rise in cases: health minister ([article](#))
- Health officials keep close eye on rising COVID-19 cases, 'additional measures' possible ([article](#))
- Ontario's COVID testing positivity rate the highest since September ([article](#))
- Head of Ontario COVID-19 science table says capacity limits may need 'fine-tuning' ([article](#))
- Just under half of COVID-19 cases at closed Toronto school found using take-home tests ([article](#))
- COVID-19 infections rising again in Ontario, but experts say no need to panic ([article](#))
- Toronto books 8,000 appointments for COVID-19 vaccine booster shot ([article](#))
- Ontario MPP Randy Hillier apologizes for COVID-19 social media posts ([article](#))
- ONTARIO: Province boosts health spending, plans to phase out COVID-19 supports ([article](#))
- Many Ontario hospitals instituting COVID-19 vaccine requirements in absence of Ford provincial mandate ([article](#))
- Ontario's public schools report week-over-week increase in COVID-19 cases for first time since mid-October ([article](#))
- 'Pay now or pay later:' Peel's top doc says refusal to mandate vaccination for hospital workers will still lead to staffing shortages ([article](#))
- 100 permanent teachers, staff at TDSB placed on unpaid leave after not disclosing COVID-19 vaccination status ([article](#))

National Updates

The Government of Canada:

- Health Canada authorizes the use of the Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine as a booster shot ([Statement](#))
- Health Canada authorizes the use of the Pfizer-BioNTech Comirnaty COVID-19 vaccine as a booster shot ([Statement](#))
- Statement from the Chief Public Health Officer of Canada on November 5, 2021 ([Statement](#))
- Proof of Vaccination Requirement for Visitors of Federal Correctional Sites ([News release](#))

SMDHU Resources

Recent changes to SMDHU [website](#):

COVID-19

- My COVID-19 test was positive, now what ([link](#))

COVID-19 Vaccinations

- Third doses and boosters ([link](#))
- Pop-up clinics ([link](#))

Stop The Spread

- Gatherings, events and celebrating holidays ([link](#))

Going to School

- Families ([link](#))
- School administrators and educators ([link](#))

COVID-19 Assessment centres and testing

- Alliston ([link](#))

HealthSTATS:

- SMDHU [COVID-19 HealthSTATS page](#).

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](#), Monday-Friday - 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
- **PLEASE NOTE: We are experiencing high call volumes and our response times are longer than usual.**

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](#)